



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Flying Start: April 2023 to March 2024

The report provides a statistical overview of how the programme is working for April 2023 to March 2024.

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Introduction

Flying Start is the Welsh Government early years programme delivered by local authorities in Wales. It is aimed at improving outcomes for families with children under 4 years of age in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales.

The purpose of this statistical release is to provide evidence for policy development; to allow local authorities to monitor and benchmark their service provision against other local authorities in Wales; and to inform the public about provision of the Flying Start programme.

The main source of data used in this statistical release is management information collected via the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return directly from local authorities. This data collection started in April 2012 to March 2013. Additional data were requested from local authorities following expansion of the childcare element of Flying Start to monitor progress. Supplementary data is sourced from the National Community Child Health Database, the Pupil Level Annual School Census, the Child Measurement Programme, the Coverage of Vaccination Evaluation Rapidly (COVER) report and ad-hoc data requests from local authorities.

Further information on data sources and changes to Flying Start service provision because of the pandemic are detailed in the [quality and methodology section](#).

Throughout this release, the term 'year' refers to the financial year where it is written as '2023-24' and refers to April 2023 to March 2024. Where this is not the case the months have been specified.

Expansion of all four elements of Flying Start began in September 2022, it included: funded part-time, high-quality childcare for 2 year olds; parenting support; enhanced health visitor support; and support for speech, language and

communication. During the first phase around 2,500 additional children (aged 0-4 years) were expected to benefit from all four elements of Flying Start.

Phase 2 of the expansion programme focused on delivering the childcare element of Flying Start to more 2-year-olds across Wales during 2023-24 and 2024-25 and began in April 2023. This statistical release separately reports on the children being offered and taking up the childcare element under phase 2 Flying Start expansion.

Main points

- The number of children receiving a Flying Start health programme contact increased in line with the expansion of the programme, and was above the expected number.
- The number of contacts by Flying Start staff have been on a broadly downward trend since a peak between the years 2014-15 and 2015-16, but remained stable in the past two years.
- Each child received an average of 3.0 health visitor contacts, the lowest number on record, continuing a downward trend since the data was first collected.
- There was a small decrease in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) health visitors providing Flying Start services, but increases were observed in the number of FTE wider health team and other staff groups.
- A higher percentage of Flying Start eligible children were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds than the percentage of ethnic minority children in the general population of Wales.
- Flying Start childcare was offered to families of nearly all eligible children in flying start areas and the offer was accepted for just over 8 out of 10 eligible children.
- Just under a quarter of births in Wales in 2023 were to mothers resident in Flying Start areas.

- The percentage of children living in Flying Start areas breastfed at 10 days continued to increase to the highest on record, but remains lower than the percentage of children breastfed living in non-Flying Start areas.
- The percentage of children living in Flying Start areas fully immunised by their fourth birthday fell slightly and remained lower than the percentage of children fully immunised, living in non-Flying Start areas.
- As part of the Phase 2 expansion of Flying Start, 6,885 additional childcare places were offered.

Children receiving Flying Start services

The definition of children in receipt of Flying Start services changed in 2023-24. Previously, the number of children who had a contact with a Flying Start health visitor were counted.

From April 2023 all individual children receiving a Flying Start health programme contact are counted as being in receipt of Flying Start services. This means that all unique contacts that relate directly to the core Flying Start health programme are counted whether they are made by a Flying Start health visitor or by a member of the wider Flying Start health or local authority team.

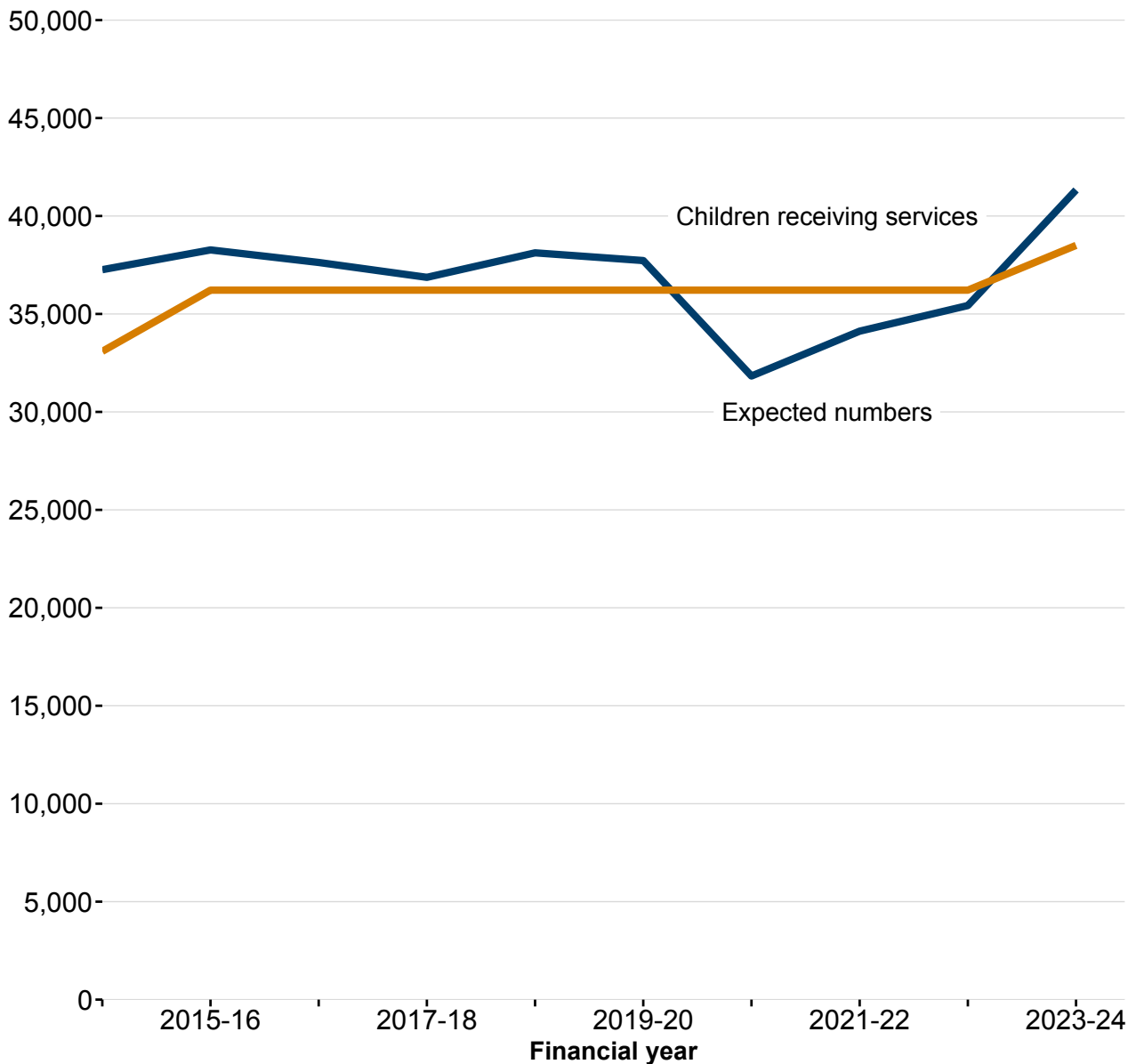
‘Transfer in’ contacts are also counted. These do not feature as part of the standard Flying Start health programme but are standard across a number of local authorities.

There may be a small number of children who receive Flying Start services but do not have any Flying Start programme contacts in the reporting year; these children would not be counted in the data in Figure 1.

Between 2015-16 and 2022-23, the number of children expected to receive Flying Start services, as defined by the [guidance of Flying Start programme](#),

remained at 36,215. Following a Phase 1 expansion across all elements of the Flying Start programme during 2023-24, the number of children expected to receive Flying Start services increased to 38,500.

Figure 1: Number of children in Wales in receipt of health visitor Flying Start services, 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 1: Line chart showing the number of children receiving services exceeded the expected numbers in each year of the programme until

2020-21 and remained below expected until 2023-24.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Children receiving Flying Start services, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The expected numbers increased in 2023-24 following an expansion of the flying start programme.

The number of children who had received Flying Start services, including a contact with a health visitor, had always exceeded the expected number in the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the number receiving services decreased in 2020-21 coinciding with the height of the pandemic and remained below the expected number in the subsequent 2 years.

In 2023-24, 41,328 children received Flying Start services. This was 7.3% higher than the expected number.

The number of children who a local authority is providing services to is known as the caseload. The number of children and percentage of the child population on health visitor caseloads varies by local authority area and is shown in the StatsWales table linked above.

52.8% of children aged under 4 in Merthyr Tydfil were on Flying Start health visitor caseloads (the highest in Wales), compared to 17.5% in Monmouthshire (the lowest in Wales).

As the eligibility for Flying Start services is area-based, the total number of children in receipt of Flying Start services is affected by the number of children aged under 4 years living in Flying Start areas in each year. This is in turn affected by changes to population demographics. The number of 0 to 4 year olds in Wales has decreased by between 0.7% and 3.5% each year since 2012.

As children may move in or out of Flying Start areas during the year, the total

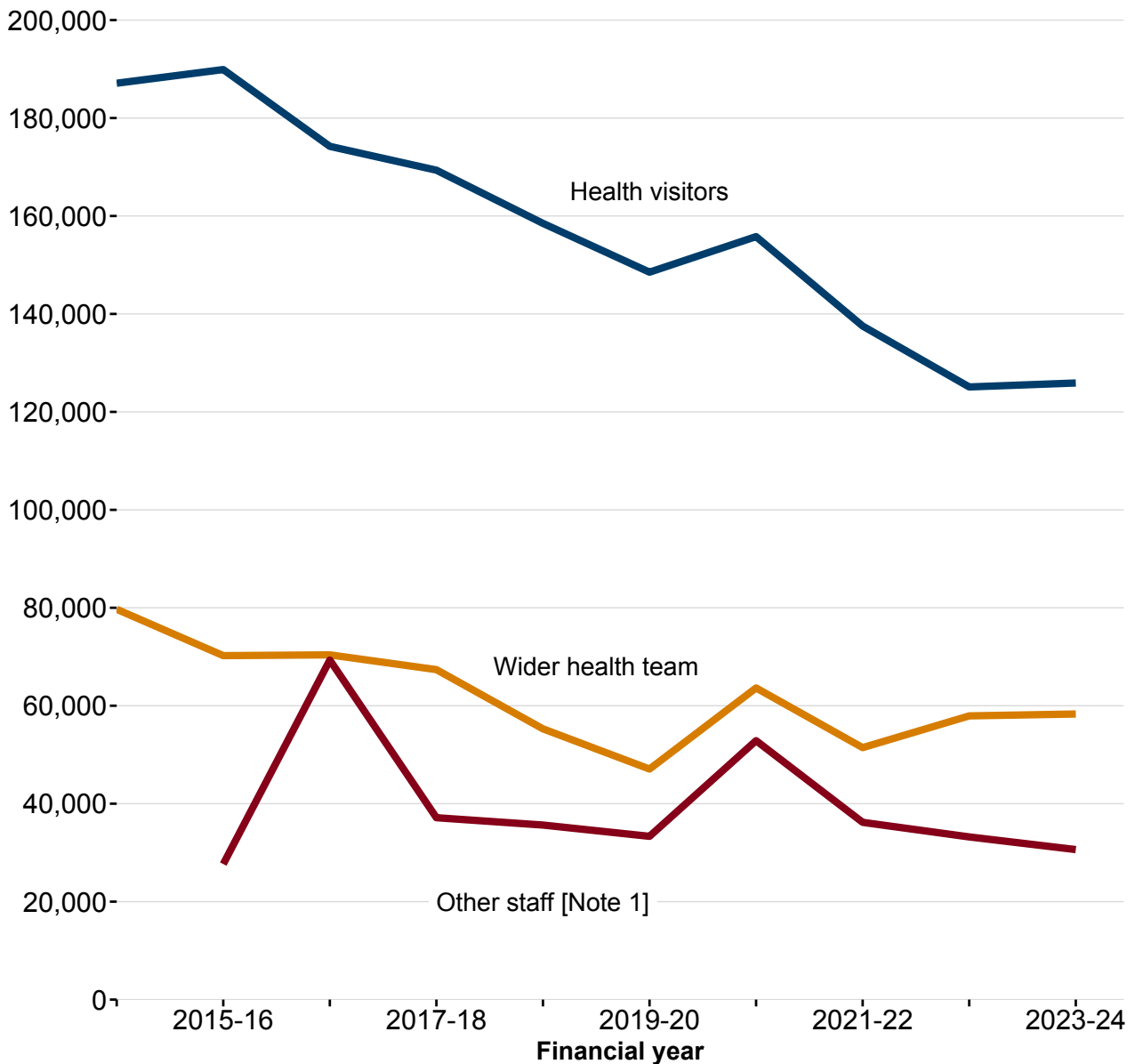
number of children counted as receiving Flying Start services, may not actually receive services for the duration of a whole year.

Activity of Flying Start programme

The Flying Start programme enables children to receive services from a range of different professionals, including health visitors; wider health professionals such as dieticians, midwives and social workers; and other staff such as assistants to fully qualified health staff. More information on staff groups is available in the [quality and methodology section](#).

Figure 2 shows the number of contacts performed by each staff group and includes all other targeted contacts relevant to the child, even when the child is not present.

Figure 2: Number of contacts by staff group, 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024



Description of Figure 2: Line chart showing the number of contacts by Flying Start staff have been on a broadly downward trend since a peak between the years 2014-15 and 2015-16, but remained stable in the past two years.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

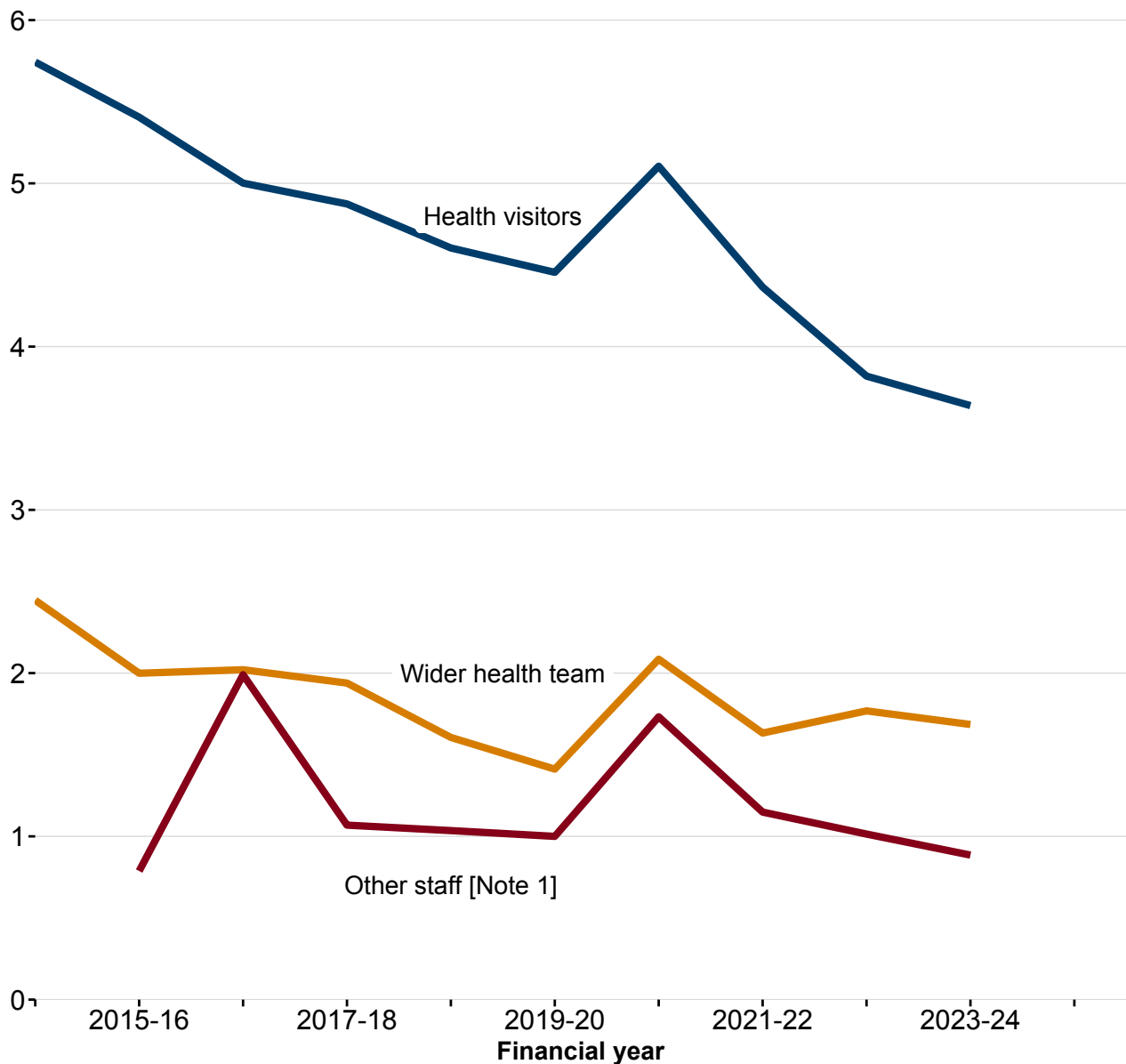
Number of contacts and average contacts per child receiving Flying Start services, by staff group and local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The definition of 'other staff' includes any unregistered staff. Contacts by other staff are only available from 2015-16 onwards.

The number of contacts with children up to age 4 by health visitors and the wider health team have been on a broadly downward trend since a peak between the years 2014-15 and 2015-16. Contacts by other staff members were recorded from 2015-16 onwards and have remained broadly stable in 4 of the last 5 years.

In 2023-24 there were 125,895 contacts with health visitors, an increase of 0.6% since the previous year; 58,309 contacts with wider health staff, an increase of 0.7% since the previous year; and 30,630 contacts with other staff, a decrease of 7.8% since the previous year.

Figure 3: Average number of contacts per child receiving Flying Start services in the year, 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024



Description of Figure 3: A line chart that shows the average number of contacts per child has been on a downward trend since data was first collected.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Number of contacts and average contacts per child receiving Flying Start services, by staff group and local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The definition of 'other staff' includes any unregistered staff. Contacts by other staff are only available from 2015-16 onwards.

In 2023-24, each child received an average of 3.0 health visitor contacts, the lowest number on record.

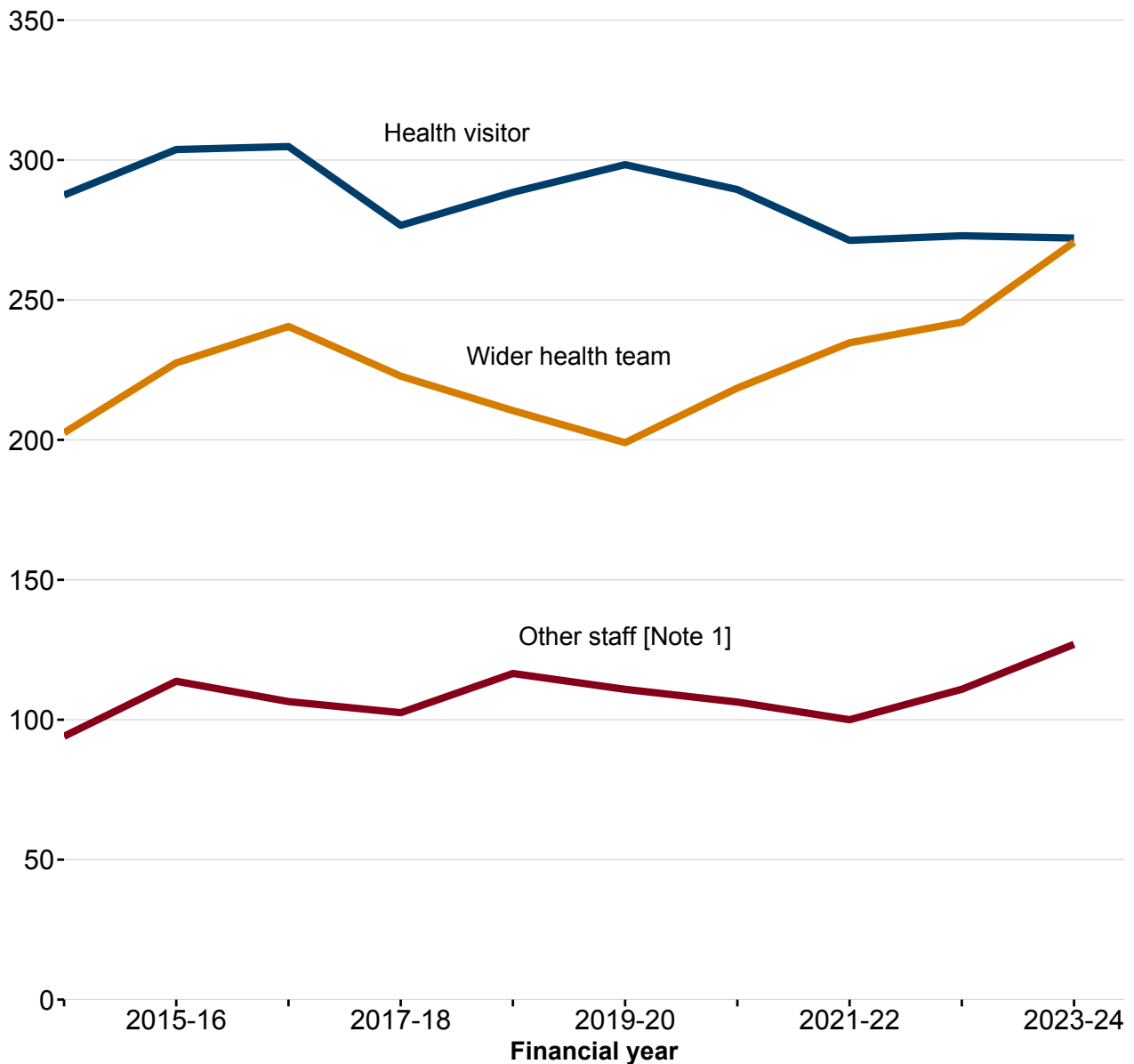
The average number of contacts with the wider health team and with other staff both decreased when compared to the previous year.

The average number of contacts per child in receipt of Flying Start services varies widely by local authority and is shown in the StatsWales tables linked above.

Flying Start workforce

Local authorities submit data on the total number of hours worked by members of each staff group providing Flying Start services. A conversion factor is then applied to estimate the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of staff providing Flying Start services in the year. One FTE is the equivalent of a member of staff working 37.5 hours per week. More detail on this is provided in the [quality and methodology section](#).

Figure 4: Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) health visitors 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024



Description of Figure 4: A line chart that shows after an initial increase up until 2016-17 there has been some year-to-year volatility, but the number of health visitors has remained between 270 and 300 FTE since 2017-18.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) health visitors in the Flying Start workforce, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Contacts by other staff are only available from 2015-16 onwards.

In 2023-24 there were 272 FTE health visitors, a decrease of 0.3% from 2022-23.

The number of FTE wider health team providing Flying Start services increased until 2016-17, followed by a decrease every year up until 2019-20, before increasing again year on year.

In 2023-24 there were 271 FTE wider health team staff, an increase of 11.8% from 2022-23.

There were 127 FTE other staff providing Flying Start services in 2023-24, a 14.5% increase on the previous year.

Characteristics of children on the Flying Start caseload

The average number of children on the health visitor caseload in 2023-24 was 34,600 children, at the Wales level.

The number of children on the caseload is generally lower than the number of children who have received Flying Start services in the year because families move in and out of Flying Start areas throughout the course of the year, and as children grow older they may become ineligible for services at a faster rate than new arrivals become eligible.

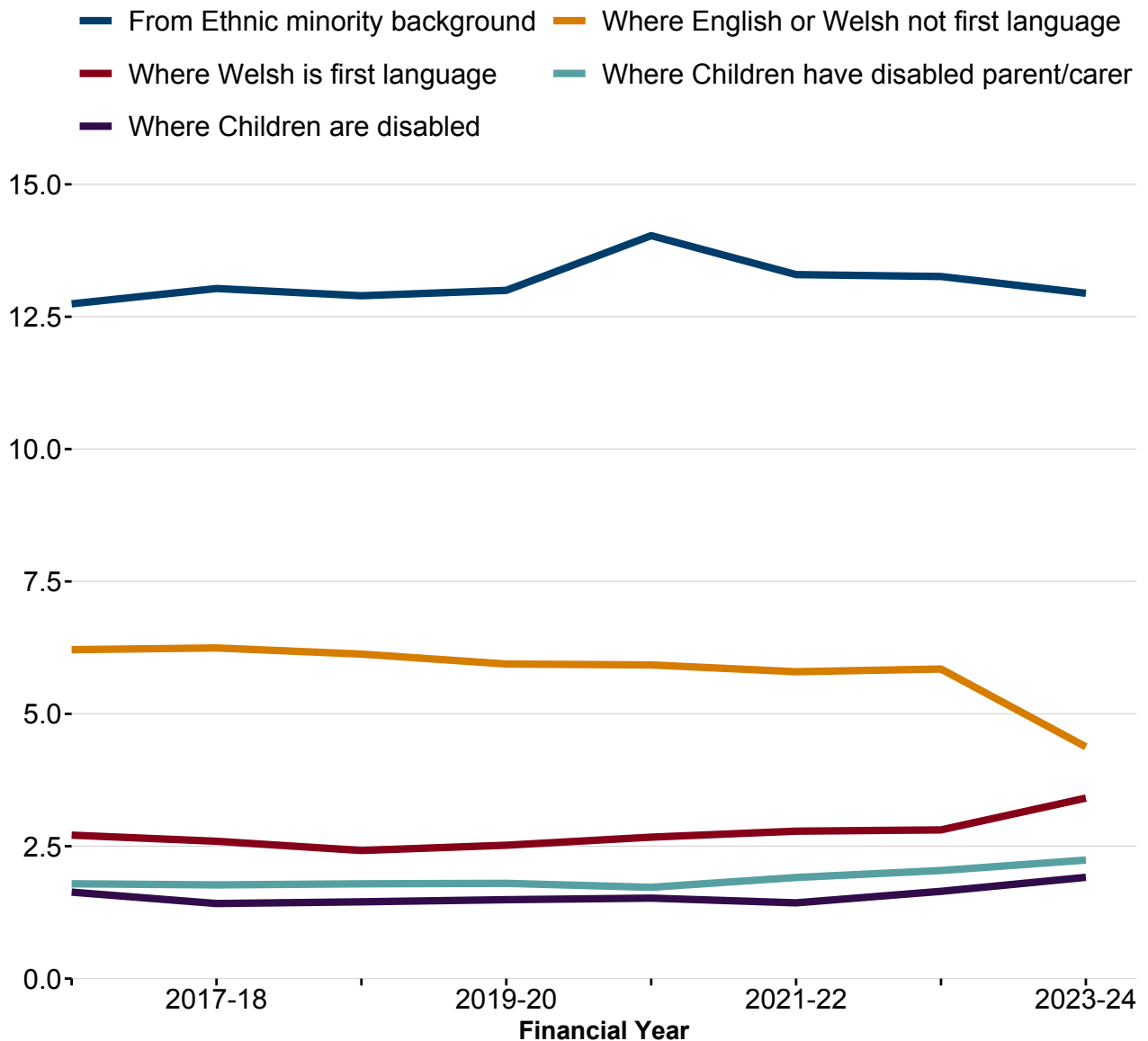
Local authorities provide data on some characteristics of children and their families, who are on their caseload.

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Figure 5: Percentage of caseload in Wales by ethnicity, Welsh language and disability, 2016 to 2017 to 2023 to 2024



Description of Figure 5: A line chart that shows there has been very little variation in the percentage of caseload by any characteristic over the seven

years shown.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Characteristics of children on the Flying Start caseload, by local authority (StatsWales)

In 2023-24

The percentage of caseload where children were from an ethnic minority background was 12.9%, a decrease since the previous year. For comparison, the **2021 Census (nomis)** estimated that 9% of children aged 0 to 4 in Wales were from an ethnic minority. Also, data from the **National Community Child Health Database** estimates that between 10% and 15% of new-borns in Wales born between 2018 and 2023 were from an ethnic minority.

The percentage of caseload where children were from families where Welsh is the first language was 3.4%, an increase since the previous year.

The percentage of caseload where children were from families where English or Welsh was not the first language was 4.4%, a decrease since the previous year.

The percentage of caseload where children have a disabled parent or carer was 2.2%, an increase since the previous year.

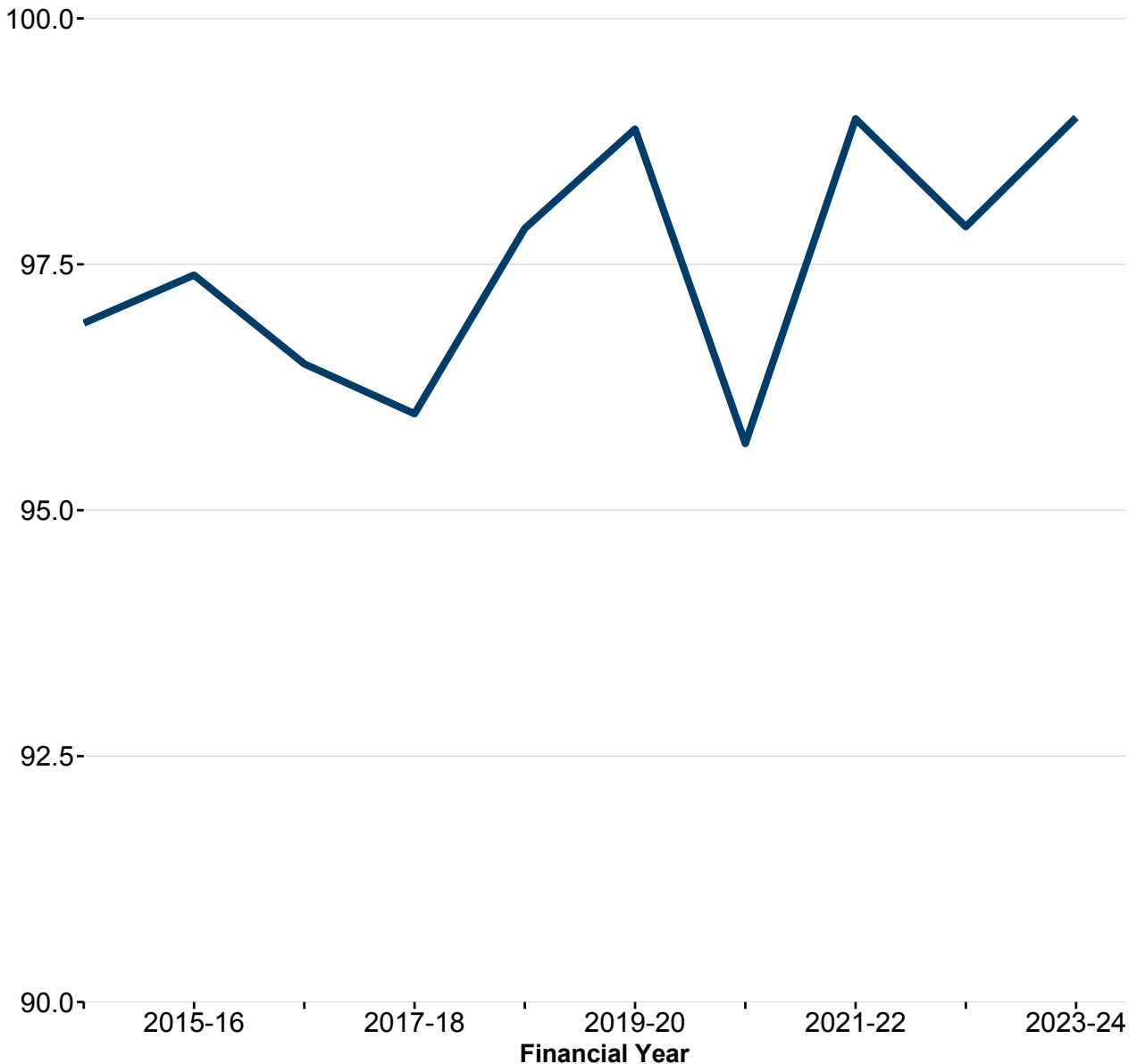
The percentage of caseload where the child was disabled was 1.9%, an increase since the previous year.

Data for all local authorities is included in the StatsWales table linked above.

Childcare

The core Flying Start childcare offer is that quality childcare is offered to parents of all eligible 2 to 3 year olds for 2.5 hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks of the year. In addition, there should be at least 15 sessions of provision for the family during the school holidays. Families can choose to accept either the full offer or a reduced offer if only some of the sessions are needed.

Figure 6: Percentage of full or reduced offers of Flying Start-provided childcare made to newly eligible children, Wales, 2013 to 2014 to 2023 to 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 6: A line chart that shows the percentage of eligible children offered childcare has fluctuated between 96% and 99% over the last 10

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years, but showed an overall upward trend.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Number and percentage of children eligible and offered Flying Start childcare, by local authority (StatsWales)

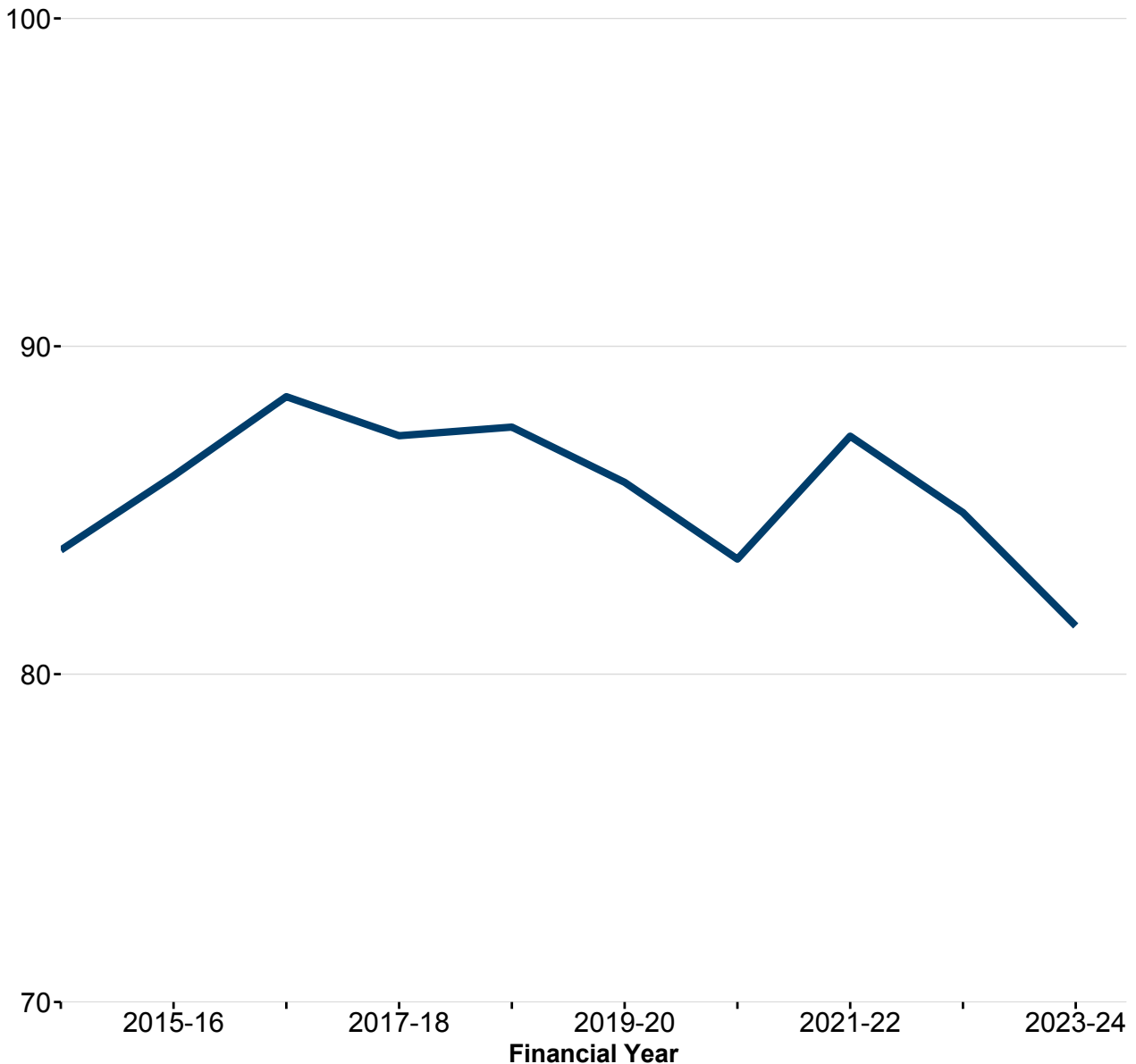
[Note 1] Y axis does not start at zero

The families of 99.0% of eligible children were offered Flying Start-provided childcare in 2023-24, an increase of 1.1 percentage points since last year and the joint highest on record.

This data is available at local authority level and can be found in the StatsWales link above. 17 local authorities offered childcare to families of 100% of the eligible children in their area. Cardiff had the lowest percentage (86.1%) of eligible children offered Flying Start-provided childcare in 2023-24.

While childcare offers are made by local authorities, it is each family's choice to accept the offer or not.

Figure 7: Percentage of children whose families accepted Flying Start-provided childcare, Wales, 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 7: A line chart showing the percentage of children whose families accepted Flying Start childcare has remained fairly steady in the last 10

years at around 86%.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Number and percentage of children eligible and offered Flying Start childcare, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Y axis does not start at zero

[Note 2] This refers to whether the offer of childcare is accepted regardless of whether the child subsequently attends childcare.

The percentage of children whose families accepted Flying Start childcare decreased by 3.5 percentage points in 2023-24 to 81.5%.

The StatsWales table linked above shows how the acceptance rate varied between local authorities. 100% of offers were accepted in Isle of Anglesey and Conwy, the highest rates in Wales, compared to 54.2% in Newport, the lowest rate in Wales.

Parenting

Every family with a Flying Start eligible child must be offered formal parenting support every year. In addition to the formal parenting offer, other parenting support may be delivered. This may include informal parenting support, bespoke enhanced one-to-one sessions and informal drop-in sessions, depending on need. Formal and informal structured courses are defined as those with a structured curriculum and a set start and end date.

In 2023-24 the take-up of courses offered to parents of Flying Start children was 76.5% for formal structured parenting courses and 80.1% for informal structured parenting courses, an increase of 4.2 percentage points for formal

structured parenting courses. The definition for informal structured courses changed in 2023-24 to only include parenting courses, whereas previous years included informal speech, language and communication courses. Therefore, comparisons of uptake of informal courses cannot be made of 2023-24 to previous years.

National and local authority data is available on StatsWales.

Speech, Language and Communication

Speech language and communication (SLC) support is offered to parents as part of the flying start programme. **New guidance has been issued on how to measure the outcome of SLC interventions.** Data collected for 2023-24 is still being processed and we will publish ad-hoc statistics in due course.

Births in Flying Start areas

In January to December 2023, 23.4% of live births in Wales were to mothers who were resident in Flying Start areas, a small decrease since 2022.

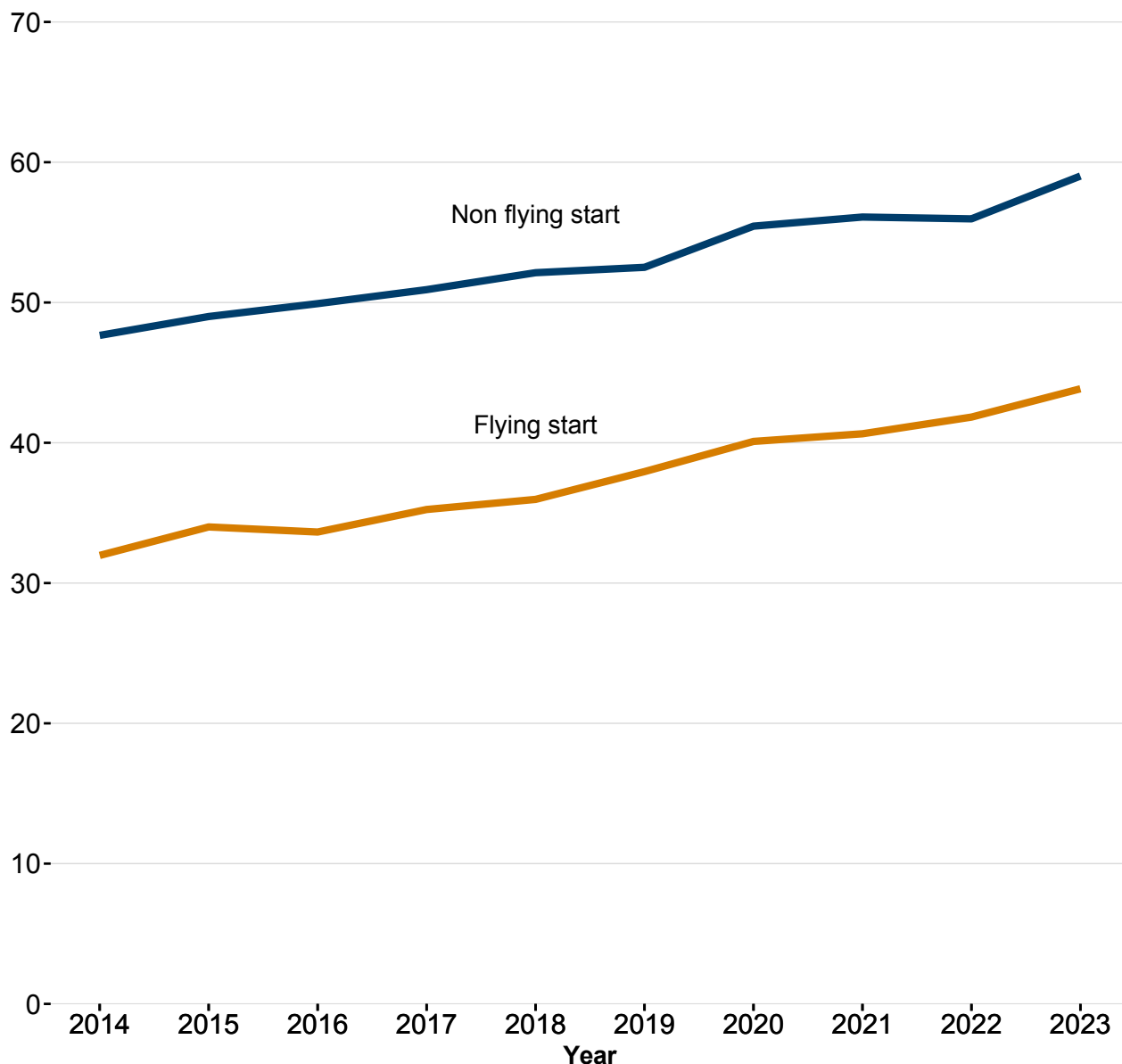
This varied between local authorities, from 39.3% in Merthyr Tydfil (highest in Wales) and 12.4% in Monmouthshire (lowest in Wales). Broadly, this reflects the coverage of the programme in each local authority.

Local authority data is available on StatsWales.

Health outcomes: infant feeding

The percentage of babies breastfed at 10 days old is one of the maternity indicators used to benchmark local health board maternity services.

Figure 8: Percentage of babies residing in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, receiving any breast milk at 10 days old, Wales, 2014 to 2023 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 8: A line chart showing the rate of breastfeeding at 10 days has been increasing at a similar rate for babies residing in both Flying Start and

non-Flying Start areas.

Source: National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD)

Babies born to mothers living in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas who received any breast milk at 10 days old, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The percentages are of the total live births minus births with no stated breastfeeding status: 14% had no stated breastfeeding status at 10 days in 2014, 4% in 2015 and 2016, 9% in 2017, 8% in 2018, 13% in 2019, 13% in 2020, 15% in 2021, 15% in 2022 and 9% in 2023.

[Note 2] 'Any breast milk' consists of combined milk feeding (breast milk plus artificial milk) plus those who receive exclusively breast milk (nothing else except water).

In 2023, 43.8% babies residing in Flying Start areas were fed any breast milk at 10 days old, compared to 59.0% of those in non-Flying Start areas.

Over the course of the 10-year time series, the gap between the two groups has remained relatively stable with the rate between 14 and 16 percentage points lower for babies in Flying Start areas. Both groups have experienced an upward trend over the last 10 years and are at their respective highest on record in 2023-24.

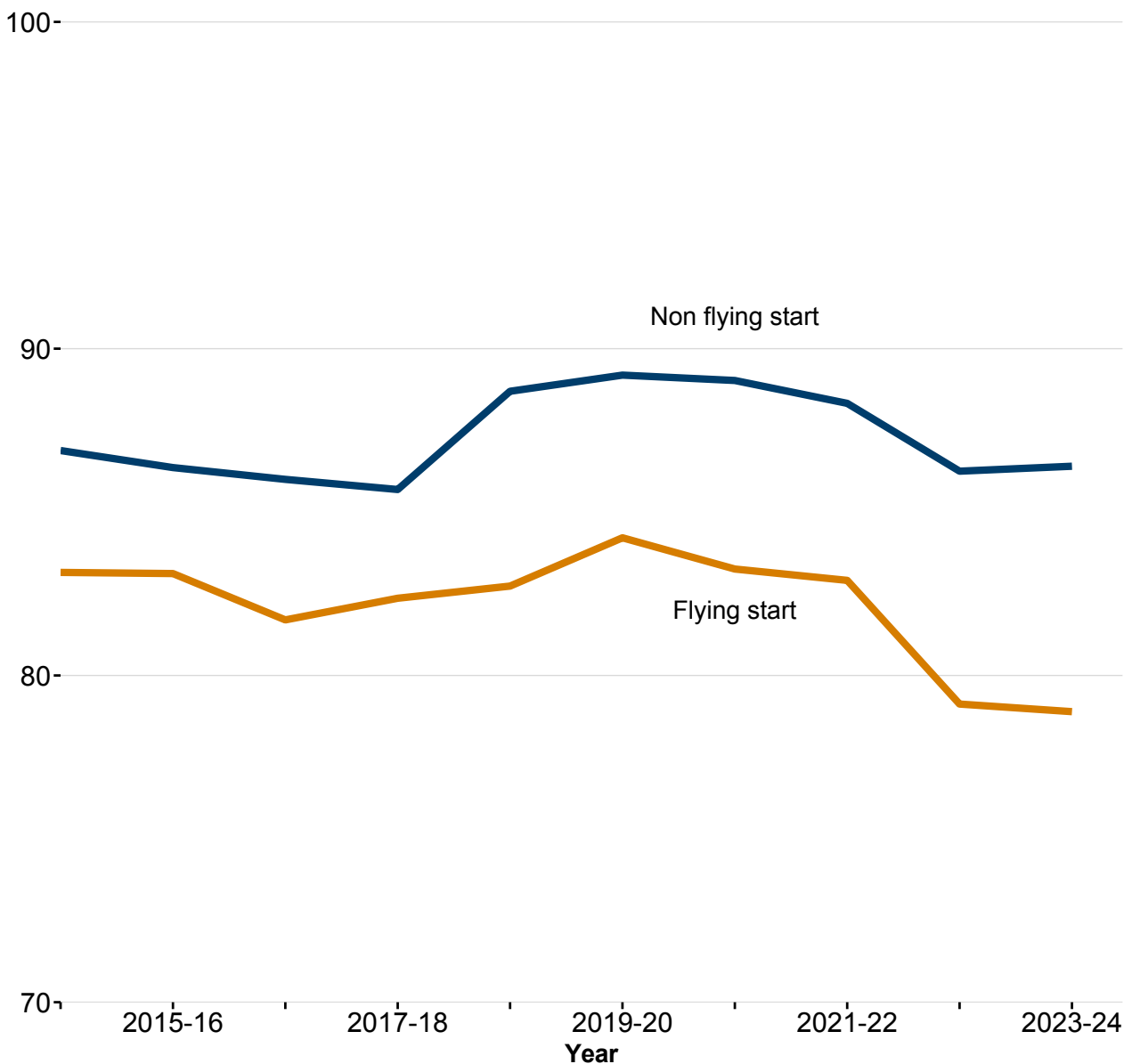
The percentage of mothers living in Flying Start areas who were breastfeeding at 10 days varied at local authority level from 60.0% in Monmouthshire (highest in Wales) to 27.8% in Wrexham (lowest in Wales).

Local authority data is available in the StatsWales table linked above.

Health outcomes: uptake of routine childhood immunisation

Vaccines are offered to all children, as part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule, to protect them against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae (Hib), Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningitis C and Pneumococcal infection (PCV). Vaccinations are given according to a routine childhood immunisation schedule starting 8 weeks after birth, and the aim is for all children to be fully immunised by their fourth birthday.

Figure 9: Percentage of children in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas that are fully immunised at 4th birthday, Wales, 2014 to 2015 to 2023 to 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 9: A line chart showing immunisation rates are largely unchanged throughout the time series and consistently higher for children living

in non-Flying Start areas than in Flying Start areas.

Source: **Public Health Wales COVER report** (numerator); National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD) (denominator)

Children living in Flying Start / non-Flying Start areas who are fully immunised by their 4th birthday, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] Y axis does not start at zero

The percentage of all children who are fully immunised by age 4 has remained broadly consistent since 2013-14 although has decreased in recent years.

In 2023-24, 78.9% of children living in Flying Start areas were fully immunised at age 4 (the lowest since 2012-13) compared to 86.4% of children living in non-Flying Start areas.

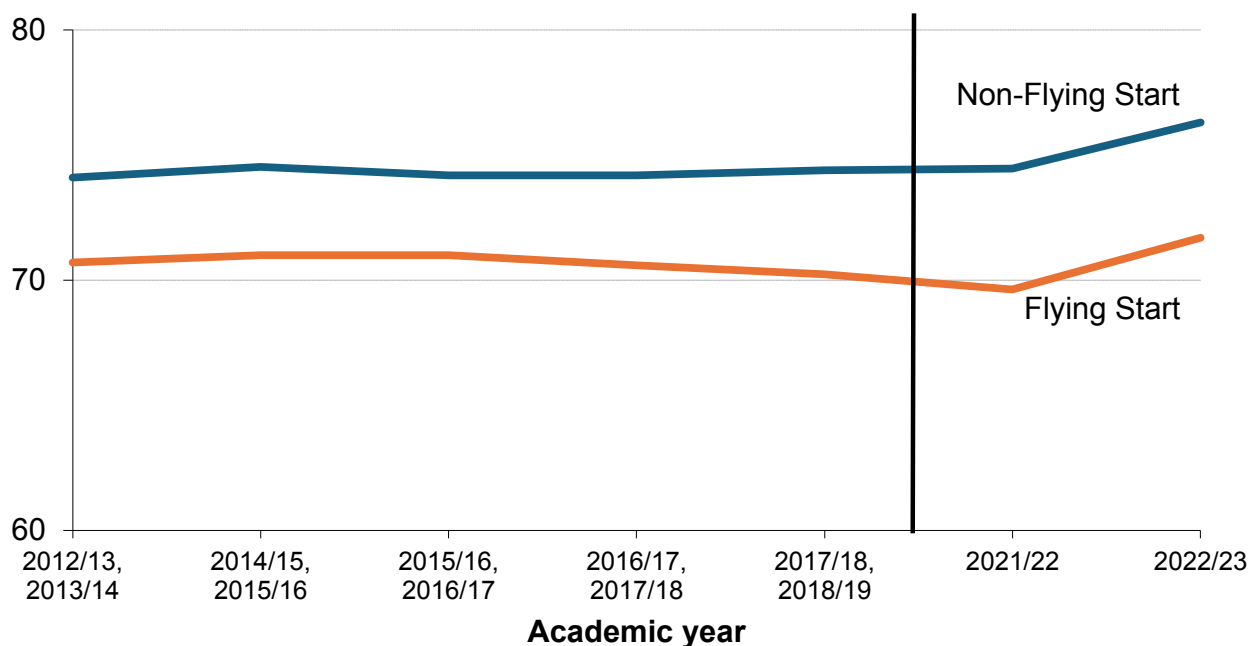
The StatsWales table above shows the differences in immunisation rates for Flying Start eligible children living in different local authorities, ranging from 95% in Isle of Anglesey (highest in Wales) to 68% in Cardiff (lowest in Wales).

In most local authorities (17 out of 22) immunisation rates were higher for children living in non-Flying Start areas than in Flying Start areas.

Health outcomes: healthy weight

The **Child Measurement Programme for Wales (Public Health Wales)** is a surveillance programme set up in 2011. Public Health Wales deliver a national height and weight measuring programme for Wales, to give a better understanding about how children in Wales are growing. The programme standardises the way in which primary school children (aged 4 and 5) are measured across Wales.

Figure 10: Prevalence of children aged 4 to 5 in ‘healthy weight’ categories resident within Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, September 2012 to August 2013 to September 2022 to August 2023 [Note 1] [Note 2] [Note 3] [Note 4]



Description of Figure 10: A line chart that shows a greater percentage of children aged 4 to 5 are of ‘healthy weight’ (including underweight) in non-Flying Start areas compared to Flying Start areas, between academic years 2012/13 and 2022/23.

Source: Child Measurement Programme (CMP) for Wales 2012/13 to 2022/23 produced by Public Health Wales Observatory, using CMP data (Digital Health and Care Wales).

Prevalence of children in ‘healthy weight’ categories for children aged 4 to 5 years resident within Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas, by local

authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] The y-axis does not start at 0

[Note 2] 'Healthy weight' includes healthy weight or underweight.

[Note 3] Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2 academic years' data were combined to increase the sample size. The pandemic disrupted this data collection which meant that it was not possible to provide 2 years combined data as per the routine practice prior to the pandemic. Therefore, regional numbers were reviewed and determined to be satisfactory for analyses based upon a single year.

[Note 4] Data is missing for academic year 2019/20 due to disruption of services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 2 local health boards could provide data for academic year 2020/21 so this year has been excluded. Cwm Taf Morgannwg health board could not provide data for academic year 2021/22 due to the ongoing pandemic impact so the data shown is related to the remaining 6 health boards.

71.7% of children aged 4 to 5 living in Flying Start areas had a healthy weight compared to 76.3% in non-Flying Start areas. This percentage of children with a healthy weight in flying start areas has been consistently lower than non-flying start areas (by 3 to 5 percentage points) since data was first collected.

Education: children recorded on roll at a maintained school

The numbers of Flying Start children starting Foundation Phase (the statutory curriculum for all 3 to 7 year olds in Wales in both maintained and non-maintained schools) measures the degree to which Flying Start children are

taking-up early years education opportunities.

In 2023-24, 90.7% of children at age 3 living in Flying Start programme areas were recorded on maintained school rolls compared to 84.3% of children at age 3 living in non-Flying Start areas.

The percentage of children living in Flying Start areas on maintained school rolls has remained fairly steady throughout the duration of the programme, varying between 91% and 94%.

National and local authority data is available on StatsWales.

Expansion of Early Years Provision

The Flying Start programme was expanded following the Programme for Government commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all 2-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision.

Phase 2 of the early years' expansion programme focuses on delivering the childcare element of Flying Start to more 2-year-olds across Wales during 2023-24 and 2024-25 and began in April 2023.

These statistics are based on management information collected by Welsh government from local authorities to monitor the progress of the Phase 2 expansion.

These statistics are official statistics in development. We are working to improve the quality of these statistics for future versions of this article. They are the best estimate we have on the number of childcare places offered and taken up in April 2023 to March 24. Data have been collected for the purposes of monitoring the roll out of the Phase 2 expansion. We are working to refine and improve this

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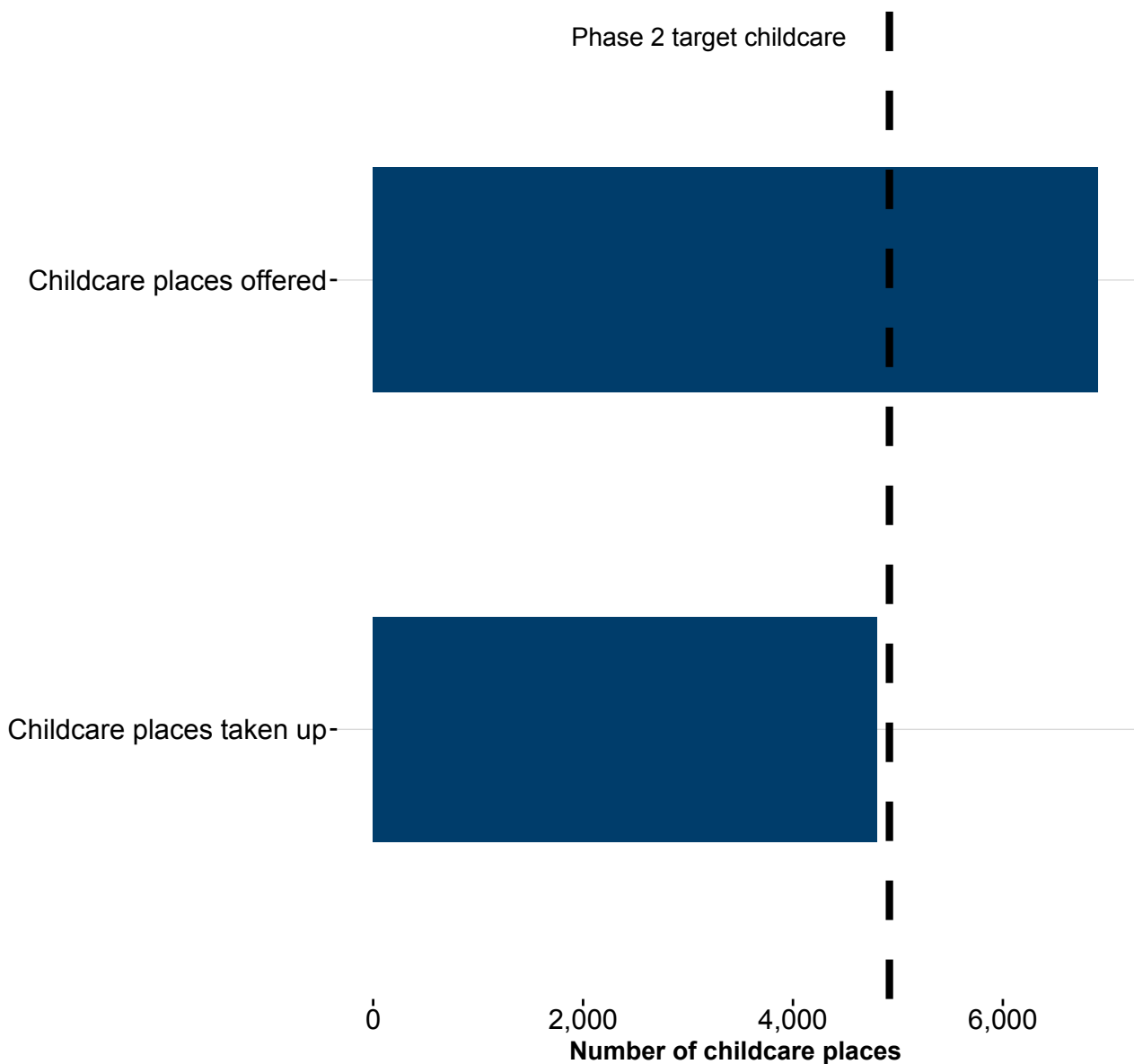
data collection to be in line with the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return.

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Figure 11: Number of Flying Start ‘Phase 2’ childcare places offered and taken up against the target, Wales, 2023 to 2024 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 11: A bar chart showing the number of Flying Start phase 2 childcare places that were offered and taken up against the target.

Source: Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Returns

Number and percentage of children offered Phase 2 Flying Start childcare, by local authority (StatsWales)

[Note 1] This refers to whether the offer of childcare is accepted regardless of whether the child subsequently attends childcare, though some local authorities defined take up differently, see the [quality and methodology section](#) for more information.

In 2023-24, the Phase 2 childcare target was for 4,919 additional 2-year-olds to access high-quality Flying Start childcare. 6,885 places were offered as part of Phase 2. 69.6% (4,790) of places offered were taken-up. In this context, the definition of take up is either the acceptance of an offer or attendance at the childcare setting depending on the local authority.

In Welsh-medium early years settings, children have access to the added benefits that often come from being bilingual. In 2023-24 21.0% (1,007) of all places taken-up were in Welsh-medium settings. As these statistics are still in development, there was some variation across local authorities as to how a Welsh medium setting was defined. There is more detail in the [quality and methodology section](#).

Quality and methodology information

A full [quality report](#) is published alongside this statistical release.

Impact of COVID-19

Information about the impact of COVID-19 on this data collection can be found in

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the [quality report](#) that is published alongside this statistical release.

Health Visiting in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Rhondda Cynon Taf are piloting a new health visiting model which means that data between 2020-21 and 2023-24 are collected on a different basis to previous years. This may mean that any differences between previous years and any differences with other local authority areas may be due to the different service provision model. Therefore, caution is advised when comparing Rhondda Cynon Taf data with previous years and when comparing with other local authorities in 2022-23.

Staff groups

The wider health team is defined as those staff with a professional health or social care registration, funded by the Flying Start programme. It will include staff who are:

- non-case holding health manager
- dieticians
- midwives
- clinical psychologists
- educational psychologists
- speech and language therapists
- social workers
- community nurses (with an appropriate qualification)
- occupational therapists
- any other health or care professionals

The definition of 'other staff' includes any unregistered staff. This typically means those who are not fully qualified and those who assist fully qualified health

professionals in delivering services.

Workforce full time equivalent estimates

Local authorities submit data for the number of hours worked by each staff group in each term of the year. A conversion factor is then applied to estimate the number of full-time equivalent staff. This calculation provides a consistent measure across all local authorities and takes into account maternity, long term illness and holidays or days off.

The conversion factors apply to each term. As the terms do not have the same number of weeks in them, the conversion factors also differ. In 2022-23 the conversion factor uses 18 weeks for term 1; 15 weeks for term 2; and 11 weeks for term 3. A full-time equivalent is counted for 37.5 hours worked per week for all staff groups.

The conversion factor formula is: number of hours worked in term divided by (number of weeks in term multiplied by 37.5).

Data on the number of **staff directly employed by the NHS** is published by Welsh Government and is collected in an entirely different way. Therefore, it is not comparable to any data published using Flying Start data monitoring forms.

Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

All of our statistics are produced and published in accordance with a number of

statements and protocols to enhance trustworthiness, quality and value. These are set out in the Welsh Government's [Statement of Compliance](#).

These [official statistics \(OSR\)](#) demonstrate the standards expected around trustworthiness, quality and public value in the following ways. This applies to all the statistics in this release apart from those relating to the Phase 2 expansion of the childcare element of Flying Start which are [official statistics in development \(OSR\)](#). These statistics are not classed as official statistics. However, we have applied the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics as far as possible during development.

Trustworthiness

These statistics are compiled from a range of sources. The main source of data used in this statistical release is management information collected via the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return directly from local authorities. This data collection started in April 2012 to March 2013., Additional data were requested from local authorities on the phase 2 expansion of the childcare element of Flying Start. Supplementary data is sourced from the National Community Child Health Database, the Pupil Level Annual School Census, the Child Measurement Programme, and the Coverage of Vaccination Evaluation Rapidly (COVER) report. Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates are used for population analysis.

Quality

The published figures provided are compiled by professional analysts using the latest available data and applying methods using their professional judgement and analytical skillset. Statistics published by Welsh Government adhere to the Statistical Quality Management Strategy which supplements the Quality pillar of the Code of Practice for Statistics and the European Statistical System principles

of quality for statistical outputs.

Most of the data included comes from administrative sources which are used in the management of the Flying Start services. The data is dependent on local authorities maintaining accurate records but systems are well established and reliable. Supplementary data sourced from other national databases are also of high quality and considered reliable

Data for the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return is collected by Welsh Government directly from local authorities. Local authorities complete data collection forms based on data stored on their respective IT systems and return the completed forms to Welsh Government via Objective Connect, a secure web data transfer system.

Validation checks are performed by Welsh Government statisticians and queries referred to local authorities where necessary. While the Flying Start Monitoring Return has been validated, data from all other sources is requested. The statistical release is then drafted, signed off by senior statisticians and is published in line with statement on confidentiality and data access which is informed by the trustworthiness pillar contained in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The additional data collected for the Phase 2 expansion of the childcare element of Flying Start is also compiled by local authorities using data stored on their own IT systems. As 2023-24 was the first year of this expansion, some variation in the definitions used for uptake of childcare and the definition of a Welsh medium setting occurred. Around half of local authorities defined uptake of childcare as acceptance of an offer, whereas others used attendance at a childcare setting as the measure of acceptance. Similarly, there is variation across local authorities in how a Welsh medium setting is defined and the extent to which Welsh is used to constitute a Welsh medium setting. Work is underway to ensure a uniform definition is applied for future data collection.

Value

The purpose of the statistical release is to provide evidence for policy development; to allow local authorities to monitor and benchmark their service provision against all other local authorities in Wales; and to inform for the wider public about provision of the Flying Start programme. The annual statistical release also supports the Welsh Government's long term plan for health and social care: [A Healthier Wales](#).

The timeliness of the data provides the most recent update using reliable data. Making this information available in this form provides a single definitive source of data on the activity, uptake and provision of the Flying Start programme.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#)

2015.

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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