

Appendix 15 – Luton’s Family Information Service (FIS)

Brief background

Luton Family Information Service (FIS) provide information, advice and guidance to parents and carers, allowing them to decide on the best type of childcare according to their individual needs. FIS acts as the first point of contact for parents, giving advice over the telephone, through emails, at events, as well as sending to parents or carers the details of their preferred type of childcare provider, allowing them to make their own choices.

Luton FIS is committed to impartiality, confidentiality and data protection requirements and have formal agreements and direct links with Ofsted. All of the information provided to parents and carers is absolutely free of charge.

How Luton Family Information Service can help you

FIS securely hold the details of all Luton registered childminders, childcare providers (children’s centres, schools, nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, etc.), and breakfast and after school clubs and holiday play schemes. Details of preferred providers are printed or emailed and sent to parents, together with FIS literature. FIS tailors the list of providers to suit a parent’s individual needs, for example a particular school pick up/drop off area or a particular age group.

To ensure that parents are receiving the most up to date information, all providers are sent an FIS provider agreement to complete which asks for information about your childcare provision. You will be asked to answer questions about your Ofsted registration, the type of childcare you offer, opening hours, costs and the age of children that you can care for, together with details such as whether you have your own transport or can provide care for children with additional needs.

The most important part of the FIS provider agreement is the **data protection** section. This is where you give your permission for your details to be given over the phone, in writing (lists sent to parents), emailed, and to be made available online in Luton’s Directory <http://directory.luton.gov.uk> If you do not return this form to FIS with the relevant responses and a signature, FIS will be unable to provide a parent or carer with the details of your services. Therefore it is important that you return this completed form as soon as possible.

As part of our duty to provide accurate up to date information, FIS will ask for regular updates on your vacant childcare spaces. And annually you will be required to complete an update form. This will be used to collect updates to your details, with the information provided used to inform Luton’s Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which government legislation requires Luton Council to complete.

Contact details and opening hours

Tel: 01582 548888

Email: fis@luton.gov.uk

Web: www.luton.gov.uk/fis

Directory <http://directory.luton.gov.uk/family>

Post: Family Information Service, Flying Start Office, 2nd Floor TOKKO, 7 Gordon Street, Luton, LU1 2QP

Monday	8:45am to 5:15pm	<i>Please note during term time the telephone will be on voicemail from 4:30pm on Mondays and Tuesdays</i>
Tuesday	8:45am to 5:15pm	
Wednesday	8:45am to 5:15pm	
Thursday	8:45am to 5:15pm	
Friday	8:45am to 4:30pm	
Saturday / Sunday	Closed	

Useful websites

For a parent, it can sometimes be difficult to know where to go for help. Luton Family Information Service (FIS) have put together this list of useful websites, which may be useful to you as providers and the families you work with.

Childcare Choices

An easy to use government website to help parents identify what their free entitlements are and what support may be available to them to help with their childcare costs.

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Childcare choices also includes a section for childcare providers about what they need to know

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/providers>

Family and Childcare Trust

A leading national charity in the field of policy, research and advocacy on childcare and family issues

<https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org>

Family Lives

Free advice, support and signposting available 24 hours a day on all areas of family lives, with a section for professionals that may be of use to providers in helping them support the families they work with.

<http://www.familylives.org.uk/>

Help with childcare costs calculator

This Government website has an online calculator that can give parents an estimate of how much help they could get towards the cost of approved childcare. Parents will need information for themselves and their partner if they are a couple including; how much is currently spent on childcare, benefits they or their child gets and parents income.

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

Its Learning Luton (The Learning Platform)

This website is used by Luton Council and childcare providers to share information and knowledge, resources and a calendar of upcoming training sessions.

<https://luton.itslearning.com>

School support Services Luton

Details of the training courses, events, and network meetings for childcare providers and those that want to work with children. All Luton courses, events and meetings will be booked through this website.

<http://www.schoolsupport.luton.gov.uk/>

Student Parents

The website includes an online calculator that can estimate student finance entitlements.

<https://www.studentparents.org>

Turn 2 US

An online Benefits Calculator for 'means tested benefits'. Contributory Benefits are not calculated but are featured in the calculation results when parents have informed them that they are getting such benefits. The Benefits calculator does not work out entitlement to benefits for students, people who are under 18 years old, people in hospital/residential care, prisoners, people on strike or not a British or Irish Citizen and UK Nationals living abroad.

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Find-Benefits-Grants>