Introduction

Warwickshire Family Information Service (FIS) was launched in October 2007 as a response to the increasing diversity of information being provided by the former Children’s Information Service. Driven by the requirements of Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 Warwickshire FIS grew out of these roots to become a ‘one stop shop’ of information for families on a variety of topics.

A key element of this is to be pro-active in establishing and maintaining our information service in ways that best facilitate access to it, in particular, that reach out to people who might otherwise have difficulty in taking advantage of the service.

Our vision for Warwickshire is that every family, no matter what their circumstances, race, gender, age, religion, belief, sexual orientation, marital status or any disability is able to access accurate, up to date and timely information, in a format they prefer, at the time they require it.

National and corporate drivers

The work of the FIS is underpinned by the Childcare Act 2006, in particular Section 12 duty to provide information, advice and assistance and the Section 11 duty to undertake an assessment of the sufficiency of local childcare.

In addition, the work of the team supports the following corporate ambitions:

1. Community and customers
   Offer universal access to services and advice in person, via telephone and online channels, through our One Front Door project. Warwickshire FIS has established access routes through all these channels and actively promotes partnership working to enable greater access and encourage use by families who traditionally would not engage with services.

   Encourage volunteering across the County. Working with the parent participation development officer, Warwickshire FIS is developing volunteering opportunities for parents within the service.

   Improve resident satisfaction with services and their role in shaping services. The FIS maintains high satisfaction levels with the services offered, regularly seeks feedback from customers and is actively supporting the use of parent representatives to ensure parents’ views on the development of the service are considered.
4. Enterprise, transport and tourism

*Increase opportunities for people to improve their work related skills.* The FIS supports parents to access childcare enabling them to take up work or work related training.

6. Schools and education

*Raise the educational aspirations of children, young people and families.* The team promotes access to positive activities, provides information on local clubs and is an active partner in the Warwickshire directory.

*All children and young people in Warwickshire are healthier.* The team provides an anti-bullying helpline and email service for parents.

Think family agenda

- Supporting the concept of ‘no wrong door’ by providing information on a variety of subjects and signposting to wider services based on the needs of the individual family.

Reducing child poverty

- Proportion of children in poverty – The team provides a range of information on financial support available to families.

- Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families – The team maintains a database of Ofsted registered provision to ensure parents are provided with accurate and up to date information on childcare options. Additional work with Job Centre Plus is undertaken to promote the use of formal childcare to parents returning to work.

**Role of the team**

Our purpose is to:

- Provide a free and impartial information and signposting service for all families, children and young people (aged 0-20) living within the county of Warwickshire, using a variety of mediums

- Offer information and support to other professionals to enable them to develop their services and work more effectively with families

- Meet the requirements of Sections 11 and 12 of the Childcare Act 2006

**Description of services**

The following sections give a brief summary of the key functions undertaken by the FIS team.

Telephone and email helpline - This local rate number and central email address gives families the opportunity to seek impartial information through a trained member of staff on a variety of subjects. Specific services are offered regarding childcare and bullying.
Outreach - A team of outreach workers provide families with the opportunity to access services face to face from a variety of locations. Outreach work is focussed on those families who either would not or cannot otherwise access our services through the telephone helpline or online.

Online - A comprehensive suite of webpages has been developed to enable families to access information on a wide variety of subjects online, mirroring that available through our helpline and outreach services.

Childcare Brokerage - A dedicated brokerage officer provides one to one support for families where they need tailored support beyond that offered by our helpline and outreach staff.

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment - Warwickshire FIS leads on the production of the childcare sufficiency assessment, including mapping the supply and demand of childcare within the county.

Communications and Marketing - A programme of both universal and targeted marketing ensures that awareness of our services is increasing.

Resources - Warwickshire FIS maintain and develop a large bank of information resources, both electronically (via the FIS Website or by email) and in hard copy. Key leaflets are also translated into other languages where demand has been identified, and other information can be translated on request.

3 year strategy

Due to the ever changing nature of information and the changing needs of Warwickshire families, Warwickshire FIS continually looks to develop our service provision. In particular we will focus on developing:

- The quality of information available through our services, including the development of resources, monitoring and quality assuring our work and ongoing training of staff
- Improving access to the service through raising awareness of access routes, targeting outreach work and ensuring all routes provide easy access to high quality, impartial information
- Working in partnership to increase information availability for families, promote information sharing and support integrated working.

Specific targets can be found in the FIS annual business plan.
Introduction

The overarching aim of the service for 2013-13 is to maintain a high quality and accessible information service for Warwickshire Families.

To support our work on this agenda in 2012-13 the Family Information Service will be focussing on the following key priorities:

1. Low income families
2. Families with a disabled child
3. Families with English as an additional language
4. Increasing customer access by establishing a presence on social media and an online provider update facility

Other relevant documents

For information on our achievements over the last year please refer to the FIS Annual report 2011-12.

Contacts

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