

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>22 JULY 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS FOR SERVICES BEING PROVIDED UNDER THE FLYING START PROGRAMME WITHIN THE CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES GRANT</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>  <b>CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>STEPHANIE THOMAS, EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE MANAGER</b>  <b>MELINDA POWELL – CENTRAL GRANTS TEAM MANAGER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>This report has been written to highlight the vulnerability that currently exists by the absence of service level agreements for services being delivered under the Flying Start programme in Bridgend.</b>  <b>The report emphasises the need for service level agreements to be in place as they are critical to ensure efficiency and integrity of provision of service and safeguard the use of public funds under the terms and conditions of the Children and Communities Grant.</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to enter into a service level agreements (SLAs) between Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB), in providing support to children and families in respect of the Flying Start programme.
- 1.2 The SLAs will outline the services that will need to be delivered under the grant's terms and conditions establishing clear expectations, a service delivery model and performance monitoring arrangements as instructed by Welsh Government for the provision of midwifery, enhanced health visiting, early years advisory service, and speech and language therapy.
- 1.3 The SLAs will both safeguard public funds and ensure that existing and future services are delivered in line with the Flying Start and Children and Communities Grant (CCG) strategic programme guidance and terms and conditions of the grant.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Since the inception of the Flying Start programme in 2007 and more recently the Flying Start expansion programme, the local authority has engaged the services of publicly funded healthcare organisations to deliver essential services under the Flying Start programme.
- 2.2 Currently, there are no formal SLAs in place for these services. The level of funding issued to providers delivering the services and service delivery expectations outside of contractual arrangements is high and poses a risk to the local authority.

## **3. Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 Currently there are no legally binding SLAs between Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and providers delivering services under Flying Start.
- 3.2 A working group has been established comprising of officers from Early Years and Childcare Team, Central Grants Team and Legal Services with SLA documentation currently being prepared in draft.
- 3.3 Given the annual value of existing arrangements, it is vital that SLAs are put in place to mitigate the risk of financial implications, service disruption and performance of the services being delivered. It is proposed that all providers delivering Flying Start services under the programme will have their own SLAs in order to deliver in line with Welsh Government grant terms and conditions.
- 3.4 SLAs will outline clear expectations between the providers and BCBC to determine key performance arrangements in line with Welsh Government's performance and data returns ensuring all information is accurately submitted, collated and reported in line with the grant conditions.
- 3.5 The SLAs will support BCBC and the provider to ensure there is clarity and transparency with providing services through the programme objectives.

## **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

## **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 A better and more targeted use of resources. This proposal is focused on long-term security for the Flying Start programme under the CCG. The proposal removes the uncertainty the programme faces around if and when financial and performance returns are not submitted/incorrectly submitted in line with grant terms and conditions and objectives.

- 5.2 Protecting services that matter the most. The proposal, if agreed, will enable the council to take action should any issues arise in relation to the quality of service being delivered or should the expectation of service provision fall short of requirements outlined in the Flying Start and CCG strategic programme guidance.
- 5.3 To support the development of this proposal, the SLAs will have input from the providers providing the service ensuring that all parties understand the objectives, timelines, and responsibilities to ensure the service operates effectively and we meet our commitment to one council, working well together with partners.
- 5.4 It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

## **6. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications linked to this report.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 Flying Start services play a key role in supporting the delivery of intensive support to make a crucial difference to the life chances of Bridgend Flying Start Children 0 to 4-years-old and their families.
- 7.2 The priorities set out in the Flying Start programme reference a need to ensure delivery through the four core elements – intensive Health Visiting support, funded quality childcare, parenting support and support for early literacy. Each element will have their own SLAs in place.
- 7.3 As part of the SLAs, delivery partners will be required to confirm that their staff are trained to recognise the early signs of neglect and abuse and have systems in place to record and escalate concerns that arise.
- 7.4 Effective information sharing in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be obtained to work with Flying Start and collaborate with multi-agency teams to enable 0 to 4-year-old children in Bridgend and their families to be supported by Flying Start where applicable.
- 7.5 Staff will undergo regular safeguarding training, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and ensure they are up to date on current safeguarding guidance and policies.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Flying Start programme is funded by Welsh Government through the CCG. BCBC is responsible to ensure that funding is allocated in line with the grant's terms and conditions and that expenditure is compliant. The absence of SLAs poses a risk to the local authority in terms of public funds.
- 8.2 For the 2025-2026 financial year, BCBC has been allocated £10,004,770 through the CCG where approximately £6,618,838 will be allocated to the Flying Start programme. The funding is reviewed on an annual basis and therefore it is not

necessarily the case that the same amount of funding will be allocated in subsequent financial years.

- 8.3 Regular financial monitoring will continue to ensure concise and accurate reporting to Welsh Government in line with their reporting requirements.
- 8.4 SLAs will make the best use of public funds, ensuring value for money and allowing the council to monitor against an agreed framework of outcomes and impact of service.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 9.1.1 approves the process of entering into SLAs between BCBC and CTMUHB, delivering the Flying Start service;
- 9.1.2 delegates authority to the Head of Partnerships and Housing to approve the final terms of the SLAs on behalf of BCBC and to arrange execution of the agreements on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Regulatory, HR and Corporate Policy;
- 9.1.3 approves any extension or amendment to the SLAs and to enter into any further deeds and documents which are ancillary to the SLAs.

## **Background documents**

None