

Meeting of:	Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 11 May 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Family Information Service Annual Report 2020
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 information on the performance of the Vale Family Information Service (FIS) during 2019-2020. • This report provides an update of the Family Information Service response to the Covid-19 Pandemic during 2020-21. • 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. The link to the FIS Annual Report 2020 (Appendix 1 is below).

[Family Information Service Annual Report 2020](#)

2. Scrutiny receives annual updates on 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. 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 almost 800 services including approximately 200 family support services, 150 Children and Young People's activities and services, 330 childcare resources and 120 preschool and 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 During 2019-20 Outreach activities included attending school nursery intake sessions, parent & toddler groups, antenatal classes, Flying Start childcare groups, lone parent workshops and many more. FIS, in partnership with Vale Play Development, also organised 2 community events – Picnic & Play in Romilly Park Barry during the summer holidays and the FIS and Play Christmas Party at Barry Leisure Centre. The service works closely with agencies such as the Families First Advice Line, Carers support, Flying Start, PACE, JCP, health visitors, midwives, schools and sports and play, to reach parents in greatest need.
- 1.4 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 continued to develop 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. FIS has also attended many school nursery intake sessions, parent & toddler groups and held drop-in

sessions for parents to increase take up. When looking at the number of children who started accessing the Childcare Offer during the Autumn term 2019 (Sep 2019) there were 577 children, compared to 671 children who started accessing their Foundation Phase Nursery place (86%).

- 1.5** The Index for Children and Young People with Disabilities or Additional Needs is administered by the FIS. There were 786 children on The Index in March 2020 and these families receive a quarterly newsletter and ad hoc e-bulletins, to keep families and professionals up to date with services and support in the Vale. In 2019, a regional Transition Information Group was set up, to ensure information about transition from childhood to adulthood was cascaded to families in Cardiff and the Vale. The following links (Appendix 2, 3 and 4) refer to the Index Annual Report 2019/20; Index Summary Report 2019/20 and The Index Newsletter Survey Results for the Vale of Glamorgan.

[Index Annual Report 2019-20](#)

[Index Summary Report 2019-20](#)



Index Survey
Results final - word

- 1.6 Response to the COVID-19 pandemic** – Following the announcement that the country was going into lockdown as of 23 March 2020, enquiries to FIS increased considerably. Parents were enquiring about whether childcare was still available, what the new restrictions meant, whether the Childcare Offer was being extended, and childcare providers were enquiring about whether they should remain open and whether they would still receive Childcare Offer funding even if they closed. The Welsh Government set up the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS) which funded childcare for children age 0-5 years for key worker parents and vulnerable children. FIS set up the application process from scratch and then processed all 442 applications. The CCAS closed on the 31 August 2020 and since then there have been a number of changes with regards to childcare settings and schools and FIS has been instrumental in keeping providers and parents informed and up to date.



CCAS final report -
November 2020.pdf

- 1.7** In December 2020 the Vale was awarded funding through the Welsh Government Child Development Fund, to support children age 0-5 who had been most impacted by Covid until the end of March 2021. FIS employed a temporary Support Officer to support the scheme and source and place children in childcare. Funding has now been extended for a further 6 months to the end of September 2021.
- 1.8** Through the CCAS scheme, the FIS team supported 445 keyworker parents to remain in employment, by securing childcare for 312 children. Feedback from parents and providers was extremely positive. *'The scheme was excellent and a*

lifeline for my family.' The full report is available in the 'Background Papers'. The Child Development Fund has funded 33 children in childcare since January and consultation is now taking place with parents and providers on their experience of accessing the support.

- 1.9 This required the FIS team to adapt to this new role, whilst still maintaining their core service during the pandemic. The Team worked well with childcare colleagues in Education and Flying Start, to ensure the schemes were implemented effectively. Over the last year, the FIS team has responded to over 1,000 enquiries relating to COVID-19 and over 2,600 enquiries in total.
- 1.10 The service has reflected as part of their recovery planning on the importance of partnership working and communication within the team. The service has relied completely on digital skills and developments and this has allowed them to try new ways of working with families and providers in the Vale.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The FIS Team is a small team comprising 5 staff and over the past two years there have been several changes. In 2019, a Childcare Offer Engagement Officer was recruited to a new post. The Outreach Officer relocated to England, resulting in a vacancy for 3 months and The Index Officer left her position, also resulting in a 3 month vacancy. In January 2020, we recruited to both the Outreach Officer and the Index Officer post. By the end of March 2020, we were all working from home. The Index Officer then left to have a baby in September 2020. In January 2021 recruitment took place for the Index Officer post, and a temporary FIS Support Officer to support the Welsh Government Child Development Fund. The Team have recently welcomed a further member of staff through the Kickstart Scheme.
- 2.2 The Index for Children and Young People with Disabilities or Additional Needs has been running as a regional Index across Cardiff and the Vale. In April 2020, Cardiff decided to withdraw from the regional contract and have their own separate Index. Therefore, we now have our own Vale Index but we still work closely with colleagues in Cardiff and we continue to hold a Regional Transition Information Steering Group on a quarterly basis.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government 30 Hour Childcare Offer will be moving to a new national digital system, which should be up and running in June 2021 to all new applicants, with a funding start date in September 2021. The Vale currently partners with Newport City Council, who 'deliver' the Childcare Offer on our behalf. There are currently 10 'delivery authorities' in Wales, all using different systems. The new system will replace these, so that we are all working with one system. Meetings are taking place to consult on how the system will be rolled out and who the new 4 'Assessment Authorities' will be.
- 2.4 A national Family Information Service website has been created and launched by Data Cymru, which links to the Dewis Cymru website: www.fis.wales The search

functionality has now been improved and the FIS will be linking to this from the Vale FIS web pages at the beginning of 2021, and promoting it via social media.

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) above.
- 3.2** The Welsh Government Childcare Offer helps 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 has consulted with some parents and providers who have contacted the service regarding the Offer, to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Offer itself, as well as the FIS. FIS aims to increase this activity during 2021.
- 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 88% of parents who contacted the service said that they had the right information when they needed it and 95% would recommend FIS to others. FIS carried out a survey with all the families signed up to The Index, to find out how they felt about The Index newsletter. 92% of those who responded rated the newsletter as either excellent or good. 43% also wanted to be part of a focus group, to help develop local services for children with disabilities. Following this, a parent focus group was held using Teams, but attendance was low. FIS are now planning to send a survey to all on The Index to look at what is working well and gaps in services. With the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act coming into force in September 2021, FIS are working closely with colleagues in Education and with the Regional Transition Information Steering Group, to ensure the right information is being given to parents, carers, children and young people.

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

None

Family Information Service



Annual Report 2020

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

Social Care Information Coordinator

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1. Background
2. FIS Outcomes for 2019-20
3. Key Achievements
4. Feedback
5. Case Study
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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 200 family support services, 150 Children and Young People's activities and services, 330 childcare resources and 120 preschool and 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 regional and jointly funded across Cardiff and Vale and managed by the Vale FIS. In 2019, a regional Transition Information Group was set up, to ensure information about transition from childhood to adulthood was cascaded to families in Cardiff and the Vale.



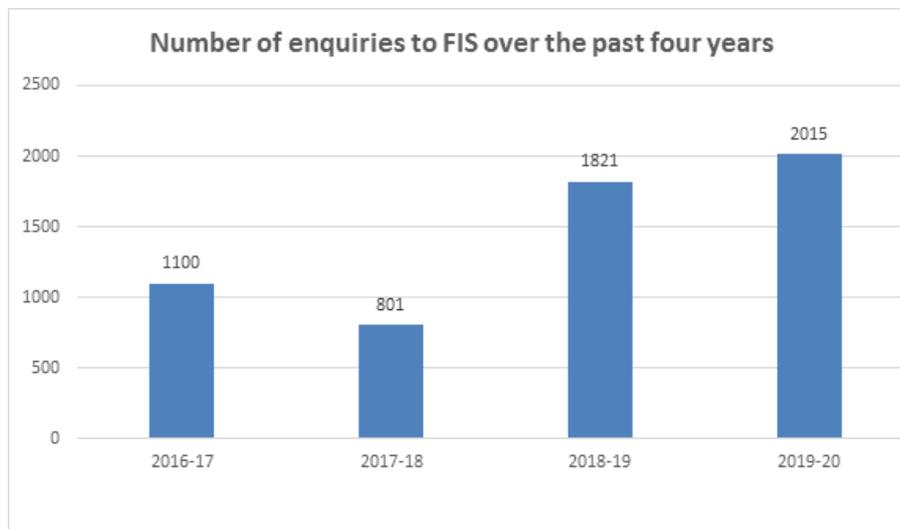
1.7 The Welsh Government 30 Hour Childcare Offer has been available in the Vale since March 2019 and the Vale FIS Team employs a Childcare Offer Engagement Officer. This provides working parents with 17.5 hours of funded childcare per week in term time and 30 hours during 9 weeks of the school holidays. 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.

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. Vale FIS are working with Data Cymru and other FIS in Wales to tweak the search criteria and functions of the website.



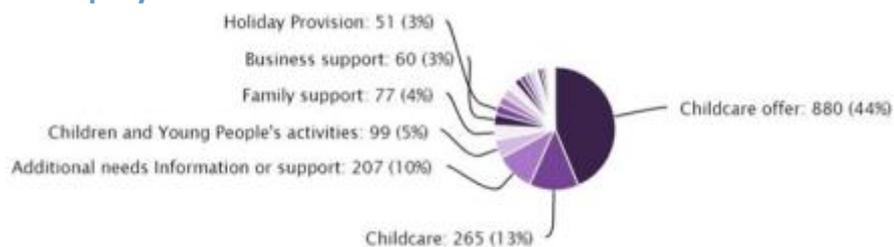
2. FIS Outcomes for 2019-20

2.1 **2,015** enquiries received direct to the service (11% increase from the previous year, mainly due to calls relating to the 30 Hour Childcare Offer).



FIS has also received **342** calls for Children & Young People Services and have put these calls straight through to the Duty Team.

2.2 Subject of Enquiry



880 enquiries for the Childcare Offer (25% increase from last year)

350 enquiries for childcare information (18% decrease from last year)

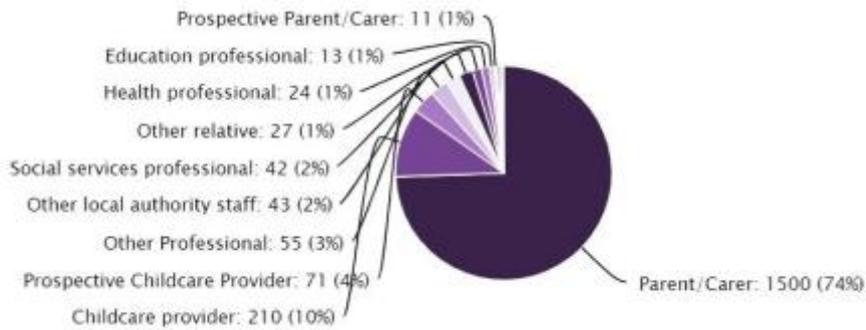
234 enquiries for business support, employment and family support

210 enquiries for activities and leisure

2.3 Who has contacted FIS?

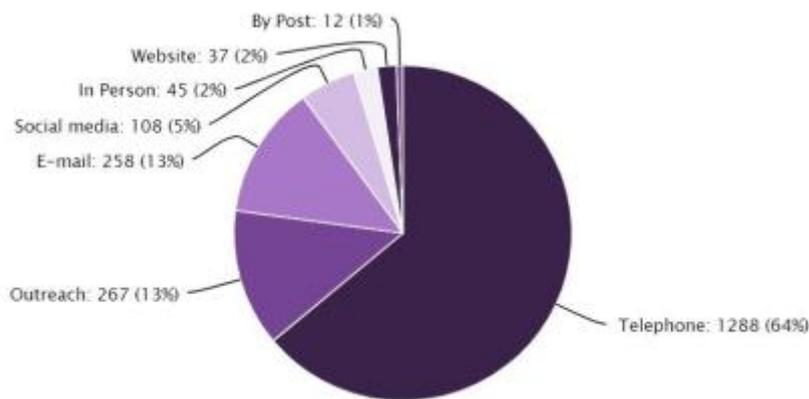
Almost three quarters of enquiries were from parents or carers, slightly more than last year.

Enquiries from childcare providers have increased significantly and have almost doubled since last year. Whereas enquiries from other professionals have increased slightly from last year by 17%.



2.4 Method of Enquiry

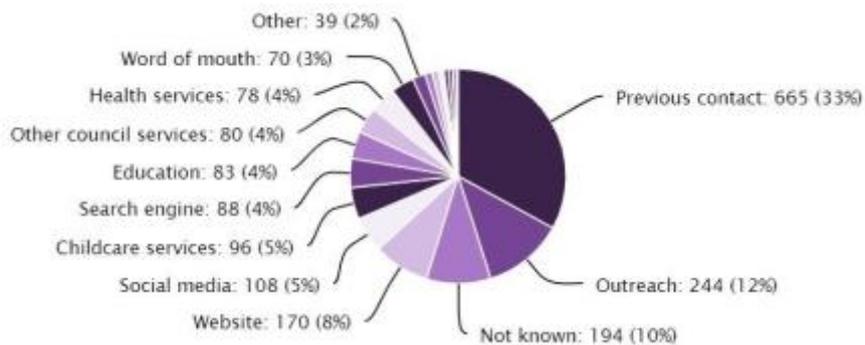
64% of enquiries were by phone, which has increased significantly from last year. Whereas the number of enquiries made via email and outreach have decreased since last year. 108 enquiries were received directly from Social Media, which is a 60% increase from last year.



2.5 Source of Enquiry

A large proportion of our enquiries have been from people who have previously contacted the service (33%). Therefore, 67% were new contacts.

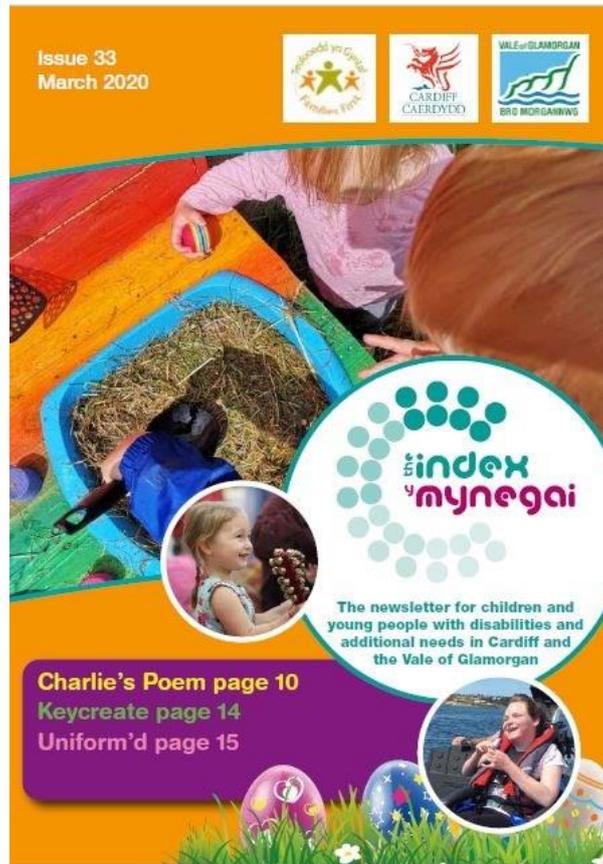
We've seen an increase in referrals from the previous year from Other Council Services, Education, Health and Childcare Services. Referrals from Childcare Services has almost trebled.



3. Key Achievements



- **1,350** new contacts to the FIS (67% of all enquiries)
- Referrals from Education have more than doubled since last year (**83** enquiries)
- **880** enquiries regarding the Childcare Offer (44% of all FIS enquiries).
- **629** children accessed the Childcare Offer between September 2018 - August 2019. **782** children accessed the Childcare Offer between September 2019 – August 2020 (this figure will increase as applications are still being processed).
- **184** childcare providers were signed up to the Vale Childcare Offer as at March 2020. **153** of whom are based in the Vale. This is 76% of all childcare settings in the Vale.
- **126** new children and young people signed up to the Index for Children and Young People with Disabilities or Additional Needs (compared to 122 new registrations in 2018-19).



- Transition working group set up to improve information for young people age 14-19yrs. [January 2020 newsletter](#) included a 4 page supplement and all newsletters now contain a section 'Planning for My Future'
- FIS Certificate of working in partnership achieved by: **3** childcare settings, **6** childminders, **5** partner organisations and **2** schools
- 2 successful outreach events organised by FIS – Picnic & Play in Romilly Park Barry and the FIS Christmas Party at Barry Memorial Hall. This event and National Play Day were organised in partnership with the Play Development Team.
- FIS has encouraged new services to sign up to Dewis and has updated approximately **195** family support services, **147** activities and groups for children and young people, **119** parent and toddler / preschool groups and **320** childcare settings.



- Facebook continues to be used as a successful communication tool. We have **2,655** people 'like' the FIS Facebook. An increase of **551** people since last year. **108** direct enquiries have been received via Facebook. The most successful post on Facebook was FIS Picnic and Play event in the summer, which reached **8,136** people and resulted in **793** engagements.
- Two holiday activity programmes have been produced online for Easter and Summer, resulting in almost **7,000** page views in April and the same in July 2019.

4. Feedback

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

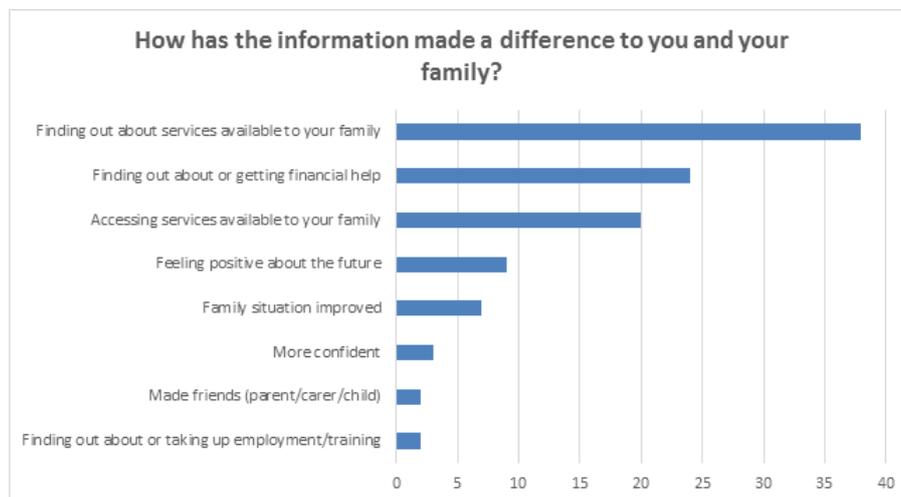
85 people provided feedback. Of those:

88% said they had the right information when they needed it, **3.5%** were unsure, **3.5%** said No and **5%** didn't answer.

67% said the information provided made a difference to them and their family

95% said they would recommend our service to other people

When asked how we can improve our service, **4** people said 'more promotion of the service' and **1** person said 'more support in finding childcare settings with spaces'.



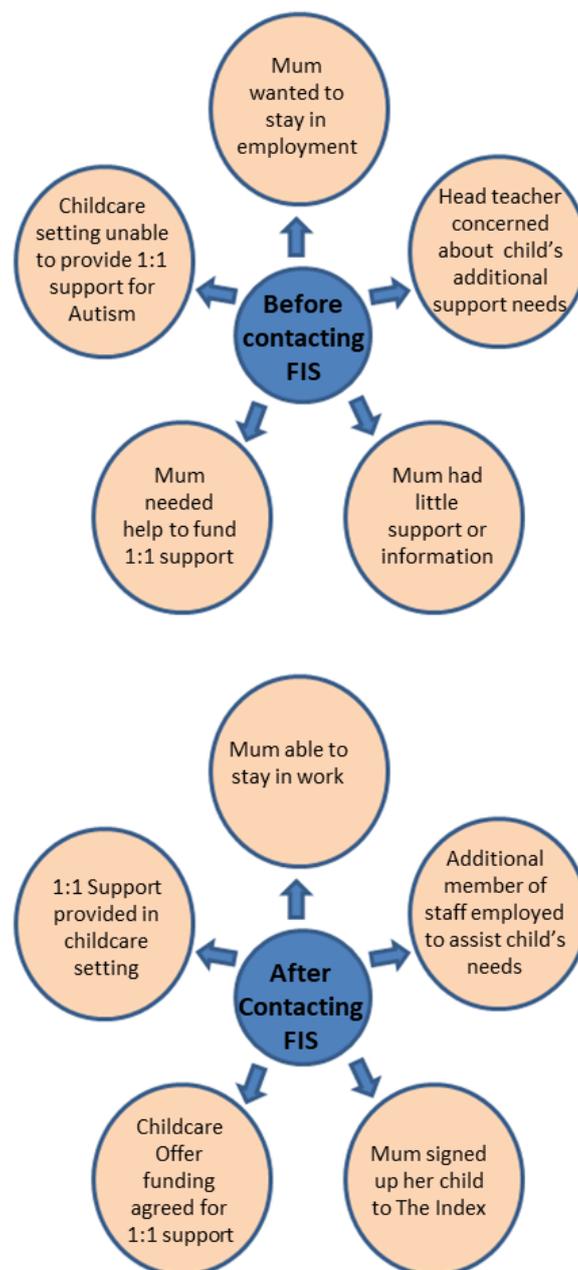
'The lady that helped me was brilliant. She explained everything to me in a way that made sense!
She also linked me up with admissions and sent me a list of childcare.'

'I emailed with several queries. Responses were prompt, polite and well informed. Information provided went over and above what I asked and the additional information was very useful (e.g. the list of settings accepting the childcare offer)'

'All I can say is they are AMAZING and I would recommend them every time. A good support for all.'

'Thank you so much for forwarding on information for family services and for taking time out to talk to me about how the index has helped me as a single parent. It's helped me to not only find groups where I could take my son and feel comfortable but also take him to activities and the parents could relate and understand how hard it is going back and forth to outpatient appointments and the worry of trying to also balance making sure they still have good attendance in school I want to thank you for making this magazine and time effort and thought you have put into it and the help and support it has given me and my son, thanks so much again.'

5. Case Study



6. Key Actions for 2020-21

- Explore opportunities to maximise our use of digital platforms to enhance our reach and engagement with and for parents, providers and professionals
- Develop digital literature to promote the Childcare Offer, FIS and Index
- Ensure information about the evolving COVID pandemic is cascaded to parents, providers and professionals
- Support Welsh Government with childcare initiatives relating to the COVID pandemic and work closely with childcare colleagues, including the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS) and the Child Development Fund (CDF)
- Gain feedback from parents and childcare providers about the Childcare Offer
- Set up a closed Facebook group for childcare providers
- Engage with parents and professionals to determine purpose and format of The Index
- Improve information on transition by working with schools, transition workers and young people
- Review production of Index Newsletter in line with survey and feedback
- Promote FIS Wales website as ‘the place to promote your service

Contact Details

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2 - [@VOGFIS](#)



3 - [@ValeFIS](#)





The Index for Children and Young People with
Disabilities or Additional Needs

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – 2020

Gemma Owen, Index Officer

Becky Wickett, Social Care Information Coordinator



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BACKGROUND

The Children Act 1989 requires all service providers to work closely together, in partnership with parents, to set up a system to assess the needs of children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, and their families. In order to do this, each local authority must set up what the Act calls a 'register' – the Vale of Glamorgan calls it 'The Index'.

The Index was initially launched in the Vale in April 2005 and, through Families First Grant funding support, was re-launched in April 2012. The Index Officer sits within the wider framework of the Family Information Service (FIS). The Families First Grant funds a Temporary Index Officer post and the production of The Index newsletter.

The Index was mirrored in Cardiff and became a regional Index for Cardiff and Vale. Due to its success, Cardiff will now be developing their own Index. Information on activities and services in Cardiff and other neighbouring local authorities will still be shared with Vale Families via the Vale Index.

The purpose of The Index is to directly provide families who have children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, with information on local services, clubs and activities. We offer information and guidance, signpost to relevant agencies and keep families up to date with any changes that may affect them.

Families who are signed up to The Index will receive our quarterly newsletter – 'The Index' – and regular mail outs on workshops, benefit advice, networking, clubs and services, training opportunities, carers support and any relevant information from other agencies. Families can also request specific information that may be of interest to them.

The Index also assists service providers in planning their services and budgets. It can give a clearer picture of how many children and young people there are with disabilities or additional needs in the Local Authority area. Having a clearer picture of the level of need will enable the agencies to work together to plan better services.

The children and young people included on The Index have been referred by their parent / carer, health visitor, social worker and other agencies. The information gathered is a factual record of the child's needs and the information is held confidentially on a stand alone secure system within the Family Information Service Team.

If you have any comments or queries in relation to this report, please contact:

Index Officer

theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

0800 5871 014

SUMMARY

-  The Index is Vale of Glamorgan's voluntary register of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs.
-  In order to be included on The Index, the child / young person needs to:
 - have a diagnosed disability, be in the process of diagnosis or have confirmed ongoing additional needs
 - be aged up to 18 years
 - live in the Vale of Glamorgan
-  The Index aims to provide information to:
 - Families – keeping families up to date with services, support and activities
 - Professionals – keeping professionals up to date with the needs of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs
 - Organisations – promoting existing services and support

KEY DATA

-  786 children & young people registered on The Index as at March 2020
-  126 new registrations to The Index between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020
-  31 children & young people have deregistered from The Index due to turning 18, moving out of the area or requesting to be deregistered
-  The majority (67%) of those on The Index in the Vale are male
-  The highest proportion (49%) of those on The Index in the Vale are aged 4-10 years
-  58% of those on The Index live in Barry
-  Autistic Spectrum Disorder is the primary reason for registration for 34% of those on The Index
-  When looking at all reasons for registration, 54% (428 children) of those on The Index have Behavioural/Emotional Difficulties and 50% (390 children) have Communication and Socialisation Difficulties



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 - 2020

-  126 new children registered on The Index
-  Regular attendance at ADHD Clinics at Llandough Children's Centre
-  Index coffee mornings held with parents in primary schools
-  After School information session held in partnership with key partners
-  Transition working group set up to improve information for young people age 14-19yrs. January 2020 newsletter included a 4 page supplement and all newsletters now contain a section 'Planning for My Future'
-  All young people on the Index age 18yrs asked if they would like to be added to a separate 'Transition list', in order to still receive key information
-  Worked with social services professionals to promote day opportunities and support planners roles to families of young people
-  Survey sent to families asking about the The Index newsletter and respondents offered a family swim pass as an incentive to respond
-  A regional [Family Friendly leaflet](#) produced, explaining The Index
-  Improved referral process for key social services teams, including the Child Health and Disability Team, Flying Start, FACT and the Families First Advice Line. Referrals for CHAD and Flying Start are now flagged on the WCCIS and PARIS systems.
-  A referral process established for families applying for the Childcare Offer, where the parent has identified that the child has additional needs. .

PRIORITIES 2020 – 2021

-  Link online registration form to the database
-  Improve information on transition by working with schools, transition workers and young people
-  Simplify Index registration form and data captured
-  Review production of the Index newsletter in line with survey feedback
-  Review purpose and format of Vale Index by engaging with families and key partners
-  Work with the FIS Team to deliver an effective communication programme incorporating new ways of working to reflect current climate
-  Set up a closed group on Facebook for Index families as an additional communication tool



PROMOTION OF THE INDEX ACROSS THE VALE

OUTREACH

The FIS Team always promotes The Index at events and meetings and here are some examples:

-  Child Health and Disability Team Meeting
-  Vale Families First Holiday Clubs (Playscheme and Teescheme)
-  ADHD Clinic at Llandough Hospital
-  Families First Providers Strand Meetings
-  Flying Start transition sessions and Family Fun Days
-  The Autism Directory
-  Special Needs Health Visitors
-  School and nursery intake sessions
-  Transition professionals and Adult Day Services
-  Job Centre Plus lone parent sessions

DIGITAL PROMOTION

Social media is used as an effective communication tool. Examples of Facebook posts that have resulted in a lot of engagement include::

- Families First Advice Line (FFAL) – 1430 people reached, 35 engagements.
- Developing Dolphins – beat eating disorders – 1019 people reached, 66 engagements.
- ACES and Learning Difficulties – 1150 reached, 97 engagements.
- Connected Carers Event – 1182 reached, 36 engagements
- Family Information Service Picnic & Play Inclusive Event – 8136 people reached, 793 engagements.

E-Bulletins – 26 sent inbetween quarterly newsletters

The Index web pages have received over 1,390 page views over 7 months. Unfortunately we've been unable to obtain web stats for the whole year.

ENQUIRIES

The FIS has received almost 200 enquiries for information on additional needs and support. This could be people enquiring about the Index or would just like some information on education, activities, support groups etc.

FEEDBACK

After getting in touch with the Family Information Service, enquirers are contacted to gain feedback on the service they received from FIS and more specifically, The Index.

100% of those who responded said the information they received helped them and 89% said they were provided with the right information when they needed it 100% said they would recommend our service to other people.

FEEDBACK EXAMPLES:

'Thank you so much for forwarding on information for family services and for taking time out to talk to me about how the index has helped me as a single parent. It's helped me to not only find groups where I could take my son and feel comfortable but also take him to activities and the parents could relate and understand how hard it is going back and forth to outpatient appointments and the worry of trying to also balance making sure they still have good attendance in school, alongside the hospital and others understanding your child's additional needs. It also helped me find support groups near my local area. I want to thank you for making this magazine and time, effort and thought you have put into it and the help and support it has given me and my son, thanks so much again.'

'I wish I'd known about the index a lot earlier when my son was originally diagnosed but finding information is difficult if you don't know what you're looking for. I think the NHS needs to promote you more at the diagnosis stage.'

'Your help and support is so very much appreciated and I don't think you know just how much - so thought I would tell you. Thank You Very Much. And as it is December, I would like to wish you all A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year (from a professional)

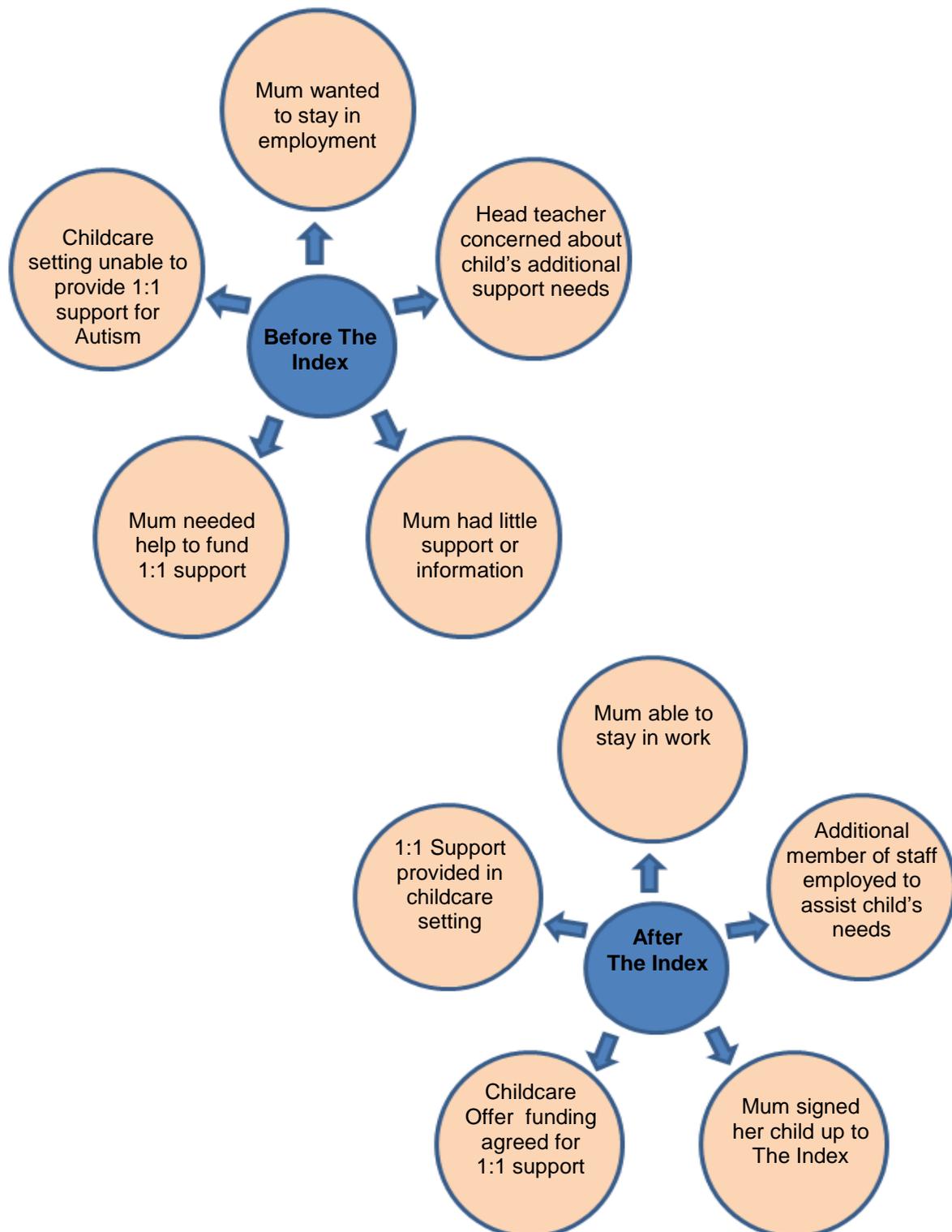
'I work for flying start, Everyone has been helpful and gives lots of advice, not just for me but for all the families I work with, Even parents I work with find the team very helpful. Also when they are not sure about speaking on the phone, they come away feeling good that they received advice and where to go. A lot of my families are starting to contact yourselves. So thank you for your support, also thank you for all the families

'All I can say is they are AMAZING and I would recommend them every time. A good support for all.'

Case Study

A Head teacher contacted FIS enquiring about childcare, as a child attending the nursery school for ½ day sessions had Autism and was receiving additional support. The parent needed to work and current childcare arrangements had broken down.

The Head Teacher advised the parent to contact FIS.

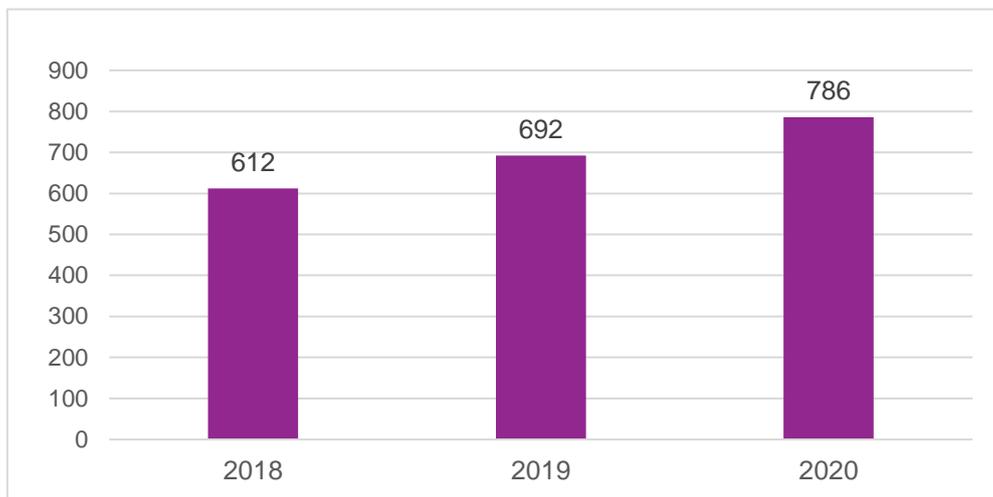


CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE INDEX: FACTS AND FIGURES 2019-20

REGISTRATIONS

Currently Registered – 786. This is a 13% increase from the previous year and a total of 126 new registrations.

Chart 1: Number of children and young people registered on The Index over the past three years



Deregistrations

31 (3 no longer living in area, 2 requested to be removed, 26 turned 18).

REVIEWS

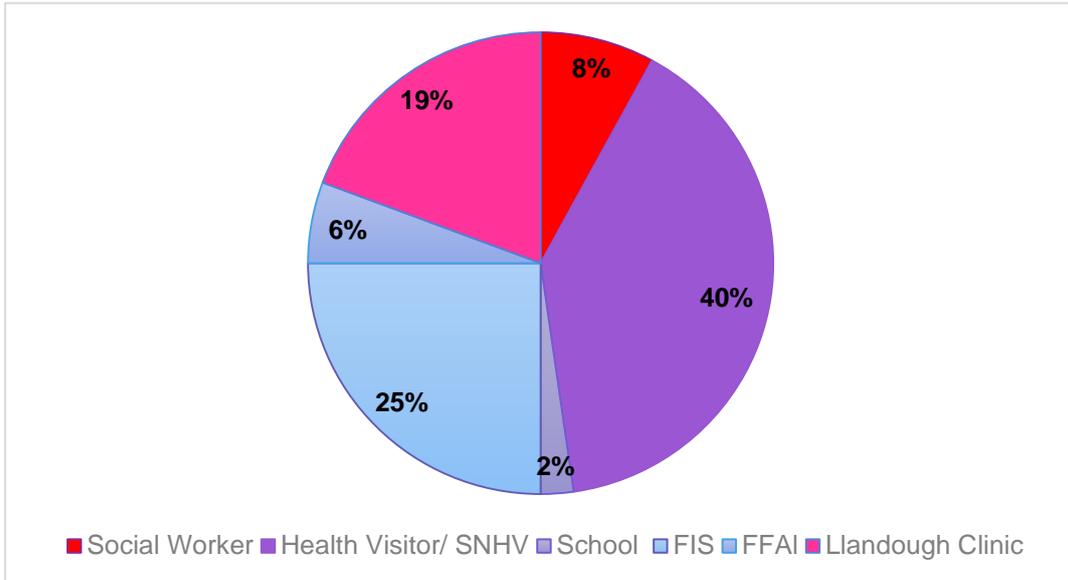
81 children were reviewed. Registrations are now reviewed every 3 years.

REFERRALS

We ask families where they heard about the Index and some professionals refer families directly. The highest number of referrals to The Index this year have come from the Health Visitor/ Special Needs Health Visitor (40%).

- Social Worker -7
- Health Visitor /Special Needs Health Visitor- 35
- Families First Advice Line- 5
- Family Information Service -22
- School- 2
- Llandough ADHD Clinic or Hospital Visit -17

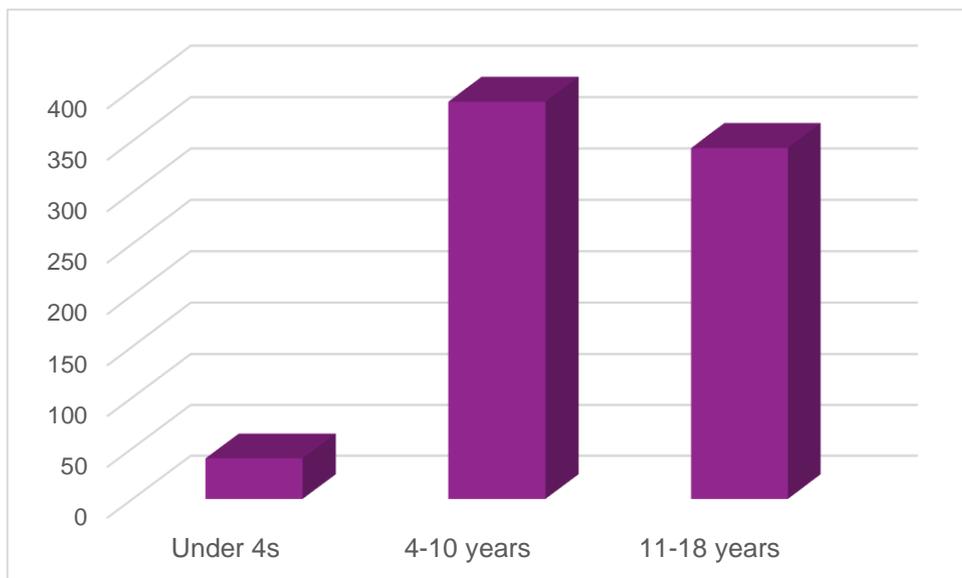
Chart 2: Source of referrals to The Index 2019-20



AGE RANGE & GENDER

- The majority of children (530, 67%) registered on the Index are male.
- 40, 0 - 3 years
- 388, 4 – 10 years
- 354, 11 – 18 years
- 4 Undisclosed

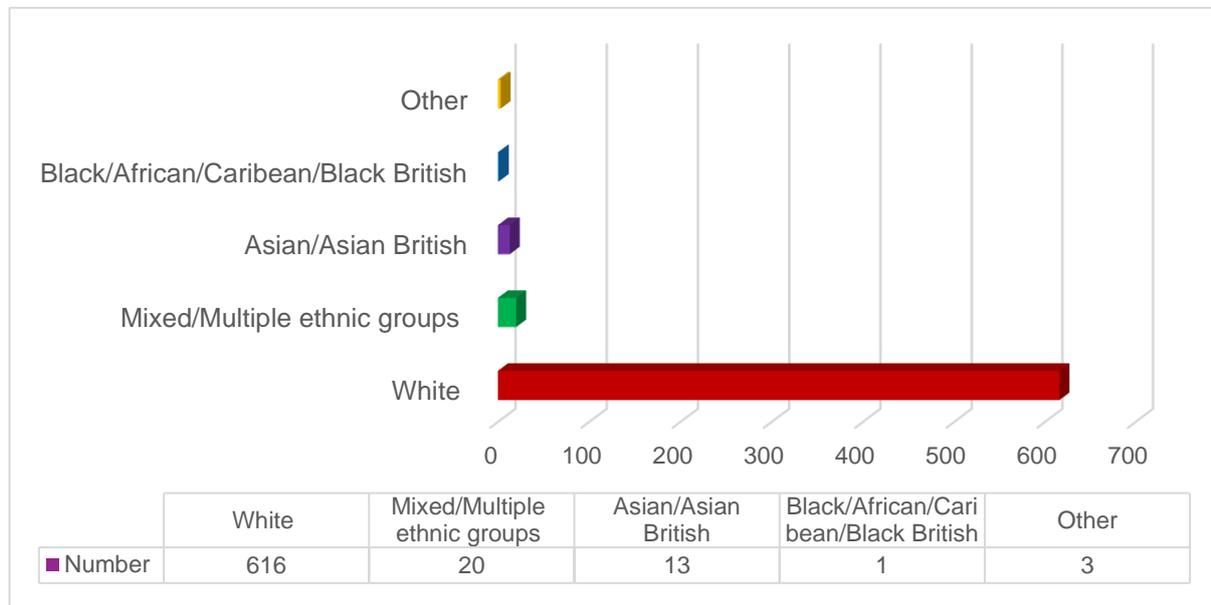
Chart 3: Age range of children and young people on The Index



ETHNICITY

78% of children are white (total of 616 children) 17% have not disclosed their ethnicity and 5% (total of 34 children) are from a minority ethnic background. The Office of National Statistics Census 2011 states that only 3.56% of the Vale population are from a minority ethnic background.

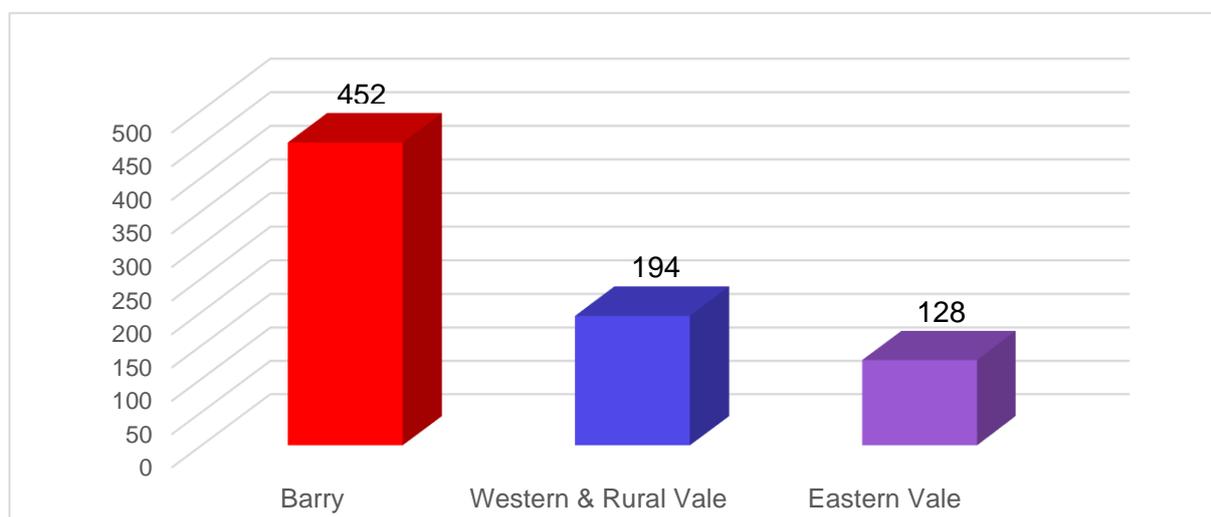
Chart 4: Ethnicity of children and young people on The Index



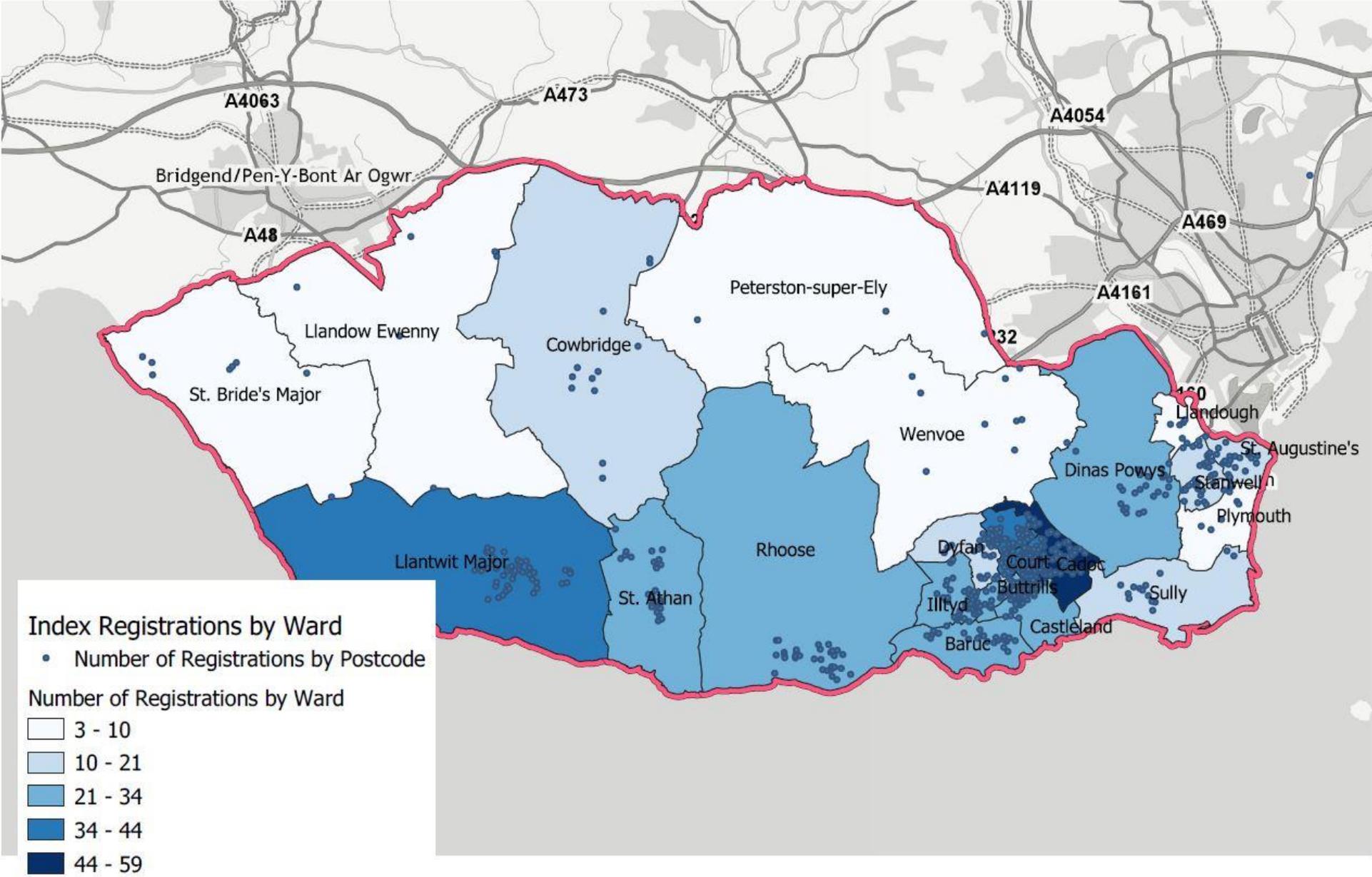
GEOGRAPHICAL BREAKDOWN

The majority of children on The Index live in Barry (58%), 25% live in Western and Rural Vale and 17% live in Eastern Vale. The map shows Index registrations by ward. The darker shaded wards have a higher number of Index registrations. Some wards in Barry and Llantwit Major have the highest number of registrations. Whereas rural wards and some wards in Penarth have the lowest number of registrations. More promotion could be targeted at these areas.

Chart 5: Location of children and young people on The Index



Number of Children Registered on The Index by Ward



PRIMARY REASON FOR REGISTRATION

When signing up to The Index, parent / carers are asked to state the primary reason for registration as well as listing any other associated disabilities / difficulties.

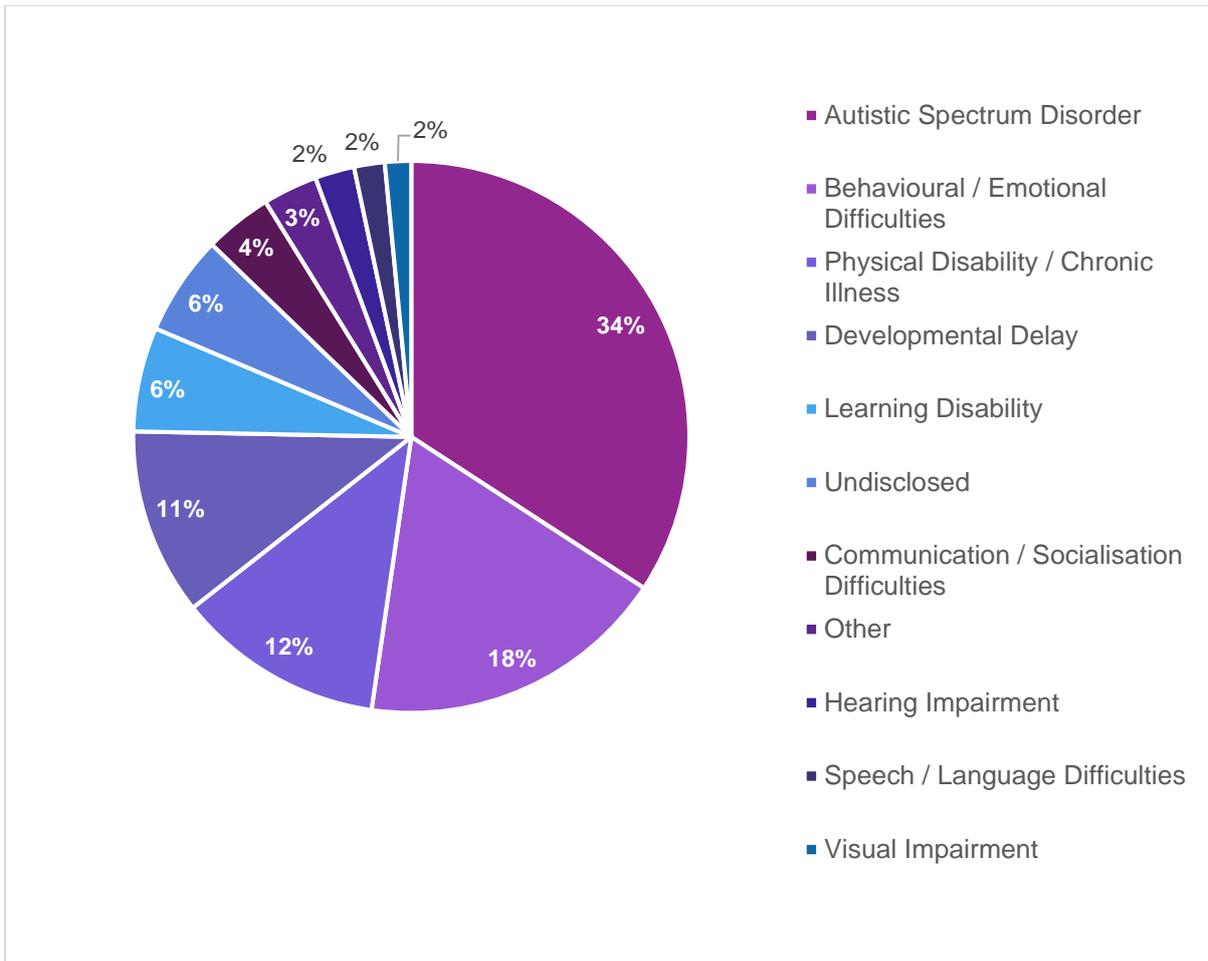
It should be noted that the parent will state their child's disability based on diagnosis (if diagnosed), and also their perception of the disability and how it impacts their family. For example, one family who has a child with Downs Syndrome may register the primary reason as Learning Disability, another as Behavioural / Emotional Difficulties, depending how their child is affected.

The Table below illustrates that the most common reason for registration remains to be Autistic Spectrum Disorder (34%). In the past year, 57 new registrations gave ASD as the primary reason for registration. The next most common reason was Behavioural / Emotional Difficulties, which accounted for 24 new registrations. The table also shows a significant increase in children with ASD from the previous year (50), Behavioural/Emotional Difficulties (43), Physical Disability (32). These aren't all new registrations, as when children are reviewed, they are asked whether there have been any updates to their diagnosis. This would explain the number of 'undisclosed' reasons decreasing from 99 to 46.

Table 1: Primary Reason for Registration over the Last 2 Years

Primary Reason for Registration	2018-19		2019-20	
	Total Number	Percentage	Total Number	Percentage
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	219	32%	269	34%
Behavioural / Emotional Difficulties	99	14%	142	18%
Physical Disability / Chronic Illness	63	9%	95	12%
Developmental Delay	76	14%	86	11%
Learning Disability	43	6%	48	6%
Undisclosed	99	14%	46	6%
Communication & Socialisation Difficulties	32	5%	31	4%
Other	25	4%	25	3%
Hearing Impaired	15	2%	18	2%
Speech / Language Difficulties	11	2%	14	2%
Visually Impaired	10	1%	12	2%

Chart 6: Primary Reason for Registration on The Index March 2020



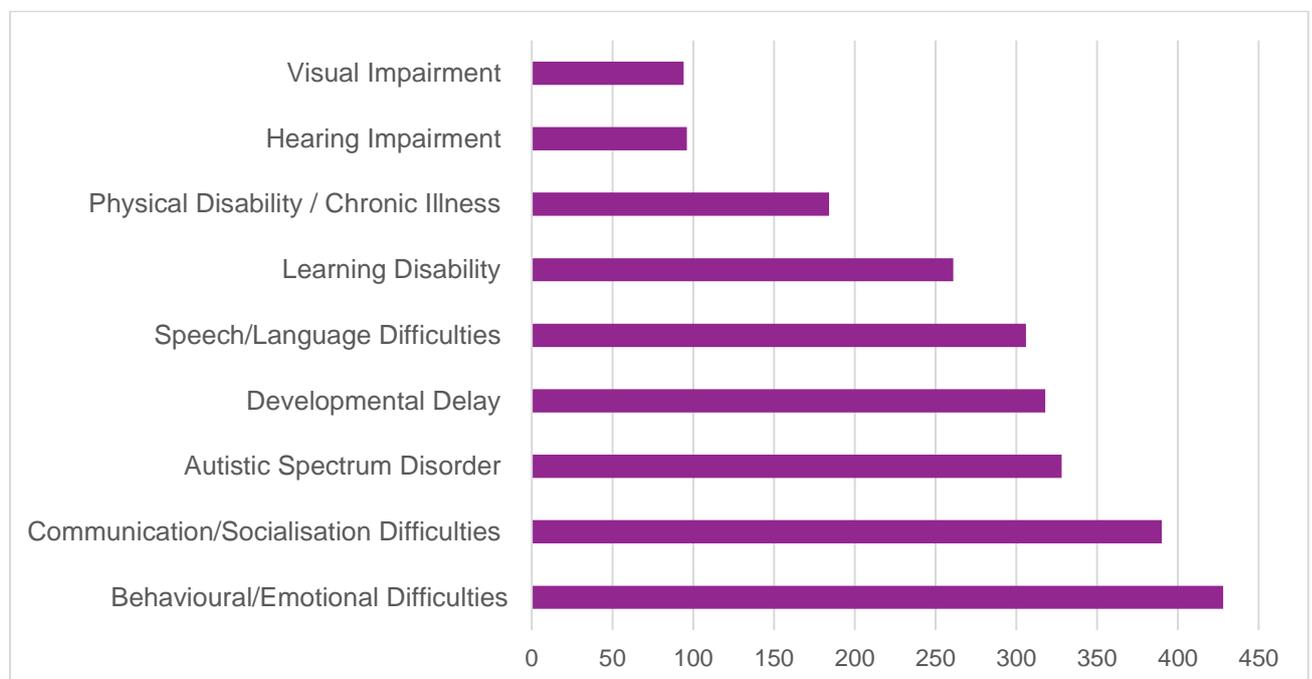
ALL REASONS FOR REGISTRATION

Whilst families state the primary reason for registration, many of the children and young people have more than one type of disability / difficulty that has an impact on their lives. Families are asked to state all reasons for registration.

54% (428 children) of those on The Index have Behavioural/Emotional Difficulties. 50% (390 children) have Communication and Socialisation Difficulties, followed by Autism (328 children, 42%), Developmental Delay (318 children, 40%), Speech / Language Difficulties 39% (306 children). Please be aware that this includes children where the parent or professional has said that they are under assessment for a specific disability.

The following chart illustrates this in more detail.

Chart 7: All reasons for registration on The Index



INFORMATION REQUESTED

During registration, we ask whether the family would like any information to support them and their child. For the past year we received the following responses:

Table 2: Information requested 2019-20

Activities	92
Family Support Services	78
Childcare	12
Carer assessments	31

Many parents require information on a variety of aspects.

SOCIAL SERVICES

169 children on The Index (21%) have a Social Worker.

Following the appointment of a Carers Support Officer within the Child Health and Disability Team, a strong link was established to ensure that those new to The Index are made aware of a Carers Assessment.

From 2019 – 20, 15 carers received a carer’s assessment and 31 wanted more information or to be referred for one.

We now ask parents/carers whether they receive certain services.

Table 3: Services Received by those on The Index

Service Received	Total Number on The Index Register	2019-2020
Social Worker	173	17
SW for Sensory Impairment	8	1
Care in the home	1	1
Respite	16	3
Direct Payments	17	4
Other	37	2
Parent Carer Assessment	87 (plus 48 have been referred)	15 (plus 31 wanted more information or to be referred)
Young Carer Assessment	2	2

EDUCATION

The **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018** (‘the Act’)

Aims to create:

- A unified legislative framework to support all children of compulsory school age or below with additional learning needs (ALN) and to support young people with ALN who are in school or further education (FE)
- An integrated, collaborative process of assessment, planning and monitoring which facilitates early, timely and effective interventions
- A fair and transparent system for providing information and advice, and for resolving concerns and appeals.

- It is expected the ALN system set out in the Act will be fully implemented over a three-year period. The implementation period is expected to run from September 2021 to August 2023.

During implementation, the ALN system will operate in parallel to the existing special educational needs (SEN) system, which will gradually be phased out during the implementation period.

The number of children of compulsory school age in the Vale, who have a special educational need, according to the PLASC return January 2020, is **2,913**, which is **16.3%** of the overall school population. This is either through a Statement, School Action Plus or School Action. This may mean that additional resources are required to support these children, e.g. access to specialist equipment or additional LSA support. Although not all these children would necessarily be eligible for the Index, it demonstrates that many more children could benefit from being on the Index. The number of children who have a special educational need has significantly reduced since 2017(3,642).

Of the children and young people registered on the Index, 24% have a statement of need; this has decreased by 2% since 2018 – 2019. This is reflected in the decrease of children in school who have a special educational need.

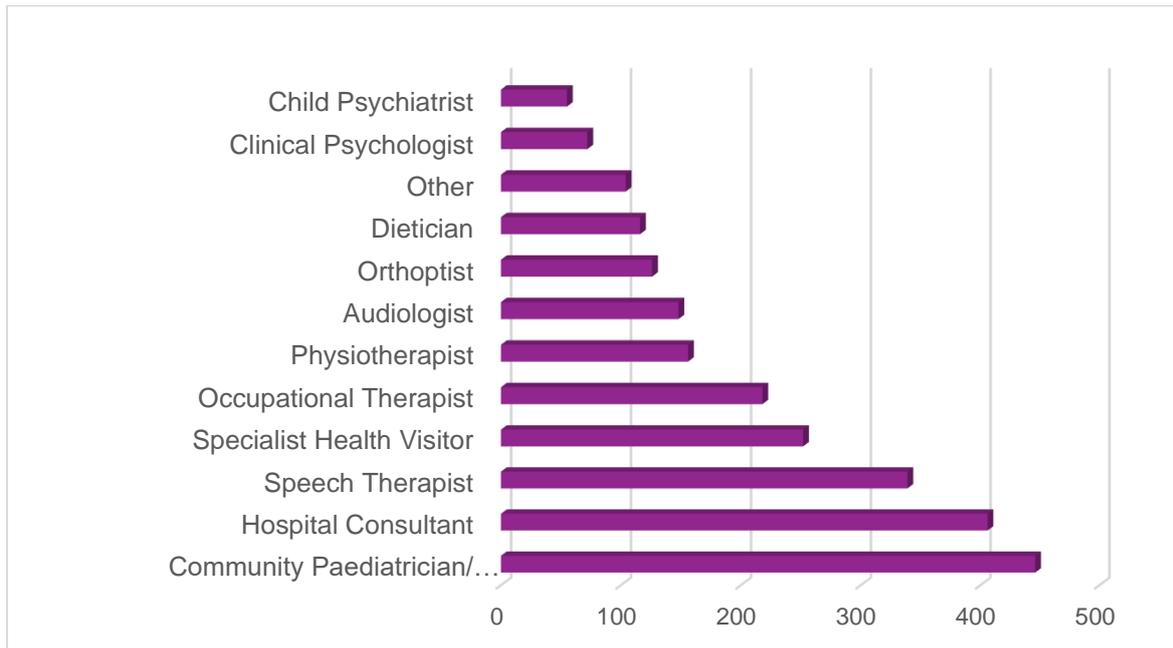
HEALTH

It is widely acknowledged that children and young people with disabilities and additional needs have greater health needs than the rest of the population. Those with disabilities access the full range of health services to meet both their ordinary health needs and their additional health requirements through referral to specialist services.

57% of children and young people on The Index in the Vale see a Community Paediatrician / Paediatric Nurse, whilst 13% have responded with “Other” which includes: CAMHS; Emotional Wellbeing Service; Orthotics; and the Neurodevelopmental Service.

The chart below illustrates the health services being accessed by children on The Index.

Chart 8: Health Professionals accessed by children and young people on The Index



53 children on The Index (7%) use PECs to communicate and 24 children (3%) use Makaton.

SUMMARY

As can be seen, The Index provides a vital service to families with children with disabilities or additional needs, ensuring that they receive accurate, up to date information, on services and support they can access.

The Index includes children and young people age 0-18 years and covers a wide range of individual requirements. Therefore, one of the challenges is to ensure that the information provided to families is beneficial to their specific situation.

A priority will be to review the format of The Index, to ensure it's meeting the needs of families. We plan to engage and consult with families and people working with families via focus groups and other methods, reflecting the current climate.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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[@VOGFIS](https://www.facebook.com/VOGFIS)



[@VALEFIS](https://www.twitter.com/VALEFIS)



Annual Report April 2019 - March 2020

Index Officer

The Index is the Vale of Glamorgan's voluntary register for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs.

It's good to have the right information and know what support is available.

The Vale of Glamorgan want you to have a full, happy, healthy life.

We want you to connect to services, take part in activities and have fun – that's what The Index is for.

The Index lets you know about the services, activities and events happening in your area.



Vale Facts and Figures 2019 - 2020

Total of 786 on The Index in the Vale by 31 March 2020



32% 67%

21% have a Social Worker

24% have a Statement

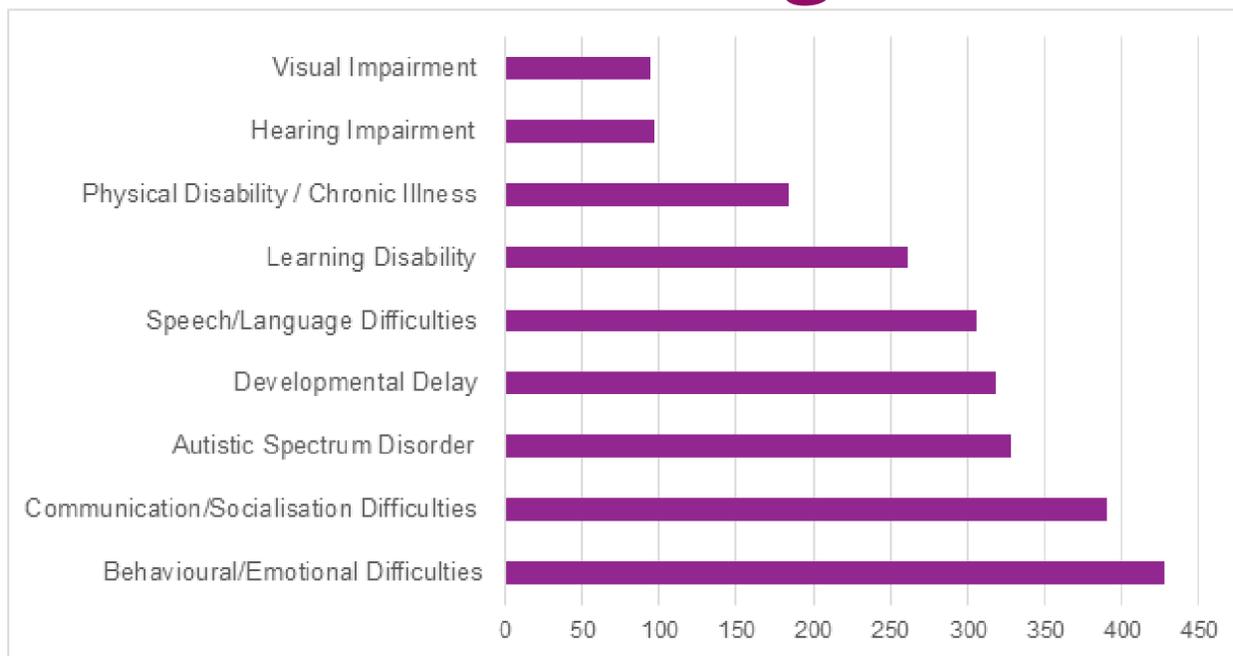
31% claim DLA / PIP

10% wheelchair users

37% receive medication

42% are on the Autism Spectrum

All reasons for registration



7% are using PECs

2 families receiving the newsletter in Welsh

3% are using Makaton

5% are from an ethnic minority

190+ ALN specific enquiries

New! **126 registrations April 2019 - March 2020**

39% of those new registrations have ASD

34% of those new registrations have behavioural/emotional difficulties

25% of new registrations were referred from FIS

40% of new registrations were referred from a health visitor



Key Achievements

April 2019 March 2020



126 **New!**
registrations



Those turning 18 asked if they would like to be added to 'transition list'



Regular attendance at Llandough Children's Centre ADHD clinics



Worked with social services professionals to promote day opportunities to families



Index Coffee Mornings held in Primary Schools



Almost 200 enquiries to The Index for additional needs information



After school information session held with parents and key partners



Survey sent asking about Index newsletter



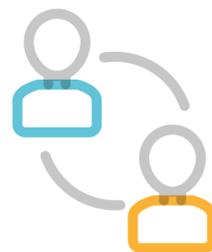
Regional 'Family Friendly' leaflet produced



Referral process established for families applying for Childcare Offer



Transition working group set up for 14-19 year olds. 'Planning for my Future' section now included in newsletter



Improved referral processes for key social services teams

Feedback

April 2019 - March 2020

100%



said **The Index**
had helped them

'I wish I'd known about index a lot earlier when my son was originally diagnosed. I think the NHS needs to promote you more at the diagnosis stage.'

'All I can say is they are **AMAZING** and I would recommend them every time. A good support for all.'

The Index has helped me find groups and activities where I can relate to other parents. It has helped me find support groups near my local area. Thanks for the thought you put into the magazine and all the support for me and my son'

'Your help and support is so very much appreciated and I don't think you know just how much - so thought I would tell you. Thank You **Very Much**
From a professional

'I work for flying start, Everyone has been helpful and gives lots of advice, not just for me but for all the families I work with. Even parents I work with find the team very helpful and come away feeling good about their interaction. So thank you for your support'



Priorities April 2020 - March 2021



1

Engage with parents and professionals to determine purpose and format of Index



2

Simplify Index registration form and data captured



3

Improve information on transition by working with schools, transition workers and young people

4

Set up closed group on Facebook for Index families as an additional communication tool



5

Review production of Index Newsletter in line with survey and feedback.



6

Work with FIS to deliver effective communication programme incorporating new ways of working to reflect current climate



If you know of any groups, projects or services for those with additional needs that you think the rest of the Vale should hear about, then please let us know and we can promote them to families and professionals.

If you are supporting someone who would benefit from being included on The Index, then you can access a paper copy or online version of our registration form on our website.

Our webpages also have links to online versions of all of the quarterly newsletters that have been produced, and you can sign up to The Index eNews to receive regular updates.

We are always looking for new ways to reach out to families and professionals, so if you think it would be useful for us to talk to those that you work with, then get in touch. We can arrange to come along with information on our services and other relevant services.



0800 587 10 14
theindex@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



asanaeth Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd y Fro
Vale Family Information Service

The Index is funded by Welsh Government's Families First initiative, and administered by the local Family Information Service in the Vale of Glamorgan.





The Index Newsletter Survey Results for the Vale of Glamorgan

April 2020

One of the benefits of signing up to The Index is families receive The Index newsletter through their door every three months. It contains information on local services, events, activities and articles from parents.

There are currently 770 families signed up to The Index across the Vale and we are keen to ensure that we are delivering a newsletter that meets the needs of all in terms of both format and content.

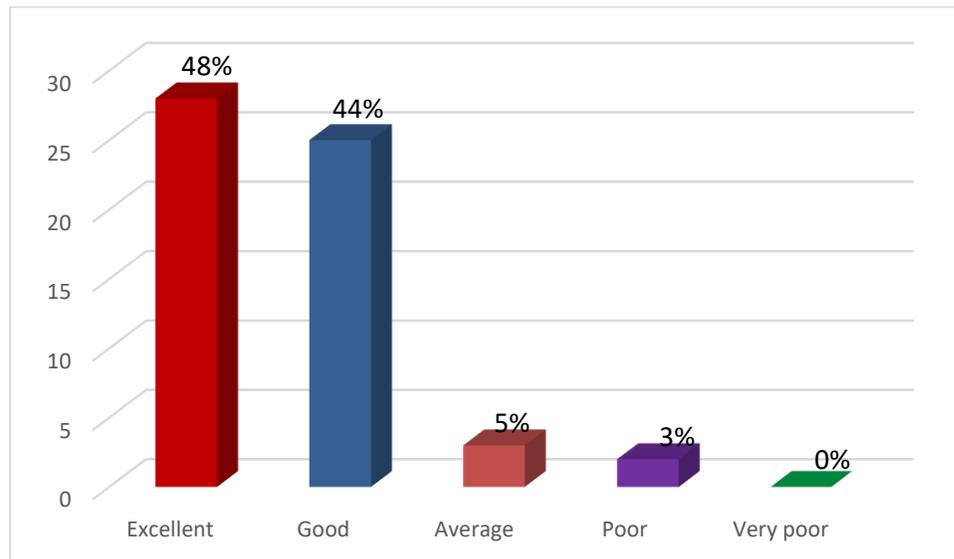
The Index survey was sent out to all parents registered with The Index in The Vale to obtain their views about the current and future delivery of The Index newsletter.

An incentive of a family swim pass at Cardiff International Pool was offered in order to encourage parents to respond.

The Vale survey received 58 responses, 52 were online and 6 by post. One Welsh response was received.

Findings

Q1 On a scale of 1-5 how useful would you rate The Index newsletter?



The majority of respondents found the newsletter to be excellent/good and found the content useful. The minority felt that there were no suitable activities to suit the needs of their child or activities were too far away from where they lived (as stated in the comments below)

Excellent

Brilliant magazine, love the info provided!

Keeps you up to date with what's going on in the Vale and the surrounding area. Great if you don't have social media accounts

I look forward to receiving the newsletter as it's full of useful information.

Really positive reading about other parents in same situation and great ideas for things to do

Didn't know about this until I got an email, advised by my health visitor.

Gives me the information that I would get anywhere else for extra activities for my son

I find the newsletter useful

I find the newsletter brilliant for up to date activities

We are always very grateful to hear about any groups meetings or up & coming activities

Very informative. There are many activities for my disabled child which I was no aware of.

Very useful, love hearing others stories and all useful information about what's happening locally

I love it when the Index drops through my door. It is good to keep abreast of the services that our available to families established and new.

It's brilliant, all the information is sent to you. As a working parent of a disabled child I need someone to do the leg work for me.

Has been very helpful in suggesting suitable activities to do during the school holidays. Such as Ysgol y Deri's play scheme, autistic friendly cinema at Barry memo and CCFC Ability football, to name just a few.

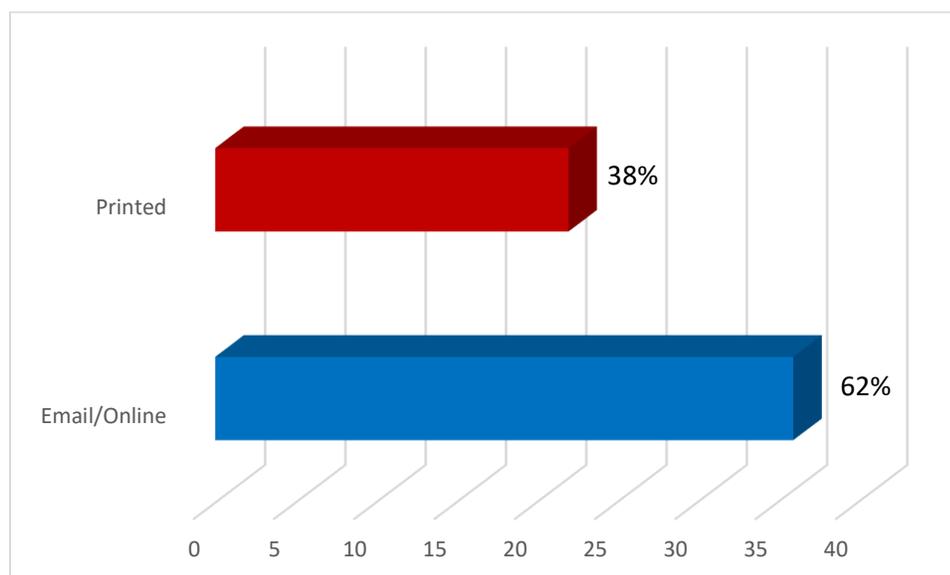
Lots of useful links to clubs and activities

I struggle to find services closer to home, most seem to be Cardiff. We live in Llantwit Major.

It gives a wide variety of things going on for our children but I also enjoy reading the real life stories

When needed there is something for everyone, with help alongside
The Index provides a good spread, age wise of activities
Really informative
Good
Useful info
Most not yet relevant as child is too young but useful to know what's available for older children.
Although not all the content is relevant to me, I find it very useful to see what's going on and available in the area to support families and children with additional needs. Keep up the good work.
Excellent for support and services information
Very informative and useful. I feel I'm being kept up to date without having to looking for info.
Plenty of resources provided, do tend to find they are aimed at children with learning disabilities so would be nice to have a variety of others e.g. deafness, congenital heart defects, Crohn's disease. Just to name a few.
Need more for younger children
Always full of handy information and date to add to the diary from courses to help with parenting to activities to do as a family
Average
I always have a look through the index, but very rarely make use of any ideas within there. Although my daughter does enjoy the summer playscheme.
Poor
There is never anything that my son can access. There are some activities available for some disabled children, though nothing for him.
It looks well done but it's not good to me. All the activities are all not in my area, not available for his age group.

Q2 What would your preferred format be to receive The Index newsletter in the future?

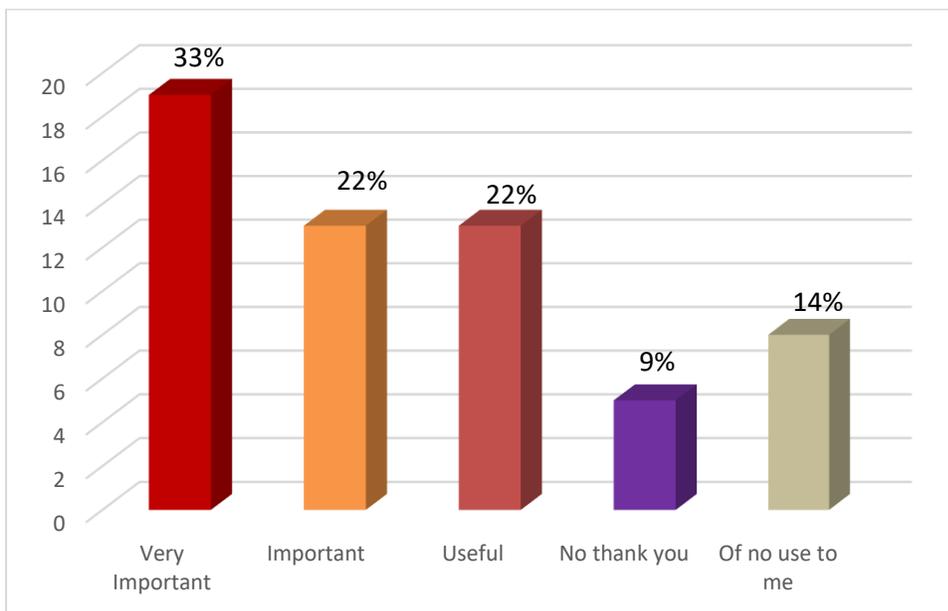


The majority of respondents would like to receive the newsletter online, and the comments suggest this is in order to have ready access and be more environmentally

friendly. However thirty eight percent still wish to receive a printed copy, adding this was to be able to look through it themselves or to make it easier for their children to access.

Additional Comments
I'm old fashioned and prefer to sit and read through a printed copy.
I get both but normally read it by email
I think having a paper copy makes it more real
I find it better printed as it's easier to read having a paper copy, if I read electronic mail I tend to skip a lot
I would prefer email to save paper/printing etc.
I'm all for paperless as it's more environmentally friendly.
Helps having a printed copy as make it easier to show my daughter, as she's able to hold and flick though the pages by herself
Some people may not have internet access and should be able to still opt for a paper version. There is (in my view) no need for a glossy publication though.
I think I would be more likely to read any info in paper format as I get so many emails they can easily be over looked
Email would be cheaper and environmentally friendly.
E-mail is best for me as I always have the information at hand rather than printed as I'd lose it.
My children enjoy looking through the booklet
Online. Just because I'm eco conscious
Less waste and can read at leisure/anywhere!
Convenient and cost effective
Need to have ready access

Q3 The Index currently provides information about services provided in both Cardiff & The Vale. How important is it to you that you receive information about services provided in Cardiff, some of which you may only be able to access if you are a Cardiff resident?



Just over half (55%) felt it was either very important or important. Some people commented that they could share with others. Others felt they would be frustrated if they were unable to access Cardiff services. Also there are those who rarely venture to Cardiff so do not feel the need to know about the services.

Additional Comments
No as I am from the Vale of Glamorgan.
I'm willing to travel to things I think are relevant and good to know what other areas are offering
It's great to provide from both Cardiff and the vale so I can pass on to friends whom live in Cardiff with children with additional needs
It's nice to know what's available in both Cardiff and the Vale.
It's frustrating as so many services seem to be a postcode lottery
Although this is no use to me, it will benefit Cardiff residents as some may not be able to have access to the vale. That said, the same would need to be considered for Vale residents who may not be able to get to Cardiff.
It is still good to see what is going on
I live in sully near Barry
As we live in Ogmore by Sea the services in Cardiff are not always accessible
I have family in Cardiff that would find this info useful too so always passing things on
I think I would be more likely to read any info in paper format as I get so many emails they can easily be over looked
It's not very beneficial but they do seem to have a lot more going on compared to the Vale
As a trustee of a charity that covers The Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff and other areas it is import I know about services so I can offer and make our members and their families aware.
At least it gives an idea of what is going on locally. If there was ever something my son could take part in happening in Cardiff, at least then I could request for him to take part or for a separate session to be arranged in the Vale of Glamorgan. Ideally, we should be told about activities in Bridgend and RCT too.
With 4 children of different ages it is important for us to see lots of activities in different areas
Useful to know what is available. However of no use to me if the activities are only for Cardiff residents
It would have to be an acceptance for me to go to Cardiff for something. I can't access Cardiff transport wise due to time/transition due to ASD and she gets travel sick. We live in Llantwit Major which seems to be a black hole in regards to most services whether disability or health.
I think it's a good idea to have Cardiff and vale although I may get frustrated if all services in Cardiff were for residents only

Q4 Do you have any other feedback about The Index newsletter or how it could be improved?

The majority of feedback for this question, when answered, was positive. However, many did not leave a response. One parent said that there's a disconnect between services offered and those required. Some wanted more variety for a range of disabilities and activities for younger children.

Additional Comments

More competitions please

Keep doing a good job 😊

I'm grateful to receive it.

Excellent resource. Which has really helped our family. Many thanks

There appears to be a disconnect between services offered and those required by children like my son so that they can take part. The Index could help to expose this gap by understanding what is needed by the local population that they serve.

Keep up the good work

Very good service

Need more for younger children

Not necessarily, just the points previously made. The primary point being information for a variety of disabilities in children.

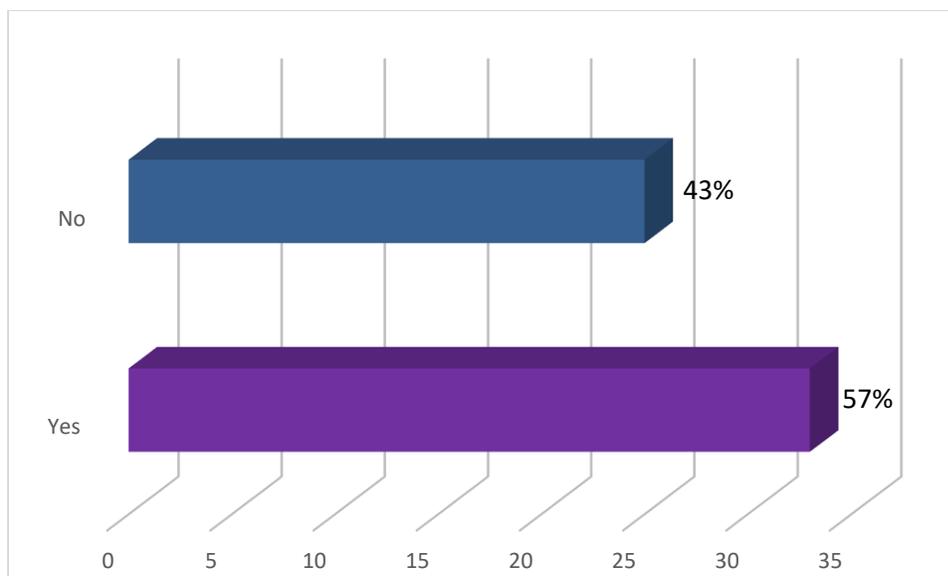
No! Maybe more about the age group which I need as there's a lot of ages!

I think you're doing an excellent job 👍

Any info about any concessions available. Any carers support outside of working hours. Time for carers at present excludes working parents

Q5 Would you like to be part in a focus group in future to help inform the development of local services for children with disabilities or additional needs?

The majority of people wanted to be part of a focus group.



Summary and Recommendations

1. The majority of people (92%) rated the newsletter as either excellent or good. Therefore people see the value in the newsletter.
2. As 62% would be happy to receive a digital copy, this needs to be followed up. It would reduce costs for printing and postage and would be more environmentally friendly. It could also mean that a newsletter could be distributed monthly, ensuring information is current. We need to consider the remaining 38% who would prefer a printed copy and perhaps a printed copy could be posted to these families.
3. There were no strong feelings on whether people living in the Vale should receive information on services and activities in Cardiff, However, each newsletter should still contain information about accessible services open to Vale residents in bordering local authorities.
4. We should include information on a wider range of disabilities and a variety of ages. Work is needed to identify these gaps
5. We had such a positive response from people wanting to be part of a focus group, we will consider how we can use this to consult about the services provided and whether they are meeting people's needs. It would also help with meeting the recommendation in 4. above

Contact Details:

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Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS)

Report for the Vale of Glamorgan

Following an announcement that the Nation was to go into lockdown as of 23 March 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Welsh Government (WG) held a series of emergency meetings with childcare leads in Wales regarding how the childcare sector would operate during the pandemic. Many discussions took place around childcare settings remaining open, with the strong possibility of some being required to close under WG requirements.

Following these discussions, WG announced that as childcare plays an important role to working parents, the necessity for some childcare settings to remain open would be central to supporting key working parents (according to WG list) who are vital during the pandemic. These include, NHS roles, care home workers, childcare staff, supermarket workers etc.

In order to support key worker parents and vulnerable children, WG set up the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS) for children aged 0 – 5yrs that would facilitate payments for childcare. The scheme would pay the childcare fees of eligible key worker parents who were maintaining a crucial role throughout the pandemic.

Key teams supporting the ever-evolving Coronavirus pandemic and CCAS included Children & Young People's Partnership, Family Information Service, Flying Start, Play and Education colleagues. On-line application forms were devised and uploaded working alongside education colleagues who were also developing an on-line application for children attending school hub childcare.

On-line CCAS applications went live on Thursday 09 April 2020. The Family Information Service were instrumental in processing initial applications and setting up appropriate childcare. Every 4 weeks, parents were contacted regarding their childcare set up and whether there were any changes in circumstances. A panel was appointed to assess applications made via professionals for those children deemed vulnerable.

Confirmation of childcare placements and payments to childcare providers were assigned to the Children & Young People's Partnership. Maintaining contact with childcare providers was vital throughout to ensure that they were managing their circumstances and vacancies and to keep them up to date with the ever-changing guidance from Welsh Government.

The CCAS came to an end on 31 August 2020, the following data was collected.

Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme data collated

Number of CCAS Applications	
442	
Key worker applications	429
Vulnerable children	13
Successful Applications	
312	
Key worker applications	299
Vulnerable children	13
Number of children supported	
312	
Children of key workers	299
Vulnerable children	13
Number of key worker parents supported	
445	
Unsuccessful applications	
130	
Reasons:	
Parent not working or not a key worker	22
Application not completed when asked for relevant ID and documents	63
Duplicate applications	19
Thought they were applying to the school hub	11
Childcare Offer funding covered the hours needed	8
Child lived out of county	7

CCAS Childcare Hours	
Number of hours initially booked by parents	Number of hours attended by children
106,031*	92,705.50
*this figure related to the number of hours requested by the parents on their application form	

Critical Key worker parent classification	
Number of Health or Social Care workers supported	215
Number of Education or Childcare worker supported	41
Number of Transport workers supported	18
Number of Public Services (including local and national government) workers supported	16
Number of Public Safety (Military, Emergency services)	50
Number of Food and Essential Goods workers supported	25
Number of Utility, Finance and Communication workers supported	70
Total number of Critical Workers supported	435

Number of childcare providers signed up to CCAS scheme to support Vale children	
23 Childminders	25 Day-care settings (9 of which outside of the Vale)

Cost of Childcare	
April	£39,896.38
May	£56,635.56
June	£99,574.80
July	£135,959
August	£117,460.26

Total spend	£449,526

Feedback from Childcare Providers and Parents accessing the CCAS funding

At the end of CCAS, the Family Information Service produced a survey for both Childcare Providers and Parents. These were sent to those who signed up to the scheme requesting their views on a number of different issues.

Childcare Provider Summary responses

Although only 13 responses were received, feedback was very positive and gave us a good insight into whether childcare providers benefitted from the scheme and how they found the process and communication.

85% of childcare providers said that the funding benefitted them and just over half said it helped them to stay open.

All apart from 1 childcare provider found signing up to the Terms and Conditions straight forward.

A couple of providers commented on the variation between local authorities, which was confusing:

There seemed to be some confusion between operating counties as to the roll out and operation of the scheme.

The system varied from LA to LA but the Vale's format was easier than others.

77% found the claims and payment process very or quite straight forward. Three people found it quite or very difficult, mainly due to the number of claim forms and the attendance data they had to complete.

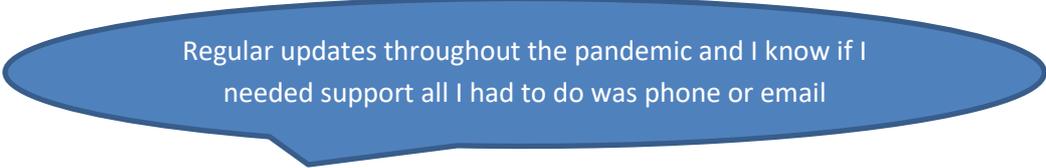
The claims and payment process were very simple and efficient for The Vale of Glamorgan

Claim went in on a Friday payment was by the middle of the following week

The claiming process was quite lengthy completing a claim form per week for each child. This became increasingly time-consuming with 30+ parents utilising the C-CAS scheme.

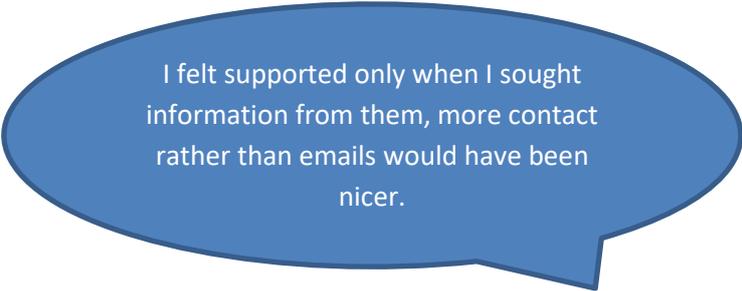
100% had no issues with the C-CAS process

All providers apart from 1 said the communication from the FIS was excellent or good.



Regular updates throughout the pandemic and I know if I needed support all I had to do was phone or email

1 provider said that more direct contact would have been nice:



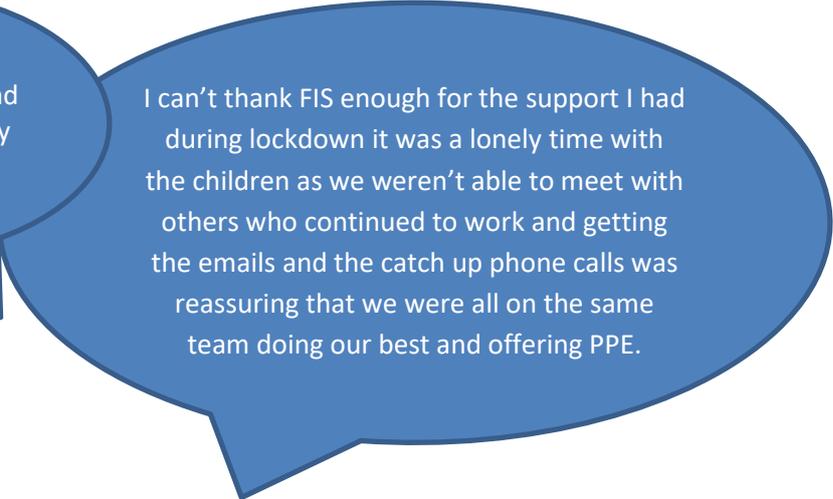
I felt supported only when I sought information from them, more contact rather than emails would have been nicer.

100% said they found the email bulletins that FIS send useful and when asked their preferred communication method, they all said email. All, apart from 1 would like to receive information on training. This was closely followed by local initiatives, Welsh Government updates and funding.

Further comments were given by providers and although most were positive, 1 childminder said that they had to temporarily suspend their business due to lack of business.



The scheme was a great support to us and I feel benefitted many families.



I can't thank FIS enough for the support I had during lockdown it was a lonely time with the children as we weren't able to meet with others who continued to work and getting the emails and the catch up phone calls was reassuring that we were all on the same team doing our best and offering PPE.

Parent Summary responses

Responses from parents were very positive. The funding meant that parents could increase their working hours (32%) and carry on working without the worry of how they would afford childcare.

Without this scheme I would not have been able to continue to work as a GP through lock down.

The scheme was excellent, and a life line for my family.

Would have been forced to resign if the funding hadn't been available. Thank you so

The majority of parents would usually use a mixture of paid childcare (88%) and grandparents/extended family (57%). As grandparents weren't allowed to provide childcare, without the C-CAS funding, these parents would have been far worse off financially. However, only 22% of parents said that without the C-CAS funding they couldn't have afforded childcare.

I was completely new to childcare and having to return to work on a hospital ward during a pandemic this scheme made working by day a lot easier and not draining when thinking of childcare

96% of parents found the application process very or quite straightforward and 93% didn't have any issues with the C-CAS process.

I found the process and funding extremely beneficial to my family and enabling myself and my husband to continue to work in the health service, knowing our children were safe and being looked after within their child care setting during a

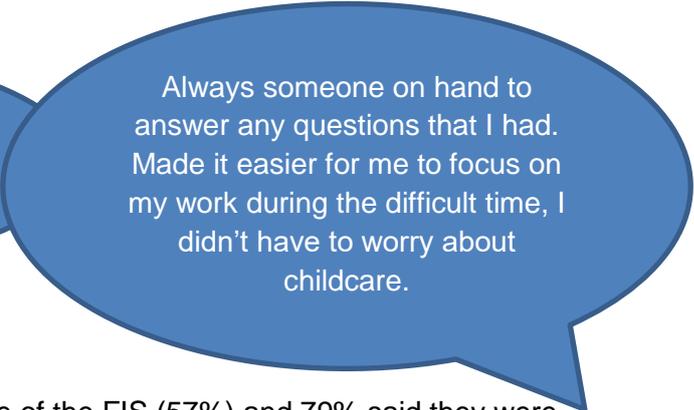
I thought the whole process was extremely straightforward any queries initially were dealt with promptly

I found the process straightforward and built a good rapport with one of the staff members who helped ensure there were no delays with my application.

95% of parents found the continued communication from the FIS as excellent or good.



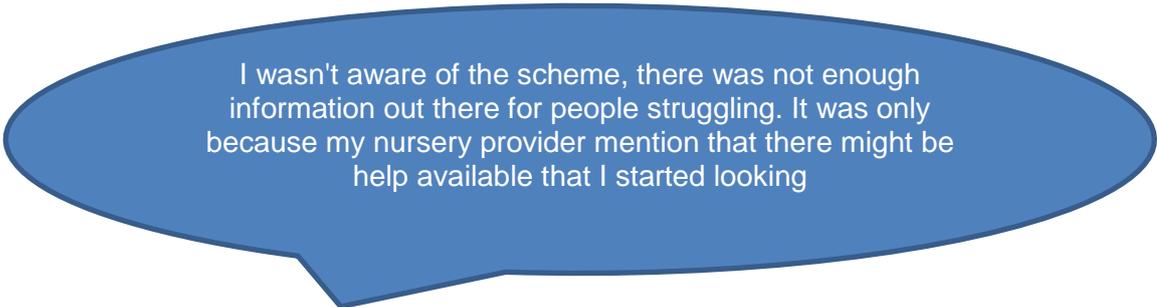
Everyone we have spoken to has been helpful and knowledgeable. They have responded promptly to any queries and always followed up on



Always someone on hand to answer any questions that I had. Made it easier for me to focus on my work during the difficult time, I didn't have to worry about childcare.

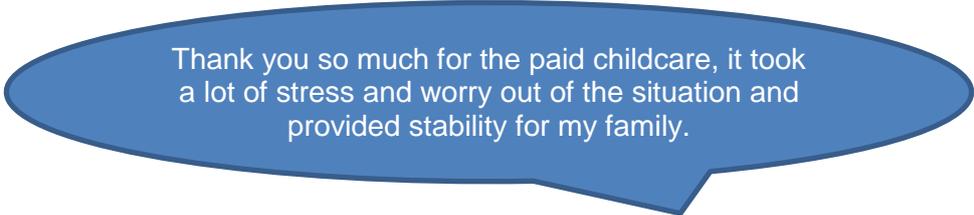
Just over half of all parents were already aware of the FIS (57%) and 79% said they were likely to contact the FIS again. The most common reason for contacting FIS would be for information about the Childcare Offer and activities and services for children.

Parents were asked to make further comments and a couple mentioned that there should have been more promotion about the scheme.



I wasn't aware of the scheme, there was not enough information out there for people struggling. It was only because my nursery provider mention that there might be help available that I started looking

Other comments were extremely positive



Thank you so much for the paid childcare, it took a lot of stress and worry out of the situation and provided stability for my family.

Debbie Maule & Becky Wickett

November 2020