

Meeting of:	Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 15 July 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Family Information Service Annual Report 2018/19
Purpose of Report:	To update Scrutiny Committee on the work of the Vale Family Information Service (FIS)
Report Owner:	Director of Social Services
Responsible Officer:	Head of Resource Management and Safeguarding
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Cabinet Member, Social Care & Health Operational Manager, Accountancy Operational Manager, Legal
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Report provides current information on the performance of the Vale Family Information Service (FIS). • The FIS Annual Report includes information on a major change that has been implemented in relation to the roll out of the Welsh Government's 30 Hour Childcare Offer in the Vale of Glamorgan. • The Family Information Service plays a vital role in contributing to the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) requirement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. 	

Recommendations

1. That Scrutiny Committee considers the Annual Report of the Vale Family Information Service (FIS) and the work undertaken to support parents/carers and providers in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. Scrutiny receives annual updates on the Family Information Service.
3. Members consider the impact of the Welsh Government 30 Hour Childcare Offer upon the Family Information Service.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure effective oversight of this important area of social services activity.
2. To ensure Scrutiny Committee continues to be updated with regard to the Family Information Service.
1. To ensure Members are aware of the 30 Hour Childcare Offer.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Family Information Service (FIS) provides families in the Vale of Glamorgan with information and guidance on child care and support services for families. These include additional needs support, activities and groups for children and young people.
- 1.2 The FIS currently maintains a database of over 800 services including approximately 190 family support services, 190 Children and Young People's activities and services, 300 childcare resources and 65 parent and toddler groups. FIS uses the [Dewis Cymru online directory](#) as its database and ensures that all services are updated every 6 months.
- 1.3 Outreach activities have increased, which support parents in the community, through schools, groups and via key professionals. The service works closely with agencies such as the Families First Advice Line, Carers support, Flying Start, PACE, JCP, health visitors, schools and sports and play, to reach parents in greatest need.
- 1.4 The Vale FIS has experienced a number of changes in 2018/19, including the regionalisation of the Index, which holds information on children with additional needs, and the roll out of the 30 hours Childcare offer. The Childcare Offer provides parents of eligible children with 17.5 hours of funded childcare per week in term time and 30 hours during 9 weeks of the school holidays. FIS has increased its use of social media to engage with parents and promote the service and uses the Vale Connect system to send regular e-bulletins to parents, providers and professionals.
- 1.5 The Welsh Government 30 hours Child Care Offer was originally planned for implementation in the Vale of Glamorgan in September 2019. However, expectations of Welsh Government were that it was to be rolled out across

Wales by April 2019, which had a significant impact on the number of enquiries being received by the FIS Team and service.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** While the core funding for FIS was not increased in line with this growth in the number and type of enquiry received, grant funding has been made available to assist the transition and increase staff resources. Recruitment has now been made to support the Child Care Offer, which has rectified the additional pressure felt by the rest of the team.
- 2.2** The Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) requirement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has meant that the FIS plays a vital role in ensuring that families are provided with the right information at the right time.
- 2.3** A new national Family Information Service website has been created by Data Cymru, which links to the Dewis Cymru website. Plans are in place to launch this website as the primary place to go for information on childcare, groups, family support and activities for children and young people in Wales.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** FIS is a preventative service, reaching families in the community and providing relevant information that can prevent families reaching crisis point. Enquiries to FIS vary greatly from childcare, help with childcare costs, support for a family who has a child with additional needs and doesn't know where to turn, to groups for parents and children who feel isolated. Example case studies are provided in the FIS Annual Report (Appendix 1).
- 3.2** The implementation of the Welsh Government Childcare Offer will help parents to increase their working hours, or those who are not working to consider employment. FIS works collaboratively with partners to ensure parents are encouraged to apply and to ensure that childcare providers also see the benefits of the scheme. FIS also intend to consult with all parents and childcare providers who have contacted the service regarding the Offer, to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Offer itself, as well as the FIS.
- 3.3** To ensure the IAA is working effectively, FIS works closely with many organisations to ensure families are signposted and referred for the correct support. These include the Families First Advice Line, Vale Parenting Service, PACE Project, Health Visitors, Carers Development Officer, Flying Start, Job Centre Plus, Sport and Play Development and many more. Examples of this are given as case studies and outreach events in the FIS Annual Report (Appendix 1). FIS also ensure that organisations use Dewis Cymru as the well-being resource directory for Wales and they ensure information is available and up to date. The new national FIS website links to the Dewis Cymru website so providers only have to update their information once. FIS will be promoting this site in the coming year.

- 3.4** FIS contact all those who have enquired to the service to ask for feedback, to help develop the service. For example 100% of parents who contacted the service for information to support their child with additional needs, said that the information had made a positive impact on them and their family. FIS plans to support the improvement of information on transition, reflecting changes in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill and will be consulting with young people and their parents to find out what information is important to them and how they would like to receive this.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The Family Information Service is funded from RSG as a legacy from Welsh Government Cymorth Grant which transferred to RSG in 2008.
- 4.2** Additional funding to support The Index is provided under a Service Level Agreement funded from Families First.
- 4.3** Welsh Government funding for the Childcare Offer has funded a temporary Engagement Officer who sits within the Family Information Service.

Employment

- 4.4** There are no employment considerations resulting from this Report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.5** The Family Information service enables the Council to fulfil its responsibilities under the Child Care Act 2006, Section 27, regarding the provision of prescribed information to parents and prospective parents, on childcare and other services or facilities.
- 4.6** It also provides an integral part of the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) service, as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014).

5. Background Papers

Family Information Service Annual Report 2018-19.



Appendix 1. Outreach Evaluation 2019

Kelly Hughes – Outreach and Information Officer

Julia Sky – Index Officer

1. The Vale Family Information Service (FIS) continually seek outreach opportunities to enable us to engage with families we may not have previously reached, offering information and support to those who may need it. Free family events are a great way for us to meet parent/carers, enabling us to engage and talk to them in a relaxed and informal environment.

Over the last 12 months, we have hosted 2 of our own events and run 5 small scale workshops, as well as supporting partner organisations in the delivery of their events.

A variety of information and leaflets are always available at each of our events and we are able to take direct enquiries on the day and feedback any relevant information.

2. Summary

In total, the FIS attended 127 Outreach events and groups throughout the last financial year (Apr 18-Mar19), enabling us to engage with over 3,330 people. We have built good working relationships with existing partner organisations and developed new relationships with new services. Referrals continue to come into us from these organisations and vice versa, enabling us to better inform and support our families together.

Free family events, both large scale and small are key to us being able to reach those we may not have previously met and we will continue to work alongside our partner organisations to do so.

3. FIS School and Partner Certificate

A further 6 partners have achieved the FIS Partner Certificate. These are Vale Libraries, Adult Learning, Design to Smile, Communities 4 Work, Inspired Learners and Cylch Meithrin Pili Pala.

St Illtyds and Ysgol Y Ddraig have both achieved the FIS School Certificate in the last 12 months. We have also engaged with 7 schools who we have not previously engaged with. They are keen to offer parents information on the 30 hour Childcare Offer or Index coffee mornings.

4. Carer Drop in Clinics

FIS worked with the Carer's Support Officer and the Families First Advice Line to organise Carers' Drop in Clinics, for carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and young carers in the Vale. The aim was to provide immediate information and support to families and to offer a carer's assessment if appropriate. Those already on the waiting list for a carer's assessment were also invited. 6 clinics were held in various areas in the Vale and a total of 20 carers attended and received information and support.

5. Family Fun Day by Barry Town Council 29 May

The free event was hosted by Barry Town Council to raise awareness of the Barry Cemetery. We attended along with Vale Libraries and Sports and Play from the Council. Other local organisations and charities also attended. All stall holders were asked to provide activities to engage with families and the event was publicised through Social Media, local radio and newspapers. The event was very successful with over 200 people attending. We spoke to over 50 parents, taking 5 direct enquiries on the day.

6. National Play Day – Romilly Park, 1 August

A partnership event was hosted by the FIS and the Sports and Play Team. The annual event aims to highlight children's right to play and its importance in children's lives. This event was attended by over 100 families and ran until 7pm to reach working families. An array of activities and play equipment was spread across the greenspace to cater for all ages and abilities.



7. Picnic and Play – Central Park, 10 August

The FIS hosted this event at Central Park in Barry. Ten of our regular partner organisations were invited. However we then opened up the invites to local groups and organisations who were keen to promote their services. This helped build relationships with those we may not have worked with previously. Some of the groups who came forward included the Urdd, Badminton Wales, All Star Cricket and Active Health and Wellbeing. It was also the first public event that the new Vale Parenting Service had attended.

A variety of activities, sporting mini taster sessions and workshops ran throughout the day. We received support from local Supermarkets Waitrose, Asda and Tesco who all donated fruit and bottles of water for children to have on the day. The event was attended by over 200 people, many staying for the day pitching up gazebos and enjoying picnics.



8. Sensory Workshop – Barry Library 16 August

FIS organised a sensory workshop for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Barry Library. The workshop aimed to offer a more sensory, quieter experience for those who may have found our Picnic and Play event overwhelming. A selection of equipment was set up in and outside the library, catering for all ages and

Sensory Workshop Thursday 16 August 2-4pm

at Barry Library

FREE Fully Inclusive fun for ages 0-18yrs

sensory play
fully inclusive
family fun

fis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
01446 704704

Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth I Deuluoedd y Fro
Vale Family Information Service

abilities. There were no structured activities as we wanted children to feel at ease. We did offer some examples of how parent/carers could make their own sensory bottles at home. 32 people attended this event and we received 6 enquiries on the day. Feedback was very positive.

9. The Welsh Autism Show – Cardiff City Stadium 28 September

The Welsh Autism Show hosts over a hundred exhibitors, providing information on services and support for individuals with Autism. For the second year, Vale FIS attended The Welsh Autism Show to promote the work of The Index and illustrate the work of the Information, Advice and Assistance Services across Cardiff and the Vale. An exhibition space was booked and



shared with Vale Families First Advice Line, Cardiff Family Information Service and Cardiff's Support 4 Families Team. Over 1,500 people attended the event from all over Wales, with lots of individuals coming from Cardiff and the Vale. The event resulted in 5 new registrations to The Index in the Vale, as well as 7 enquiries from individuals already registered with The Index.

10. FIS Christmas Party – Barry Memo 11 December

As last year's Christmas Party was so well attended, this time we decided to run a ticketed event. Those who wanted to attend were asked to email us to book spaces. The event was split into 2 sessions, the first for preschool children and the second for all ages. Families were able to attend both sessions but were required to book separately. Tickets were then emailed out and these could be printed off or shown on a mobile device on the day. 16 partner organisations attended the event, all offering a different activity to engage families.



Organisations were asked to vary the activity they offered to ensure they catered for the different age sessions. Entertainment included soft play, a magician, a disco and of course Santa! A poster was created and circulated to all schools, supermarkets, through social media and via the local radio station. The party was fully booked a week before the event

took place with 497 people attending on the day. Feedback obtained from the public and participating organisations was extremely positive.

11. Spring Crafts – Community and Vale Libraries February Half Term

We contacted smaller Vale and community run libraries across the Vale in January, offering to put on free craft workshops in their library. The aim was to engage with families in a smaller community setting rather than at a larger event. Four of the six Libraries we approached were happy for us to do this, those were Cowbridge, Llantwit Major, Rhoose and Sully. We attended each setting for 2 hours with different crafting materials. We had pre made some spring ideas for children to use as inspiration. 47 people attended the sessions over the 4 locations and we received 16 enquiries. Due to the timing of the workshops, this was also a good engagement opportunity to promote the 30 hour Childcare Offer. It also gave us the chance to speak to the staff in the libraries and ensure they understood what we offered and how we could support the families they meet. Feedback was positive, with two of the libraries asking if we could offer something similar again.

12. Index After School Session – Margaret Alexander Hall 20 March

The after school session was aimed at children and young people with disabilities and additional needs. Families already registered on the Index were consulted prior to the event, to find a suitable location and time and to find out what they would like to have at the session. The aim of the event was for parents and carers to find out about the services and support available, whilst children and young people could engage in play opportunities. Partner organisations were invited including Vale People First, KeyCreate and Inspired Learners as well as some of our regular partners such as Adult Learning, FFAL and PaCE. Children and their parent carers were also given the opportunity to have their say about what they want to see in their community and topics that were important to them.



Family Information Service

Annual Report

2019

Providing families in the Vale of Glamorgan with accurate information and guidance on childcare, support services for families including additional needs support and activities and groups for children and young people.

Becky Wickett
Information Officer

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1. Background

1.1 The Vale Family Information Service (FIS) is a one-stop information service for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-20 years in the Vale of Glamorgan, as well as for professionals working with families. It provides free information on a wide range of childcare options and activities and support services for children, their families and their carers.

1.2 The [Vale FIS has a website](#) containing information for parents, helping them support their child through their life. For example information on parenting groups, financial help, starting nursery and school, play and leisure, bullying, relationships etc. FIS also provide information to childcare providers on training, grants and events etc. FIS has increased its use of social media to engage with parents and promote the service and uses the Vale Connect system to send e-bulletins to parents, providers and professionals.

1.3 The FIS maintains a database of over 800 services including approximately 190 family support services, 190 Children and Young People's activities and services, 300 childcare resources and 65 parent and toddler groups. FIS uses the [Dewis Cymru online directory](#) as its database and all services are updated every 6 months.

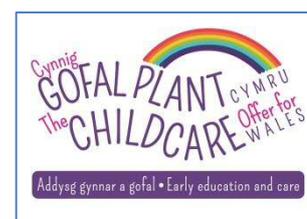
1.4 Families and professionals can contact the service directly or via social media, online and email.

1.5 FIS provides an outreach service which supports parents in the community, through schools, groups and via key professionals. The service works closely with agencies such as the Families First Advice Line, Carers support, Flying Start, PACE, JCP, health visitors, schools and sports and play, to reach parents in greatest need.

1.6 FIS is also funded through Families First Grant to administer The Index, which is a directory of children and young people in the Vale with disabilities or additional needs. The Index is now regional and jointly funded across Cardiff and Vale and managed by the Vale FIS.



1.7 The Welsh Government 30 Hour Childcare Offer was rolled out across the Vale of Glamorgan in January 2019, with applications open to parents on the 4 March 2019. This provides parents of eligible children with 17.5 hours of funded childcare per week in term time and 30 hours during 9 weeks of the school holidays. FIS is the

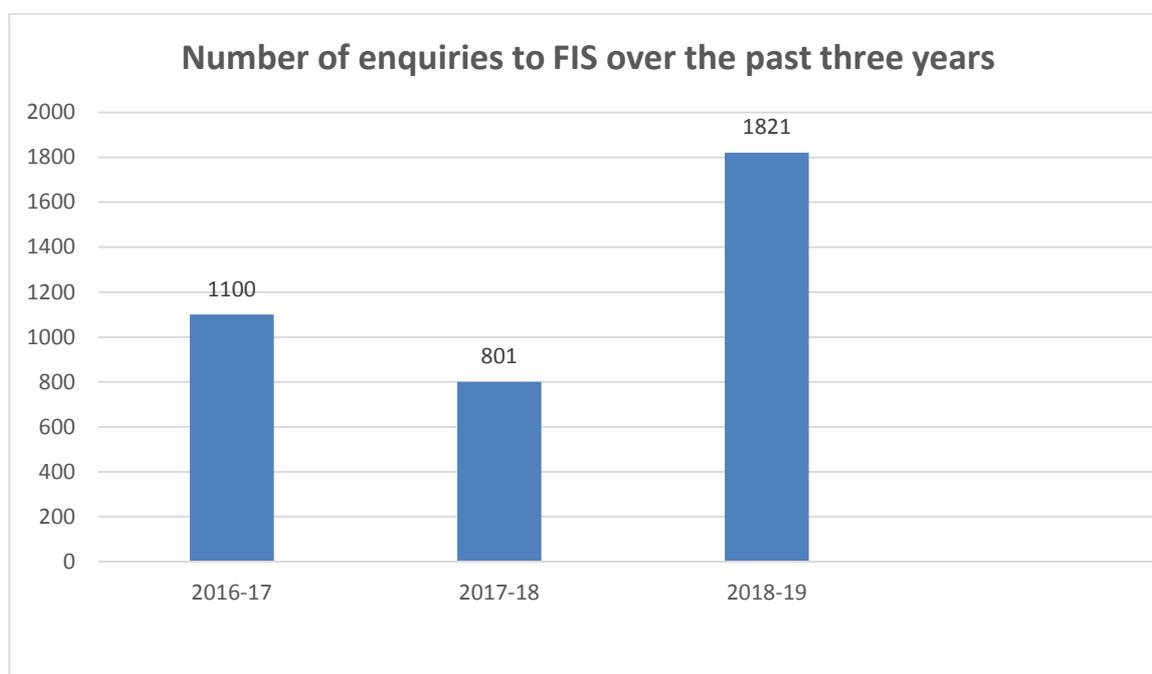


first point of contact for enquiries and is responsible for engaging with parents and childcare providers to promote the offer and increase take up. An Engagement Officer was appointed in April 2019 and is managed by the Information Officer within the FIS team.

1.8 A new national Family Information Service website has been created by Data Cymru, which links to the Dewis Cymru website, so providers will only have to update their information in one place. Plans are in place to launch this website locally and nationally as THE place to go for information on childcare, groups, family support and activities for children and young people in Wales.

2. FIS Outcomes for 2018-19

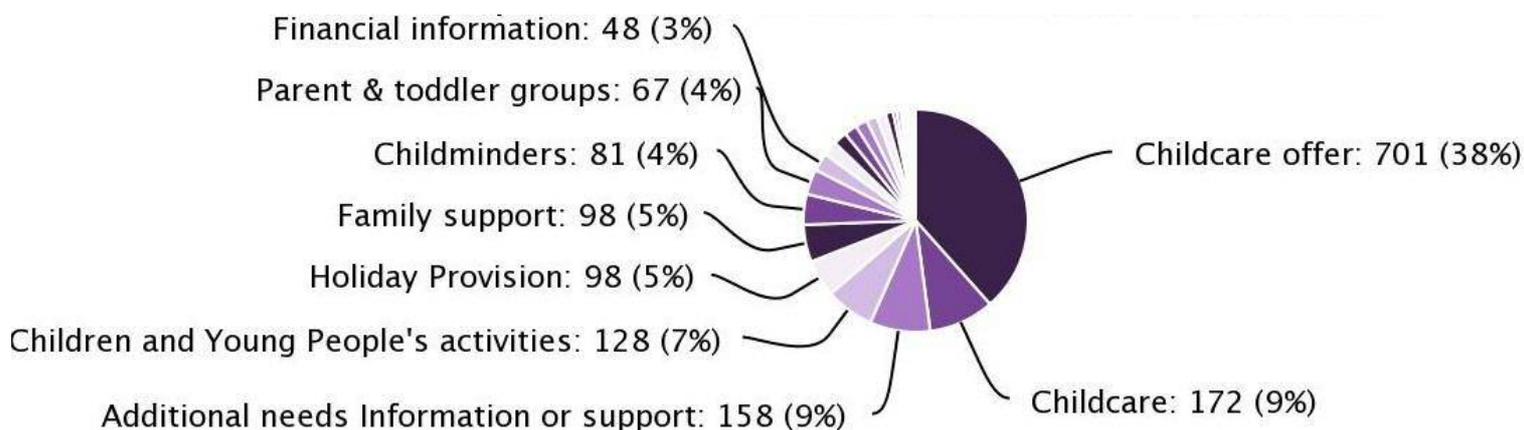
2.1 **1,821** enquiries received direct to the service (127% increase from the previous year, mainly due to calls relating to the 30 Hour Childcare Offer).



2.2 FIS recreated their web pages. As Google takes a while to register new web pages, people using Google to search for information weren't directed through to the new web pages, which meant that web stats were unobtainable for the majority of the year.

2.3 FIS childcare database was migrated to the Dewis Cymru website in April 2018 which doesn't allow the number of online searches made for childcare in the Vale of Glamorgan to be reported. This has been raised with Data Cymru and should be looked at next year.

2.4 Reason for Enquiry to the FIS



701 direct enquiries for the 30 Hour Childcare Offer

462 direct enquiries for childcare information (7.6% increase)

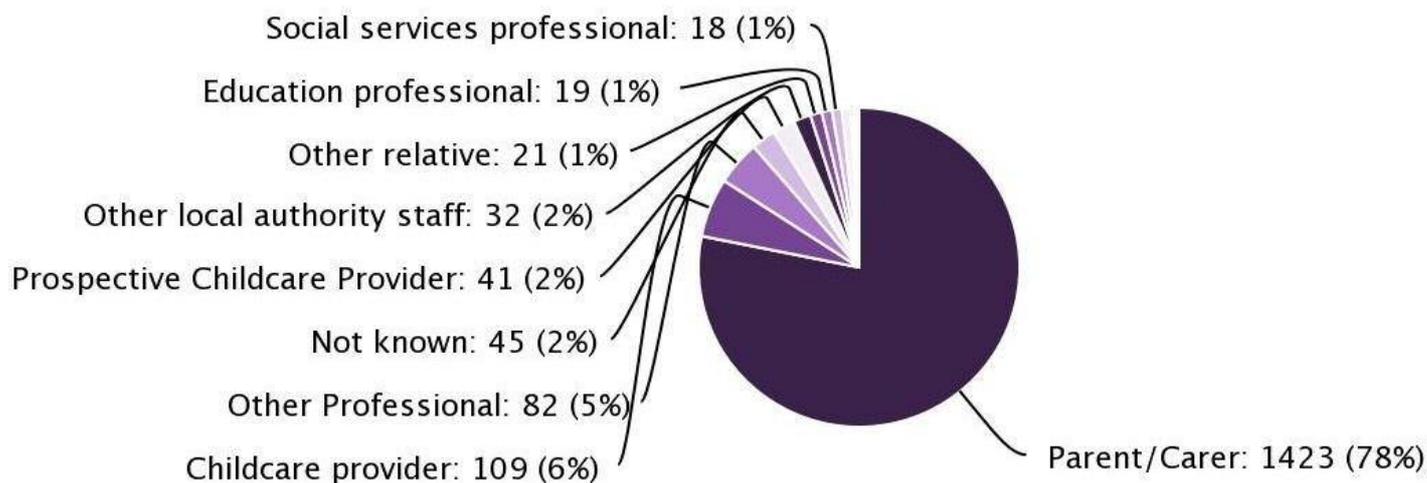
417 enquiries for health, well-being and leisure information (37% decrease). This figure includes over 170 calls taken for Children's Services, where callers were transferred straight through to the Duty Team.

158 direct enquiries for additional needs support and the Index (55% increase)

2.5 Who has contacted FIS?

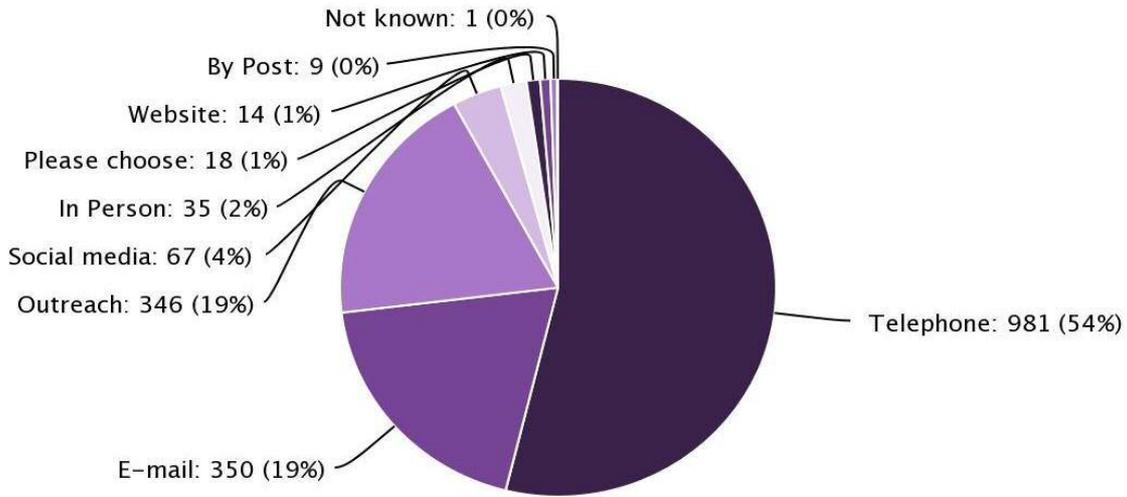
Over three quarters of enquiries were from parents or carers. This is a 161% increase from the previous year and is mainly due to the 30 Hour Childcare Offer and handling calls for Children and Young People Services.

Enquiries from childcare providers have also increased by 30% and there has been a 90% increase in enquiries from other professionals.



2.6 Method of Enquiry

Just over half of enquiries were over the telephone (981), 350 via email (19%) and 346 via outreach (19%)

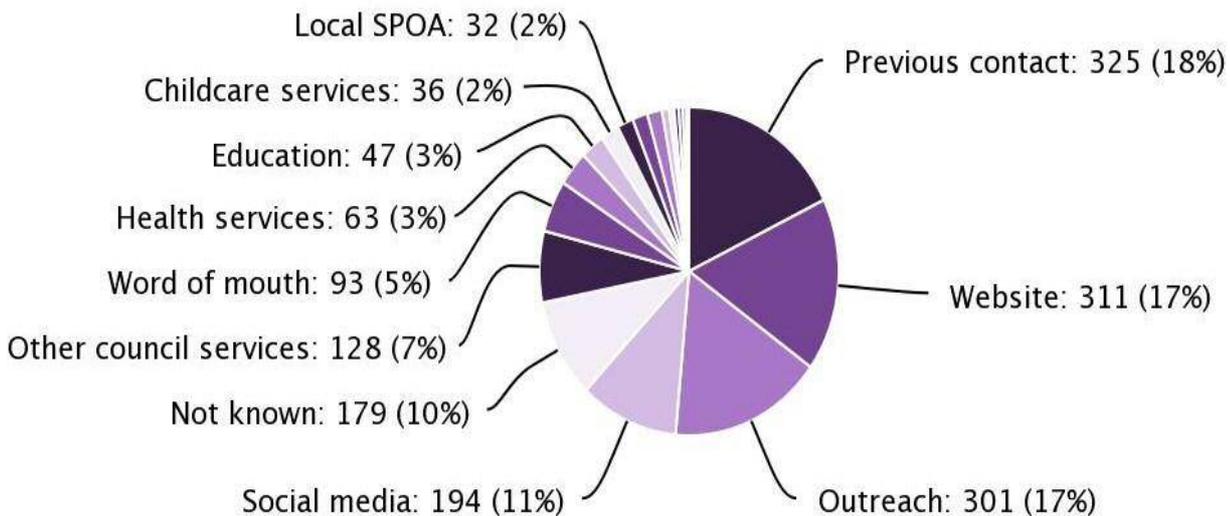


2.7 Source of Enquiry

18% of enquiries were from people who have contacted FIS before. Therefore, 82% were new contacts.

Website and outreach were the following highest sources of enquiries.

It's worth noting that 194 people contacted FIS as a result of social media, which is a huge contrast to two years ago where social media resulted in 19 enquiries. And 'other council services' has increased from 41 enquiries to 128 enquiries over the past two years.



3. Key Achievements

- 1,496 new contacts to the FIS
- FIS has played a vital role in ensuring the smooth roll out of the 30 Hour Childcare Offer in the Vale. By working with the Children's Partnership Coordinator and other partners, FIS engaged with parents and providers, resulting in over 700 direct enquiries, 571 applications from parents and 162 providers signing up to accept children under the Offer.
- 86 new children and young people signed up to the Index for Children and Young People with Disabilities or Additional Needs.
- FIS attended 127 outreach events and groups, engaging with over 3,330 people (see Appendix 1. Outreach Evaluation Report)
- 6 organisations have received the FIS Partner Certificate and 2 schools have achieved the FIS School Certificate
- A successful FIS Christmas Party was held in Barry Memorial Hall, attended by almost 500 people. And a new event 'Picnic and Play' in Central Park Barry, was organised in partnership with the Play Development Team and attended by over 200 people.
- FIS ensures that the Dewis Cymru website is THE place to go for information on services and support for families. FIS has encouraged new services to sign up and has updated approximately 193 family support services, 187 activities and groups for children and young people, 62 parent and toddler groups and 300 childcare settings.
- Social Media continues to provide a key tool to provide information to families and the FIS business page now has 2,114 people who have 'liked' the page (477 new people since last year) and 892 followers on Twitter. Parents and providers also contact us through social media, resulting in 67 enquiries and 194 people found out about us through social media.
- The Index now has a free phone number and The Index leaflet has been redesigned into an easy read leaflet for families.
- Two holiday activity programmes have been produced online for Easter and Summer



- Carer drop in clinics established, by working with the Carer’s Development Officer and FFAL, for parent carers of children with disabilities and young carers. 6 clinics held throughout the Vale and 20 carers attended and provided with information and a carers assessment where appropriate.

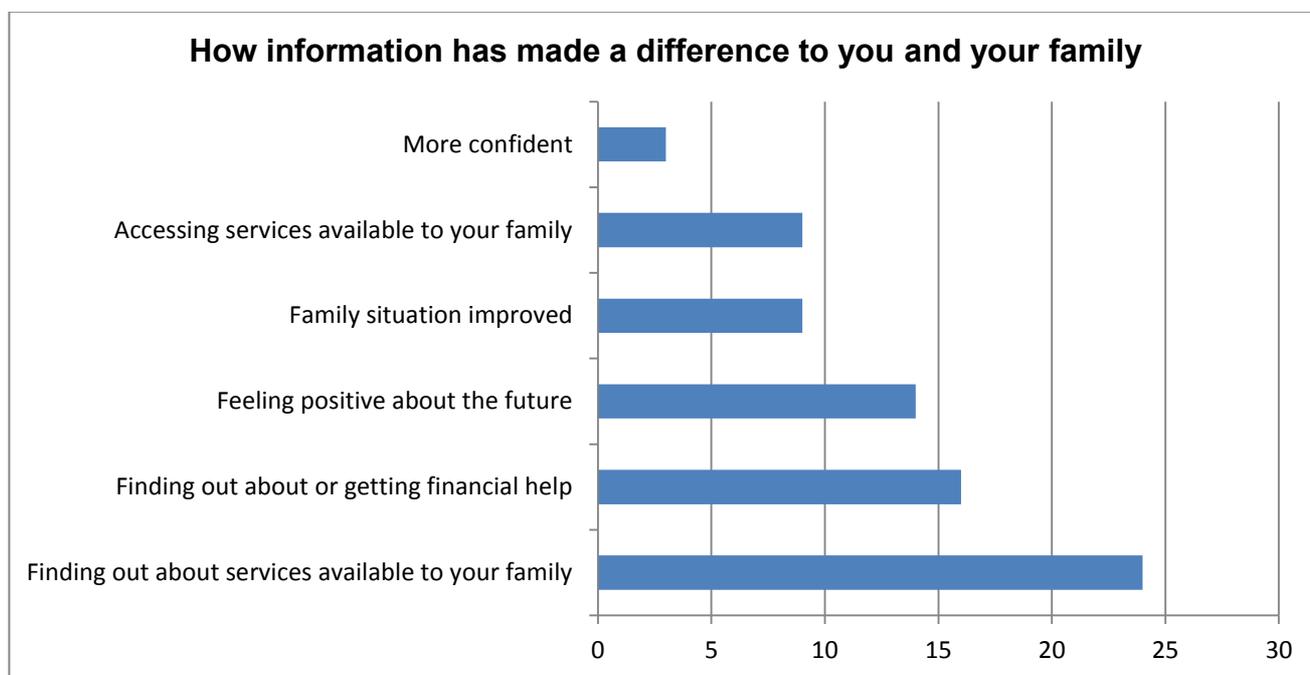
4. Feedback

FIS aim to contact everyone who enquired to the service to gain feedback, to help develop the service and ensure that people received the information they need.

52 people provided feedback. Of those:

81% said they had the right information when they needed it, 10% were unsure, 5% said No and 4% didn’t answer.

65% said the information provided made a difference to them and their family



100% who enquired for additional needs support said that the information had made a positive difference to them and their family.

‘Very helpful and prompt with reply’

‘Really fast service and everything I needed to know straight away.’

‘Very friendly, polite, approachable and informative, kept up to date with the latest information’

I think the Index is brilliant. I often pick up the newsletter, find things to do and say ‘right, that’s what we’ll do today’

When asked how we can improve our service, 2 comments were regarding the search function on the Dewis Cymru website and that you can't filter by age and area. When searching for activities for children, 'you end up with reams of random things lumped together'.

The new national FIS website should address this issue as the search functionality is far more advanced and tailored when searching for childcare and activities.

5. Case Studies

Our Outreach Officer met a parent at a session she had arranged at a local Library. Mum was a single mum whose child was eligible to start nursery in April. She worked 16 hours a week and relied on family to support with childcare. She hadn't taken up her child's place at Foundation Phased Nursery (FPN) as the 2.5 hours a day was too difficult for her to arrange wraparound childcare through her family. Due to her circumstances, I told mum about the new Childcare Offer that was due to roll out across the Vale. We discussed the eligibility criteria and how the Offer worked. I was also able to find suitable childcare providers who provided a wraparound service to her child's chosen FPN. Mum was able to secure childcare and utilise the Offer to help pay towards her childcare. She was also thrilled to hear that she could give her family a break through the holidays, especially the Summer holidays.

Our Index Officer was contacted by the Vale Play Development Coordinator regarding a family whose children attend the Families First Holiday Club. One Child has additional needs and was already on the Index and the other child supports their sibling. Their family circumstances had changed and the family were struggling. During outreach at the holiday club, our Index Officer was able to support the parent by discussing their needs and signposting to relevant services. A parent carer assessment referral form was completed for dad's own needs and a young carers assessment referral form was completed for the older sibling. The family were also signposted to the YMCA Young Carers Project and the Families first Advice Line. The parent and older sibling both received assessments of their own needs by the Carers Support Officer in CHAD, and the outcome of this was that funding could be accessed through the Carers Support Fund to provide respite for the family to access out of school provision during term time.

FIS had an information stand at the Civic Offices promoting the Childcare Offer. A parent approached and explained that her 11 year old daughter had just received a diagnosis of ASD and she wasn't sure where to go for information and support. We told mum about The Index and she signed her child up. We sent information on Playscheme / Teenscheme and ASD services such as NAS, AP Cymru and Barnardo's Cygnet programme. Mum contacted the service at a later date as she needed information on holiday childcare and financial support with childcare costs. We were able to give this information, including the Assisted Places Scheme and the Families First Holiday Club.

We ran an After School Session for families who were signed up to the Index and both mum and daughter were able to meet key professionals including the Leader of the holiday club. Mum was extremely grateful for the information and support.

6. Key Actions for 2019-20

- Promote the rollout of the Welsh Government's Childcare Offer in the Vale of Glamorgan, encouraging parents to apply and childcare providers to sign up. Including attending nursery school intake sessions, preschool groups and parent & toddler groups, as well as working with key health and social care professionals.
- Market the Childcare Offer locally in line with the national campaign planned for September 2019.
- Gain feedback from parents who have contacted FIS regarding the Offer, as well as childcare providers and feedback to the Welsh Government.
- Increase awareness about FIS with new parents by attending parent & toddler groups, post-natal groups including NCT and buggy fit and working with midwives and health visitors and encourage take up of the FIS Partner Certificate.
- Engage with hard to reach parents by linking with the Vale Adoption and Fostering teams and Vale People First Parents Group
- Work with the Play Development Team over the summer and attend a range of play schemes and activities across the Vale.
- Create a Cardiff and Vale Index website, replacing the separate websites and thus reducing resources to update both. Create regional promotional materials.
- Improve information on transition for young people with disabilities and additional needs, by working with the Regional Transition Coordinator for Cardiff and Vale and with other key partners

- Consult with young people with additional needs age 14+ and their families as to what information they would like to receive and how they would like to receive it.
- Work with IAA partners to ensure parents are being referred correctly and carers are receiving information about carers' assessments.
- Promote the new National website for FIS locally and nationally with other FIS in Wales as THE place to go for information for families and encourage organisations to add their information.
- Increase outreach at schools via coffee mornings, intake sessions and encouraging schools to sign up to the FIS School Certificate

7. Contact Details

Becky Wickett – Information Officer

Kelly Hughes – Outreach and Information Officer

Dawn Jenkins – Information Assistant

Julia Sky – Index Officer

Kathryn King – Childcare Offer Engagement Officer

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Vale_FIS