

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	20 th August 2019
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Service Area	Community Wellbeing
Committee Date	2 nd September 2019

To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Impact Of Flying Start And Registered Education Providers On Outcomes In Maintained Schools

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with elected members and colleagues the performance outcomes of the Flying Start programme 2018-19 within Merthyr Tydfil and where possible put this into the context of non-Flying Start, Cwm Taf or national performance data.
- 1.2 The health indicators continue to be challenging and impact on the long-term development and health related outcomes of our communities and the impact these issues can have on future achievement in life and within education. It is recognised that these needs cannot be addressed through a single programme and many are related to the wider poverty agenda and require a culture shift across communities.
- 1.3 To provide early information on the work underway to develop a vulnerability profile for 0-4years alongside the recent review of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) data which could with Welsh Government (WG) approval assist to shape future targeting of Flying Start services in the context of a geographical versus needs led approach.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The content of this report is discussed and noted.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Flying Start is a Welsh Government funded early intervention child poverty programme and has been available in Merthyr Tydfil since 2007- 2008. Flying Start is a geographically targeted programme aimed at children 0-47 months and their families. There are four core entitlements including: funded part time childcare for 2-3 year olds; an enhanced health visiting service, access to parenting support and access to Early Language Development support. Flying Start locally also offers a number of other elements in response to identified needs including family support and targeted midwifery services. Across Wales, Merthyr Tydfil has the highest percentage of its population (40%) with access to Flying Start with a cap figure of 1204 children. In total 1,393 children benefitted from the programme over the year out of a population of 2,996.
- 3.2 Developments in neuroscience alongside research such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) has identified the first 1,000 days of a child's life from 'the womb' through to a child's 2nd birthday as a critical period that sets the life path for a person's personal and intellectual development as well as their lifelong health and wellbeing trajectory.
- 3.3 Flying Start is geographically targeted at the most disadvantaged areas in Wales and was originally available in three areas based on WIMD data and school catchment. The programme expanded in 2012/13 utilising income benefit household data and moved into an additional nine LSOA whilst keeping original catchment areas. The Welsh Government has allowed a small number of children (16) living outside of geographically targeted areas access to Flying Start services. The approach taken to outreach locally is to continue to offer Flying Start to those high need families who move outside of the area. This report seeks to outline two areas of work that will influence future targeting of services; the development of a vulnerability profile and newly published LSOA data.
- 3.4 Whilst this report enables comparisons against nationally published performance data for 2018/19, both local data and associated health data have also been provided to illustrate some of the challenges within the population and faced by services.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

4.1 Health

- 4.1.1 A core component of the Flying Start programme is an enhanced Health Visiting service.
The local authority commissions with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) for 10.6 Health Visitors, a 0.4 team leader, plus 3.6 community nursery nurses. During 2017-18, 1231 children were allocated to Health Visitor caseloads, this represented an increase in a case load of 25 children on the previous year.
- 4.1.2 The wider Health team engagement with families (face to face contacts) increased slightly during 2017/18 to 8,350 (1.5 per child) and Merthyr Tydfil was one of only 10 authorities across Wales where engagements did not decrease.

However, in 2017-18 engagements by Health Visitors decreased from 6.1 contacts per child to 5.3 contacts. These figures for Health Visitors and the wider health team ranked Merthyr Tydfil as 6th and 12th in Wales respectively.

- 4.1.3 Live births across Merthyr Tydfil (711) decreased in 2016 by 32, however of the births 41% (288) were in a Flying Start area. A healthy birth weight is identified nationally as being above 2500 grams. Merthyr Tydfil has seen this low birth weight indicator remain stubbornly high across both Flying Start (24 <2500g) and non-Flying Start (49 <2500g) areas. In 2016, children born below a healthy birth weight was 6.1% compared to 5.4% for Wales.
- 4.1.4 In 2016 children receiving breast milk at 10 days old for Merthyr Tydfil was identified as 18% in Flying Start areas and 32% in non- Flying Start areas. This placed Merthyr Tydfil well below the Welsh average for both indicators which are 34% and 50% respectively. The data published by WG relates to 2016 however more up to date data is available locally for Flying Start areas. This data demonstrated an improving picture across all three breastfeeding indicators (10 days, 6 weeks and 6 months following birth) during 2017.
- 4.1.5 The percentage of children fully immunised by their 4th birthday was 91% in Merthyr Tydfil, ranking Merthyr Tydfil as joint 1st in Wales and 6% above the Welsh average. The performance is largely due to the 3% improvement in Flying Start areas during 2016.
- 4.1.6 Children having a healthy weight are measured as part of the child measurement programme for all children at age 4-5 years. In 2016-17, 67% of children in Merthyr Tydfil had a healthy weight compared to the Welsh average of 72%. During this period 65.4% of Flying Start children were measured as having a healthy weight compared to non-Flying Start children (67.8%).
- 4.1.7 Closely related to both the healthy weight and breast-feeding indicators is the prevalence of dental caries (decayed, missing or filled teeth) encountered by children by the age of five years across Merthyr Tydfil. In 2014/15 this was 56.5% compared to a Welsh average of 34.2%.

4.2 Childcare and Education

- 4.2.1 The number of families offered childcare in 2017/18 was 333 (99%) with 322 (97%) families taking this up. When comparing the take up of childcare Merthyr Tydfil (17/18) was ranked as 2nd in Wales and significantly above the Welsh average of 87%.
- 4.2.2 The percentage of children both Flying Start (100%) and non-Flying Start (96%) on a school roll in 2017/18 placed the LA overall (98%) in joint 2nd in Wales alongside Swansea and Vale of Glamorgan.
- 4.2.3 It should be noted that the data collection for this statistic only counts children who were aged three as at the 31st August and were recorded on a school roll the following January.
- 4.2.4 Attendance at childcare sessions (83%) is not reported nationally and is therefore a local indicator without any comparison to other local authorities. This indicator has remained static for the past three years, and alongside this the number of unfilled spaces (9%) remained static for 2017/18.

4.3 Foundation Phase Outcomes

4.3.1 During 2017/18 324 children (92% of all children) attended childcare and received initial and final assessments which were included in the FPP analysis.

4.3.2 In 2017-18, 52% of children achieved Outcome level 1 in all 4 areas of development at final assessment. When including vulnerable groups (ALN & EAL) this figure decreased to 45%.

4.3.3 The Foundation Phase Profile compact is made up of individual components and analysis of performance against each component clearly identified that children's maths and language skills fell behind the other areas of development on both entry and exit assessments. The outcomes for each individual component are identified below:

- Personal & Social Development, Wellbeing & Cultural Diversity – 46% of children achieved expected outcomes (Gold or above) at initial assessment and 79% of children achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
- Language, Literacy & Communication Skills – 33% of children achieved expected outcomes (Gold or above) at initial assessment and 69% of children achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
- Mathematical Development – 13% of children achieved expected outcomes (Gold or above) at initial assessment and 52% of children achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.
- Physical Development – 51% of children achieved expected outcomes (Gold or above) at initial assessment and 81% of children achieved expected outcomes (Outcome 1 or above) at final assessment.

5.0 **WHERE WE ARE NOW**

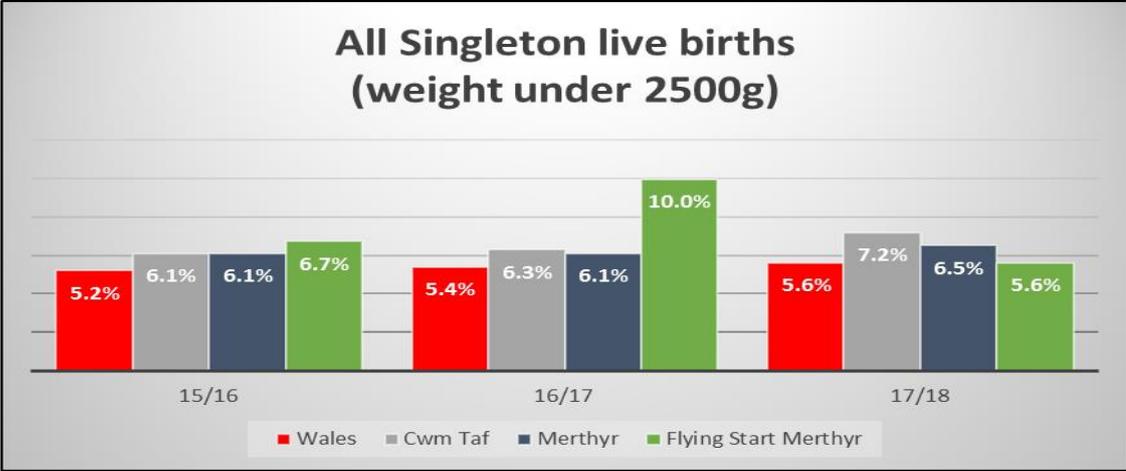
5.1 Health

5.1.1 The national performance data identifies that during 2018/19, 1190 children were allocated to Health Visitor caseloads. This represents a decrease of 41 children on the previous year.

5.1.2 Wider Health team engagement with families (face to face contacts) decreased significantly during 2018/19 to 6169 (-30%) this equates to a decrease from 1.5 to 1.3 contacts per child on the caseload. Additionally, during 2018-19, there has been a decrease in engagements by health visitors from 5.3 contacts per child to 3.9 contacts per child on caseloads. These decreases are concerning but can in part be attributed to three vacant Health Visitor caseloads for periods of approximately four months plus sporadic Community Nursery Nurse vacancies during the year. This has dropped Merthyr Tydfil to joint 14th and Joint 18th respectively

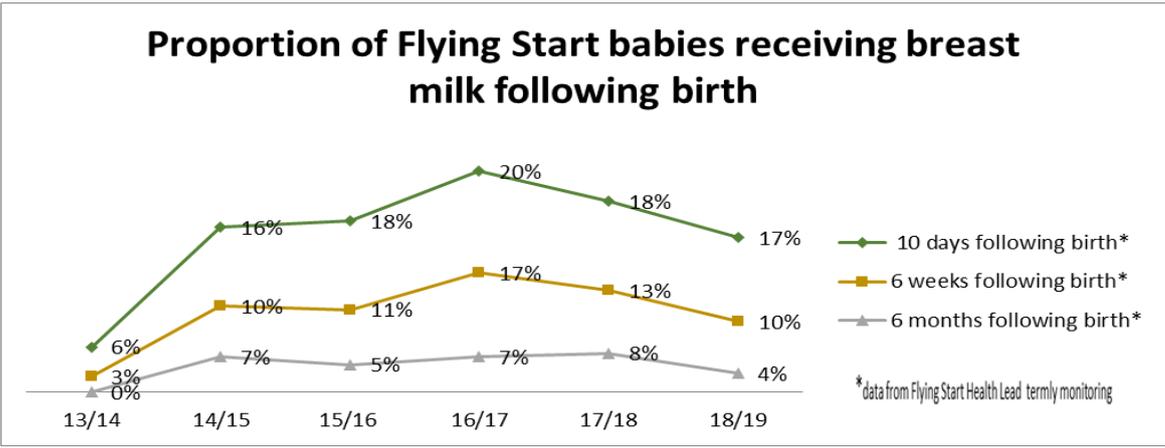
5.1.3 Live births across Merthyr Tydfil again decreased slightly in 2017/18 to 707; however, of the births 40% (283) were in a Flying Start area, which remains consistent with the allocated population percentage for the programme.

5.1.4 A healthy birth weight is identified as being above 2500 grams. Merthyr Tydfil has seen this low birth weight indicator remain stubbornly higher than the Welsh average as identified below. However according to local data provided by Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, in 2017/18 levels have improved in Flying Start areas to equal the Welsh average of 5.6%.

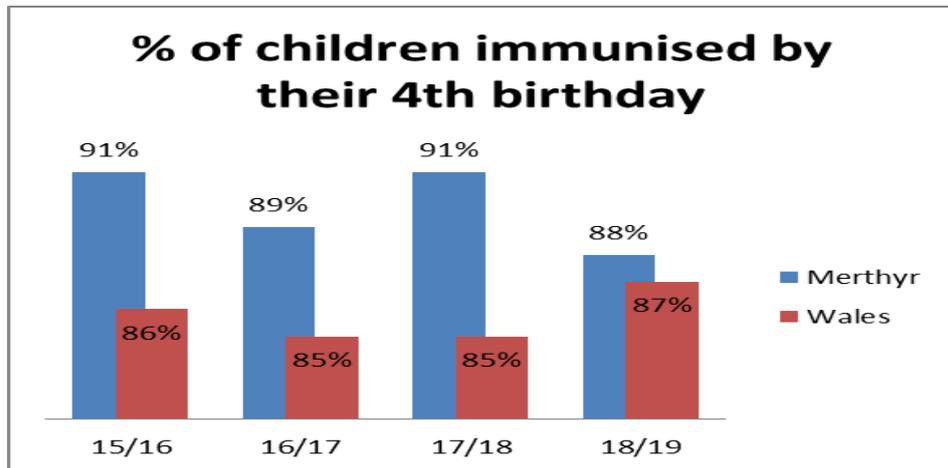


5.1.5 In 2017, according to the national stats release for Flying Start children receiving breast milk at 10 days old was identified as 20% in Flying Start areas and 29% in non-Flying Start areas. This demonstrated an improving picture in Flying Start areas of 2% in comparison to the previous year but remains well below the Welsh average, which is 35% and 51% respectively.

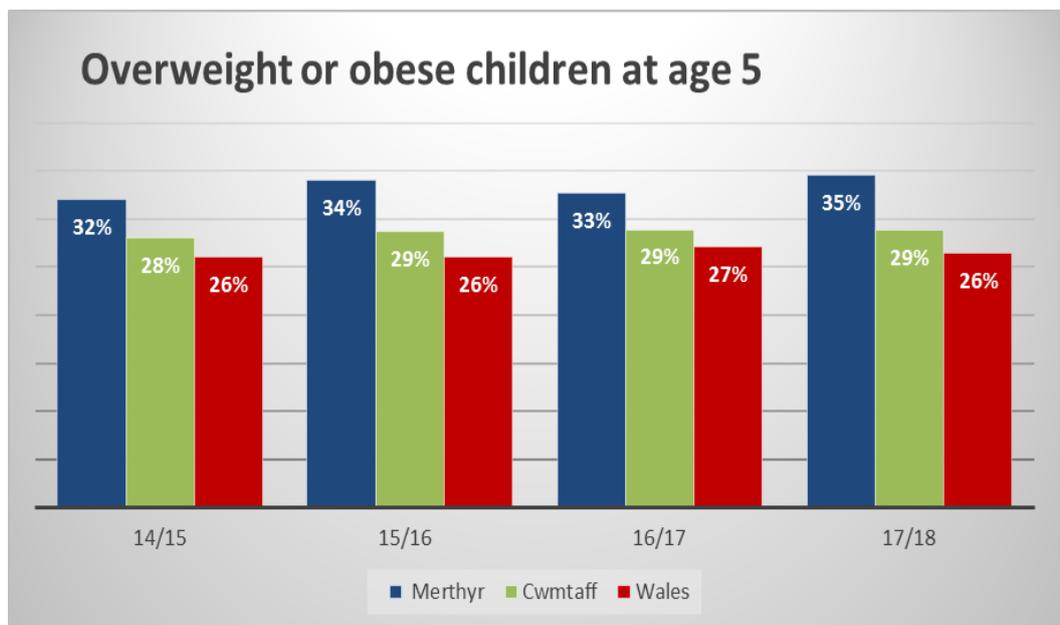
5.1.6 The data published by WG relates to 2017, however more up to date and a wider set of data is available locally for Flying Start areas from Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB. This data whilst unverified by WG in a stats release demonstrates that since 2017 there has been a reduction in all three breast feeding indicators at ten days, six weeks and six months following birth.



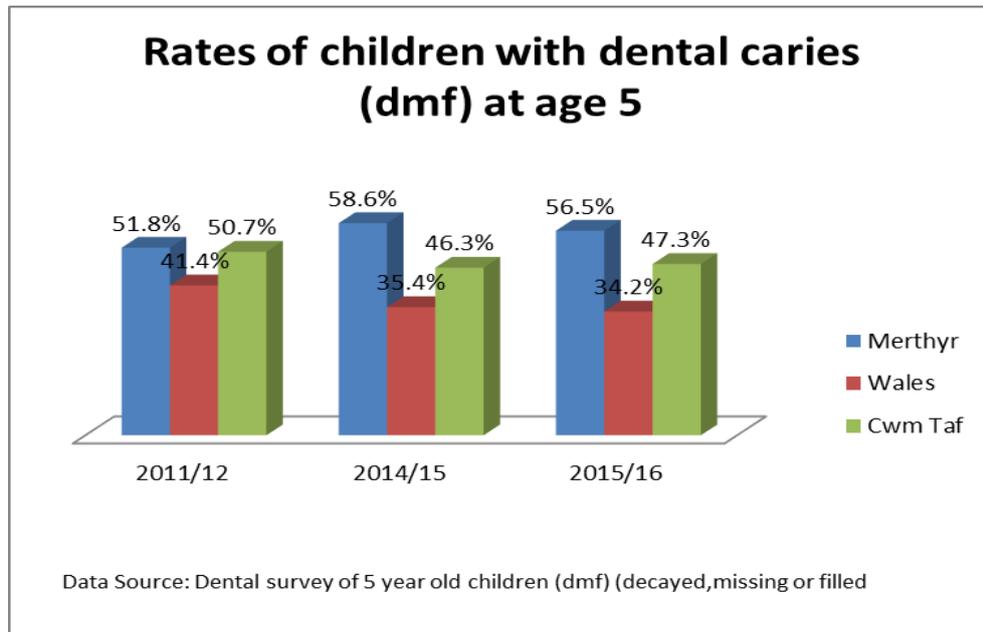
5.1.7 The percentage of children being fully immunised by their 4th birthday has also decreased to 88% (down 3%) in 18/19 within Merthyr Tydfil as a whole, but remains slightly above the Welsh average. This decrease is more strongly reflected within Flying Start areas with a 5% downturn in immunisations (8th in comparison to other Flying start areas in Wales) and non-Flying Start areas experiencing a slight decrease (1%) over the same period (14th in Wales).



5.1.8 Children having a healthy weight are measured as part of the Child Measurement programme aged 4-5. Within Flying Start areas the data identifies that 63.7% of Flying Start children have a healthy weight whilst in non Flying Start areas this rises to 68.4%. Both of these data sets are below the Welsh average of 70.6% and 74.2% respectively. This ranks Merthyr Tydfil as 22nd in Wales and demonstrate that the gap between Flying Start and non-Flying Start children for this indicator is widening.

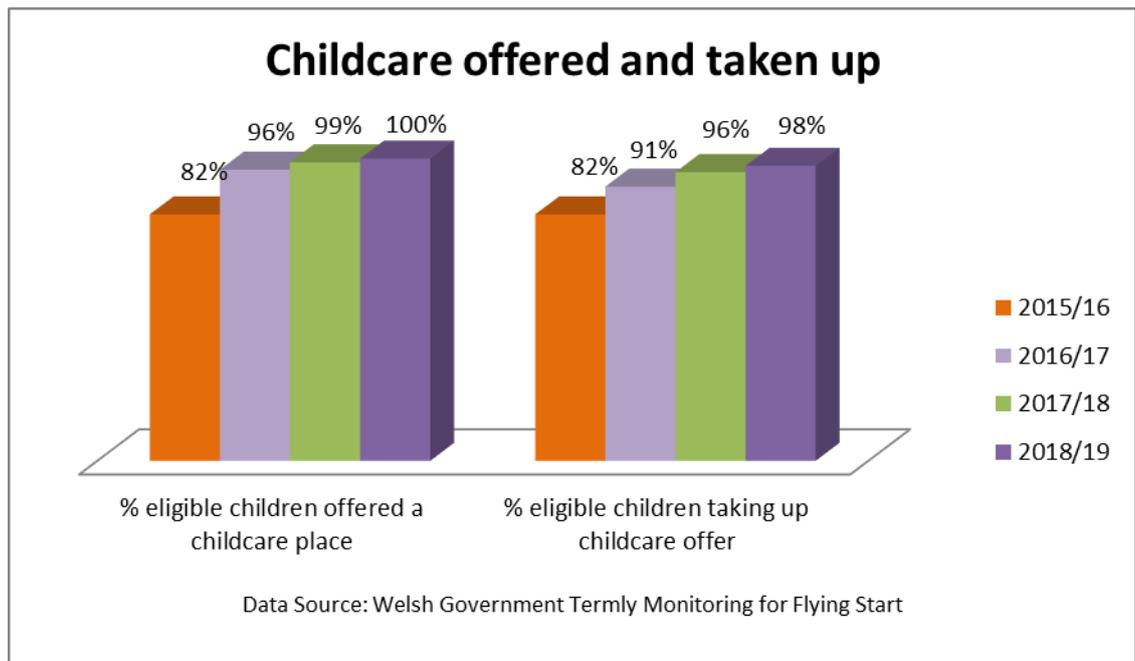


5.1.9 Closely related to both the healthy weight and breast-feeding indicators is the prevalence of dental caries (decayed, missing or filled teeth) encountered by children by the age of five years across Merthyr Tydfil. In 2014/15 this was 56.5% compared to a Welsh average of 34.2%. A further report is due to be published August 2019 with data from 2016-17.



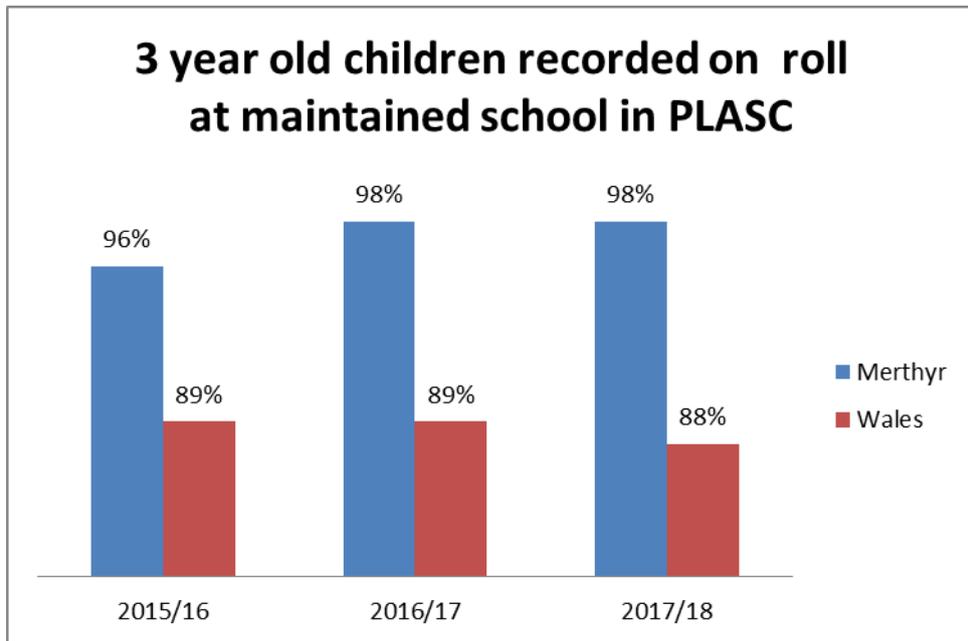
5.2 Childcare and Education

5.2.1 The number of eligible families being offered childcare in 2018/19 rose to 100% with 287 of the 294 offered places taking up the offer; this was a 2% rise.

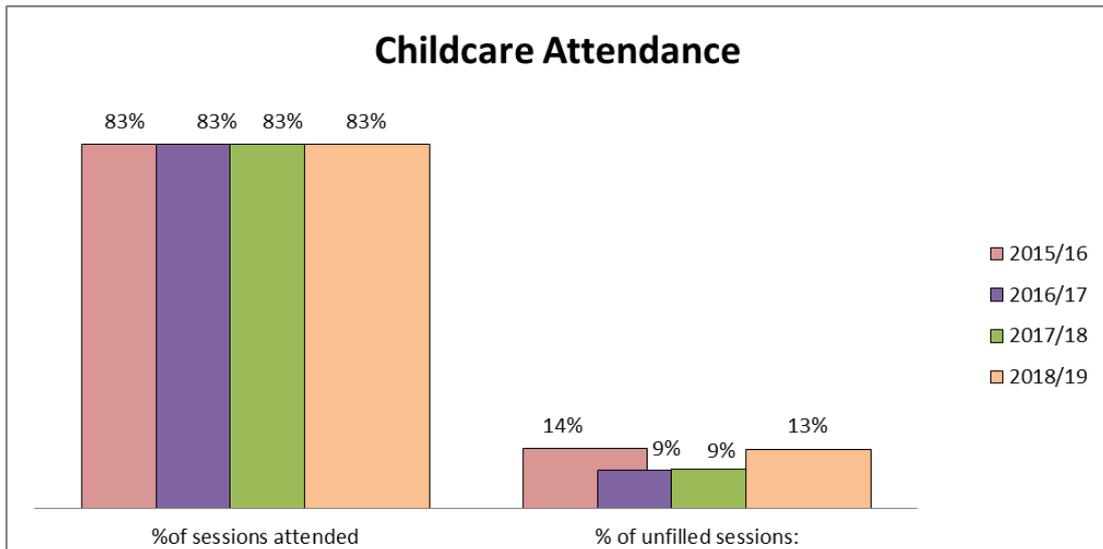


5.2.2 When comparing the take up of childcare, Merthyr Tydfil Flying Start (18/19) has remained jointly ranked 2nd in Wales and is significantly above the Welsh average of 88%.

5.2.3 In 2017/18 there was a 4% increase in the number of non-Flying Start children recorded on PLASC (joint 1st in Wales) but a 5% decrease in the number of Flying Start children recorded (12th in Wales). Over all Merthyr's average remains consistent at 98% and ranks Merthyr Tydfil as joint 2nd in Wales for this indicator.



5.2.4 Attendance at childcare sessions within Flying Start is not a national indicator and therefore cannot be compared nationally at present. Within Merthyr Tydfil the 83% attendance rate as remained consistent for the last four years, despite a focus on attendance which has included introducing an updated attendance policy and process to monitor and follow up absences more rigorously.



5.2.5 After good progress in reducing unfilled spaces (those commissioned through the existing model but not required) in 2016/17 & 2017/18, a 4% increase has been seen in 2018/19. An average of 10% fewer children were eligible for childcare during 2018/19 which impacted on demand for childcare places. Childcare is a demand led service and the nature of changing birth rates will mean that numbers eligible for childcare will be subject to localised fluctuations. Driving down on unfilled spaces needs to be balanced alongside providing financial stability to the sector and retaining a quality workforce that may be required each term.

5.2.6 A review of the childcare commissioning model is scheduled to take place which will consider the changing requirements across the population with a view to reducing the number of unfilled places.

It should be noted that through the current model of commissioning Merthyr Tydfil Flying Start has 96% of group based early years providers across the County Borough registered to take Flying Start children. Through this registration, each provider has to demonstrate a commitment to achieving all of the quality standards, systems and processes required by Flying Start. The net effect of this is the raising of quality across the sector through influencing practice in almost all providers.

5.3 Foundation Phase Profile (Compact) Outcomes

5.3.1 During 2018/19, 291 children were eligible for Flying Start childcare. Ten of these children either declined a childcare place or did not attend. 281 (100%) of the remaining children had initial and final assessments which were included in the FPP analysis. Of these children, 155 were boys and 126 were girls. The following data analysis includes outcomes for children with additional learning needs (ALN) and English as an Additional Language (EAL). It also includes outcomes for 16 (6%) of these 281 children who attended childcare for one term or less due to parental choice or moving out of the area.

5.3.2 In 2018-19, 43% of children including ALN & EAL achieved Outcome 1 in all four areas of development at final assessment. This figure increases to 47% when ALN & EAL children are excluded. This shows a decrease on 2017-18, where the figures were 45% and 52% respectively.

5.3.3 The Foundation Phase Profile compact is made up of outcomes for each individual component, the expected outcomes are Gold or above at initial assessment and Outcome 1 or above at final assessment. These are identified below for each category (including ALN & EAL):

- Personal & Social Development, Wellbeing & Cultural Diversity – 40% of children achieved Gold or above at initial assessment and 76% of children achieved Outcome 1 or above at final assessment. Value added = 36% (a 3% increase on 2017/18).
- Language, Literacy & Communication Skills – 33% of children achieved Gold or above at initial assessment and 67% of children achieved Outcome 1 or above at final assessment. Value added = 34% (a 2% decrease on 2017/18).
- Mathematical Development – 14% of children achieved Gold or above at initial assessment and 49% of children achieved Outcome 1 or above at final assessment. Value added = 35% (a 4% decrease on 2017/18).
- Physical Development – 49% of children achieved Gold or above at initial assessment and 77% of children achieved Outcome 1 or above at final assessment. Value added = 28% (a 2% decrease on 2017/18).

5.3.4 The table below demonstrates that children entering Flying Start settings in 2018/19 were overall at a lower starting point than those entering settings in 2017/18. Decreases were seen in Personal & Social Development and Physical Development, with Language Development at the same level and Mathematical Development 1% higher than in 2018/19. The average percentage difference across all areas of development at initial assessment between 2017/18 and 2018/19 was -1.75%.

5.3.5 Final outcomes in 2017/18 were higher than 2018/19 across all areas of development. Although the Personal & Social Development levels of children entering settings in 2018/19 were 6% lower than the previous year, this difference has been halved by final assessment, where 2018/19 figures are 3% lower than 2017/18.

5.3.6 In addition, 6% of the 2018-19 cohort attended for one term or less and therefore, may have evidenced little progress, which could substantially impact upon this data and therefore this will need to be considered in the annual production of this data.

Comparison 2017/18-2018/19

	% of children Gold or above at initial assessment 2017/18	% of children Gold or above at initial assessment 2018/19	% difference from 2017/18 to 2018/19	% of children Outcome 1 or above at final assessment 2017/18	% of children Outcome 1 or above at final assessment 2018/19	% difference from 2017/18 to 2018/19
Personal & Social	46%	40%	-6%	79%	76%	-3%
Language	33%	33%	0%	69%	67%	-2%
Maths	13%	14%	+1%	52%	49%	-3%
Physical	51%	49%	-2%	81%	77%	-4%
Average % difference			-1.75%			-3%

Total number of children 2017/18 = 324 Total number of children 2018/19 = 281

5.3.7 Performance of Boys versus Girls: Data for 2017-18 indicated that Flying Start girls outperformed Flying Start boys across all areas of development and, in 2018/19; girls continued to outperform boys in Personal & Social Development, Language Development and Physical Development. However, in Mathematical Development, boys have bucked the trend. In 2018-19, the percentage of boys achieving Outcome 1 or above at final assessment is 5% higher than the percentage of girls where as in 2017/18 boys lagged behind by 2%.

5.3.8 Mathematical Development and the achievement of boys has been an area of focus across the counties childcare sector over the past 12 months. Additional training was provided to support practitioners to develop their maths areas and resources and to learn different methods of engaging boys. The next step will be to continue this improvement with boys whilst also developing girls’ skills, to encourage the development of mathematical skills in all children.

5.3.9 Performance of Children with Additional Learning Needs: In 2018-19 the total number of Flying Start children with ALN, known to the Enhanced Support Panel (Early Years Action Plus and statemented) was 26, which is 9% of the cohort (281), a 1% reduction on 2017/18. Of these 19 children with ALN 12 were boys and seven were girls. Whilst children with ALN generally have lower outcomes than their peers, it is important to note that the value added for children with ALN 2018-19 (difference between initial and final assessments) across the four areas of development is, on average, 30% and is only 3% behind that of the value added for all children. This intensive support has seen improvement in value added for this group increase by 10% in comparison to 2017/18 performance data.

5.3.10 Performance of children where English is an Additional Language: In 2018-19 the total number of Flying Start children with EAL needs was 10. This is 4% of the overall number of Flying Start children. None of these children had an identified additional learning need and all 10 children were boys.

EAL children 2018/19	Personal & Social Development	Language Development	Mathematical Development	Physical Development
Initial Gold or above	30%	20%	20%	40%
Final Outcome 1 or above	40%	30%	10%	70%
Value Added (Final - Initial)	10%	10%	-10%	30%

5.3.11 It is evident from the above data that in 2018-19, EAL children attending Flying Start settings did not progress in line with their non-EAL peers. These results for EAL children indicate a decrease on the previous year’s performance. When looking at where performance is in line with their peers (Physical development) it is evident how language and communication needs have a dramatic impact across the curriculum from a very young age.

6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

6.1 Vulnerability profiling – Over the last two years, the Local Authority has worked in partnership with the Welsh Government, Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB and Rhondda Cynon Taff on an Early Years Co-integration project. The focus has been to review the Early Years system in the context of providing the right services, to the right families at the right time. A key priority has been the future development of a vulnerability profile tool that will draw upon a number of different data sets across health, education and social care. The tool will enable the targeting of support at an individual child and family level but will also be used to consider population level data to assist with the planning and shaping of services. Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB are leading on the development of the tool and once finalised it should offer an alternative approach to geographical targeting, however this will require a shift in approach from the Minister and Welsh Government as they have always insisted that Flying Start should not be a needs assessed programme.

6.2 Capita One - Education and Early Years are currently implementing a joint approach to the strategic use of the Council’s Capita One system. A Capita One development team is shared across the children and communities grant programmes to develop the system with a phased approach to implementation. The system will improve long-term tracking of the impact of Flying Start through to age seven and potentially up to age 16. It is understood that whilst data may not be published this can still be analysed to ensure effectiveness of interventions and assist when considering the range of services that may be supporting a family through early years or with older siblings.

- 6.3 Early Years Strategy- the Early Year's Strategy is currently being re-drafted in partnership with: Health, Childcare Providers, Education, Social Services and third sector childcare organisations and will provide a strategic direction for Early Years for the next three years. It will be important that the Strategy reflects emerging themes and policy changes including the ALNet Act, Early Years Co-integration, ACEs and First 1,000 days and will be closely aligned with the Parenting Strategy that will be available for consultation in the Autumn.

7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1 Consider the health implications of this report and consider if it would be beneficial asking Cwm Taf UHB and Public Health to attend a future Scrutiny meeting to outline the strategies they have in place to address the health inequalities identified, the critical role of health visitors within the Early Years and how the Council can assist in the tackling of these agendas within a partnership approach.
- 7.2 A future report be scheduled to consider possible approaches and implications of restructuring the commissioning model for Flying Start childcare to reduce unfilled spaces.
- 7.3 Provide an update on the future vulnerability profiling for Early Years and consider how this might shape future access to Flying Start should WG request the local authority to review the current geographical approach and request a future options paper for the programme.
- 7.4 WG recently issued more updated LSOA income benefit household data for consideration by local authorities. Local review of the data indicated that the majority of LSOA's currently eligible for Flying Start services in Merthyr Tydfil haven't changed. However, there could be scope, should WG choose to allow Local authorities greater flexibility to enable certain LSOA areas to be withdrawn. This could lead to two options to introduce a new geographical area or free up capacity for an expansion of the Outreach provision, utilising a more needs based approach. This approach would allow Flying Start services to be provided to those pockets of poverty outside of the current LSOA's, however this would only be possible with a robust vulnerability tool to ascertain those individuals eligibility for outreach. The service is currently awaiting WG feedback on the future targeting of Flying Start. The WG has advised that they will publish an options paper and involvement from Scrutiny, once this is available, would enable Merthyr Tydfil to be in a strong position to offer their feedback within a local context.
- 7.5 Childcare Commissioning Model – In 2013, a commissioning model for the expansion of Flying Start was agreed by Cabinet. This model was developed in conjunction with the sector and included a supply and demand approach whilst balancing the needs of the sector and parents/ carers. In order to achieve value for money alongside offering financial stability, maintaining parental choice and quality across the sector, it will be important that a review of the model takes place in the context of the work theme looking at the targeting of future Flying Start services.
- 7.6 Completion and approval of a new Early Years Strategy and a separate Parenting Strategy which is currently being finalised.

8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 The delivery of Flying Start through its early intervention with Families assist with achieving the wellbeing objectives: Best start to life, Living Well, and some aspects of Working life. It also contributes to the PSB agenda for the first 1000 days and the tackling of ACEs. It needs to be noted however that this only applies to the areas designated as Flying Start

SUE WALKER
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Flying Start statistical release 18-19	July 2019	Cwm Golau Integrated Children's Centre
Flying Start termly monitoring reports	September 2018-December 2018 and March 2019	Cwm Golau Integrated Children's Centre
Flying Start expansion update Cabinet Report	January 2013	Cwm Golau Integrated Children's Centre
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		