



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Flying Start outreach: guidance for local authorities

Explains how to support those living outside a Flying Start area.

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# About this Guidance

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age, living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales.

The core elements of the programme are:

- Funded quality part-time childcare for 2–3-year-olds
- An enhanced Health Visiting Service
- Access to parenting support
- Support for speech, language, and communication

Flying Start was established in 2007 as a geographically targeted community-based programme. This model of intervention can reduce the stigma for families in accessing social and health care services, it supports increased socialisation and creates a sense of community amongst participants. It also allows infrastructures and the workforce to be developed within communities which promotes the co-location of services and multi-agency teams. This supports collaborative working and allows families to benefit from a multi-agency response to their individual needs.

Since 2012 local authorities have been able to use a small percentage of their funding allocations to provide an outreach service to children and their families identified to be in need but who are living outside Flying Start defined areas[1]. This has enabled local authorities to have some flexibility within the programme.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with Welsh Government guidance relating to Flying Start. These can be found at: [Flying Start: guidance | GOV.WALES](#)

**Consultation with local authority Flying Start Teams has taken place during the development of this guidance.**

[1] In this guidance a Flying Start area is an area that receives all four components of the Flying Start Programme.

## **Audience**

This Guidance is intended primarily for those responsible for delivering, planning, and managing Flying Start Services within local authorities. It will however be of interest to other professionals working with families including Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists and Families First teams who may identify children in need of outreach services.

## **Introduction**

Outreach provides an integrated approach to family support services utilising the structures and systems delivered by Flying Start. Outreach funding should provide the flexibility to provide some or all of the core elements of the Flying Start programme to children and their families who have been identified as being in need but living outside a Flying Start area.

Each local authority is allocated a CAP which is the target number of children (beneficiaries) they are expected to reach through their core Flying Start programme and Flying Start Expansion. Welsh Government funding is allocated on a per child basis.

Since 2012 local authorities have been supporting a small percentage of children and their families living outside defined Flying Start areas. Initially this

provision was capped at 2.5% of the funding allocated at that time. In 2017 this was increased to 5% of Flying Start revenue and in 2018 it was increased again to 10% where it has remained. Each local authority has adopted different ways of providing outreach services in accordance with the unique needs of the families that live within specific communities or because they have assessed needs.

In 2021 the Programme for Government committed the Welsh Government to continue support for its flagship Flying Start programme. And, in line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, this commitment was extended to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision.

As part of the expansion of Flying Start services, which started in September 2022, guidance was issued to local authorities which enabled them to reach up to 25% of their expansion targets via outreach. Increasing the proportion of services that could be delivered via outreach enables support to reach a greater number of children living outside of traditional Flying Start areas, including those living in rural deprivation. As expansion targets are met, the numbers accessing Flying Start childcare via this route may diminish.

A change to the existing financial limits for outreach services prescribed was formalised in this guidance document to regularise the situation across Wales and in order to provide consistency and clarity across core and expansion services.

## Key Principles

Flying Start outreach can be delivered to:

- Children of families/carers moving out of a Flying Start area.

- Children of families/carers living outside Flying Start areas but who are assessed to be in need.
  - Communities of interest
  - Children who have been identified as medium/high need of support and require access to Welsh Language provision.
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- Children under 4 years of age can have access to all, or some, elements of Flying Start services, through outreach funding, if they have an identified need and the resources are available.
  - It is not a requirement of outreach that children must access all 4 elements of the Flying Start core programme. However, in order for those in receipt of outreach services to count as a 'Flying Start beneficiary families will need to have received a Flying Start Health programme contact as part of the outreach offer or be identified as medium/high need for Flying Start Expansion.
  - Outreach funding should be prioritised for those children who are identified as being in need of support. It is not universal provision.
  - Local Authorities should utilise a family assessment tool, such as the JAFF (Joint Assessment Family Framework) when agencies are referring children and their families for outreach which then should be considered at a multi-agency resource panel meeting to identify if children are eligible for outreach funding. However, the Flying Start Manager should have autonomy to agree interim arrangements subject to review within 6 weeks to prevent delay in services being provided.
  - A review timetable should be set at regular intervals (at least termly) to determine if the outreach service is still required or whether a pathway to

engage the family with another agency exists. Outreach can be a limited service although it can continue until the child is 4 years or when they make the transition to early years education. Provision needs to be family focused and subject to individual needs.

- Flying Start is an early intervention and prevention programme. Funding, including for outreach, must not be utilised to fund services which the local authority has a statutory obligation/duty to provide.
- Outreach services are not intended to replace the existing targeting methodology which provides all four elements of Flying Start to eligible families living in disadvantaged communities.

## Objectives of Outreach

The objectives of Outreach are to:

- Extend the reach of Flying Start to families and/or specific community groups of children with identified need living in non-Flying Start areas.
- Provide continuity of support to children and families moving out of Flying Start areas, for whom there needs to be continuity of provision before transitioning to other services or provision.
- Enable local authorities to increase the coverage of their Flying Start services during periods of demographic change, such as fluctuating birth rates, which may result in fewer eligible children living in recognised Flying Start areas.

# Funding

Local authorities are now able to deliver outreach services to a quarter (25%) of their overall local targets (CAP).

For example, if a local authority has a target (CAP for both Phase 1 and Phase 2) of 800 children then a maximum of 200 of this target could be made up of children in receipt of outreach services.

Local authorities should prioritise reaching their targets (CAP) via traditional geographic targeting methodologies and should consider outreach once these have been exhausted.

## Expansion of Flying Start Childcare

As expansion towards universal provision of Flying Start childcare continues and targets are met, the numbers accessing Flying Start childcare via this route may diminish. Whilst we recognise that the need for Flying Start childcare will reduce as expansion progresses, outreach can and should still be used to access the remaining components of the programme for those families in need.

## Process

### What should be included in Flying Start Delivery Plans?

- The local authority's policy on how outreach funding will be allocated and managed against the criteria set below.
- How the local authority will ensure that requests/referrals for outreach are managed in a fair and transparent way. To include what multi-agency



process is in place to assess referrals and how agreement is reached about funding support packages.

- How Flying Start teams will ensure effective communication with Families First Coordinators and other agencies to ensure outreach funding is available to the most disadvantaged families across the local authority; and
- How outreach funding is being utilised in the most effective way to satisfy the needs of the most disadvantaged children in the local authority.

## **Criteria for how outreach funding can be utilised.**

Outreach funding can be provided in the following circumstances:

### **Children of families/carers moving out of Flying Start areas.**

- Outreach funding can be used to ensure continuity of service and necessary support to children who are identified (through local family assessment tools and panels) as being in need of support and who have been in receipt of Flying Start services but are moving out of Flying Start areas.
- The Flying Start Manager should be able to agree initial transitional arrangements to prevent delay in the child/family being able to receive support. A multiagency review/panel meeting should then be held within 6 weeks.

### **Children of families/carers living outside Flying Start areas.**

- As part of a tailored package of support, referrals can be made to request individual Flying Start entitlements for any child with identified need within the local authority aged under 4 years of age. Referrals can be made by Families First Coordinators, Health Visitors, local authority Departments, or other agencies detailing the gap in resource/intervention from any other

statutory or grant funded service and why they should receive a Flying Start outreach service.

- Childcare spaces should be offered on a needs basis via outreach if commissioned childcare spaces are unallocated on a long-term basis.
- Reviews to be held at least termly.

## **Communities of Interest**

- Flying Start teams can utilise their outreach funding to target children from specific groups or communities of interest within their local authority who have distinct needs. These might include, for example: children and families who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences or domestic abuse; refugees and asylum seekers; traveller communities; homeless families; children and families affected by incarceration.
- Flying Start teams have the autonomy to decide which groups in their local authority would benefit most from which elements of Flying Start. Delivery Plans must include which 'Community of Interest' the local authority is targeting, and the outcomes they expect to see realised from the investment.
- Review's to be held at least termly.

## **How referrals should be made**

The request for services should be made through a family assessment tool such as the JAFF framework, or similar process to the Flying Start Manager or nominated representative.

It is at the discretion of the Flying Start Manager, or nominated representative, as to whether to commit the funds and resources to provide the support required.

The Flying Start Manager, or nominated representative, should work closely with the Families First Coordinator, or nominated representative, to confirm the services that will be provided and whether there is a pathway for Families First to support the family.

Consideration must also be given to the needs of the whole family and suitable services provided through the Families First strategically commissioned projects. The Flying Start element should be part of a suite of support provided for the family as a whole whenever possible and if applicable.

## **Collaboration**

Flying Start teams will be working collaboratively with other early years, family and childcare initiatives including Families First to ensure that families across Wales are able to benefit from all the available resources across programmes. This is particularly important in the commissioning of outreach services.

The aim should be to achieve increased programme alignment and make effective use of funding to better meet local needs and support the most vulnerable people in our society.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Flying Start teams must collate data locally to record the number of children who are benefiting from outreach support and how outreach funding is being spent.

In addition, case studies demonstrating the impact of outreach funding should be collated to include within the Welsh Government funding monitoring process.

Welsh Government Account Managers will monitor the delivery of outreach as part of the regular monitoring arrangements.

It is recommended that local authorities regularly review their outreach policy and delivery to ensure funding is being utilised in the most effective way to satisfy the needs of the most disadvantaged children within individual local authorities. This process should include a review of outcomes for families in receipt of outreach funding.

## Summary

Outreach support should provide Flying Start Teams with the flexibility to provide elements of the Flying Start programme to additional children and families that are living outside Flying Start geographical areas but who have been assessed to be at medium/high need.

Local Authorities that wish to deviate from this guidance should seek approval from their designated Account Manager within Welsh Government.

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