

Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr Is-adran Gofal Plant, Chwarae a Blynyddoedd Cynnar  
Deputy Director Childcare, Play and Early Years Division



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

To: Judith Greenhalgh,  
Chief Executive,  
Denbighshire County Council,

Cc: Karen Evans,  
James Wood,  
Dawn Anderson

20 March 2018

Dear Judith,

As you know the Welsh Government has been working with seven local authorities across Wales to deliver the childcare offer since September 2017. The Welsh Government remains committed to delivering the childcare offer across the whole of Wales by September 2020. Ahead of that we would like to expand the programme of early implementation, enabling us to test the offer in as many authorities as possible before full roll out. To achieve this we have agreed a rolling programme of early implementation, setting out when each local authority will become an early implementer.

Determinations around the rolling programme are based on the information supplied by the 15 local authorities not currently delivering the childcare offer in January, and discussions held with relevant Directors and senior officials regarding the strategic vision for the childcare offer and proposals for further roll out.

Having fully considered the information in the round I would like to invite Denbighshire County Borough Council to begin to deliver the childcare offer within some agreed wards from April 2019.

With regards to the strategic roll-out of the childcare offer across the whole of Wales we wish to make the process as uniform as possible, and to achieve maximum value for money for the administration of the process. Consequently we want the further roll-out of the childcare offer to be driven by the following principles:

- the process for applying for the offer should be as uniform as possible for parents;
- the process for payments to childcare providers to be as straightforward as possible particularly so if they are delivering childcare for parents from more than one local authority;
- reducing the duplication of effort in developing systems and processes;

- build on existing best practice and reducing the differences in approach across Wales; and
- achieving economies of scale.

Further to this, you will be aware that we are in discussions with HMRC about a longer-term on-line application process for parents to apply for the childcare offer and for childcare providers to receive payment. Consequently we wish to minimise the cost to Wales of developing multiple processes that will become redundant in 2020.

Given the existing Early Implementer Local Authorities (EILAs) have already developed operational systems to deliver the offer we are proposing a new delivery model for further roll out of the offer. The model will operate on a regional education improvement consortia basis and will see new early implementer local authorities (NEILAs) working in partnership with existing EILAs.

There will be two categories of local authority within an Education Improvement Consortia region; a delivery authority and an engagement authority:

- **Delivery Authorities** will be responsible for processing applications from parents, determining eligibility and informing them of the outcome. They will also process and make payments to childcare providers for delivering the offer.
- **Engagement Authorities** will be responsible for promoting the offer to parents and childcare providers within their areas, training their Family Information Service (FIS) to deal with enquiries on the offer and provide delivery authorities with any information they require to process applications and administer the offer.

During the discussion with James Wood we explored the possibility of you working in partnership with Flintshire County Council, who are already delivering the childcare offer. This model would see Flintshire County Council acting as the Delivery Authority on your behalf.

The Minister for Children and Social Care has recently agreed this approach and, consequently, I would now like to invite you to begin the formal arrangements to enable this to happen, in line with your internal processes. You are best placed to decide what wider governance arrangements need to be agreed with Flintshire, but I will be writing to them in similar terms.

We do, however, respect that there will be additional costs incurred by Denbighshire in taking forward the delivery of the childcare offer. You will be issued with a grant to cover these costs and further details on the specific amounts will be discussed with your officials in the coming weeks.

Subject to agreement to the proposals from both yourselves and Flintshire, further advice will need to be presented to the Minister for Children and Social Care ahead of a written statement being issued to Assembly Members. I would be grateful if we could align our communications and ensure that any public statements regarding delivery of the childcare offer in Denbighshire are made in parallel with that written statement. Colleagues from the Welsh Government's Press Office will want to work with you to coordinate any press and publicity.

I do not underestimate the challenges that joint working such as this may provide. The Welsh Government remains committed to regional working in the delivery of public services.

Therefore you can be assured of our continued and focused support throughout the delivery of this programme.

I am writing to all local authorities in Wales to inform them of the further expansion of the childcare offer across the remainder of Wales. My officials will continue to liaise with yours to co-ordinate this

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owain Lloyd". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Owain Lloyd  
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