

Minutes



Formal Council Questions and Responses

Date: 24 March 2025

1 **Question to the Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years:
2025/11 - Flying Start**

Councillor Routley asked:

I am writing to inquire about the strategies currently in place to expand the Flying Start program to ensure comprehensive coverage for all eligible families in Llanmartin Underwood Which is a part of the Bishton & Langstone Ward, specifically those affected by postcode limitations.

Could you also clarify how you will address the disparities and financial challenges faced by residents in areas like the Underwood estate, which lack the level of support provided in other nearby cities?

Additionally, given the increasing cost of living surge including childcare it's crucial to identify With clarity, What Immediate measures are you taking to eliminate this postcode discrepancy, ensuring equitable support for all deserving families.

Councillor D Davies responded:

The council is bound by Welsh Governments strategy for the expansion of the Flying Start programme. Flying Start areas are determined by using Lower Super Output Area data. This methodology applies to all Local Authorities in Wales.

In general, those LSOAs with the highest proportion of income benefit households are those which are designated as Flying Start areas. The boundary for Flying Start targeting must fall somewhere and therefore not all families can be eligible at present. Unfortunately, LSOA boundaries do sometimes give rise to issues where houses very close to a Flying Start area, but not within it, are not able to access the programme.

The roll out of Flying Start childcare to all 2-year-olds must be a gradual process to ensure the sector is able to respond to the increased demand this will inevitably create. It also gives the Local Authority time to plan for the development of new childcare places. The same targeting methodology for additional 2-year-olds will continue unless Welsh Government issue updated guidance for the imminent Phase 3 expansion. To ensure that we address discrepancies for families who fall outside of the current eligibility, Flying Start also includes an outreach element, enabling services to be delivered to those living with assessed needs highlighting vulnerabilities and/or risks.