



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Introduction of the Childcare Funding (Wales) Bill
DATE 16 April 2018
BY Huw Irranca Davies AM, Minister for Children and Social Care

The Childcare Funding (Wales) Bill has today been introduced to the National Assembly for Wales, together with its explanatory memorandum and regulatory impact assessment.

The cost of childcare is a major concern for working parents; it can cause a drain on household finances and the family's quality of life. We have listened to these concerns and to parents who say these costs are acting as a barrier, preventing them from returning to work or progressing in work.

The Welsh Government is introducing our Childcare Offer, providing 30 hours of government-funded education and childcare for the working parents of three and four-year-olds for 48 weeks a year.

I am keen to establish a national system for managing applications and for making the necessary eligibility checks. This Bill will enable us to achieve this. It provides Welsh Ministers with the power to provide funding for childcare for eligible three and four-year-old children of working parents and to make regulations setting out the arrangements for administering and operating such funding.

The Bill will enable Welsh Ministers to secure access to information which is pertinent to making a decision about a person's eligibility for the funding. In the main, this information is held by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Regulations made under the Bill will specify the information which applicants will need to provide in support of their claim for childcare funding and will explain how applications are to be made. Penalties and sanctions to be imposed, in the event that applicants provide false, misleading or dishonest information or should any of the sensitive information provided by third parties be disclosed unlawfully, will also be specified in regulations under the Bill. The

Bill will also make it possible for the Welsh Ministers to establish arrangements whereby applicants will be able to ask for decisions in respect of their eligibility or penalties to be reviewed.

Subject to the Bill being passed, it is envisaged that administration of the scheme will be carried out by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs who will accept applications and check eligibility for the Welsh Childcare Offer.

This Bill will enable a technical solution to the management and processing of applications for the Childcare Offer, reducing some of the administrative and time burden upon parents and local authorities.

I will make an oral statement about the Bill tomorrow.