

P-06-1362 Match the new childcare offer in England of 15 hours for 2 year old's from April 2024 – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 11 October 2023

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1362 Ein cyf/Our ref JMSS/00591/23

Views in light of the document for the Committee to consider
October 2023

11th

I do not feel that the letter I received from the Deputy Minister for Social services on the 9th October 2023 adequately address the issues raised. Firstly, I would ask that in future the Deputy Minister for SS avoids comparing the Flying Start program (supporting deprived areas) to universal government funded help for **working parents**. It is not relevant in response to the petition that I started for the following reasons laid out in this letter.

Key Points for consideration

Why Flying Start is not comparable to working parents childcare offer;

- It is a postcode lottery and therefore not universal (unlike the English offer)
- The majority of parents who qualify for flying start **do not work**.
- Flying start hours are specified as 2 hours per day which **does not support parents who work** traditional hours 9-5 as they need a provider to pick up/drop off.
- The ability to use flying start if you are a **working parent** is therefore depending on the availability of wrap around childcare.
- In my area in particular (as I'm sure many others) the only local provision that provided wrap around childcare to local schools in Llangollen closed in August 2024 so even if flying start became available in our area **working parents** would not able to use it.
- Qualified providers have to be registered as a Flying start setting so parents cannot use the hours where ever they wish (unlike the English offer)

Other comments on the letter

The expansion of the Welsh childcare offer to support parents in education and training that you mentioned again **does not help working parents**. To hide behind financial pressures is not acceptable when the UK government has provided the funding but it is being spent otherwise.

Further questions

You mention *building capacity in the sector*. By this I assume you mean number of childcare places suitable for flying start. The Welsh childcare system is crumbling, 300,000 less places than this time 12 months ago and counting. How are the government looking to support the building of capacity?

Final question - can **working parents** who have to send their child to nursery in England due to lack of provision in Wales claim the 15 hours in April 2024 in line with the other parents sending their children to the nursery, otherwise is this not border county discrimination based on regional postcode.

Similar Petition

I am aware of a comparable petition started a few days after mine by Jade Richards (didn't think this was possible) which received an astonishing 10,000+ signatures. I hope the Welsh government realise how many **working parents** and childcare providers feel let down.

Thank you very much for your time.