



Ein cyf/Our ref:FM -/00596/15

Paul Apreda

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Dear Paul,

I am writing in response to your question submitted at the recent Carwyn Connect event, regarding the engagement of fathers through Welsh Government funded programmes. May I take the opportunity to thank you for attending the session and for submitting a question.

All of our family support programmes emphasise the need to work holistically with the whole family, taking an individualised, tailored and flexible approach to support parents and promote engagement. Through our significant investment in the Families First and Flying Start programmes, we continue to develop effective, multi-agency support for families in order to improve their outcomes, particularly for those living in poverty, or at risk of poverty.

Local Authorities are expected to actively promote services to fathers and support their engagement. Our Parenting Support guidance highlights practical strategies for facilitating this engagement. The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty speaks to many parents and practitioners during visits to a wide range of organisations, projects and settings around Wales. As she said at the Children, Young People and Education Committee of 4 June, she has seen first hand how Local Authorities are encouraging and facilitating father engagement.

Many Local Authorities are providing dedicated support specifically tailored to the particular needs of fathers, including providing fathers groups. Many areas are also employing dedicated 'Dad's Workers'. One such 'Dad's worker' from Swansea was recognised at our Flying Start 'Stars in their Lives' Awards in January. Many areas are also training their staff on engaging with fathers and building relationships with them.

My officials have given detailed consideration on how to record individual parents' engagement with Flying Start services. There are, however, a number of difficulties associated with this. Local Authorities recording mechanisms are set up to record information against the child eligible for Flying Start services rather than their father or mother.

As a parent, step parent, live in partner of one child could often be the same for a different child, it is difficult to record this information consistently, especially where grandparents and other relatives also play a parental role. In essence, to record accurately the number of mothers and fathers attending different courses Local Authorities would have to manually scrutinise attendance lists to record relationship details. This would place a disproportionate administrative burden on them.

Thank you once again for taking the time to attend a 'Carwyn Connect' event.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Carwyn' written in a larger, more prominent script than the surname 'Jones'.

CARWYN JONES