



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

# Flying Start: quality report

This report covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our statistics.

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# What are these statistics?

**Flying Start** is the Welsh Government Early Years programme 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 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 Flying Start programme

The main aspects of **Flying Start** are:

- free part-time childcare for 2 to 3-year-olds
- an enhanced health visiting service (where the health visitor caseload is capped at 110 children)
- access to **parenting support**
- access to Speech, Language and Communication support (previously described as Early Language Development).

These services are universally available to all children aged under 4 years and their families in the areas in which the programme runs.

A Flying Start requirement is that there must be one full time equivalent health visitor per 110 children aged under 4 in the target areas. This is to ensure

delivery of intensive support to Flying Start children and their families. The primary function of the Flying Start health visitor is to support the family in the home, assessing both the child (using an appropriate Welsh Government approved developmental assessment tool), and the family (in terms of high, medium and low risk). In some local authorities, midwives are employed as part of the core Flying Start team. Whether or not this is the case locally, Flying Start health visitors work closely with generic midwives working with Flying Start parents. Emphasis is placed on working with the most vulnerable groups including teenage parents, those who are victims of, or may be at risk of domestic abuse and pre/post-natal depression.

The core Flying Start childcare offer is that quality childcare is offered to parents of all eligible 2 to 3-year-olds for 2 ½ hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks. In addition, there should be at least 15 sessions of flexible provision for the family during the school holidays.

Flying Start complements the [Healthy Child Wales Programme](#).

## Parenting support

Every family with a Flying Start child must be offered formal parenting support at least on an annual basis. This can be in groups or one to one in the home with a mix of formal and informal support depending on need. In addition to the formal parenting offer, other parenting programmes may be delivered, such as informal parenting support, bespoke enhanced one-to-one sessions and informal drop-in sessions.

Structured formal parenting courses are defined as those with a structured curriculum and a set start and end date, as listed below (but note that decisions as to which courses to offer are made locally):

- Incredible Years: Parent and Babies Programme
- Incredible Years: Parents and Toddlers Programme
- Triple P: Standard
- Triple P: Stepping Stones
- Parents Plus Early Years Programme (PPEY)
- Parenting Positively
- Incredible Years: School Readiness Programme
- Family Links Nurturing Programme (FLNP)
- Incredible Years: Pre-school BASIC Parent Programme
- Solihull Approach Parenting Group
- Handling Children's Behaviour
- Kaleidoscope Play and learn
- Parents Early Education Programme (PEEP)
- Playing and Learning Strategies (PALS)

Structured informal parenting courses also have a structured curriculum and a set start and end date.

In both cases, a 'place' on a course is defined as one allocated to an individual parental figure. If two (or more) parental figures are allocated a place on a course, this would be recorded as two (or more) places. Any children attending with a parent for any reason would not be counted as a place.

The measure of 'take up' of course places is defined as the number of people who attended at the first session.

Bespoke enhanced distinct packages of support are defined as planned, time bound series of sessions, delivered on a one-to-one basis, that have been identified as a requirement via a specific referral from within the Flying Start programme in respect of parenting. Usually, such a package will last for a minimum of four dedicated sessions to a relevant family unit, delivered in the home or elsewhere.

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

## Flying Start evaluation

Since 2014, a series of reports from the National Evaluation of Flying Start have been published. A research report '**Qualitative Research with Flying Start Families: Wave 3 Report**' was published on 18 July 2018. It reports on a longitudinal research project which involved three waves of in-depth interviews with 72 families between 2015 and 2017, and aims to provide an insight into

families' engagement with and experience of family support services for those without access to the programme.

A research report '**Process evaluation of the phased expansion of Flying Start**' was published on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This report is an evaluation exploring the successes and challenges in the phased delivery of Flying Start expansion and the impacts on stakeholders and includes examples of good practice. This report recommended a standardised approach to monitoring data collection, following the same definitions across Wales to allow the comparison of data across local authorities for both offers and take-up.

## Local authority programme sizes

Note that, although every local authority in Wales has a Flying Start programme, they vary substantially in terms of the absolute numbers of children in receipt of services. Users should note the effect of this distribution on the statistics. Where a large absolute number and proportion of Flying Start children are concentrated in specific local authorities trends in these areas can have a disproportionate impact on the all-Wales figures.

Local authorities where the programme size is small, in terms of caseload, can see greater fluctuations from year to year. Many of the areas with small caseloads are rural where there may be additional challenges relating to access and distribution of services which may impact on patterns and trends.

## Sources of data

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, and the Coverage of Vaccination Evaluation Rapidly (COVER) report. Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates are used for population analysis.

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 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025 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.

## **Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return**

Welsh Government Knowledge and Analytical services (KAS) established routine data monitoring of the Flying Start programme in 2012 and early 2013 with the first data being collected for the financial year 2012-13. The information is collected three times a year from local authorities and includes data used to manage the programme.

This statistics in the annual release cover each complete financial year based on the final data collection of each year.

## National Community Child Health Database (NCCHD)

In the statistical release, the NCCHD is used to source data on the number of children born in Flying Start areas and for infant feeding.

The NCCHD is maintained by NHS Wales Informatics Services (NWIS) and was established in 2004. It consists of anonymised records for all children born, resident or treated in Wales and born after 1987. The database brings together data from local Community Child Health System databases which are held by local health boards (LHBs) and its main function is to provide an online record of a child's health and care from birth to leaving school age.

The infant feeding statistics presented in this statistical release is the proportion of babies resident in Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas who, at 10 days, are recorded as receiving any breast milk. This includes babies with a breastfeeding status of exclusive milk, combined milk feeding (predominantly breast), and combined milk feeding (partially breast). Babies who are exclusively breastfed are fed nothing other than breast milk and potentially water; babies who are recorded as combined milk feeding will have breast milk and artificial milk.

Note that analysis of NCCHD data is geography based so there will be a small number of children resident in these areas whose families have not taken up offers of Flying Start services and therefore are incorrectly counted as Flying Start children.

## Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

In the statistical release, the **PLASC** is used to source data on the number of children on maintained school rolls at age 3.

The PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by

all maintained schools in January each year. Schools record data on pupils and the school throughout the year in their Management Information System (MIS) software. This data is collated into an electronic PLASC return and submitted to the Welsh Government through DEWi (Data Exchange Wales Initiative), a secure online data transfer system developed by the Welsh Government. The returns are authorised by head teachers and validated by local authorities.

The percentage of 'Children on maintained school rolls at age 3' counts children who were aged 3 as of 31 August and also recorded on school rolls on PLASC in the following January. The numerator is calculated by counting the number of children recorded on PLASC with postcodes in Flying Start areas. The denominator counts the number of children recorded as being in receipt of Flying Start services on the NCCHD, whose resident postcode is in a Flying Start area as of the following January 31.

Note that analysis of PLASC data is geography based so there will be a small number of children resident in these areas whose families have not taken up offers of Flying Start services and therefore are incorrectly counted as Flying Start children.

## Child Measurement Programme

In the statistical release, the **Child Measurement Programme** is used to source data on the number of children living in Flying Start areas of healthy weight at ages 4 and 5.

The Child Measurement Programme for Wales is a surveillance programme set up in 2011 by Public Health Wales. The purpose is to undertake 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.

Prevalence rates (healthy (including a small number of under-weight children), overweight or obese) were calculated using the age and sex-specific body mass index (BMI) centiles calculated using the British 1990 growth reference (UK90) (from a method proposed by Cole et al (1995)). The body mass index (BMI) was calculated using a method proposed by Keys et al (1972). The following weight categories have been assigned:

- underweight: less than but not including 2nd centile
- healthy weight: 2nd centile up to but not including 85th centile
- overweight: 85th centile up to and not including 95th centile
- obese: 95th centile and above

Cole, T.J. et al (1995) Body mass index reference curves for the UK. Archives of Disease in Childhood, 73: 25-9. Cited in Dinsdale H, Ridler C, Ells L J. A simple guide to classifying body mass index in children. Oxford: National Obesity Observatory, 2011.

Keys, A. et al (1972) Indices of relative weight and obesity. Journal of Chronic Diseases, 025:329-343.

Public Health Wales combine weight categories for healthy and underweight so that there is access to counts and proportions of overweight and obesity together and separately.

Records are included in the Child Measurement Programme for Wales if they meet all of the following criteria:

- location of residence can be determined
- residence in Wales
- school located in Wales
- born in the period September 2017 to August 2018 for 2022/23 data
- sex is recorded

Eligible records are determined to be valid, and will be counted in the number measured, if they meet all of the following criteria:

- height measurement recorded and is not an implausible measurement
- weight measurement recorded and is not an implausible measurement
- consent not withdrawn
- measurement collected during the academic year 2022/23

The Child Measurement Programme was implemented in reception year across Wales for the first time during the 2011/12 academic year. As the programme was under development during this period, this first year is regarded as a transitional year.

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 from 2021/22 onwards.

Note that analysis of Child Measurement Programme data is geography based so there will be a small number of children resident in these areas whose families have not taken up offers of Flying Start services and therefore are incorrectly counted as Flying Start children.

## **Coverage of Vaccination Evaluation Rapidly (COVER) report**

In the statistical release, the **COVER report (Public Health Wales)** is used to source data on the number of children living in Flying Start areas who were fully immunised at age 4.

COVER reports are produced by Public Health Wales on a quarterly basis, and an annual report is also produced covering the April to March financial year. The reports detail uptake of the immunisations in the **UK routine childhood schedule (NHS Wales)** in children reaching key birthdays during the reporting quarter (or year for the annual COVER reports).

Immunisation statistics are calculated using data from the NCCHD which is updated once each quarter using the latest data that has been entered in regional Child Health Department databases. Immunisation data from the NCCHD is sent to Public Health Wales, where it is analysed using a standard statistical routine (based on the previously existing WAG KC51 report).

Percentage uptakes in the COVER reports are an indication of how many children resident in the Wales at age 4 during the financial year have been vaccinated in accordance with the UK routine schedule.

Data sourced from the COVER report is reliant on notifications of immunisations given (scheduled and unscheduled forms) being returned to local NHS Trust Child Health Offices and being entered into their database. Any data entered onto local Child Health Systems after the annual extract has been taken, would not be counted in the COVER report statistics.

COVER report data includes information for living children who are resident in Wales, and therefore includes children who are living in Wales but who are registered with GPs in England.

Note that analysis of COVER report data is geography based so there will be a small number of children resident in these areas whose families have not taken up offers of Flying Start services and therefore are incorrectly counted as Flying Start children.

## Population

Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates of population are used in this release. For 2023-24 the 2023 mid-year estimates have been used. The estimates are published on [StatsWales: local authority](#).

## Coverage

### Flying Start programme coverage

Flying Start targets the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. The programme has been targeted to areas according to measures of relative deprivation including the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), free school meals and the proportions of children aged under 4 years living in households in receipt of income related benefits.

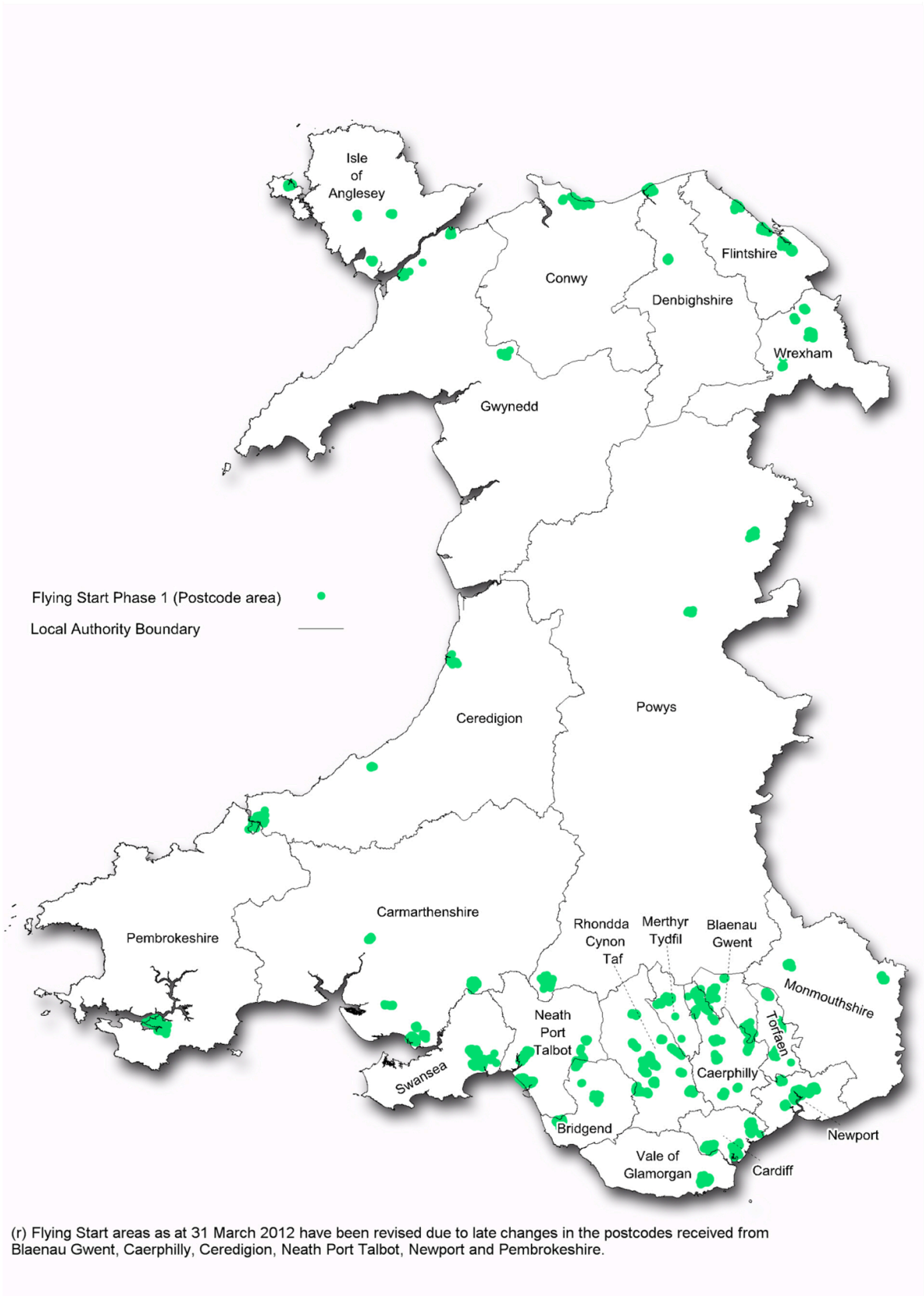
## **Map 1: Location of Flying Start areas at programme inception (as at 31 March 2012)**

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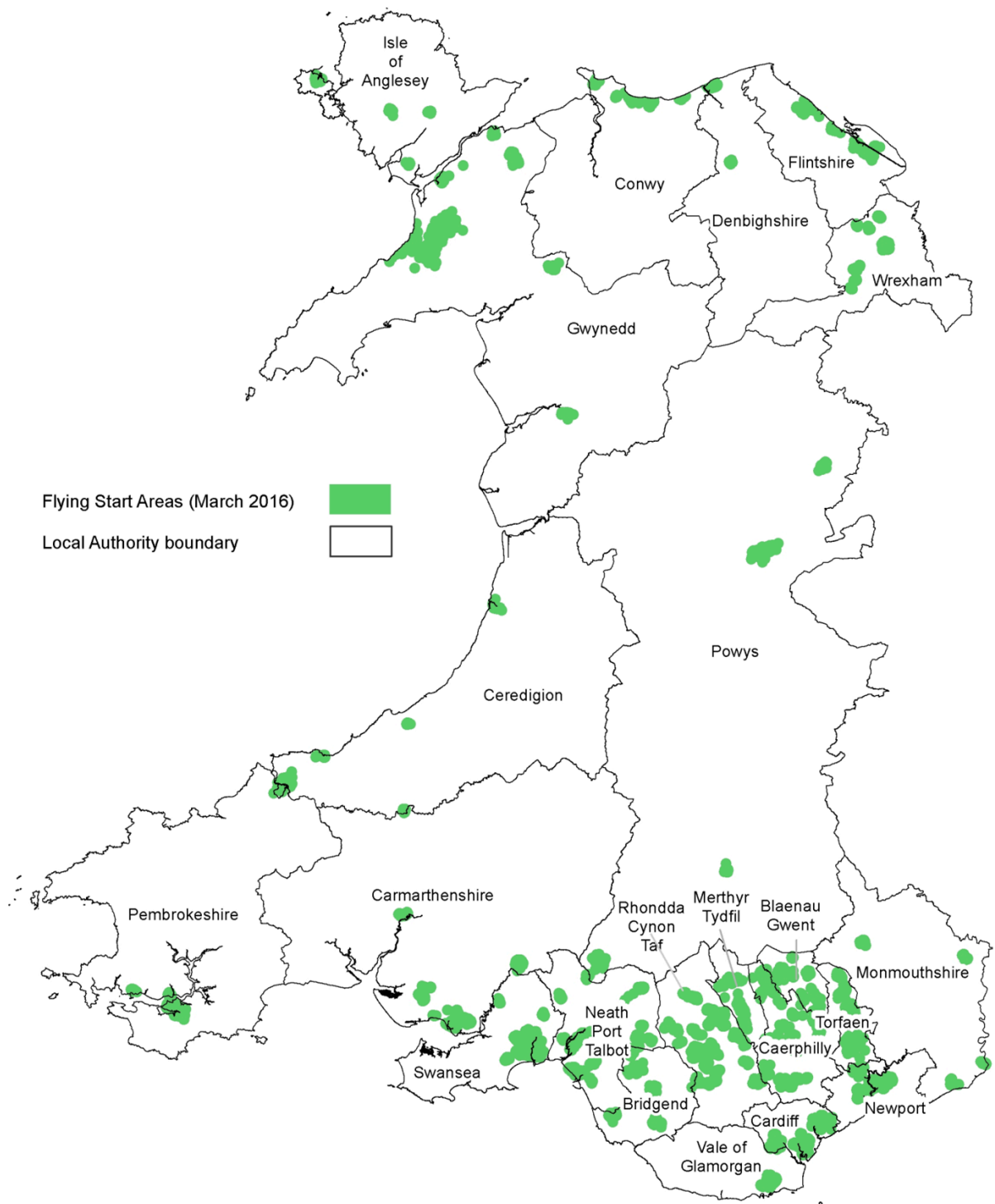


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Map 1 shows the location of Flying Start areas at the start of the programme in March 2012. The areas were defined by postcodes provided to Welsh Government by Flying Start coordinators. In a small number of postcodes not all of the dwellings within the area are included in the programme.

A small expansion of the programme into additional areas occurred in 2012-13 but the major expansion to date was during 2013-14 and 2014-15. The expectation was that the number of children benefitting from the programme by the end of 2015-16 would be 36,000, but this figure was met by the end of 2014-15.

**Map 2: Location of current Flying Start areas (as at 31 March 2020, unchanged from 2016)**



Flying Start Areas (March 2016)   
 Local Authority boundary

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Map 2 shows the location of current Flying Start areas, which have remained unchanged since 2016. Data is presented for Flying Start areas as defined in that point of time, where possible. This means that for example, data for 2012-13 will be based on a slightly different geographic area to 2019-20 data.

Management data has been collected for some aspects of the programme separately for pre-expansion areas and for expansion areas. Where a split is not available the addition of the developing areas into the statistics should be considered when interpreting the data.

## Data coverage

The Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return submitted by local authorities is management information which has full coverage of children receiving Flying Start Services.

The NCCHD records all children born, resident or treated in Wales after 1987. Data on breastfeeding at 10 days is collected through the Healthy Child Wales Programme. If a parent does not accept a health visitor contact at 10 days then data for that child's breastfeeding status will not be recorded. Quarterly breastfeeding data is published by the Welsh Government and there has been over 90% coverage since April-June 2015 in the large majority of months.

The PLASC has full coverage of all children in maintained schools in Wales.

## Published Statistics on Flying Start

**A full annual statistical release and all termly updates are published through the Welsh Government website. The latest annual release is published in an html formatted summary with more detailed data included**

in [StatsWales tables](#).

A number of other outputs may complement users of the Flying Start statistical release. These include:

- [Healthy Child Wales Programme](#)
- [maternity and births](#)
- [breastfeeding \(StatsWales\)](#)
- [immunisation \(StatsWales\)](#)
- [Child Measurement Programme \(Public Health Wales\)](#)
- [education data \(StatsWales\)](#)

## What are the potential uses of these statistics?

These statistics will be used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to Ministers
- to inform debate in the Welsh Parliament and beyond
- to make publicly available data on Flying Start in Wales
- monitoring service delivery
- policy development

## Who are the potential users of this data?

The main users are:

- ministers, members of the Welsh Parliament, and the Members Research Service in the Welsh Parliament
- NHS organisations including health boards and Public Health Wales
- Local Flying Start teams

- the Department for Health and Social Services in the Welsh Government
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies

If you are a user and do not feel the above list adequately covers you, or if you would like to be added to our circulation list, please let us know by e-mailing [stats.healthinfo@gov.wales](mailto:stats.healthinfo@gov.wales).

## Strengths and limitations of the data

### Strengths

- The outputs provide a statistical overview of the Flying Start programme in Wales and the levels of service provision in each local authority.
- Data has excellent coverage and should cover all children living in Flying Start areas in Wales.
- Outputs have a clear focus on Wales and have been developed to meet the internal and external user need in Wales. These releases aim to inform Welsh Government policy on the planning and delivery of Flying Start services.
- The information is processed and published regularly and in an ordered manner to enable users to see the statistics when they are current and of greatest interest.
- Efficient use has been made of administrative data sources to produce outputs in.
- Long established databases such as the National Community Child Health Database and Pupil Level Annual School Census have been utilised to provide additional insight into the Flying Start programme.
- **Detailed statistics are provided in StatsWales tables** published alongside

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the html formatted statistical release.

## Limitations

- Data is available at local authority level but is not published at any lower aggregation.
- Data from the NCCHD, PLASC, the COVER report and the Child Measurement Programme are based on geographic boundaries. This means that any child who lives in a Flying Start area will be counted, rather than children who specifically receive Flying Start services. In practice, this difference will be small.
- Flying Start is part of a devolved policy area and different governments can therefore make different policy decisions about programmes in this area. Therefore, comparisons between other UK countries are not possible.

## Data processing cycle

### Data collection

Data for the Welsh Government Flying Start Data Monitoring Return is collected by Welsh Government directly from local authorities. Excel-based data collection forms are issued by Welsh Government 2-3 weeks after the end of Term 1 and Term 3. Local authorities complete the 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. These validation checks will include steps such as:



- checking all data fields are populated
- flagging data where caseload caps are exceeded by 10%
- ensuring cumulative counts of each data field increases between Term 1 and Term 3
- highlighting where the percentage of new offers is 10% greater than the number eligible children
- making sure the take-up of childcare offers is lower than or equal to the number of offers made
- checking for any negative numbers

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 \(UK Statistics Authority\)](#).

Publication will usually occur in summer/autumn, apart from the 2019-20 publication which was delayed until February 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statistics are currently published in an html webpage with brief analysis and commentary, in addition to [supplementary summary tables published on StatsWales](#).

## Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic will have affected the services offered through the Flying Start Programme and data may not have been recorded as accurately as it had been prior to the pandemic as resources were severely impacted. While the majority of 2019-20 was unaffected by the pandemic, the first national lockdown came in March 2020, therefore services offered and data collected for that month has been affected in various ways including:

- some parenting and SLC programmes were not able to be completed
- attendance for childcare sessions was reduced from parent choices and later in the month, the enforced lockdown
- some health visitors were redeployed to different roles to help with the pandemic
- some Flying Start staff would have been self-isolating which affected the service offered
- some contacts recorded as face-to-face contacts may have taken place over the phone or virtually
- no home visits or clinics were allowed from the week commencing 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020
- general IT issues in the local authority which were not a priority to resolve during the early stages of the pandemic

Data from 2020-21 and 2021-22 were also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In years prior to the pandemic, in general only face-to-face contacts were recorded as Flying Start contacts. Welsh Government guidance issued in June 2021 stated that, as a general rule any targeted activity conducted via different means during the pandemic (i.e. virtual contacts through Skype or Whatsapp) should be recorded in the same way as face-to-face contacts were recorded previously. The guidance also stated that local authorities should exercise their professional judgement when determining if a virtual contact was meaningful enough to be recorded.

Local authorities have provided additional feedback on how services were affected in 2021-22, and these included:

- some parenting and speech, language and communication (SLC) programmes were either not run or not able to be completed
- some childcare sessions had low attendance due to continued parental concern over COVID-19
- some parents chose not to take-up childcare which they may have accepted prior to the pandemic

- some Flying Start staff would have been self-isolating, shielding or unwell which affected the service offered
- some contacts recorded as face-to-face contacts may have taken place over the phone or virtually.

These factors need to be considered when using data for 2021-22. Services in 2022-23 were also affected by the pandemic, however returned to usual operating in 2023-24. Whilst the enforced restrictions and adaptations to service delivery seen in 2021-22 were not seen in 2022-23, there may still have been some disruption caused by localised outbreaks of the virus. Furthermore, some of the virtual delivery of Parenting courses, SLC and health visitor services was retained as part of programme delivery for 2022-23 either due to personal choice or because it was deemed to be an effective means of reaching some families depending on individual circumstances. Caution is therefore advised when comparing data from 2022-23 with pre-pandemic figures.

## 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.

## Disclosure and confidentiality

The data collected and published by Welsh Government is at aggregated local authority and national level, and there is minimal risk of disclosing information about any individual. Checks are still performed and suppression of small

numbers in specific will take place if required.

No personal information pertaining to details such as first name, surname or date of birth are received by Welsh Government in this dataset.

## Symbols and rounding conventions

Where figures have been rounded there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total. The following symbols are used in the tables:

- .. The data item is not available
- . The data item is not applicable
- The data item is not exactly zero, but estimated as zero or less than half the final digit shown
- \* The data item is disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication

## Quality information

### 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.

## Accessibility

The statistics are published in an accessible, orderly, pre-announced manner on the Welsh Government website at 9:30am on the day of publication. An RSS feed alerts registered users to this publication. Simultaneously the releases are also published on the National Statistics Publication Hub.

[Statistical releases are publicised on X](#) and all releases are available to download for free.

From 2021 the statistical release is published in html format. Alt text is provided for all charts and tables so that they can be read with a screen-reader.

Data tables are published in Excel and linked to the statistical release page.

Plain English is used in our outputs as much as possible and all outputs adhere to the Welsh Government's [accessibility policy](#).

All our webpage headlines and html outputs are published in Welsh and English.

## Dissemination

Given the strengths and limitations listed above, Flying Start data are of sufficient quality to justify publication. **A statistical release** is published with high level summaries and linked to detailed **StatsWales tables**.

## Evaluation

We always welcome feedback on any of our statistics. If you would like to make any comments, please e-mail us at [stats.healthinfo@gov.wales](mailto:stats.healthinfo@gov.wales)

Produced by the Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government

Last reviewed: November 2024

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