

New areas to pilot Welsh Government's free childcare offer

When rolled out across Wales, the offer will provide 30 hours of early education and childcare to working parents of 3 and 4 year olds for 48 weeks of the year.

In September 2017, the Welsh Government began piloting the offer in a number of areas in Anglesey, Gwynedd, Caerphilly, Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Swansea, and across the whole of Blaenau Gwent. This approach has enabled the Welsh Government to test a range of aspects and issues impacting delivery and take-up.

The Minister is today announcing the offer is being extended to cover the whole counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Caerphilly from this month, and the whole of Rhondda Cynon Taff from at the start of September 2018. Discussions are also on-going with Flintshire and Swansea with a view to rolling out the offer to all remaining areas within those authorities as soon as possible.

In addition, the offer is also being expanded immediately into the following areas of Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC: The wards of Brynna, Llanharan, Llanharry, Talbot Green, Hawthorn, Graig, Rhydyfelin Central, Taff's Well and Treforest.

Huw Irranca-Davies said:

"Our ground-breaking childcare offer is already making a real difference to parents right across Wales, reducing the strain on family income and helping ensure childcare is not a barrier to them taking up employment or increasing their hours.

"I'm delighted to confirm the offer is being rolled out to new areas across Wales, as we continue the work to roll out the offer across the entire country by 2020."

As part of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2018/19, the funding to support the childcare offer increases to £25m in 2018-19, and to £45m in 2019-20.

This increase in funding will allow the Welsh Government to expand and test aspects of the delivery of the offer in some additional local authorities from September 2018 onwards.