How is your local authority meeting the information duty?

The following set of questions have been included to help local authorities and their FIS identify where progress can be made in implementing section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006.

1. Who has accountability for Section 12? Do they have sufficient strategic authority across services for fathers, mothers, children and young people to ensure it is implemented?

A fully integrated FIS needs to be led strategically at a senior level in the Children’s Trust. There should be a named officer in the local authority who is accountable for Section 12, and ideally, a steering group to monitor progress of its implementation.

2. Have you developed a strategy to deliver consistent, integrated, inclusive information across the local authority and partner agencies in your locality? Is this linked with related strategies such as the Parenting Strategy and CYPP?

Implementation of Section 12 should be planned and delivered through an information strategy. This can be a stand-alone document or part of another strategic plan such as the parenting strategy or the CYPP. It should show how the FIS links with partner agencies to deliver a seamless information offer through a variety of access points.

3. How are you measuring whether you are successfully delivering against Section 12?

Local authorities should have clear processes in place to measure the delivery, reach and impact of the FIS and ensure it is meeting the needs of the local community. Data gathered on monitoring and evaluation should be analysed and used to inform planning.

It is recommended that local authorities establish and maintain communications strategies to ensure a joined-up approach to provision of information to parents.

Statutory Guidance to Section 12 of the Childcare Act

You can download this publication or order copies online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Planning to inform

The strategic importance of Families Information Services

Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 (the information duty) places a statutory duty on all top tier local authorities in England to deliver information, advice and assistance to parents of children up to the age of 20. Local authorities deliver this through provision of a Families Information Service (FIS).

In order to achieve successful implementation of Section 12 it is essential that planning of the FIS takes place at a strategic level. Joined up, effective planning of the FIS in partnership with other services can also contribute to broader objectives such as:

- The Children’s Plan’s 2020 goal of both fathers and mothers* satisfied with the information and support that they receive
- The priorities set out in the Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare document
- The Local Authority national indicator set and Local Area Agreements.

To enable successful delivery the FIS should be linked into a network of partner agencies within the information duty?

The following set of questions have been included to help local authorities and their FIS identify where progress can be made in implementing section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006.

1. Who has accountability for Section 12? Do they have sufficient strategic authority across services for fathers, mothers, children and young people to ensure it is implemented?

A fully integrated FIS needs to be led strategically at a senior level in the Children’s Trust. There should be a named officer in the local authority who is accountable for Section 12, and ideally, a steering group to monitor progress of its implementation.

2. Have you developed a strategy to deliver consistent, integrated, inclusive information across the local authority and partner agencies in your locality? Is this linked with related strategies such as the Parenting Strategy and CYPP?

Implementation of Section 12 should be planned and delivered through an information strategy. This can be a stand-alone document or part of another strategic plan such as the parenting strategy or the CYPP. It should show how the FIS links with partner agencies to deliver a seamless information offer through a variety of access points.

3. How are you measuring whether you are successfully delivering against Section 12?

Local authorities should have clear processes in place to measure the delivery, reach and impact of the FIS and ensure it is meeting the needs of the local community. Data gathered on monitoring and evaluation should be analysed and used to inform planning.

It is recommended that local authorities establish and maintain communications strategies to ensure a joined-up approach to provision of information to parents.

Statutory Guidance to Section 12 of the Childcare Act

You can download this publication or order copies online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

Planning to inform

The strategic importance of Families Information Services

Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 (the information duty) places a statutory duty on all top tier local authorities in England to deliver information, advice and assistance to parents of children up to the age of 20. Local authorities deliver this through provision of a Families Information Service (FIS).

In order to achieve successful implementation of Section 12 it is essential that planning of the FIS takes place at a strategic level. Joined up, effective planning of the FIS in partnership with other services can also contribute to broader objectives such as:

- The Children’s Plan’s 2020 goal of both fathers and mothers* satisfied with the information and support that they receive
- The priorities set out in the Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare document
- The Local Authority national indicator set and Local Area Agreements.

To enable successful delivery the FIS should be linked into a network of partner agencies within
This table sets out priority areas to which FIS can contribute. These are intended as examples rather than as an exhaustive list, as there are a significant number of local and national priorities where FIS can potentially have an impact.

### How the FIS supports local and national priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local priority</th>
<th>Examples of how FIS supports the priority</th>
<th>Delivery partners</th>
<th>National policy or legislation</th>
<th>National indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information, Advice and Support for Parents</strong></td>
<td>• FIS provides a parent-focused, quality assured service based on comprehensive childcare information and specific expertise</td>
<td>• Ofsted</td>
<td>• Section 12, Childcare Act 2006</td>
<td>NI 14 Avoidable Contacts: The average number of customer contacts per received customer request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS delivers a specialist brokerage service to support fathers and mothers who are not able to find suitable childcare</td>
<td>• Childcare Providers</td>
<td>• Aiming High for Disabled Children</td>
<td>NI 54 Services for disabled children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS provides single point of contact for information on services, facilities and publications for parents of children aged 0-20</td>
<td>• Parent Know How Services</td>
<td>• Children’s Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assess and Secure Childcare Sufficiency</strong></td>
<td>• FIS holds a definitive database of childcare supply</td>
<td>• Providers of Support Services for Parents and Children with a Disability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS holds data on childcare demand and gaps in sufficiency through delivery of its information and brokerage services</td>
<td>• Section 6 and 11, Childcare Act 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS supports development of the childcare workforce by providing access to funding, training and recruitment opportunities</td>
<td>• 2020 Children and Young People’s Workforce Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Centres and Extended Services</strong></td>
<td>• FIS provides information to fathers and mothers on-site or through outreach and information access points at children’s centres and schools</td>
<td>• Children’s Centres</td>
<td>• NI 88 Number of extended schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS promotes children’s centres and extended services to parents</td>
<td>• Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS supports swift and easy access to specialist services through its database of provision</td>
<td>• Providers of Services at Children’s Centres and Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Strategy</strong></td>
<td>• FIS is a gateway to all services, facilities and publications of benefit to parents of children aged 0-20</td>
<td>• Children’s Centre Practice Guidance</td>
<td>• NI 22 Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in their area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS supports fathers and mothers to make informed choices on appropriate services for themselves and their families</td>
<td>• Extended Schools Prospects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS provides support for priority groups identified in the strategy, such as teenage parents and fathers</td>
<td>• Every Child Matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS collects data on demand for services from parents which can be used to inform planning</td>
<td>• Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Activities for Young People</strong></td>
<td>• FIS provides information about activities for young people up to the age of 20</td>
<td>• NI 100 Young people’s participation in positive activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS collects data on demand for services of young people which can be used to inform planning</td>
<td>• Youth Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending Child Poverty</strong></td>
<td>• FIS delivers a brokerage service which can support fathers and mothers to return to work</td>
<td>• Youth Matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS provides information on financial assistance for childcare</td>
<td>• Section 6, Education and Inspections Act 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS provides information on services which can support families experiencing financial difficulties</td>
<td>• NI 116 Proportion of children in poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Health and Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>• FIS provides information to support healthy living, such as opportunities for active play, healthy eating and activities delivered by childcare providers</td>
<td>• NI 53 Obesity in primary school age children in reception and Year 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS signposts to health services and professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FIS provides information on support services which help with issues such as bullying and drug abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Planning

#### How is your local authority measuring?

Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you developed a strategy to deliver this through provision of a Families Information Service (FIS) in your area?</td>
<td>A fully integrated FIS needs to be led strategically, be joined up, effective planning of the FIS takes place at a strategic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you identified a named officer in the local authority who is responsible for the information duty?</td>
<td>The Local Authority national indicator set linked into a network of partner agencies within the local community. Data gathered on monitoring and evaluation of the FIS and ensure it is meeting the needs of the families it serves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. How are you measuring whether the information strategy is effective? | There are several ways in which this can be measured, including:

- Impact on the delivery, reach and impact of services.
- Improvement in the delivery and accessibility of services.
- Increase in the satisfaction of users.
- Reduction in the number of referrals to other agencies.
- Increase in the number of users accessing services.

These measures can be linked to key performance indicators and used to inform planning.

### The strategic importance of FIS

#### The importance of a gateway to services

- **Assess and Secure Childcare Sufficiency**
- **Children’s Centres and Extended Services**
- **Parenting Strategy**
- **Positive Activities for Young People**
- **Ending Child Poverty**
- **Child Health and Wellbeing**

These examples illustrate the importance of a gateway to services, enabling parents to access a wide range of services and information in a streamlined and efficient manner.

### FIS in context

- **Health Professionals including GPs and Health Visitors**
- **Children’s Workforce Development Council**
- **Providers of Parenting Services**
- **Providers of Services for Young People**
- **Schools Admissions Teams**

These are just a few examples of the many agencies and organizations that may provide information and support services, with a common goal of promoting healthy lifestyles, child development, and well-being.

### The role of FIS in informing parents

- **FIS is a gateway to all services, facilities and publications of benefit to parents of children aged 0-20**
- **FIS holds a definitive database of childcare supply**
- **FIS holds data on childcare demand and gaps in sufficiency through delivery of its information and brokerage services**
- **FIS supports development of the childcare workforce by providing access to funding, training and recruitment opportunities**

Through these and other services, FIS plays a crucial role in informing parents about the wide range of services available to support them and their children.