# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Flying Start Childcare Expansion Achieves Delivery Target 2023-24** |
| **DATE** | **12 February 2024** |
| **BY** | **Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Social Services** |

I wrote to Members in June 2023 to provide an update about our commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision, in line with the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru.

Phase 2 of the expansion of early years provision began in April 2023. During this phase (2023-24 and 2024-25) we are investing £46m in extending Flying Start childcare and expect to support more than 9,500 extra two-year-olds across Wales to access quality Flying Start childcare.

I am delighted to inform Members, the preliminary data from local authorities indicates we have achieved our delivery target of offering an additional 4,500 childcare places for the Flying Start childcare expansion during 2023-24. More than 700 childcare places have been taken up in a Welsh-medium setting.

These are significant achievements which demonstrate our commitment to giving every child in Wales the best possible start in life. Flying Start childcare is a vital service, which helps children to learn, grow and thrive. Through our Phase 2 expansion of the provision of Flying Start childcare, we will continue to reach more families who can benefit from this offer and making a positive difference to their lives.

Together with the Plaid Cymru Designated Member, Sian Gwenllian, I want to thank colleagues across the sector including local authorities, the NHS and childcare providers for all their hard work to extend high quality Flying Start childcare in some of our most disadvantaged communities. We will continue to work closely with local authorities, childcare providers and other partners to ensure the quality and sustainability of Flying Start childcare.

I will keep Members of the Senedd updated about further progress.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.