Derby City Council’s Families Information Service
Annual Report
December 2018
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Introduction

This annual update provides a summary of the main achievements of the Families Information Service (FIS) during 2018 and outlines some of the key developments planned for 2019 onwards.

FIS provides information, advice and assistance to families with children aged 0-19 years and 0-25 years with additional needs and disabilities. Information is provided on a range of topics including:

- Registered childcare, including what is available locally, what to look for when choosing a quality childcare setting, eligibility for funded places and help with childcare costs;
- Things to do and places to go, including positive activities, sports and leisure clubs, uniformed groups and local events for families;
- Services for families offering support in areas such as health, education options, finance and benefits, family support, parenting and safeguarding.

The FIS offers information to parents via a telephone helpline, email, website, Facebook and face to face at a variety of venues across the city. The service also supports people who work with children, young people and families to access information on their behalf.

The FIS aim is to:

- provide a fully accessible information service to all families in Derby with information available in a range of formats and at a range of contact routes;
- ensure that parents are given information to make informed choices about services for their children and family.

Background

Derby’s Families Information Service is a public facing information hub that delivers the Information Duty, Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 which states that local authorities must provide parents and prospective parents with accurate and up to date information, assistance and guidance on services that support family life.

Access to high quality information can help parents and carers in their parenting role and can be key to improving outcomes for children and young people. In particular, it can support;

- Early intervention – information can support access to the right services at the right time.
- Empowerment – parents are in a better position to make the right choices for their family if they have access to the information they need.
- Engagement – parents are more likely to get involved if they understand what is available.

The Information Duty has been reinforced in the Department of Education (DfE) Guidance June 2018 to local authorities, which focuses on the importance of FIS being able to check eligibility and support families to take up the early education entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duties the Families Information Service (FIS) provides information, advice and assistance to families with children aged 0-19 years and 0-25 years with additional needs and disabilities.

**Enquiry Rates**

FIS is responsible for a wide range of service which generates both professional and public engagement and enquiries:

- **Local offer Social Media engagement**
- **Local Offer Directory data quality**
- **Local Offer web pages management**
- **FIS and LO promotional materials and literature**
- **New Childcare Providers Briefing and support through the registration process.**
- **Consultation and outreach activities for LO and FIS that increases awareness of both FIS and LO and informs the required coproduction and development of the LO.**
- **Childcare web pages management**
- **FIS Social Media engagement**
- **Families Information Service**
- **2 year old eligibility processing**
- **Childcare Directory data quality**
- **Undertake a range of engagement activities to securing good take up rates for the Early Education Entitlement.**
- **Funding for Early Education Entitlement including; headcount processing, code queries Provider audits and supporting childcare providers with using the Provider Portal.**

**Table 1** evidences the number of calls that FIS handled during 2018, there has been a 46% increase in the number of day to day enquiries recorded on Synergy as Quick Enquiries which demonstrates the commitment that the team has places on recording the breadth and number of interactions that are handled via the helpline and emails.

The data also suggests that there has been a slight decrease in the number of childcare enquiries run on Synergy however the reductions is small and could reflect the changes that the team has made to the way enquiries are recorded. The reduction in the number of 2 year old applications processed is also minimal and is in line with the reducing number of children identified by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) as being eligible for a funded 2 year old childcare places. In the Autumn term 2018, the city saw 1111 children accessing a funded place which represented an 80.5% take up, the highest take up achieved to date, so the reduction in applications reflects the change in potential eligible children rather than a reducing interest in the childcare offer.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Childcare Enquiries</th>
<th>Quick Enquiries</th>
<th>2yo Apps*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>361</strong></td>
<td><strong>4879</strong></td>
<td><strong>1417</strong></td>
<td><strong>6657</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Avg/month** | 30.08 | 406.58 | 118.08 | 554.75 |

**2017** | 401 | 3344 | 1477 | 5182 |

**% Change** | -9.98 | 45.90 | -4.06 | 28.46 |

Table 2 plots the total enquiries per month and evidences the peaks in service demand. The start of each academic term shows an increased enquiry rate and this reflects the number of parents that FIS support to find and take up pre-school childcare, check eligibility for funding and access wrap around childcare for school aged children. It also evidences the high levels of support given to childcare providers as they submit headcount data in order to claim the funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Table 2
Families Information Service website statistics

During 2018 the web pages that FIS are responsible for received in excess of 38,700 views, the four most frequently visited pages were:
- Children’s Centres – 13,694
- Childcare providers – 11,017
- Funded 2 year old childcare – 7,031
- Childcare Information for parents – 5,578

FIS has reviewed site usage and included in this the time spent on individual pages which helps to evidences how the site is used by families and professionals. Time spent on page evidenced that users are spending longest on the Funded 3 and 4 year old childcare, Childcare information for parent and Funded 2 year old childcare.

FIS will continue to monitor web site usage and report on site visits and visit trends and use this information to help support the continuing development of the pages.

Families Information Service Social Media statistics

During autumn 2018, FIS re launched the Families Information Service Facebook account and is delivering a very successful engagement campaign; information on services, events and interest articles are posted daily and followers have increased from 224 to 308 a 38% increase in just 3 months.

FIS averages 747 Facebook engagements daily. Published posts have generated 1,400 link clicks which evidences that followers are interested in and engaging with the range of information being published. Posts are split between social interest and childcare related information; in August 2018 we posted about Operation Winter Coat Total which reached a record 58,800, more typically our childcare extended entitlement post in December reached 1,400.

In Autumn FIS delivered an employer engagement campaign targeting small to medium local employers to raise awareness of the Early Education Entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and the Tax Free Childcare offer via both Marketing Derby and LinkedIn.

Childcare and Family Service Records

All service information records are held on Synergy, a specialist database, which supports FIS’s functionality. Currently there are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider type</th>
<th>Number of records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare provider</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice and Guidance</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things to do</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1852</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Childcare providers’ records are audited twice a year in April and October with the majority completing their audit using e-forms on the Provider Portal. All other provider types are audited manually on an annual basis. This involves cross checking service information from the provider’s website or by phoning them to confirm updates.

During 2018, 425 new records were added to the database and 159 records were end dated because the services were no longer available.
GDPR

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations came into force; FIS reviewed all current and historical data records to ensure that the service was compliant. A new protocol was agreed for end dated records which included stripping out all service information and contact details. Historic childcare enquiry letters held within Synergy were deleted with an inventory of data sources and storage completed.

FIS Strengths

- Promotion work undertaken by FIS and prompt eligibility checking of the 2 year old funded childcare offer has supported Derby to exceed an 80% take up rate in the city for the first time.
- 3 and 4 year old funding page has been amalgamated to include the extended entitlement page so that parents now have one place to visit to find out what they might be able to access as their child turns 3.
- Children’s centre colleagues have been trained to submit via the Provider Portal any service updates that they need to ensure that parents are receiving the most up to date information on the support that is available in their local community.
- 425 new services have been added to the Directories giving parents a 21% increase in the number of services that they can self-service they information needs from.
- FIS has linked with the Council’s Learning and Skills objective 9 ‘to increase the number of children benefiting from free breakfast to 800’ by identify and promoting where children can access a free or low cost breakfast.
- In March 2018 FIS successfully bid for a Department of Education (DfE) grant aimed at supporting the take up of the extended entitlement. FIS purchased and implemented two new Synergy modules which will streamline the funding payment process and support eligibility auditing. FIS also purchased the ‘Parental Portal’ module, which DfE are keen for local authorities to offer, as it will provide parents with a seamless journey for validating and securing a funded 3 and 4 year old childcare place.
- FIS delivered 8 New Childcare Provider Briefing sessions, working closely with Toward Work, Job Centre Plus, Children Centres and Priority Families to lead on a targeted childminder recruitment campaign. These activities supported 10 new childcare providers to open which brought 154 new places to the city.
- FIS averages 747 Facebook engagements daily with one social interest post reaching 58,800.
- FIS web pages have supported 38,700 people to self-service their information needs.

What’s happening next?

To ensure compliance with statutory duties next year, the Families Information Service will continue to raise parent and carers awareness of our service and the support it can offer families. We will circulate posters and leaflets to key partners so that the FIS brand is seen around the city and recognised by parents as a trusted source of information.

To comply with DfE requirements, FIS will implement a new parent portal in Spring 2019 which will improve a parents end to end journey, enabling them to validate their HMRC 3 and 4 year old extended entitlement code and contact childcare providers directly to request further information, request a visit and book a funded childcare place.

FIS will continue to build on our successful Facebook campaign and regular post information that supports family life and interests our followers.
FIS will actively identify new services for the Childcare and Families Service Directories so that parents are able to search for and find the latest information on a wide range of local and national services.

FIS will continue to deliver a rolling audit programme for service records in the searchable directories to make sure that the information held is up to date, accurate and trusted by families.

FIS will continue to review the Families Service Directory and Childcare pages with a focus in Spring 2019 on refreshing the information and developing an out of school childcare guidance page.

In summer 2019 FIS aims to publish both a Childcare Sufficiency Assessments for 0 – 5 year olds and one for 5 years and over, the assessments will report on the supply of childcare in each age range and analyse this against demographic data and parental demand.

**Contact Details**

For more information including ordering copies of our leaflets and posters or to invite us to speak to parents or at team meetings, please contact us:

Derby Families Information Service
**Telephone:** 01332 640758  
**Email:** fis@derby.gov.uk  
**Facebook:** @DerbyFIS  
**Website:** [https://www.derby.gov.uk/community-and-living/childcare/](https://www.derby.gov.uk/community-and-living/childcare/)

If you have any queries about this annual report please contact:

Judith Allbutt
Families Information Service Co-ordinator
**Telephone:** 01332 642614  
**Email:** Judith.allbutt@derby.gov.uk
Appendix 1 – Sample Facebook posts

28th August 2018 at 8pm – Total reach of 58,500

Operation Winter Coat!

@DerbyChildrensHealth would like unwanted clean, warm winter coats for children aged 0-16 years. Collection starts on Monday 3 September through to Wednesday 31 October.

You can be drop coats off at Rosehill Children’s Centre or there is a bag you can place them in at the Ashbourne Centre foyer, @KingswayHospital.

28th August 2018 at 8pm – Total reach of 1,400

If your child receives the childcare extended entitlement, make sure you renew the code by 31st December.

Do it today before Christmas preparations take over but hurry up, it's officially the shortest day today! Call 0300 1234 097 or visit http://socsi.in/QL0X

30th September 2018 at 10am

Total reach of 1,600

SENDIASS has a brand new website just for Derby Families! 😃

Derby SENDIASS is a free, confidential, impartial information, advice and support for parents, children and young people up to the age of 25 about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

5th January 2019 at 8am – Total reach of 1,700

Interactions 19

National Eye Week starts today promoting the importance of eye health and the need for regular sight tests for all. The @DerbyArena Velodrome is hosting an event called "Get Stoked" to raise money for @SightSupDerbys. Ride as a stoker on the back of a tandem around the velodrome track. Join their Paracycling Challenge on Friday 28th September between 1.00pm - 4.00pm.

- Open to sighted and visually impaired riders.
- Tandems are piloted by trained professionals.

It's free to enter, they just ask each participant to raise a minimum of £150 in sponsorship. You can enter individually, or in teams of 4.