# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Completion of Phase One Expansion of Flying Start** |
| **DATE**  | **13 June 2023** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services**  |

We are committed to continuing our support for our flagship Flying Start programme and – in line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru – we are delivering a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision.

I am pleased to inform Members about the successful completion of Phase one of the expansion of the Flying Start programme.

The first phase, which began in September 2022, aimed to deliver an increased provision of all four elements of the Flying Start programme to an additional 2,500 children aged 0 to four. This would mean more children would benefit from the support of Flying Start, including access to enhanced health visiting, support for speech, language and communication, parenting support and 12.5 hours of free childcare for two to three-year-olds.

Preliminary data from local authorities suggests we have exceeded our aim. At the end of March 2023, 3,178 children had been reached through this first phase. This included 772 children who have been offered a childcare place. The number of Welsh-medium childcare places taken up has tripled.

The phase one expansion has now been amalgamated into the core Flying Start programme. This means the overall Flying Start target is to deliver services to 38,500 children a year.

Together with the Plaid Cymru Designated Member Sian Gwenllian, I want to thank our local authority, NHS and childcare sector for all their work to extend Flying Start services and to provide high-quality provision in some of our most disadvantaged communities. We will celebrate this partnership working and share best practice at the Supporting Families, Parents and Children Conference on 14 June.

Phase two began in April 2023 and over the next two years we will be investing £46m in extending Flying Start childcare. We expect to support more than 9,500 extra two-year-olds across Wales to access quality Flying Start childcare during this phase. I will keep Members of the Senedd updated with further progress.