



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Childcare Offer for Wales

Information Request Pro-forma to Inform Further Roll-out

Local Authority:	Monmouthshire County Council
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If you have any queries on any aspect of completing this form then please email them to TalkChildcare@gov.wales.

Section 1 – Delivery of the Childcare Offer

It is unlikely we will be able to deliver the offer in your whole local authority area. We are therefore asking you to indicate which areas you would choose first and why. These areas will eventually need to be agreed through your local democratic processes, prior to any final Ministerial decisions being taken in respect of further roll out. We have learnt from the local authorities that are already delivering the Offer that a clear rationale for choosing which areas to pilot the offer is essential and this enables political consensus and supports communications with stakeholders.

1.1 Please list the electoral wards within your local authority in the order in which you would plan to roll-out the Childcare Offer.

Monmouthshire’s Well Being Needs Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) divided the authority into five areas based around the main towns with their surrounding areas. In order to ensure consistency, it makes sense to use these areas for the roll-out of the Childcare Offer.

The order in which the Childcare Offer would be rolled out within Monmouthshire is as follows:

- Monmouth
- Chepstow
- Usk & Raglan
- Caldicot
- Abergavenny

The estimated population of 3-4 year olds in each of these areas between September 2018 and August 2019 is as follows:

- Monmouth - 192
- Chepstow - 383
- Usk & Raglan - 86
- Caldicot - 320
- Abergavenny – 280

Further work is underway to calculate the percentage of working parents in each of these areas, in order to estimate the number of families that would be eligible for the Childcare Offer.

1.2 Please provide the rationale for why you have prioritised the electoral wards in this way?

Monmouthshire is on the border with England and we have received a number of requests regarding the Childcare Offer from families in these bordering areas, as many of them work in England or have friends and family that are taking advantage of the English offer.

	<p>Both Monmouth and Chepstow border with England, which is why these areas have been prioritised.</p> <p>Following this, we have ranked the remaining areas based on the percentage of working parents. We have prioritised the areas where there is a higher percentage of working parents as we would assume there would be relatively high take up of the Childcare Offer in these areas. There are already a number of families accessing childcare to wrap around their FPN provision in these areas, so we know that there is a need and that there appears to be sufficient childcare available to meet this need.</p>
<p>1.3 What is the mix of childcare provision that parents in these electoral wards would like to access?</p>	<p>There are currently a mix of Local Authority Nursery classes and non-maintained settings providing early education throughout Monmouthshire, apart from the central region of Usk & Raglan where there is only provision within the non-maintained sector. The majority of these non-maintained settings are registered as day care and are already providing childcare to wrap around the early education entitlement. There are also non-approved settings and childminders in these areas that are not able to offer early education but they can provide wrap around childcare; many of these are already doing so and will collect or drop off from the education providers.</p>
<p>1.4 Do you believe there is sufficient formal childcare available to meet the needs of parents?</p>	<p>The most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment suggested that there were no areas with significant gaps in childcare for children aged 3-4 years; the main gap related to childcare during school holidays and the unmet demand was predominantly for school aged children. The other issue highlighted by the CSA was a lack of Welsh medium provision, particularly full day care. This is still an area for development, however we have relocated Cylch Meithrin Y Fenni in the north of the county so they have been able to extend their opening hours to provide wrap around childcare for the Welsh medium maintained FPN provision; we have also developed non-maintained wrap around childcare on the site of the Welsh school in the south of the county that currently offers FPN provision.</p> <p>We are anticipating an increase in take up of childcare once parents can access this provision at no cost; however, there are surplus places currently so we believe there is sufficient formal childcare in Monmouthshire to meet the needs of parents.</p>

<p>1.5 What evidence do you have of demand for Welsh-medium provision in these electoral wards?</p>	<p>As mentioned in 1.4, the recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment did highlight Welsh medium provision as a significant gap, particularly in relation to full day care. Progress has already been made to address this issue, as listed above, and further developments are planned.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the CSA suggests that there is very little demand for Welsh medium provision in Monmouth and Chepstow, particularly in wards that border with England.</p>
<p>1.6 Is there currently sufficient Welsh-medium provision in these electoral wards to meet this demand?</p>	<p>There is currently no Welsh medium childcare provision specifically within these areas; however, there are no Welsh medium schools in these areas either. There are surplus places in Welsh medium maintained and non-maintained settings in neighbouring areas that could be accessed, if needed.</p>
<p>1.7 What effect would an increased demand for Welsh-medium provision, as a result of introducing the Offer, have in these electoral wards?</p>	<p>An increase in demand for Welsh medium provision would be beneficial to us as it would enable us to develop sustainable Welsh medium provision, which is a target on our CSA Action Plan and our WESP. We are working closely with Mudiad Meithrin to monitor this demand and to promote the benefits of Welsh medium education. In the first instance, we are supporting the Cylch Ti a Fi to strengthen and develop this provision in order to have sufficient demand to develop a cylch meithrin which is sustainable. We are also providing Welsh courses for staff to ensure the workforce is not a barrier to developing this provision, as it has been in the past.</p>
<p>1.8 Are the electoral wards served by a Welsh-medium primary school to facilitate progression between Welsh-medium childcare and Welsh-medium statutory education?</p>	<p>There is no Welsh medium primary school in these areas but transport is provided to the Welsh medium primary schools in neighbouring areas.</p> <p>The existing Welsh medium childcare provision has been developed on the site of the Welsh medium primary schools, in order to facilitate progression between Welsh medium childcare and Welsh medium statutory education.</p>

Section 2 – Governance.

Strong governance arrangements and political buy-in are key to delivering the Childcare Offer.

2.1 What governance arrangements do you propose to oversee the development and delivery of the Childcare Offer?

Rolling out the Childcare Offer using the areas defined by the Well Being Needs Assessment will assist with gaining political buy-in as councillors are familiar with dividing the authority in this manner and the differing demographics and needs of each of these areas.

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) will act as the steering group for the Childcare Offer and they will oversee the development and delivery of the offer. The Directorate Management Team will also receive regular updates so that the wider team will be aware of the Childcare Offer and will have the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have and to contribute towards the development of the offer in Monmouthshire. In addition, a working group will be set up including representatives from Early Years, IT, School Access Unit and Finance to support the implementation of the Childcare Offer in Monmouthshire.

2.2 How quickly could you establish any new governance arrangements?

The EYDCP have been kept informed of the development and implementation of the Childcare Offer so they are already familiar with the details of this offer and possible issues related to implementing the offer in Monmouthshire have already been discussed. The EYDCP also oversee the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan so they are aware of any potential childcare gaps in childcare provision and the progress that has been made to meet these gaps and further developments that are planned. Therefore, it would be a matter of continuing this work rather than having to establish new governance arrangements.

Preliminary meetings have already taken place with colleagues in Early Years, IT and School Access Unit so they have an understanding of the Childcare Offer and have contributed towards the developments made to date and the proposals for rolling it out.

Following submission of this proposal, a cabinet report will be produced to inform councillors and to seek political approval.

Section 3 - Resources to administer the Offer

The Welsh Government provides a grant for administrating the Childcare Offer. One of the lessons coming from those local authorities that are administrating and delivering the childcare offer is the need for strong internal links between the childcare team and other departments within the local authority, particularly: IT; finance; audit; education; Family Information Service; and social care.

3.1 Please outline the staffing structure that you would propose to develop and deliver the Childcare Offer.

The Early Years team in Monmouthshire is based within the Children & Young People’s Directorate and is directly managed by the Head of School Improvement. Early Years encompasses FPN education, childcare and the Family Information Service and we work closely with the School & Student Access Unit and the ALN Section to ensure smooth transition between childcare and education. We also have good links with IT, finance, audit and social care.

At present it is a very small team made up as follows:

- Early Years Manager
- Early Years Officer (P/T)
- Early Years & Childcare Development Officer
- Family Information Officer (P/T)
- Early Years ALN Liaison Officer (P/T)

In order to deliver the Childcare Offer we would need to develop this team to include a full time Administrative & Finance Officer and another Development Officer, as well as possibly increasing the ALN Liaison Officer post to full time.

3.2 Please outline how you would enable on-line applications for parents?

School admissions is already available on-line and we are considering processing school nursery admissions in the same way in the near future.

We are currently looking into various database options and the ability to enable on-line applications for the Childcare Offer for parents is one of our priorities. In the short term, application forms and supporting information will be made available through the FIS website and the MCC website and parents will be able to complete and submit applications electronically.

<p>3.3 Can you outline the data protection arrangements within your local authority and how these would be applied to the delivery of the Childcare Offer?</p>	<p>Each member of the team has undertaken Data Protection training and we have attended awareness raising sessions for the GDPR, which will come into place in May 2018.</p> <p>Existing data protection arrangements are already in place such as acquiring parental permission to share data and following guidelines in relation to timescales and purposes for storing personal data. Safety measures to protect data are followed including keeping paper records in locked cupboards, password protecting documents and using secure email, if required. The same data protection arrangements would be applied to the delivery of the Childcare Offer.</p>
<p>3.4 Would you be prepared to pay childcare providers in advance for delivering the Childcare Offer? How would you achieve this?</p>	<p>The majority of childcare providers, apart from childminders, are already set up as suppliers on our creditors system so payments can be processed quickly and easily.</p> <p>We already pay our non-maintained FPN providers termly in advance so it would be possible to continue this practice for the delivery of the Childcare Offer. These processes could easily be developed to enable monthly payments in advance and clawback of overpayment, if necessary.</p>
<p>3.5 What monitoring systems do you have in place for Foundation Phase Nursery (Early Education)? How would you report on the number of Foundation Phase Nursery hours a child actually uses?</p>	<p>The Early Years Team are responsible for approving non-maintained FPN providers and monitoring their compliance with the Service Level Agreement, as well as processing Early Education funding. Monitoring of places is carried out termly to ensure there are sufficient places in each of the areas of Monmouthshire and to monitor take up of these places.</p> <p>We have robust systems in place for recording the actual take up of FPN provision per child so it is possible to report on the number of FPN hours being used in Monmouthshire. This information could be provided on a termly or annual basis per setting and per area, as well as Monmouthshire as a whole. We can easily identify children not accessing their full entitlement of 10 hours (5 sessions) per week, as well as those children that are accessing their entitlement at more than one setting.</p>

Section 4 – Foundation Phase Nursery

The Childcare Offer is comprised of the child's existing entitlement to Foundation Phase Nursery (FPN) provision and childcare. It is important that the offer is delivered in a way that support parents' ability to access both, without compromising either.

4.1 How many hours of FPN provision do children in your authority receive?

If a child attends a maintained setting, they receive 12.5 hours a week of funded FPN provision (2.5 hours per day) and they are expected to attend for all 5 sessions.

If a child attends an approved non-maintained setting, they receive a maximum of 10 hours funded FPN provision a week (2 hours per day) but there is far more flexibility; for instance, there is no minimum take up and provision can be accessed at more than one setting, including settings in neighbouring authorities.

There are currently 12 maintained settings in Monmouthshire providing 690 FPN places and 28 non-maintained settings providing 977 places. Take up of places has been fairly evenly spread between the two sectors for a number of years with an average of 45% of children taking up their provision in the maintained sector and 55% in the non-maintained.

4.2 Is the approach to delivery of FPN consistent across the authority? If not, please outline the differences highlighting how this would affect the electoral wards prioritised under section 1.

The delivery of FPN provision is consistent across the authority and there are no differences in provision for 3 year olds and 4 year olds. The only inconsistency is the difference in provision between the maintained and non-maintained settings, as detailed above.

Maintained and non-maintained settings are spread fairly evenly across the local authority, apart from the Usk & Raglan area where there is no maintained FPN provision. I wouldn't expect this to have any effect on the roll-out of the Childcare Offer.

4.3 How might you deliver FPN provision differently in order to make it more accessible for parents to access both the FPN and the childcare elements of

Monmouthshire is already very flexible in the delivery of FPN provision. There are no catchment schools / settings for FPN and parents are able to choose where they send their children to best meet their needs. There are a range of childcare types approved to offer FPN provision including day nurseries,

<p>the offer?</p>	<p>playgroups and cylch meithrin.</p> <p>The 10 hours of FPN provision can be taken up at more than one setting within the non-maintained sector, including approved settings in neighbouring authorities. There is no minimum take up required to access funding, as there are in other local authorities.</p> <p>There is far less flexibility within the maintained sector, as children must access their full entitlement at one setting (either morning or afternoon sessions) and they are required to attend for 5 sessions a week. This is one area that we could look at in order to make it more accessible for parents.</p> <p>In terms of enabling parents to access both the FPN and the childcare elements of the offer, we already have a number of childcare settings located on school sites and childcare providers that will collect or drop off from local schools. Many of our approved non-maintained providers have already extended their hours to include wrap around childcare and several also offer childcare during some of the school holidays.</p>
<p>4.4 What monitoring systems do you have in place for FPN?</p>	<p>The Early Years Team are responsible for approving non-maintained FPN providers and monitoring their compliance with the Service Level Agreement, as well as processing Early Education funding. Monitoring of places is carried out termly to ensure there are sufficient places in each of the areas of Monmouthshire and to monitor take up of these places. If a need for additional FPN places is identified in a specific geographical area, expressions of interest are sought from existing childcare settings and support is provided to get them to the necessary standard to become an approved FPN provider.</p>
<p>4.5 Are you able to report on the number of FPN hours a child actually uses?</p>	<p>We have robust systems in place for recording the actual take up of FPN provision per child so it is possible to report on the number of FPN hours being used in Monmouthshire. This information could be provided on a termly or annual basis per setting and per area, as well as Monmouthshire as a whole. We can easily identify children not accessing their full entitlement of 10 hours (5 sessions) per week, as well as those children that are accessing their entitlement at more than one setting.</p>

Section 5 – Special Educational Needs

We must make sure children with SEN can access the Childcare Offer and therefore need to know what are your current early years SEN arrangements and, if they don't already, could these be adapted to include 3 and 4 year old children.

5.1 What current arrangements do you have to identify children 3 and 4 years old with SEN in your local authority?

We currently employ a part-time Early Years ALN Liaison Officer who works closely with childcare settings to identify and support children aged 2-4 years with SEN. Referrals are made by health professionals such as child portage workers and health visitors, childcare settings and parents themselves. The Early Years ALN Liaison Officer will visit the child in the setting or at home to support with transition between settings and to provide advice to parents and childcare workers.

An Early Years ALN Panel meets half termly (6 times a year) to assess the needs of these children and to provide advice, signpost to relevant services and allocate funding or equipment, if appropriate, to support the child in the childcare setting.

If a child aged 3-4 years accesses their Foundation Phase Nursery Provision in a maintained setting (school nursery class) then the school are expected to use their delegated budget to support children with SEN and to submit a SAPRA (School Action Plus Resource Assist) if additional support is required.

5.2 Could your existing arrangements adapted to facilitate children with SEN to access the Childcare Offer?

This process is already in place for children from the age of 2 years so it wouldn't need to be adapted significantly to facilitate children with SEN to access the Childcare Offer. The only issues would be around funding and the capacity of the Early Years ALN Liaison Officer, as there may well be a need to work with more than one setting for an individual child.

If 1:1 support is required to enable a child with SEN to attend a setting, this is currently funded for a maximum of 10 hours a week (2 hours a day) for children aged 3-4 years in non-maintained settings, in line with their early education entitlement. Children aged 2-3 years and 3-4 year olds not accessing FPN provision are limited to 2 or 3 sessions a week.

	With the roll-out of the Childcare Offer, their entitlement would increase to 30 hours per week (6 hours a day) so there would need to be additional funding available to enable settings to meet the needs of these children for the additional hours of entitlement.
5.3 Is there another way?	We are currently working closely with colleagues in neighbouring authorities to develop a regional approach to SEN in the Early Years. Two of these authorities (Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent) are early implementers of the Childcare Offer so we will take advice from them as to how this our existing systems can be developed to incorporate the Childcare Offer.

Section 6 – Regional /Joint Working

We will expect any new local authorities coming on board wherever possible to work with existing early implementers in delivering the Offer, in order to build on best practice and to ensure economies of scale. These early implementers are: Anglesey and Gwynedd (working together), Flintshire, Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent. In the event that this is not possible, we expect joint working with neighbouring local authorities within regional educational consortia given that Foundation Phase Nursery is a key component of the Childcare Offer.

6.1 Which neighbouring local authorities do you propose to work with to deliver the Childcare Offer at full roll-out?	In the South East Wales Consortium we have good relationships between the local authorities and we meet regularly as Early Education and Childcare leads. We are currently collaborating on a piece of work around ALN as part of the innovation work and the childcare offer is discussed in this context. I have already requested information from both Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly in relation to how they have implemented the offer in their authorities and we are hoping to visit them to look at their administrative procedures, particularly in relation to their use of a database and how they check parents' eligibility.
6.2 In the event that 6.1 isn't possible, which neighbouring local authorities do you propose to work with? Are there existing partnership arrangements in place?	<p>We currently have cross border arrangements for Foundation Phase Nursery provision with six neighbouring local authorities – Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Powys, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. We would expect these arrangements to continue and be developed further with the roll-out of the Childcare Offer.</p> <p>We have close links with Newport as we work in a very similar way and we attempt to offer parents as much flexibility as possible; therefore, there are</p>



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	<p>families sharing their Early Education entitlement between Monmouthshire and Newport settings.</p> <p>We are already in discussions with Ceredigion in respect of the possibility of purchasing their database, which is currently being developed to incorporate the Childcare Offer.</p> <p>We would expect these partnerships arrangements to continue and to be developed further in the future.</p>
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