Family Information Service

2015 - 2016 Annual Report
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Quotes from service users:

- Phew what a relief! Thank you so much for your help you have been an absolute diamond and put my mind at ease throughout all of this

- Once again, thank you so much as I was really freaking out, but am a lot more optimistic now. Thank you for your swift response that's really helpful.
• Very pleased I met you this morning. Most fortuitous. Thank you very much for such a prompt reply.

• How nice of you. I am relieved now. I hope I will have a chance to meet with you and thank you in person.

• Many thanks for the info you have sent, and thank you for going out of your way to help me!!

• This list is really useful, thank you ever so much and also thank you for sending it so promptly. This means more than you know... Thank you so much for your time.

• Thank you. Your approach and help is incredibly kind, and genuinely so, which I’m sure will make a difference to many future panic stricken, lost or confused single parents!
1 Family Information Service - Context

The Family Information Service was developed in 2001 to address Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006; to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and to ensure parents and prospective parents can access the full range of information they may need to support their children physically, emotionally and socially.

The ethos of our Service is both proactive in reaching those parents who might otherwise have difficulty accessing information and inclusive; targeting parents and prospective parents including fathers, mothers, absent parents, foster parents and others caring for a child.

Following the revision of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) legislation in the Children and Families Act 2014 concerning the support to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), the remit of FIS is now formally extended to include support for young people with additional needs to the age of 25 years. The FIS remit includes a wider demographic and, in fulfilling the information, advice and support requirement of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, there is an additional responsibility to ensure access to information around areas such as education, health and social care relating especially to SEND. FIS is the universal point of contact in providing universal and specialist information, advice and support for families with children and young people with additional needs, including young adults.

A number of resources are based within the FIS remit – the Family services Directory – 1 Big Database which now holds all childcare information, the searchable SEND Local Offer website for parents/carers, children and young people as well as linking with Uzone, an e-magazine, for all children and young people.

In line with the current government thinking the resources enable parents, children and young people to see more clearly what services are available in their area, find resources to support them, have an opportunity to review those services and to contribute to the development of new services or identify gaps in service provision. Thus giving more autonomy in choice and ultimately a more informed view of how they access support.

FIS continues to receive the Council’s Tell Us Once enquiries and deals with enquiries about the increased offer of 2 year funding and offers Free School Meals checks. In line with #One Council FIS works to the Corporate Customer Service Care Standards and the Customer First principles, consistently with the front facing council customer services, and have worked tirelessly to smarten delivery, eradicate unnecessary processes and build more robust web and internet resources for families, who can self-serve. As a result web hits to digital resources have increased and Facebook activity has been well used by parents.
Nevertheless access to the helpline via telephone and email has continued to be busy, but the landscape is changing; ten years ago the enquiries to the helpline were of a relatively straightforward nature – a request for a nursery’s details, questions about childcare options or confirmation of the age at which a child could start school and where to find school information - now the Information Team are dealing with much more complex enquiries – calls to the helpline are often complicated in nature, the caller often has anxieties and the calls result in tying together the support of a number of agencies to find a solution to the enquiry. The requirement on the Team is to know more, be inquisitive and invariably to deal with areas of work new to universal delivery. FIS is also the publicised answer to universal delivery of Early Help services in the new Strategy.

FIS also delivers two specialist areas of Information and Advice:

• Information and Advice for Economic Wellbeing – this service supports families who are unwaged or struggling to manage their finances on a low wage. The service operates in community venues including Children’s Centres, One Stop Shops and with other key stakeholders including Connecting Families and social care. See this year’s report at page 16

• Information and Advice SEND and additional needs – this service supports families with children and young people with additional needs, including SEN and disability and contributes to the offer of Information, Advice and Support as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice (2015). See this year’s report at page 20
2 Enquiry Handling and Customer Contact

During 2015/16, FIS recorded 4706 enquiries by telephone to the universal service, 8374 by email, 627 by text, 99 via the Tell Us Once referral system and 22 by post. In addition 6733 enquiries were taken by the Team at community outreach events. The enquirers are a mix of the public, people acting on behalf of families and professional requesting information to support the families they are working with. A huge total of 20,561 questions asked – as well as all those corridor conversations and informal meets!

The specialist services delivered a total of 471 one to one sessions to families and the Team visited over 31 services and organisations at meetings, events and team briefings to promote the work of the FIS and its partners, touching base with in excess of 4440 people.

In addition FIS has promoted hundreds of events via the 1 Big Database calendar, Facebook and through email networks of organisations and professionals working with families, children and young people.

Key newsworthy articles have been written and included in over 10 different journals, staff newsletters, public magazines, electronic newsletters and bulletins and in the press over the year. Adverts for FIS appear regularly on the public TV Connect framework and in relevant family magazines and local newspapers per a planned programme of advertising.

The FIS on line presence:

- 1 Big Database, the universal Family Services Directory, received 13,345 visits to pages maintained by FIS: 1 Big Database holds approximately 2885 organisations, services and activity providers in the local area, including childcare providers.

- Rainbow Resource, the searchable Local Offer for families with a child or young person with an additional need, was re-launched in September and has received 6709 visits this year. Browsers on average spend 3 or 4 minutes on the site!

- Facebook – the FIS account has received 109,968 visits this year and is linked directly with 103 organisations and services!

3 Customer Insight

Following our work with the business analyst it was agreed that in order to truly understand what our customers want from the service and how well we have performed we would undertake a sample of telephone interviews with our customers in addition to collecting the comments/feedback from our customers.
General Customer Feedback
The vast majority of our customers are happy with the service they receive from FIS: they tell us we are quick to respond, we listen, we provide a very high level of good customer service and we are well informed. The FIS Team has a bursting folder of compliments to evidence this and has not received one complaint this year.

Monthly feedback calls
Outbound calls have been made each month to customers who have contacted FIS the previous month. The aim of these calls has been to check in detail how satisfied they were with the level of service they had received, how useful the information had been and to identify areas in which we can improve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Successful calls</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We spoke to 67 customers over the course of the year.

Key findings
The calls made are all to customers who made telephone enquiries to FIS rather than those that emailed.

When asked if they would rather have self served online, ie found the information they wanted by searching our websites and databases, an overwhelming 45% of respondents said they would prefer to call and talk to someone. 37% of respondents said they would rather self-serve and 18% said they had no preference. The 45% of customers stated that they wanted to speak to someone; they wanted to have a dialogue and to gain clarity around subjects. They felt that wouldn’t be possible through self service.

How do customers find our number?
The data we gathered suggests that Health Visitors are a very good channel for getting the Family Information Service number to families. 18% of our respondents found our number this way. A further 61% found our number online; either through our website or through Google.

With 61% of respondents going online to find our number but still ringing through to use our service, it suggests that either people are unable to find the information they need or that they would prefer to have a conversation with a person. This notion is supported with the majority of respondents (45%) saying they would not prefer to self serve. Anecdotal evidence from feedback calls also supports this.
How do our customers rate the service delivered?

Customers are largely very satisfied with the service received.

- 99% of respondents stated that we were able to answer all of their questions.
- 100% of respondents felt that our response was timely.
- 100% felt that the information given was up to date.
- 82% were able to find the childcare they needed.
- 86% did not have to change their request to suit their needs.

That 14% of our customers had to change their request to find appropriate childcare is also of concern and again one that we will feed back to the Childcare Sufficiency Team.

It might be useful to revisit a few of the customers we spoke to and drill down into the detail of a few cases to find out exactly what barriers and issues affected them securing suitable childcare.

Additional findings and comments

- Very polite and helpful service, answered all the questions I had about 2 year funding and how the hours can be used.
- Very quick phone call to get the information I needed.
- Gave me some really good pointers of where to find the information I needed.
- The information given was very, very useful
- Really helpful, couldn't have asked for more. Childcare was found very reasonable
- Very very helpful, sent a lot of information
- People spoke to were really friendly and helpful.
- Really happy with the service and lots of things were happening now as a result of the phone call.
- Everything was fine, a great help.
- Very nice, guided through online stuff, Angela was called back to ensure she was getting on ok. Granddaughter started school 6 days after the phone call.
- Advisor was brilliant - she answered phone and spoke to her colleague. Said she would email the information, which she did. Then called to check information had been received.
- I prefer to not to use internet. Found information on EY funding very complicated and too much.
- Very helpful - didn't have a clue what I was doing!
- Very happy with outcome
- Hasn't had baby yet so haven't taken up childcare. Using the list though.

From the feedback that was received by both telephone and emails it shows that all customers were pleased with the service they received from the Family Information Service.
4 Service Promotion and Marketing

During the year members of the Family Information Service have attended a large number of conferences, training events, visits to childcare settings, including baby and toddler groups, interagency meetings and events. These are good opportunity for FIS to network and to promote the vast breadth of information that we provide. Regular sessions have been:

- 7 Interagency meetings in the different areas of B&NES
- 30 Reception New Parent Intake evenings
- 7 Open evenings for Year 7 pupils at secondary schools
- Monthly One Stop Shop sessions in Bath and Keynsham and Midsomer Norton
- Stakeholder events at Children’s Centres

We have also had the opportunity to speak at other team meetings:
- Customer Services
- Registrars
- SENDIT
- Parent Support Advisors
- Council Connect
- Disabled Children’s Team

Attendance at training courses and conferences also offers networking opportunities in addition to increasing our knowledge base with up-to-date and in-depth information;

- Attachment disorders
- Customer Care Standards
- Welfare benefit update
- E-Safety
- Benefit training for young people
- Writing reports for impact
- Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI)
- Tribunal training
- Hidden Sentence
- Fire Warden
- Action against child poverty
- Preparing young people for independence
- Real Ambition, real jobs – Facilitating the route into work for young people with SEND
- 14 – 25 strategy stakeholder meeting
- Employment is everyone’s business
- Common assessment framework
- Regional Training from aspiration to outcome
Several of the team were able to attend training and events that were being provided by other teams and deliver a session on what the Family Information Service can offer, including:

- The Introduction to Childminding Practice (ICP)
- SEND SENCo briefings
- Parents Carers Aiming High meetings

FIS has had a presence at a number of conferences, providing a stand of information, or information about the service in delegate packs, and we have networked with a range of attendees about the available resources:

- Strategic Director’s meeting for Head Teachers
- School admin and finance staff events
- Bath City Conference
- Bath Freshers’ Fair
- Step by Step in Children’s Centres
- Equalities Summit
- DHI
- APEX practitioners meeting
- Transitions core group
- Disabled persons strategy group
- Learning Difficulties Group – post 16
- Childminder groups
- Inclusive Sports Group
- Student and family support team – Bath Studio School
- Avonsafe meetings
- Personal Skills and Employability working group
- IPSEY – Early Years Assessment Panel for SEND
- LSCB joint working steering group
- Stonewall/ equalities groups
- Early Help board
- Strengthening Social Care project group
- Prince’s Trust drop-in
- Job Centre Plus events
Quality standards and benchmarking
Baby feeding hubs

FIS has had a Regional and National presence:

- SWIASS – Taunton
- FIS South West Regional meetings
- South West Disability conference

5 Universal Parenting Outreach

In light of the Early Help agenda, and with a number of services targeting resources at key sets of families identified by a range of factors relating to need, universal groups have a part to play.

Parent and toddler groups, and under 5s activity groups, are often the ‘soft’ parenting option that supports families in the early days of having children. Comparing concerns and issues with others experiencing the same is comforting and lifelong friendships are made. Those shy of approaching ‘professionals’ about concerns will often talk to friends, so getting good information to the local communities can have positive benefits.

As a result FIS has reinstated universal outreach visits. We aim to provide an annual visit to any group catering for children 0 – 5 years and their parents – this could be parent and toddler groups, messy play, Mums/Dads and bumps – at the visit we make contact with the organiser and capture the details of where and when the group meets and seek their permission to publicise this on the 1 Big Database Calendar for other parents to see. This enables FIS to provide up-to-date accurate information for all 1 Big Database users and enquirers to the service.

At the same time we meet informally with the parents and helpers in the room and leave information about FIS and how to access our resources. We engage with the group and offer access to Early Years and Safeguarding training and our specialist services. To date this has worked really well. Many parents are first time parents and are not aware what support is available for them. These visits offer an opportunity to provide information in a relaxed and informal way, put a face to the name and introduce FIS

For over 10 year FIS has collated paper folders of useful information for parents – 2500 were compiled and delivered to new parents by Health Visitors each year. This year, in line with the Council’s Digital by Default delivery and to rationalise use of resources (time and printing costs), we added all of the resources from the folder to the Council Website - Information for Parents - and produced postcard size room thermometers highlighting with the web address. Health Visitor’s give the thermometer to all new parents and point out the resources that can be found there. As a result we have only produced 1 hard copy folder for families who have needed to access paper resources; over 2000 families have accessed the resources on line. Pack printing and preparation time has been saved and enables the Information Team to undertake these outreach visits which are proving valuable.
The groups reached this year can be seen in the table below.

**Baby/Toddler Group Visits 2015/2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Name</th>
<th>Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acorns Parent Toddler Group</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Comes Too</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathampton Mini- Club</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batheaston Toddler Group</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathford Baby &amp; Toddler Group</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Tots</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumps &amp; Babies (Moorlands Infant School)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatterbox</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clutton Mother, Baby &amp; Toddler Group</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coombe Down Toddlers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Harptree Parent &amp; Toddler Group (Baby Bears)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Toddler Group</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Steps (Whitchurch) Toddler Group</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxhill Toddlers &amp; Babes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midsomer Norton Methodist Toddlers</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltford Community Church Toddlers</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southdown Infants Stay &amp; Play</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total groups visited = 24    Total numbers reached = 435

6. Specialist Information and Advice Service - Economic Wellbeing

This service supports families who are unwaged, or struggling to manage their finances on a low wage, or who have a number of finance related issues. The Information and Advice Officer is full time and has allocated days of the week for specific areas to ensure cross authority visibility.

Support is offered at face to face appointments, over the phone, sometimes entirely by email or via professionals who are already supporting the family. Families can often be seen on a drop-in basis if not already with a customer.

Face to face appointments are usually held at children’s centres or other council buildings but could be in any public building (home visits are only offered if the supporting professional is also present)

Total number of sessions 356 for the year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath East</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath West</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynsham and Chew</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somer Valley</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most sessions are attended by one person only and are held at a Children’s Centre convenient to the customer. Other sessions have been held in One Stop Shops, schools and libraries, and information has also been given over the phone and by email if a face to
face appointment has not been necessary. Some sessions are attended by more than one member of the family which can include different generations and there has been a slight increase from last year of requests to do home visits with supporting professionals (FIS does not offer an unaccompanied home visit service). Families are occasionally accompanied to the first meeting by a supporting professional and are, more often than not, then happy to attend subsequent meetings without that support.

Usually one appointment is sufficient to enable the family to act upon any advice given with the appointment being booked for an hour (but may take less or more time). Some families need more support over a period of time and repeat appointments have been booked over the following weeks, months and sometimes a year or more after the initial meeting if something else arises.

Specific information has been delivered to small groups when requested to do so by the facilitator. This includes attendance of targeted groups at Children’s Centres and also visits to universal groups when requested where general information about benefits etc. is given. The officer continues to raise awareness of Universal Credit and some of related implications in the hope that families will be able to prepare themselves in good time. ‘Managing your Money’ packs are given at appointments with a view to helping people to start thinking about budgeting on a monthly basis. The officer has also continued to attend general ‘FIS Outreach’ visits and offered specific economic wellbeing information as requested.

In addition to the appointments with families, and supporting FIS outreach, the I&A officer’s role has included attendance at the One Stop Shop, a variety of stakeholder meetings on behalf of FIS and representing the Manager at key events.

Included in the figures above are instances when information has been given direct to professionals already working with families including Parent Support Advisors, Health Visitors, CC staff, Social Workers etc.

Customers are able to self-refer (The Family Information Service is advertised in Children’s Centres, public buildings, childcare providers and via bookmarks given out by health professionals and also at primary schools amongst other avenues). The referral route for professionals is made as easy as possible and is sometimes via phone/email and even via a conversation held in the corridor!

### Referrals were received via the following routes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bath East</th>
<th>First Steps/Bath West</th>
<th>K&amp;CVC</th>
<th>SVCC</th>
<th>U/K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carers’ Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Centre Staff</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Information Service (FIS)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Nurse Partnership (FNP)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Visitors</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off The Record</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support Advisor (PSA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(The figures above include some families with older children, including young expectant parents, of which there has been an increase in sessions this year generally as a result of referrals from the Family Nurse Partnership team).

Although a customer may have a particular issue that they initially want to discuss when booking an appointment, if often becomes apparent during conversation that there are others issues that can be addressed. ‘Unpicking’ the situation and helping the customer to prioritise what action needs to be taken is a key task for the service. The customer receives a follow up contact about 6 weeks after the last intervention to see if agreed actions were followed up and whether any further support is required.

**Issues Discussed**

- Out of work benefits
- Low income benefits
- Charity funding applications
- Childcare options
- Help with childcare costs
- Free school meals
- 2 year old nursery entitlement
- Housing including ‘Homeseach’ information
- Maternity/paternity rights
- Relationship issues
- Tax credits – including support with annual declarations
- Better off in work calculations
- Child benefit entitlement
- Child maintenance options
- Debt issues
- Income tax issues
- Rent arrears
- Care to learn information
- School application information
- Support around benefits for family where a child will be placed (following Special Guardianship)
- Information for a 17 year old working part-time
- Help with fuel bills (inc. Warm Home Discount)
- Budgeting
- Benefits if a domestic violence victim leaves partner
- Support/benefits for a child with additional needs
• Information about short term benefit advance
• How to challenge a Child Benefit claim refusal
• Information around residency for a child currently living abroad
• Benefits for grandparents caring for a child
• Information for expectant couple wanting to live together
• Special Guardianship information
• Benefits etc. for a recently lone parent
• Transfer of NI credits (Home Responsibility Protection)
• Benefit cap
• Help with school trip costs
• Benefit sanction
• Information for a Mum who’s child was being returned to her care
• Discretionary housing payment
• Support for University student living in low income household
• Funding for prison visits
• Parental responsibility following bereavement
• Carer’s allowance
• Absent father’s contact rights
• How to trace a child trust fund
• Mice problem in the home

Some of the enquiries were not within the service scope and so customers were signposted to other local and national departments, agencies and online support including:

• Online benefit calculator
• Citizen’s Advice
• Carers’ centre
• DWP
• Gingerbread
• Housing options
• HMRC
• Police
• Send Partnership Service
• Welfare Support Scheme
• Local/national charities
• Cool Ventures Bath (support for those wishing to become self-employed)
• SWAN
• Action for ME
• Reach
• Southside
• Bath College
• National Careers Service
• Children’s Centres (for events and/or family support)
• Home Office
• FIS (officer supporting families who have a child with SEND)
• Water company site ‘Assist’ information
• Child maintenance options
Positive outcomes

Follow up calls and/or emails are made or sent at around a month or two after the last interaction with customers. Replies are not always received however some of the positive outcomes are listed below:

- Receipt of Child Benefit
- Receipt of Healthy Start vouchers
- Receipt of Child Tax Credits
- Foodbank vouchers accessed
- Sainsbury’s voucher accessed via WSS for young couple managing on very limited income.
- Extension of payment for Child Tax Credit (delay of the cut-off date) whilst the records were updated
- Registration with CC Services (Estart)
- Access to full support from CC and Social Care team for special guardian of child with additional needs at risk of placement breakdown
- Better knowledge of financial support available for young parents
- Suitable child care accessed (at a lower costs than the young lone parent had originally been quoted form a much more expensive provider)
- Successful funding applications for various household items and flooring
- Better understanding of the benefit system and what to expect from Universal Credit
- Payment of nursery arrears by local charity enabling the child to continue attending
- Access to 2 year funding
- Dual housing benefit accessed
- Council tax discount received
- Housing Benefit and LHA accessed
- Better understanding about school policy on charging for trips
- Awareness of support available for families with a child with SEND

Customers are asked if they are satisfied with the service, and satisfaction rates from both customers and professionals are at 100%

7 Specialist Support for Families with Children and Young People with Disability and Additional Needs

This service supports families with children and young people with additional needs, including SEN and disability and contributes to the offer of Information, Advice and Support as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice (2015). The Information and Advice Officer works 30 hours per week, and has a flexible offer to support families, children, young people, and professionals. Families receive support by face to face meetings, telephone contact and via email both individually and in group situations. Face to face
appointments are usually held in public buildings, Children’s Centres or other council buildings. Home visits are only offered if a supporting professional is also present.

The service has supported 115 families and professionals from October 2015 to March 2016 through face to face contact. The service has also received 139 calls and approximately 200 email enquiries.

Topics of enquiry have covered a wide range relating to support and information for families with children and young people with additional needs and enquiries from professionals - those that have been requested more often are:

- Details of, and sign posting to, inclusive positive activities e.g. play schemes, clubs, groups, professionals, Send Partnership Service, Carers Centre, Early Years Team,
- Brokerage to find inclusive childcare – linking with providers to ensure that the family’s needs can be met, including leisure activities, clubs, schools and pre school provision.
- Information about, and signposting to, financial assistance /benefits/ grants
- Information for families new to the area
- From families and professionals regarding aspects of the Preparing for Adulthood Agenda Information about, and signposting to, organisations and services that can support ASD /Challenging behaviour/, dental referrals, funding requests for pre-schools, Rainbow Resource information and registration, and young carers’ support groups.

Where enquiries have been from families, generally one parent has attended a face to face meeting. Repeat contacts would usually be via telephone, email, at joint school/nursery meetings and on occasions on another face to face meeting. A face to face meeting is usually booked for one and a half hours.

Group sessions have been arranged at the request of the facilitator where the Information and Advice Officer will share general and specific information about the services available. This may be to parent groups or to groups of professionals or at training events.

Families and young people can self-refer and some referrals are also received from:

- Health Visitors
- Children’s Centres
- Nursery/pre schools
- Family Information Service
- SEND Partnership Service
- One Stop Shops
Repeat referrals

Positive Outcomes

Some of the positive outcomes are listed below.

- Many families or young people now have the support of the Send Partnership Service
- Families have received help around benefits, funding and other financial queries and are now in receipt of the appropriate benefits
- Families have felt supported and more confident in meetings and with visits to schools/nurseries
- Parents and children or young people now have regular contact from the Carers’ Centre
- A lot more families have the Rainbow Resource concession card
- Children and young people with specific diagnosis now access dental support

Targeted outreach to a range of providers supporting parents and carers and children and young people
- Step by Step Sessions at Children’s Centres: Radstock, St Martins Garden Nursery, Keynsham Children’s Centre
- Carers’ Centre: Parent Carers Aiming High group meetings
- Margaret Coates Centre Saturday club
- KIDS Bath Saturday Club
- Inclusive Sports Club: Bath University and Better Leisure facilities
- Wheels for All sessions
- Nursery and pre-school visits

Rainbow Resource Scheme: Bath & North East Somerset

The Local Authority is required to collect information about its children and young people with disability and additional needs. The Rainbow Resource Scheme database holds basic information about children and young people including name, contact details, age and diagnosis. This information is held securely by Bath & North East Somerset Council and can only be accessed by authorised staff and complies with data protection. Inclusion on the list is voluntary. We collect this information to inform service delivery and commissioning intentions and to enable families to receive information about services directly.
Children and young people aged between 0-25 years who are disabled or have any additional needs and who are resident in Bath & North East Somerset are eligible for a card which may entitle them to concessions to some leisure venues and attractions.

There are 253 children and young people registered on the Scheme.

On going task to research and update the list of providers / attractions that recognise the card and the concessions they provide

The revised Rainbow Resource bookmark and wide spread distribution promotes the searchable Local Offer and RR Scheme. RR Scheme registration forms are being included in all packs of Education, Health and Care Plan information.

8 Communication with Service Users, Stakeholders and Professionals Working with Families

FIS is supported by the People and Communities Communications Coordinator who works to raise awareness of, and promote, the breadth of services and initiatives across People & Communities, including the Family Information Service, SEND Partnership Service, safeguarding adults and children, services for older people, carers, mental health, adults with LD, adults with physical and sensory impairments, adults living with alcohol/drug misuse, using various media outlets and working with partners from health, social care, voluntary sector and the community.

Main responsibilities:

- To ensure the accuracy of the People & Communities council web pages and related intranet content.
- Production of a range of directories and resources for People and Communities including information for families in the widest context
- Liaison with colleagues in the Council (e.g. the library home and mobile services, community meals service, One Stop Shops and Public Health) and our partners (including Banes CCG, Sirona care and health occupational therapists, health visitors and district nursing team, schools colleges and B&NES Carers’ Centre, The Wellbeing College) to ensure appropriate information reaches as many service users as possible
- Production of a range of fact sheets, social care information, including a Care Guide and Directory of Services for Older People. Links to useful external websites are also provided (including Well Aware, 1 Big Database), to signpost people to where they can access further information and support.
- Joint working with the Health, commissioners, stakeholders, the voluntary sector and statutory services
- Project work to deliver council and legislative initiatives – eg developing a range of information about CSE, involvement in the FGM ‘task and finish’ working group,
which includes drafting a poster and a Connect TV ad, ensuring the FIS Facebook page continues to provide timely and relevant information, ensure web content is kept updated, logo consultation for the new LSCB logo, design of leaflets and publicity for various services

- Raising awareness about key issues including child protection, 2 year funding, healthy school meals, applying for a school place, post 16 options for young people, young carers’ etc
- Management of, and quality assurance for, the FIS Information Officers

**Getting the message out there**

The following publications and ebulletins/newsletters are used to raise awareness on a regular basis. A local media company support planned promotion of services and initiatives:

- Council Connect magazine (published quarterly) and delivered to every household in Bath & North East Somerset
- Council internal communications – Staff Matters, One Council, intranet
- Council and partner’s websites, inc. Sirona care and health, BaNES CCG, The Carers’ Centre
- Bespoke family magazines
- Local press and community publications
- Facebook
- Connect TV
- Twitter messages
- Health, social care and partner newsletters
- Council’s interagency newsletter
- Voluntary Sector newsletters, such as Healthwatch

**Impact of the Service**

Raising awareness of all services enables service users and potential service users to make informed choices. Good information also manages customer expectation.

The provision of accurate, clear, jargon-free, timely and accessible information and signposting people to services can help prevent them needing more acute or complex (and thus expensive) services.
By utilising a range of publications, consulting with service users and listening to feedback we reach a wide range of people in Bath & North East Somerset.

9 Conclusion

The last year has been a busy year for FIS, and the ethos of the small team is to network, support and deliver so that families are provided with the information they need, in the right format, at the right time, by the sources they trust. New, smarter ways of working have enabled the team to absorb new tasks and responsibilities and developments to 1 Big Database and Rainbow Resource have enhanced the customer experience. The key to meeting the challenges for information is all about service delivery, knowing the service user and maintaining quality.

The redesign of the service, which impacts from 1 October 2016, will mean that the current digital resources form the future FIS offer to families. Enquiries will be fielded by Council Connect and the One Stop Shops and during the summer a comprehensive programme of training will take place with those staff to enable them to direct families to the right information.

FIS will be maintaining a facebook presence and managing a number of other digital initiatives to promote best practice and disseminate useful information to practitioners, the public and our partners.

The Early Help App which is currently in design will offer providers a signposting service to quality provision where families can seek support.

I would like to thank everyone who has ever used FIS, or has supported FIS in promotion, networking and delivery and it is with regret that I move away from this area of work after 12 years.

Jackie Fielder
Family information and SEND Partnership Services Manager
10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1 - FIS Organisation Chart

ORGANISATION CHART
Family Information & SEND Partnership Service 1 September 2014

Manager
Family Information and SEND Partnership Services
Post no. 30189

People & Communities Information Officer

Information Officer (2 fte)

Information and Advice Officer Economic Wellbeing

Development Worker for Families with Disabled Children

Information Officer (0.54 fte)