

# Families First Quality Award

For Family Information Services – including IAQF



**FAMILIES FIRST  
QUALITY AWARD**

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THE FAMILIES FIRST QUALITY AWARD

The Families First Quality Award recognises Family Information Services (FIS) that demonstrate excellence in providing information, advice and assistance to local families.

Achievement of the award recognises Family Information Services that exceed the requirements set out in the legislation and statutory guidance and provide information and assistance of the highest quality. The standards have been designed to recognise and adapt to the different responsibilities and priorities for different FISs.

The award is an outcome-based standard. Assessments are carried out by accredited Families First Assessors who will work with Local Authorities and Family Information Services to identify suitable examples of evidence that demonstrate organisational competence against the individual elements of the standards.

The standards provide a quality framework to help Local Authority information services to think about the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) they provide, with the emphasis on delivering a high-quality experience for the service user. The aim is to ensure that, while an organisation reaps the rewards of the Families First Standards journey, they never lose sight of the needs and well-being of the individuals they seek to support.

## INFORMATION, ADVICE & ASSISTANCE (IAA) IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Legislation and statutory guidance establish a duty on local authorities to set up and maintain a service providing information, advice and assistance to parents or prospective parents related to the provision of childcare and any other services and facilities in the area of their local authority that may benefit families. In addition, the Acts/Guidance prescribe that information must have regard to the needs of parents/carers of disabled children or young persons and the provision of childcare and other related services. The service must also be established and maintained in the manner which is best calculated to facilitate access to the service by people in the local authority's area who might otherwise have difficulty in taking advantage of the service.

For the purposes of this document the acronym 'FIS' will be used to refer to Family Information Services in England and Wales.

## WHAT IS INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE?

Providing information, advice and assistance (IAA) is the core function of FIS. It covers a range of activities that equip parents, prospective parents and family members with what they need to make informed choices about the care, health, education and recreation of their children, including those with specific requirements. More specific definitions can be found in the Glossary.

## APPLICATION

When a local authority information service applies for assessment against the Families First Quality Award all services must complete Standards 1-8 and Standards 11-12 in Section One. In addition:

1. Information services in Wales must evidence Standard 10
2. Information services in England must evidence Standard 9
3. Elements of Standard 8 relate to the Family Information Directory. Local Authority information services in Wales are exempt from most of these elements. Organisations in Wales need to cover the requirements of 8.10 and 8.12 (organisations in Wales are exempt from 8:1- 8:9 and 8:11).

Area within the legislation and statutory guidance	FAMILIES FIRST STANDARD(S)		
	Standards	England	Wales
Provision of childcare information	Standard 1 & 2	✓	✓
Access to the information service	Standard 3 & 4	✓	✓
Information about other services, facilities and publications	All Standards	✓	✓
Information on services for disabled children, for children with additional needs and for disabled parents	All Standards	✓	✓
Brokerage, advice and assistance	Standard 9	✓	✗
Safeguarding children	All Standards	✓	✓
Quality of service delivery	All Standards	✓	✓
Information management	Standard 8	✓	partial
Welsh Language	Standard 10	✗	✓
Collaborative working	Standard 11	✓	✓
Early education	Standard 12	✓	✓

## FAMILIES FIRST SEND STANDARDS

Section Two, the Families First SEND Standards, are optional; there is an additional cost for completing these standards. A Local Authority information service can choose to work towards the SEND Standards at the same time as the FIS Standards, or at a later date if they wish.

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The following pages detail the Families First Quality Award Standards for Family Information Services, the links to current legislation and the types of evidence that services may provide to demonstrate how they are meeting the Standards. Assessors will consider a range of evidence and will support services to capture the outcomes of the services they are delivering.

Services in Wales wishing to cover the Information and Advice Quality Framework (IAQF) will need to also cover the notes in guidance that are highlighted and ensure that they have at least completed a self assessment to demonstrate they are working towards a fully bi-lingual service.

## SECTION ONE - Families First FIS Standards

### STANDARD 1

**Helping families - Families know how Local Authority information services can help them**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>1.1</b>	<p>Families will have knowledge of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the service that they can expect from the LA information service,</li> <li>(b) their own responsibilities in relation to the use of the service,</li> <li>(c) where they can go to for help if they are not getting the service that they can reasonably expect.</li> </ul>	<p>You may have a promotional/ communication plan that identifies how you will ensure that families will have access to relevant information. This may include outreach activities, or providing information through a website, or a centralised information service.</p> <p>You may have FAQs to help families make the most of the information available.</p> <p>You will have a statement of service (as required by criterion 5.1) that sets out the features of the service along with how to give feedback or make a complaint.</p> <p>Staff may demonstrate the provision of IAA services through a variety of channels that may include: telephone, web chat, outreach etc.</p>
<b>1.2</b>	<p>The benefits of the Local Authority information services are promoted to all potential clients.</p>	<p>In your communication you may use information leaflets or case studies to demonstrate how other families have benefited from the information – you may make use of statistics or infographics.</p> <p>Your promotional/communication plan includes an events calendar that identifies activities carried out with partners in the community to promote parent/carer engagement with your information services.</p> <p>Staff can describe how the service is promoted to relevant people.</p>
<b>1.3</b>	<p>Up to date information about where and how to access the Local Authority information services is available in a range of suitable formats, settings and media channels used by potential clients.</p>	<p>Your online Directory may include the facility to translate content into a range of community languages and may also provide an audio facility.</p> <p>Promotional flyers/leaflets, which include images that reflect the whole community, are made available in outreach/partner organisations. These are also available in different languages used in the community.</p> <p>You may use social media with parents/carers to promote use of your service.</p> <p>Staff can describe how information about the service offer is made accessible to families.</p>
<b>1.4</b>	<p>Families can access an extended range of IAA services delivered in a variety of outreach formats.</p>	<p>Your promotional/communication plan includes an events calendar that identifies activities carried out with partners in the community to promote parent/carer engagement with your information services.</p>
<b>1.5</b>	<p>Families are aware of and know how to access appropriate local and national information and services.</p>	<p>Feedback and testimonials are actively sought and used to inform promotional activities and service planning and delivery.</p>

**STANDARD 2****Enabling Families - Families are supported to make informed and realistic decisions about services**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>2.1</b>	High quality, up to date and impartial information about a range of services and organisations is provided to families, taking into consideration any statutory requirements for providing such information.	Your on-line directory will show, for example, details of your Local Offer, information on childcare provision and information on other activities/support available to families.  Staff can describe how they keep information up to date and partners (other organisations/services) will be able to confirm how you work with them to ensure currency of information.
<b>2.2</b>	The service must provide families with the categories of information prescribed in the regulations about registered childcare published by Ofsted (England) or CIW (Wales).	Staff will be able to describe the range of information available and how it is provided/circulated to families in your area. You may have an outreach service or information point that is promoted to families.
<b>2.3</b>	Information services must provide families with the categories of information prescribed in the regulations about non-registered childcare where they are able to obtain the information.	See 2.1 and 2.2 above.
<b>2.4</b>	Information is provided electronically on the Local Authority's website and is also available in a range of formats reflecting the different ages, needs and capabilities of families.	See 2.1 and 2.2 above.
<b>2.5</b>	Information is provided at a range of delivery points reflecting the different ages, needs and capabilities of clients.	You may have a communication strategy that indicates the way information will be delivered. You may have staff who undertake outreach work, or there may be local authority information points that provide this information along with other public information. Staff can describe the different ways families can access information.
<b>2.6</b>	The service helps families get the information they need about childcare provision in other areas without having to make contact with neighbouring authorities.	You may have arrangements with other local FISs to share information on your website, for example, via embedded widgets. Staff can describe examples of where they have supported families to obtain information out of area.
<b>2.7</b>	Views on the adequacy of information supplied are sought from families and from the professionals supporting them and action is taken in response to this feedback.	Your website may provide opportunities for parents/ carers and other professionals to provide comments and feedback. You may publish 'You said... We did' on your website. You may use forums or focus groups to gather feedback. You may use newsletters to share action taken in response to feedback.

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>2.8</b>	Families are appropriately signposted or referred to other specialist services for further support and information.	You record signposting and referral for further support, in line with legislation and procedures. You will be able to show your assessor your referral records.
<b>2.9</b>	An immediate referral for specialist assessment and support is undertaken where the information service has reason to believe a client or child is at risk from harm.	You will have established safeguarding procedures and maintain records of timely referral in line with legislation and procedures. Staff can provide examples of when they have used immediate referrals or are able to describe what they would do should the situation arise.
<b>2.10</b>	Referrals to specialist services and/or multi-agency teams are monitored.	To ensure that support needs are met, you follow-up referrals for additional support and update associated records. You can show your assessor records of referrals with follow up action recorded.

**STANDARD 3** **Supporting Vulnerable Families - Special attention and care is given to identify, help and support vulnerable families to make informed and realistic decisions about services**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>3.1</b>	Communications with families take into account the needs of mothers, fathers, carers, the vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded.	See 1.3 above.  You may also be able to offer IAA in community languages and/or face-to-face in a location which takes into account parent/carer/family needs. You may have access to a British Sign Language Interpreter/ Translator. Staff can provide examples of where they have provided alternative communication methods.
<b>3.2</b>	Communications with families are adapted to reflect different needs.	For example, in relation to basic skills needs, impairments, English as an additional language. See 1.3 and 3.1 above.
<b>3.3</b>	Families are informed about safe practices when accessing services found on the Enhanced Childcare Directory or Family Services Directory and, where applicable, as part of the Local Offer of services for families with special educational needs and disabilities.	For example, you will provide advice on checking credentials, references, accreditation with awarding bodies or national organisations when parents/carers are looking for childcare. The Local Offer information on your website will provide information on safe practices when choosing childcare and other services.
<b>3.4</b>	Parents are supported to understand how other specialist services can help their family and how these services are accessed.	You will have a Statement of Service (as required by criterion 5.1) which also refers to your brokerage service. You may have staff who specialise in outreach/brokerage work. Your Directory will include information on specialist services and how to make contact with them. Your Local Offer information will also provide details of relevant specialist services and how to make contact with them.

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>3.5</b>	Information, advice and assistance services are delivered flexibly at all times, in places and through media channels that are convenient for a range of families.	In addition to details of childcare and service providers included in your online Directory, you may also provide detailed advice and assistance pages on your website. You may also have a helpline, offer availability using social media, via outreach activities and through partnership working at joint events.
<b>3.6</b>	Information, advice and assistance is impartial and provided confidentially. Unless a child or young person is perceived to be at risk of significant harm, in which case the local processes for raising such concerns with the relevant agencies will be followed. This would also apply if childcare provision failed to meet legal or quality requirements.	Your induction, training and performance management records show that you provide regular updates on and monitor compliance with legislation and procedures relating to the provision of information, advice and assistance, safeguarding, referral, record keeping and the limits of confidentiality.





**STANDARD 4****Including Families - Information services collect, monitor and review equalities data as well as promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity and challenge stereotypes in the delivery of services**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>4.1</b>	Information services reach as many potential families in the local community as possible, including disadvantaged and marginalised groups.	<p>The Local Authority Equality Impact Assessment and your Childcare Sufficiency audit are likely to inform objectives and targets in your annual FIS Service Plan.</p> <p>Your Marketing Plan and Events Planner is used to promote the engagement of families with your service.</p> <p>You may invite representatives of partner organisations to team meetings and ask to join their meetings to promote the establishment of Partnership Agreements and joint working to promote your service.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	Services are sensitive to people’s faith, cultural and family background.	<p>Images on your publicity materials, flyers and leaflets and on your website reflect the diversity of people who live in the local community.</p> <p>Your Equal Opportunities Policy and practice take into account the needs of families across the community.</p>
<b>4.3</b>	Stereotypes are challenged where appropriate.	<p>Your staff and any Parent Champion induction and ongoing training challenges stereotypes.</p> <p>The staff team is given opportunities to reflect on their practice delivering information, advice and assistance so that they can constructively challenge stereotypes families may have.</p> <p>Work with partners involves the promotion of work to challenge stereotypes.</p>
<b>4.4</b>	Active efforts are made to ensure that the information services, workforce and partners reflect the diversity of the wider community.	<p>You may aim to establish a staff team/parent champions who reflect the diversity of the wider community and staff/parent champions are deployed to maximise engagement with families. You monitor all staff and volunteers by protected characteristics.</p>
<b>4.5</b>	Services give consideration to clients with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including children and their parents.	<p>Your Local Offer information is comprehensive and you ensure that the generic information in your Directory also gives consideration to families with SEND.</p> <p>Information could also be available in large print and in an audio format.</p> <p>You may have access to British Sign Language Interpreters/Translators.</p> <p>Venues used are risk-assessed and are accessible to clients.</p>

## STANDARD 5

### Meeting statutory requirements - / Local Authority information services fulfil relevant legal duties and support this by implementing robust local policies

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p>The requirement for the provision of information, advice and assistance services is set out in a written statement that makes clear the need to meet the requirements of the Information Duty and other linked legislation where relevant.</p>	<p>Your Statement of Service covers impartial and confidential information, advice and guidance and the availability of the brokerage service as well as the duty to produce and maintain a Local Offer - see Families First SEND Standard 3 in Section Two.</p> <p>Your Statement of Service will include the advice topics available, types, methods of delivery and target client groups. It will also confirm how personal information will be handled (or refer to appropriate policy) and how people may complain or give feedback.</p> <p>FIS in Wales need to address the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) Information, Advice and Assistance Duty.</p>
<p><b>5.2</b></p>	<p>Local partnership agreements, with appropriate services, clearly set out the respective roles and responsibilities of each partner.</p>	<p>You may have written partnership agreements, which are regularly reviewed, along with minuted meetings to plan and review progress on joint objectives and activities.</p>
<p><b>5.3</b></p>	<p>Local Authority information services can demonstrate an awareness of relevant guidance and statutory documentation.</p>	<p>Relevant guidance and statutory documentation is incorporated into your policies and procedures, which are regularly audited and reviewed. Examples of current legislation and guidance are shown later in this document.</p> <p>Staff can describe changes as a result of changes in legislation and guidance.</p>
<p><b>5.4</b></p>	<p>Local Authority information services have and implement policies on the following and these are reviewed regularly with action taken to improve and develop them where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Promoting equality (including age, gender, disability, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation)</li> <li>(b) Impartiality</li> <li>(c) Assessing and meeting the needs of individuals for information, advice and assistance / support</li> <li>(d) Engaging with mothers and fathers and their families</li> <li>(e) Data protection and data sharing</li> <li>(f) Information management and quality assurance</li> <li>(g) The monitoring and evaluation of information, advice and assistance provision</li> </ul>	<p>Please see 5.3 above.</p> <p>In addition, as part of your staff development and performance management strategy, you may be involved in the observation of individuals in the team to inform discussions at appraisals and in order to agree staff development plans.</p> <p>Staff can give examples of changes made as a result of monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>You will be able to provide your assessor with details of your ICO registration and the training provided to staff regarding how to deal with personal data.</p>

## STANDARD 6

### Staff training and development - Staff providing information, advice and assistance services are appropriately trained and qualified and participate in continuous professional development

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>6.1</b>	Recruitment policies and practices comply with local and national safeguarding and with equal opportunities best practice standards and legislation.	<p>Your Local Authority Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure reflects current legislation and best practice.</p> <p>You may have documentation from recent recruitment, which confirms safeguarding checks have been made and your recruitment procedure has been followed.</p> <p>Documentation will include job descriptions and personal specifications for those involved in managing and delivering the service.</p>
<b>6.2</b>	Local Authority information services have induction, training and development plans for staff providing information, advice and assistance.	<p>Your staff development policy and related procedure is applied so that staff can contribute to the achievement of objectives at an organisational, team and individual level.</p> <p>Your FIS Service Plan may include objectives for staff development.</p> <p>You will have a team training plan as well as completed staff induction and individual training plans.</p> <p>You may have a standing item at team meetings for team members to share learning with the whole team.</p> <p>You may also have a standing item at team meetings for visiting speakers from partner services.</p>
<b>6.3</b>	Suitable training programmes are developed to suit the range of delivery points and are delivered with suitable frequency.	Please see 6.2 above. There is a training budget in place. There will be evidence of communication systems such as team meetings, regular bulletins etc to ensure there is effective communication with staff.
<b>6.4</b>	<p>All staff delivering information, advice and assistance have the skills, knowledge and qualifications* to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) deliver a high quality service</li> <li>(b) deliver information, advice and assistance to diverse client groups and challenge stereotyping</li> <li>(c) know where to access specialist advice services from the independent, private and voluntary sectors</li> <li>(d) adhere to their relevant professional codes of conduct</li> <li>(e) have access to a range of continuing professional development opportunities and have structured opportunities for the evaluation of professional practice.</li> </ul>	<p>*The minimum recommended level of training for a specialist role such as brokerage would be an NVQ Level 3 Certificate in Advice and Guidance or equivalent experience, skills or abilities.</p> <p>You may have records of observation of staff delivering information, advice and assistance, which confirm their competence.</p> <p>You may be able to show your assessor both requested and unsolicited positive feedback about support provided by individuals in the team.</p> <p>You will have completed appraisal paperwork which records evaluation of professional practice and agreement and review of individual training plans.</p> <p>Services should have a values and behaviours policy which staff work to.</p>

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<p><b>6.5</b></p> <p>Systems are in place to regularly review and assess staff training needs, and these inform training plans and policies.</p>	<p>Your staff induction and initial training paperwork confirms that you regularly review training needs for new staff.</p> <p>You will have completed appraisal/supervision paperwork which confirms this for each established individual in the team.</p> <p>Your team training plan reflects organisational, team and individual needs.</p> <p>Along with knowledge of their own services, staff will know how to handle complaints, provide high quality customer service and have an awareness of other local services (or know where to signpost/refer to gain this information).</p>
<p><b>6.6</b></p> <p>Staff involved in delivering the extra help via a brokerage service will be suitably trained and supported. (See Families First Standard 9 in Section One)</p>	<p>You may support staff involved in brokerage to achieve the NVQ Level 3 Certificate in Advice and Guidance.</p> <p>You may provide bespoke training and update training for staff involved in brokerage.</p>
<p><b>6.7</b></p> <p>Staff are familiar with and understand relevant legislation that impacts on their work.</p>	<p>Current legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Sections 12 (England) and Section 27 (Wales) of the Childcare Act 2006, Childcare Act 2016 and the Statutory Guidance March 2018: Early Education and Childcare. For Wales: Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) Information, Advice and Assistance Duty.</li> <li>(b) Current Ofsted or Care Inspectorate Wales regulation and inspection of childcare</li> <li>(c) Health and safety</li> <li>(d) Safeguarding children and adults</li> <li>(e) Data protection/information management</li> </ul> <p>Staff may have access to online updates and webinars as well as training courses which cover legislation relating to their work.</p> <p>Individual team members may have a functional responsibility for updating colleagues, service providers, partners and families on the requirements of legislation.</p> <p>Staff can describe how key legislation impacts on their work.</p>

## STANDARD 7

### Leadership and management - *Information services are planned, monitored, reviewed and evaluated and prompt actions are taken to improve services and meet families' needs*

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>7.1</b></p>	<p>Systems are in place to enable decisions to be made at a strategic level regarding the planning of services to deliver information, advice and assistance to families.</p>	<p>A manager may meet regularly with relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team to review and plan services and related objectives.</p> <p>A manager may also be involved in regular strategic multi-agency meetings to review and plan services and objectives where there is a common interest.</p> <p>A manager may also report periodically to Cabinet Meetings regarding the planning of services.</p> <p>An organogram will be available showing the management structure of the service. A written description of the management structure includes the governance/scrutiny practices in place.</p>
<p><b>7.2</b></p>	<p>Information services proactively engage the local community in the design, planning, delivery, quality assurance and evaluation of the service.</p>	<p>You may use systems such as Survey Monkey to review and evaluate services provided.</p> <p>You may publish 'You said... We did' on your website.</p> <p>You may use questionnaires and focus groups to identify key objectives and activities.</p> <p>Partnership and multi-agency meetings may be used to plan the delivery and evaluation of services.</p> <p>You may use newsletters to seek feedback and to report on evaluation results and future plans.</p> <p>You refer to the results of the Equality Impact Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Audit to inform objectives and services.</p> <p>Staff can describe changes as a result of feedback and evaluation.</p>
<p><b>7.3</b></p>	<p>The design, planning and delivery of information services takes into account the needs of a varied range of families, clients and professionals in the local community as well as non-users.</p>	<p>Please see 7.2 above.</p> <p>You may also use the Equality Impact Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Audit to inform service plans.</p> <p>You may work with the Senior Leadership Team to produce strategic plans for the Local Authority, which inform an annual FIS Team Plan.</p>
<p><b>7.4</b></p>	<p>The accessibility, use of the information service and effectiveness of provision are monitored, regularly reviewed and evaluated and data is used to inform service improvement plans.</p>	<p>Staff routinely seek and record feedback at the point of delivery.</p> <p>Families and professionals using your service and the online Directory online are routinely asked to record feedback.</p> <p>You also use the Equality Impact Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Audit to inform the FIS Team Plan.</p> <p>Management information is captured and evaluated to identify impact of the service, and this supports future service planning. There are clear outcome measures in place.</p>

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>7.5</b>	Strategic objectives, priorities, targets and performance indicators for delivery of information, advice and assistance are set. These support the delivery of the relevant local strategic plans / objectives. These enable services to be evaluated and support improvements where necessary.	Your FIS Service Plan is reviewed and revised regularly with reference to the Local Authority Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan. There is a documented financial management procedure with documented lines of authority for delegated budgets. There are clear arrangements for monitoring service budgets.
<b>7.6</b>	Managers of Local Authority information services are aware of the local population who may wish to access local services and will use this information to inform service delivery. (See Families First Standard 7.2 above).	You refer to census information, the Equality Impact Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Audit to identify community needs for example. This may include: the percentage of disabled children and young people who may wish to access local services.
<b>7.7</b>	The effectiveness of referral systems is reviewed at least quarterly with providers of specialist services and action is taken to rectify areas for development.	You may send reminders to providers of specialist services each quarter to ensure that the information they include in your Directory is up-to-date. Staff routinely check the currency of information held about a specialist provider when they contact the service. You may run events for, or hold regular meetings with, specialist services to review referral systems. You may send out newsletters and surveys each quarter to request feedback to inform objectives. Partnership Agreements may be reviewed quarterly with specialist services to identify action needed.
<b>7.8</b>	The development of information services is informed by regular feedback from: (a) early years and childcare providers (b) referral agencies (c) key partners (d) families (e) action taken in response to feedback is communicated back to these groups.	You will seek feedback at least annually, although the Service will need to determine the frequency, method and nature of feedback gained to ensure effective evaluation and to support continuous development.  Staff can provide examples of changes made as a result of feedback.
<b>7.9</b>	Local Authority information services have up to date improvement plans, which are reviewed and evaluated.	You use the Plan, Do, Review Planning Cycle to determine objectives and targets and to confirm and report on progress against related performance indicators and milestones set.

**STANDARD 8****Quality information (Organisations in Wales need to cover the requirements of 8.10 and 8.12 only) - Information is effectively managed and quality assured**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>8.1</b>	Local Authority information services maintain details of childcare providers ('Enhanced Childcare Directory' or 'ECD' information) and records of provision of services or facilities, which may be of benefit to parents, prospective parents, children or young people (Family Service Directory 'FSD' information).	Your online Enhanced Childcare Directory entries, Family Service Directory entries and Local Offer entries are comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate and in line with legislative requirements and guidance.
<b>8.2</b>	Local Authority information services will be proactive in identifying and engaging with potential sources of ECD and FSD information.	<p>Members of your team may each have functional responsibility for identifying and engaging with potential sources of ECD, FSD and Local Offer information.</p> <p>You may use team meetings to update colleagues on potential sources of information and on information received.</p> <p>You may include an agenda item at strategic meetings with partners to identify potential sources of information.</p>
<b>8.3</b>	Local Authority information services gain the consent of providers for the information included in ECD and FSD records and how it is displayed or used.	<p>You may ask providers to register online to confirm their consent for their information to be included in your Directory and ask them to upload information directly into a template for you to check.</p> <p>You may use system-generated emails and reminder emails to invite providers to check and amend their entries on your website.</p>
<b>8.4</b>	Local Authority information services have systems in place to encourage all service providers to regularly update the information held in a Family Service Directory.	<p>It is expected that these will be updated regularly and at least termly on 1st January, 1st April and 1st September.</p> <p>You may use system-generated emails and reminder emails to invite providers to check and amend their entries on your website.</p>
<b>8.5</b>	The service is proactive in gathering ECD and FSD service records from identified sources of information.	This may be a technical solution where service providers are automatically prompted via email to update their own records routinely. For example allowing the review and update of each ECD record at least once every 4 months and of each FSD record at the start of each term.

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>8.6</b> Local Authority information services enhance information provided by Ofsted about childcare providers to create its ECD, giving particular consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) opening hours</li> <li>(b) cost</li> <li>(c) vacancies</li> <li>(d) age ranges</li> <li>(e) Ofsted outcome, latest inspection date and link to latest report</li> <li>(f) information to help parents/carers of children and young people with SEND make informed choices (See Families First SEND Standard 4 in Section Two).</li> </ul>	<p>You ensure that your ECD entries follow a standard format providing details of opening hours, cost, vacancies, age ranges and most recent inspection report outcome, with a link to the most recent report and information about SEND support.</p>	
<p><b>8.7</b> Appropriate vocabularies and tagging will be adopted for ECD and FSD records.</p>	<p>These may be those recommended for use for the Family Information Directory.</p>	
<p><b>8.8</b> Local Authority information services implement appropriate data quality standards and assurance procedures.</p>	<p>Individual staff may have a functional responsibility for regularly checking and ensuring that information included on your website is up-to-date and meets regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Staff can describe the quality assurance processes in place.</p>	
<p><b>8.9</b> Local Authority information services provide online access to its ECD and FSD records.</p>	<p>You will provide easy access to a comprehensive and accessible online ECD, FSD and Local Offer Directory on your local authority website.</p>	
<p><b>8.10</b> Local Authority information services provide information about services and facilities in other local authority areas.</p>	<p>For example, this may be achieved by working collaboratively with other local authorities/ organisations, using technology to “harvest” data from other websites or embedding widgets into the website.</p> <p>In Wales, reference may be made to the Dewis website: <a href="https://www.dewis.wales/home">https://www.dewis.wales/home</a></p>	
<p><b>8.11</b> The Family Service Directory is set up in a way that allows it to be regularly reviewed and analysed and used to inform local strategic planning and commissioning of services. (See also Families First SEND Standard 4 in Section Two)</p>	<p>For example to identify weaknesses and gaps in local provision.</p>	
<p><b>8.12</b> Information gathered from local childcare providers and associated services will inform local childcare sufficiency assessment and planning.</p>	<p>In joint working with childcare providers and associated services, you will refer to the Childcare Sufficiency Audit and Equality Impact Assessment to inform plans.</p>	



**STANDARD 9**

**Extra help for families (brokerage) - Local Authority services encourage and guide families through the information available and provide extra help and support those who may otherwise not access services on their own (hereafter referred to as a 'brokerage service') assured**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>9.1</b>	Staff understand the meaning of a 'Brokerage Service' as well as their role in its delivery.	Staff training will cover the brokerage policy and procedure.  Staff can explain what is meant by brokerage, in what circumstances this service should be used and can identify staff responsible for the delivery of the brokerage service.
<b>9.2</b>	Systems and procedures are in place to support families through the brokerage service.	See 9.1 above.
<b>9.3</b>	Staff are aware of the various factors, which may lead to the brokerage service being used and plan services accordingly.	See 9.1 above.
<b>9.4</b>	Staff communicate the importance of the brokerage service to strategic decision makers.	You may make presentations on the benefits of the brokerage service to the Senior Leadership Team and to Cabinet members.
<b>9.5</b>	Families facing barriers to accessing services are given the assistance that they need to help them overcome these barriers.	You may have case studies which explain how brokerage has been successfully used with families.  Staff maintain records of brokerage for monitoring purposes that you can share with your assessor.  Staff follow up brokerage signposting and referrals to ensure needs are met and any gaps in provision are recorded and reported to inform plans.
<b>9.6</b>	The brokerage service is effectively promoted to families.	For example, via outreach events, at children's centres, jobcentres and other venues and locations that are attended by children, young people and parents/carers.
<b>9.7</b>	Differentiated levels of brokerage will be identified for supporting locally agreed prioritised families.	For example, families suffering financial hardship, children in need (known to children's social care), those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), Looked After Children and those who have recently been adopted.
<b>9.8</b>	Local Authority information services establish effective partnerships with services that may help improve the delivery of the service.	For example, health, social care, children's centres, Parent Partnership Service.

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>9.9</b>	Systems exist for the brokerage service to feedback information about 'gaps' in service provision in their area to inform local delivery planning.	<p>See 9.5 above.</p> <p>In addition, the Childcare Sufficiency Audit and Equality Impact Assessment may be used to inform local delivery planning.</p> <p>You may have engaged with the SEN Advisory Service, the Sensory Impairment Service, Health Visiting teams and Multi-agency support teams to develop the brokerage service and to inform local delivery planning.</p>
<b>9.10</b>	Referrals (outgoing and incoming) are effectively recorded and used to inform local delivery planning.	See 9.5 above.



**STANDARD 10****Welsh language (Wales only) - Local Authority services encourage and promote the use of the Welsh Language**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>10.1</b>	Local Authority information services have effective partnership arrangements in place to ensure that Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision is developed in accordance with identified needs.	An authority may have a partnership in place with the Mudiad Meithrin and other Welsh language organisations, such as Welsh language childcare providers. The list of provision should indicate the language available in settings – i.e. Welsh, English, bilingual. Although FISs in Wales may not have a responsibility for the development of Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision, they should be identifying gaps in this provision.
<b>10.2</b>	Local Authority information services support the Children and Young People’s Partnership and/or Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) to raise awareness of Welsh language issues and ensure that there is sufficient consideration at all levels where decisions are made about Welsh medium and bilingual childcare provision funding.	Welsh language should be mainstreamed throughout the strategies and operational plans of such partnerships and reporting and monitoring of these strategies – in scrutiny reports etc.
<b>10.3</b>	Local Authority information services have established baselines and annually monitor progress in the provision of Welsh language and bilingual childcare settings, in all childcare sectors in accordance with the relevant statutory regulations and any associated guidance.	Welsh language should be mainstreamed throughout the Childcare sufficiency assessment (CSA) in order to ensure and report on need and provision of Welsh language childcare.
<b>10.4</b>	Local Authority information services provide information to families about the advantages of raising children bilingually and using Welsh in the family home, how to access Welsh medium literature, publications and availability of Welsh language classes.	LAs work with Welsh language bodies to promote the understanding of the advantages of raising children bilingually, providing literature and support from organisations such as Mudiad Meithrin and other research on bilingualism. Sharing information with parents and carers on the advantages, provision of Welsh language training, Cylch, Ti a fi, conversation groups, bilingual parent and toddler groups and childcare providers able to provide the service in Welsh and bilingually.
<b>10.5</b>	Local Authority information services make parents aware of the initiatives to support them in raising their children bilingually and using Welsh in the family home.	Promotion of any publication or services to support parents in raising children bilingually are well promoted and partnership work with other agencies is evident.
<b>10.6</b>	All promotional and other materials produced by Local Authority information services will be available bilingually in accordance with the Welsh Language Act.	Promotional materials may include hardcopy, web, other digital resources all available bilingually – Welsh / English and compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>10.7</b>	When new policies and initiatives are being formulated the linguistic consequences are assessed.	The impact on the Welsh language of new policies and initiatives is assessed at the planning stage and measures put in place to avoid or negate negative impacts as part of the impact assessment process.
<b>10.8</b>	There is a commitment to delivering an equally high quality service in both the English and Welsh language.	The Welsh language policy or strategy will provide an indication of this, LA commitment is also evident from the implementation of the policy and the provision of bilingual services.
<b>10.9</b>	Families receive communications in the language of their choice (English or Welsh).	In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, all general communication will be provided bilingually and direct correspondence will be provided in the language choice of the family once known (Welsh or English).
<b>10.10</b>	Arrangements will be made for a Welsh speaker to be available where families wish to communicate in this language.	In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, once the language choice of families is known, officers able to communicate in that language are available. Most LAs have lists of Welsh speakers in each business unit who can deal with clients in Welsh which is part of the organisational Language Skills Strategy.
<b>10.11</b>	Information will be provided to families, which clearly specifies if a childcare provider operates in a: (a) Welsh medium setting (b) bilingual setting (c) predominantly English medium setting with some use of Welsh (d) English medium setting	Any information or lists of provision will specify language capacity of each setting.
<b>10.12</b>	All signage in offices or for events will be bilingual with Welsh given equal prominence to English.	Any permanent or temporary signage such as posters, information boards etc will be in Welsh and English, (with Welsh first).



**STANDARD 11**

**Collaborative working - Collaborative, partnership, procurement and resourcing arrangements for the delivery of information, advice and assistance improve support to families (see also Families First SEND Standard 5 in Section Two)**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>11.1</b></p> <p>Any partnership arrangements formulated locally for the delivery of information, advice and assistance services are informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an assessment of the numbers, profile and needs of clients and potential clients locally</li> <li>(b) consultations with clients, potential clients, service providers and other external agencies as appropriate</li> <li>(c) systematic arrangements for identifying gaps and shortcomings in existing information, advice and assistance provision.</li> </ul>	<p>You use the Equality Impact Assessment and Childcare Sufficiency Audit, along with analyses of survey reports, to review and identify partnership agreements required.</p> <p>You have established partnership agreements with key support agencies.</p> <p>Staff can give examples of partnerships established based on need.</p>	
<p><b>11.2</b></p> <p>The procurement and contracting of information, advice and assistance services are open and transparent and conducted in line with relevant legislation, regulations, guidance and good practice.</p>	<p>For example, if your Local Authority outsources part or all of its Local Authority information service, you follow the local authority Procurement Policy and Procedure as detailed on your local authority website.</p>	
<p><b>11.3</b></p> <p>Any partnership arrangements formulated locally for the delivery of information, advice and assistance services take into account performance against these quality standards and other relevant frameworks and implementation guidelines.</p>	<p>Your partnership agreements reflect the requirements of relevant legislation and guidance.</p>	
<p><b>11.4</b></p> <p>The Local Authority information service will look to secure appropriate resourcing to effectively support its partners.</p>	<p>You may have made contributions to bids made for funding to support partnership working where you have common objectives.</p> <p>You may offer joint use of resources for partnership activities.</p> <p>You may have agreements with partners for FIS staff to make inputs at events and courses scheduled for families.</p>	
<p><b>11.5</b></p> <p>Multi-agency working and collaboration is underpinned by joint working when appropriate.</p>	<p>FIS staff may make inputs at parenting classes. FIS outreach workers may deliver services on partner premises. Promotional events in the community may be planned in partnership with other agencies.</p>	
<p><b>11.6</b></p> <p>The service shares good practice with other FIS, local authorities, information services, partner agencies and with national bodies (as appropriate).</p>	<p>Your FIS is actively involved in sharing good practice through networking meetings meetings and at national conferences relating to families and childcare.</p> <p>You may make presentations to operations managers across the local authority about the work of the FIS and its brokerage service.</p>	

**STANDARD 12**
**Access to early education - Local Authority services support parents/carers to access early education for their children**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>12.1</b>	<p>Local Authority information services publish clear and transparent information about how parents / carers can access their free entitlement to funded early education.</p>	<p>In Wales, local authorities will be designated as either Delivery Providers and others will be Engagement Providers.</p> <p>Where the Local Authority is a Delivery Provider, they will take responsibility for setting policies for this area.</p> <p>Where the Local Authority is an Engagement Provider, they will only be providing information on availability.</p> <p>See guidance:  <a href="https://gweddiill.gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/publications/cyp/180702-early-implementer-september-2018-en.pdf">https://gweddiill.gov.wales/docs/ds/jlg/publications/cyp/180702-early-implementer-september-2018-en.pdf</a></p> <p>You will ensure that your website and information leaflets provide accessible and up-to-date information about how to access funded early education.</p> <p>In England this would include all eligible children aged 2, 3 and 4 years and in Wales all eligible 3 and 4 year olds.</p>
<b>12.2</b>	<p>Local Authority information services enable children to access their full entitlement to grant funded early education.</p>	<p>See 12.1 above.</p> <p>In addition, you ensure that referrals are made for additional support where this is needed.</p>
<b>12.3</b>	<p>Local Authority information services help families to understand that they can access their entitlement free at the point of delivery, without applying additional charges, top up fees or terms and conditions of access.</p>	<p>Your website and information leaflets explain eligibility for free entitlement and what this means in practice.</p>
<b>12.4</b>	<p>Local Authority information services have effective mechanisms in place for recording where families report to them that they have been unable to access their free entitlement, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a provider may be charging them inappropriately</li> <li>(b) a provider is charging extra, where the child has SEND</li> <li>(c) a provider is rationing places for any reason</li> <li>(d) the provider or parent/carer reports insufficient early education places for the parent to access the entitlement.</li> </ul> <p>Local Authority information services ensure these situations can be challenged and rectified, either directly or by passing this information to the appropriate team.</p>	<p>You have implemented procedures to record, challenge and rectify issues with family access to free entitlement.</p>

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>12.5</b>	Local Authority information services understand the impact of poverty on children's learning and development and take measures to ensure children, especially from financially hard pressed families, take advantage of their full entitlement.	For example, by promoting the free entitlement in marketing materials and on the website, through the brokerage service. (See also Families First Standard 9 in Section One). You may have Management Information (MI) that identifies the uptake of services from different client groups.
<b>12.6</b>	Local Authority information services are aware that children from multiply-disadvantaged backgrounds have the most to benefit from access to high quality early education and care, and take measures to ensure these children participate by making use of their full entitlement, wherever practical.	See 12.5 above.



## SECTION TWO - Families First SEND Standards

### SEND STANDARD 1

**Information, advice and assistance (SEND Code of Practice Section 2) - Local Authority information services provide appropriate information, advice and assistance to parents/carers of children and young people with SEND**

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<p><b>1.1</b> Staff provide information, advice and support that covers SEND, health and social care for young people (aged 0-25) and their parents, either directly or by signposting to the relevant service or organisation.</p>	<p>Code of Practice Section 2 - Impartial information, advice and support.</p> <p>Managers and staff can describe and provide examples of the information, advice, support and signposting/referral in place covering SEND, health and social care for young people aged 0-25 and their parents/carers and this is delivered in ways which meet legislative requirements, national standards, objectives and targets.</p> <p>Your Local Offer pages are comprehensive and up-to-date and provide information and contact details for additional support in relation to the law, education and learning, health and care needs assessment and plans, social care, leisure and social opportunities, advice and support, personal budgets, preparing for adulthood and transport.</p>
<p><b>1.2</b> Staff provide impartial information, advice and assistance that is confidential, impartial and free at the point of delivery.</p>	<p>Code of Practice Section 2 and Duty 12 guidance.</p> <p>See SEND 1.1 above.</p>
<p><b>1.3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Staff understand their responsibilities and remit (as defined locally) in helping to deliver the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice;</li> <li>(b) LA information services understand their role in improving provision for families with children and young people with SEND;</li> <li>(c) LA information services are clear about what level of information, advice and assistance it can provide to families of children with SEND and when to refer the family to another service, department or organisation. Robust arrangements are in place to enable basic information about the family to be captured at the first point of enquiry and passed on with the referral.</li> </ul>	<p>See SEND 1.1 above.</p>



CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<b>1.4</b>	Service staff put measures in place to make sure information is easy for children, young people and their parents to understand and use plain English language and clear images, rather than professional jargon.	Code of Practice Section 2.6 - Involving families in decision making.  Managers and staff can describe how you collect feedback and can give examples of improvements made to ensure information is accessible.
<b>1.5</b>	Local Authority information services involve young people with SEND in preparing and reviewing the Local Offer either directly, or via the responsible service or organisation.	For example, the FIS may work with or hold a formal agreement with its local Parent Partnership Service, SEND or any Youth Services defining how the Local Offer will be reviewed and the various roles and responsibilities each service has and the contribution it can make.
<b>1.6</b>	Local Authority information services deliver information, advice and assistance in a manner that promotes independence, choice and control for families, recognising that: (a) in most cases, parents/carers will know their child or young person best; (b) some 18-25 year olds receiving support will be living independently of their families or the care of their local authority; (c) Voluntary and Community Sector services, volunteers and the wider community should be valued in supporting families; and (d) helping families to make informed choices and to define outcomes for their child or young person is empowering and promotes independence from the local authority.	See SEND 1.1 and SEND 1.4 above.  In addition, you may work in partnership with services and volunteers in the wider community to support families with SEND needs.
<b>1.7</b>	Local Authority information services provide families of children and young people with platforms to feed back about services and their experiences.	These may include: (a) Ensuring that the feedback area of the Local Offer is clearly explained, easily accessible to families and they are aware of how their feedback will be responded to. (b) Directly providing internet forums and social media sites where families can discuss issues and share information and where the FIS can publish useful information. (c) Signposting to internet forums, social media sites provided by the relevant service or organisation (for example Parent Partnership Service, local charities supporting children and young people with SEND, and the local authority youth website). (d) Providing relevant publications or links to publications that would assist families of children and young people with SEND. (e) Inviting family members to be on virtual advisory groups or forums or to be part of a FIS parents' forum. (See also Families First SEND Standard 5.6 in Section Two)

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>1.8</b>	The information service helps families with children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, to express a preference for state academies, free schools and further education colleges either directly or by signposting to the relevant service.	This is currently limited to maintained mainstream and special schools. Code of Practice 9.78. Your Directory will include information on the differences between maintained, mainstream and special schools and further education provision and provide contact details for further information.



**SEND STANDARD 2****Improving provision (SEND Code of Practice Sections 5, 6 & 7 - Local Authority information services contribute to increasing options and improving provision for families with children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>2.1</b>	Local Authority information services enable early years and childcare providers to improve their information in a manner that would assist families with children and young people with SEND to make informed choices about early education, schools and childcare.	This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactively collecting and storing information about setting SENCos (Special Educational Needs Coordinators).</li> <li>Proactively collecting and storing information about relevant training undertaken by staff and relevant experience of working with, and including, children with SEND in the Enhanced Childcare Directory.</li> <li>Supporting early years settings and schools to ensure their information is updated within the Local Offer.</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b>	Local Authority information services have arrangements in place to offer additional assistance for families with children and young people with SEND, who would otherwise have difficulty accessing an early years, childcare or out of school place – otherwise known as a brokerage service. See Families First Standard 9 in Section One.	You may have developed a specific SEND brokerage policy and procedure through joint working with key partners.
<b>2.3</b>	Local Authority information services are able to capture feedback from families and colleagues where early years and childcare providers are not meeting the needs of children with SEND, or have refused them entry so that the provider can be challenged either directly by the FIS and/or by the appropriate service or organisation.	See SEND 1.7 above.  In addition: Staff and families are aware of who to contact with a comment or complaint where early years and childcare providers are not meeting the needs of children with SEND or have refused them entry and know the process your FIS will follow in dealing with them.
<b>2.4</b>	Local Authority information services ensure (through policies and practice) that all families are treated with dignity and respect and that particular sensitivities around children and young people with SEND are considered and implemented.	Your Equal Opportunities Policy for work with clients may make specific reference to meeting the support needs of children and young people with SEND.  You may offer IAA face-to-face in a location which takes into account parent/carer/family needs.  You may have access to a British Sign Language Interpreter/ Translator.  You will have a Statement of Service which also refers to your brokerage service.  You may have staff who specialise in outreach/ brokerage/SEND work.  Your Directory will include information on specialist services and how to make contact with them.

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>2.5</b></p>	<p>(a) Local Authority information services benefit from feedback and involvement of children, young people with SEND and their parents/carers.; by the responsible service or department, seeking their views via facilities made available on the internet or within the Family Service Directory itself;</p> <p>(b) Local Authority information services should use this feedback to improve its services for this group. Code of Practice Section 2.6 Involving families in decision making;</p> <p>(c) Local Authority information services should swiftly pass any feedback it receives from members of the public about another service so that compliments and complaints can be managed effectively;</p> <p>(d) Local Authority information services should pass information about any potential gaps in service provision that are identified by members of the public, to the relevant service or department;</p> <p>(e) Local Authority information services should know how to pass on feedback about any potential problems or gaps in service provision it has identified with relevant public health colleagues / commissioners and / or Clinical Commissioning Groups.</p>	<p>For example, by directly consulting with target groups, having robust arrangements in place to share the views collected.</p>
<p><b>2.6</b></p>	<p>All staff are trained and are knowledgeable about meeting the needs of families with children with SEND within the scope of their role.</p>	<p>For example, all staff will have a good awareness of the SEND Code of Practice and understand how to provide information, advice and assistance to families and are able to describe this. There may be particular FIS staff members such as brokerage or outreach officers who take a specialist lead role in supporting families of children with SEND.</p>

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>2.7</b>	<p>(a) Local Authority information services provide all parents, children and young people with clear and accurate impartial information, advice and guidance in relation to SEND; the level of information, advice and assistance will depend on the FIS local remit in delivering the requirements of the Code of Practice.</p> <p>(b) Local Authority information services provide general information, advice and guidance for families with children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>(c) Local Authority information services provide specific information about the support that is available to individuals as part of the provision of a coordinated assessment and planning process.</p> <p>(d) Local Authority information services provide specific information in relation to early years and childcare services, children’s centres and support for children with SEND that is within the FIS’s existing remit.</p> <p>(e) Local Authority information services provide information about the statutory assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).</p>	<p>Code of Practice Section 2 Impartial information, advice and support and Section 9 Education, health and care assessments.</p> <p>Staff, partners and parents/carers can give examples of benefits gained from using your information, advice and support service.</p>

## SEND STANDARD 3

### The Local Offer (SEND Code of Practice Section 4) - The Local Authority Family Service Directory contributes to the range of information that makes up the Local Offer

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>3.1</b>	The Family Service Directory database contributes significantly to the 'information published in one place' that makes up the Local Offer for families.	Parents/carers of children/ young people with SEND, staff and partners of your service are able to give examples of the types of Local Offer information they access in your Directory and its usefulness.
<b>3.2</b>	The Family Service Directory includes information about the services and support available for families with children from birth to age 25.	See SEND 3.1 above.
<b>3.3</b>	The Family Service Directory and its functionality in respect of the Local Offer has been developed in consultation with families who have children/young people with SEND.	You may have a client involvement strategy which outlines the different ways in which families who have children/young people with SEND are involved in the development, design and review of your Family Service Directory.
<b>3.4</b>	<p>The Family Service Directory is organised in a manner that helps all families to navigate the range of services available, with a particular emphasis on the information that would be pertinent to a family of a child or young person with SEND:</p> <p>(a) There are clear details for each service, about its access and transport arrangements.</p> <p>(b) Any symbols used are clearly explained and these explanations are easy to view.</p> <p>(c) The cost (where applicable) and eligibility requirements are clearly defined on each service record.</p> <p>(d) Any organisations that are accredited by another body, are clearly defined and explained in plain English.</p> <p>(e) There is an opportunity for children and young people with SEND and their parents/ carers to provide feedback about the services on the directory, (See Families First SEND Standard 1.8 in Section Two).</p> <p>(f) There is provision for members of the public to feed back whenever they cannot find a suitable service to access in their area. This information is captured and used to improve the service directory and to identify any potential gaps in service provision. (See Families First SEND Standards 1.8c &amp; 5.5 in Section Two).</p>	<p>Examples may include:</p> <p>(a) A standard format is used for each entry, which includes access and transport arrangements.</p> <p>(b) Using one click on a symbol.</p> <p>(c) Your standard format for each entry also includes any costs and eligibility requirements.</p> <p>(d) Outcomes from mandatory accreditations are included and explained, such as outcomes from Ofsted inspections or from national federations or membership organisations or from the local authority (such as those relating to being able to offer short breaks for families with SEND).</p> <p>(e) &amp; (f) Providing the ability to feed back, via a web link, online survey or via the directory itself.</p>

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>3.4</b></p>	<p>(g) Information provided by members of the public about services listed on the directory is appropriately moderated so that potentially libellous accusations are referred to the appropriate organisations and are not published.</p> <p>(h) Where categories, topics or themes are used to help customers navigate the Family Service Directory, these are clearly explained.</p> <p>(i) There is information, advice and guidance (either in the directory itself or via a linked website) which helps families make informed decisions when choosing services.</p> <p>(i) Serious allegations received by the FIS in relation to services published on the directory, are dealt with effectively and where appropriate, are referred to the relevant Safeguarding authority or Local Area Designated Safeguarding Officer.</p> <p>(k) Information is included about how to report a serious concern about a service provider and when/how (and to whom) to make a safeguarding referral, when a member of the public is concerned about the safety of a vulnerable child, young person or adult.</p>	<p>(g) A named member of staff has responsibility for quality assurance and information provided is subject to moderation. Referral procedures are followed where entries made may not meet legal requirements.</p> <p>(h) &amp; (i) Availability of check lists, information explaining accreditations, 'how to' guides, quality, and tips about what to ask service providers.</p> <p>(i) Robust safeguarding procedures are followed when allegations are made in relation to services published in the Directory.</p> <p>(k) Safeguarding information is provided in your Directory so that members of the public know what to do if someone is concerned about the safety of a vulnerable child, young person or adult and if they need to report a serious concern about a service provider.</p>
<p><b>3.5</b></p>	<p>There are arrangements in place to provide information and signposting for families who want to access services across local authority boundaries, and there are links to national information, advice and support.</p>	<p>Some FIS may choose to work together, or use a single Family Service Directory covering two or more local authority areas.</p>
<p><b>3.6</b></p>	<p>Wherever practical, the principle of "store and maintain data once published via multiple channels" is employed.</p>	<p>For example, where other organisations are already providing national directories of national services for children with SEND these should be signposted or harvested into the local Family Service Directory or provided via embedded widgets, such as those available from NHS Choices.</p>

CRITERIA	WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE	
<p><b>3.7</b></p>	<p>The Family Service Directory has been developed in a way that reduces duplication and encourages providers and families (members of the public) to contribute to the richness of the information.</p>	<p>For example, with the ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for service providers to update their own records;</li> <li>• for service providers to feed back on customers' comments and star ratings;</li> <li>• to federate content, and/or provide widgets for use by other websites; and</li> <li>• to publish federated content, and/or add widgets from other websites, such as NHS Choices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.8</b></p>	<p>(a) The quality of the information in the Family Service Directory (FSD) is regularly reviewed and monitored. This includes information which specifically helps and supports families of children and young people with SEND. (See also Families First Standard 8 in Section One).</p> <p>(b) The FSD holds information about universal services (incorporating information about their ability to include and provide for families with SEND within their statutory and legal obligations).</p> <p>(c) The FSD holds information about specific/targeted services for children and young people with SEND and their families.</p> <p>(d) The FSD holds information about services for young people to help them prepare for adulthood (particular attention is given to those young people with SEND).</p>	<p>This may include:</p> <p>(a) You may have a named member of staff with overall responsibility for the quality assurance of information in your Directory.</p> <p>(b) Your information about universal services covers children's centres, schools, early education, universal health services such as Healthy Child Programme (HCP), health visiting and school nursing teams, and childcare providers and colleges.</p> <p>(c) Targeted support information in your Directory includes positive activities, access to information about short breaks/ short break providers, respite care, social services, education and health, parenting programmes, private or Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, portage home education, Parent Partnership Services, and their eligibility criteria.</p> <p>(d) Information includes entries and links to local career guidance services. Code of Practice Section 2.12/2.14.</p>



CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>3.8</b>	<p>(e) The FSD holds information specifically relating to acute and chronic health services, including NHS speech and language therapy (SALT) and physiotherapy, acute and chronic adult service supporting young people, and paediatric palliative teams.</p> <p>(f) The FSD holds information that families and service users have provided about individual services or the Local Offer in general.</p> <p>(g) The FSD has the ability for service providers to respond to feedback from service users' compliments and complaints.</p> <p>(h) The FSD includes, or has links to, information and guidance about the use of services that would benefit families of children with SEND.</p>	<p>(e) The health services information included in your Directory may also include syndicated information direct from NHS Choices.</p> <p>(f) Your Rate and Review facility shows information provided by families and service users about services and the Local Offer.</p> <p>(g) Your Directory may be set up so that service providers can respond to feedback from service users.</p> <p>(h) Links to other information may include: general information, referral pathways, paying for services, advice and support.</p>
<b>3.9</b>	The Family Service Directory is accessible for members of the public with additional needs or disabilities. For example, with consideration to those with visual or hearing impairment who may access the site either directly or by a screen reader.	Your Directory may be set up so that users can see information in large print or transfer text into an audio format.
<b>3.10</b>	Information about SEND is accessible via web pages and/or appears in search results triggered by relevant search terms being inputted (into the LA website and / or Family Service Directory).	Your whole Directory has been designed to provide links to SEND-related information from web pages and searches in both the local authority website and in your Family Service Directory.
<b>3.11</b>	LA web based information about SEND is organised so it is quick and easy for families to find what they need.	For example: by linking information; and/or filtering out information that is not relevant, families report that it is easy to find what they need.

**SEND STANDARD 4**

**Personal budgets (SEND Code of Practice Section 9.95-9.124) - The Local Authority information services contribute to helping families with children and young people with SEND to have more choice and control by understanding and promoting personal budgets in their area**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>4.1</b>	Managers and staff understand how personal budgets operate within their own local area and are able to share information with parents/carers of children and young people with SEND (this includes eligibility criteria and access).	Managers and staff can describe how personal budgets operate and how to access further information and support with reference to relevant pages in the Directory.
<b>4.2</b>	Staff help to alleviate apprehension about managing funding and service provision by providing information about setting up bank accounts, employing and managing staff (personal assistants), and reclaiming expenses either directly or by signposting to the relevant service.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.3</b>	Staff help families with children who have SEND, to understand the range of options available, so that they can make informed choices about their child or young person's education, health and care.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.4</b>	Staff help raise awareness of the important role that parents/carers play in contributing to their child's education, health and care and in contributing to their child's Education, Health and Care Plan.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.5</b>	LA information services seek to simplify the information they provide so that parents/carers of children and young people with SEND can clearly understand their options and make informed choices about services and support.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.6</b>	LA information services contribute to raising the level of understanding and awareness of parents with regard to direct payments and personal budgets.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.7</b>	Staff understand and are clear about how the money provided as direct payments/ personal budgets can be spent, so that they can explain this to parents/ carers and young people.	See SEND 4.1 above.
<b>4.8</b>	Staff understand the local procedures for appealing against a decision about an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/ or the allocation of a personal budget so they can explain this to parents, carers and young people.	See also Code of Practice Section 11 – resolving disagreements. See SEND 4.1 above.

**SEND STANDARD 5**

**Collaborative working (SEND Code of Practice Section 3) - Local Authority information services contribute to the collaborative working with parents, health, education and social care and others in supporting families with children with SEND (see also Families First Standard 11 in Section One)**

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<b>5.1</b>	Local Authority information services proactively seek to develop positive working relationships with key partners and stakeholders, in order to provide a high quality service to families with children and young people with SEND.	Key partners may include health services, social care, early years and childcare services, children's centres, schools, SEN/inclusive services, youth services.
<b>5.2</b>	Local Authority information services work collaboratively with their local Parent Partnership Service.	This may include information arrangements for signposting, support provided by a co-located or merged service, triage and referral.
<b>5.3</b>	Local Authority information services make sure partners are aware of the support provided to families around accessing early education and childcare in particular specific or specialist support/brokerage for families with children and young people with SEND including any financial assistance available to help pay for childcare.	Your marketing plan/events calendar may include awareness raising activities for partners about your brokerage service and work with families with children and young people with SEND so they can access early education and childcare.
<b>5.4</b>	Local Authority information services make it easy for partner websites to redirect to their LA's Local Offer to help promote to families the perception of joined up services.	Partner organisations may include schools, council departments, health, voluntary and community sector. Joining up of services could include for example, the FIS provides guidance to go out with service provider update forms and by providing a short URL and / or a logo / symbol, by providing some standardised text and / or via the provision of a widget. (See also Families First SEND Standards 3.6 & 3.7 in Section Two).
<b>5.5</b>	Local Authority information services seek to work with partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector and with any local volunteering programmes that support families.	Staff can describe the range of partners you work with, for example, you may work with parent champions, parent support volunteers, peer support groups and independent supporters who help parents to navigate the SEND process.
<b>5.6</b>	Local Authority information services seek to work in collaboration with families, giving particular regard to those families who have children and young people with SEND.	For example, consulting with families, using feedback to improve the services offered directly by the FIS and other partners/ organisations, asking parents to be on an advisory group or FIS parents' forum, consulting with existing parent forums.
<b>5.7</b>	Local Authority information services seek to encourage local families to be involved in the on-going review and sustainability of the Local Offer.	For example, via consultation, forums and/or involving them in Family Information Service Steering Groups.

CRITERIA		WHAT THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE
<p><b>5.8</b></p>	<p>Local Authority information services seek to act as an advocate for parents, carers and young people by building good relationships with families and commissioners and contribute to smarter and flexible services aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>See SEND 5.7 above.</p> <p>In addition, you may attend strategy meetings with senior leaders and operational managers in the local authority to inform and implement common objectives and targets for service improvement.</p>



## GLOSSARY

<b>Advice</b>	is activities that help parents, prospective parents and family members to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation.
<b>Assistance</b>	is provision of an impartial signposting, brokerage and referral service to specialist support to help parents, prospective parents and family members to meet their information needs and make progress.
<b>Brokerage Service</b>	is typically provided via a LA FIS and is a Duty in the Childcare Act 2006. The service must provide further assistance to parents who have had particular difficulties finding childcare that readily meets their needs. Brokering involves helping the family by acting as an intermediary when, for any reason, a family might find it difficult to access the service themselves.
<b>Clients</b>	are defined throughout as parents (mothers, fathers, carers), prospective parents, family members and grandparents, children or young people. It includes anyone who is acting on behalf of the client (for example, another practitioner) or local authority that is looking to access information on provision outside of their geographical boundary.
<b>Enhanced Childcare Database (ECD)</b>	a database (usually maintained by FIS) containing all Ofsted registered childcare providers and childminders, with additional information added by the providers themselves (such as opening hours and fees). Information in the directory usually covers the LA's geographical area and is accessible via the Internet and by phoning a FIS helpline. Not all childcare providers choose to have their details published on the Internet.
<b>Family Services Directory</b>	a database (usually maintained by a LA and often by a FIS) containing a range of services for parents, children and young people that have been added by a LA or by the organisations running the services. Information in the directory usually covers the LA's geographical area and is accessible via the Internet and by phoning a FIS helpline. The directory may be advertised using a particular title or brand that has been determined by the LA.
<b>Information</b>	that is accurate, up-to-date and objective. Information about childcare, health, recreation and learning opportunities, progression routes, choices, funding and where to find help and advice and how to access this.

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