Family Information Service Survey 2010: assessment of Family Information Service performance against the information duty in the Childcare Act 2006

Cordis Bright

Department for Education

1

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Background and methodology

This report - the findings of which are summarised below - provides a snapshot of key information about Family Information Services (FISs) and about whether English Local Authorities (LAs) are successfully meeting their duty under section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 to provide parents or prospective parents with information about childcare and other services, facilities or publications which may be of benefit to them.

The report explores barriers to fulfilling the duty, as well as presenting findings by region. Where appropriate, the findings in this report are compared with an earlier survey of FISs conducted in June 2008[1]. Section 2 of this report provides more information about the context of the research and methodology.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) commissioned Cordis Bright to design and host a survey of FIS Managers and to analyse and produce a report on the findings. Cordis Bright designed the online questionnaire in collaboration with a survey steering group including representatives from the DCSF, National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) and Family Information Services (FISs).

136 FISs responded to the survey out of the 152 LAs in England at the time the research was conducted. This is a 90% response rate.

Characteristics of Family Information Services

Questions in the survey profiled Family Information Services. The findings show that in 2010 the average FIS:

- Was run in-house
- Was located in the local authorities' Children and Young People's Services Directorate
- Had an annual budget of £279,556
- Most commonly reported the Sure Start Grant as a source of funding
- Spent 69% of its funding on staff costs
- Expected funding to remain stable over the next year
- Had 6.8 full time equivalent staff
- Used 59% of staff time engaging with clients
- Expected staffing to remain stable over the next year
- Ran a telephone helpline with dedicated staff who were not based in a call centre, which was open weekdays during working hours only
- Had less than 5,000 hits on its website per month

In comparison to 2008:

- A greater proportion of FISs had budgets greater that £300,000 per year (24% in 2010 compared to 11% in 2008)
- Less FISs had 6 or more full time equivalent staff than in 2008 (54% compared to 68%)

---

[1] Families Information Services: Evaluation of services provided. DCSF-RR082.

- 13% of FIS managers said their telephone helpline was available outside of office hours compared to 29% in 2008

Section 12 duty

It is the local authority's responsibility to meet the requirements of the section 12 (information) duty. Questions on whether local authorities as a whole were fully meeting the duty were not included in this research.

66% of FIS managers reported that their FIS was fully meeting the requirements of the information duty. This contrasts with 50% of FISs who stated this in the previous survey. In 2010, 1 in 3 FISs, therefore, continue to report that they are not meeting the duty.

Geographically, London FISs were most likely to report they were meeting the duty (86%), with FISs from the East of England least likely to report meeting the duty (38%).

FISs were asked how well they perceived their performance in each element of the duty. Figure 1 summarises the responses and shows that most FISs reported challenges with the service delivery element of the statutory guidance. The main report provides more detail about FISs performance under each of the elements of the duty.

Figure 1: Percentage of FISs doing "Very well" or "Well" in each element of the section 12 duty[2]

---
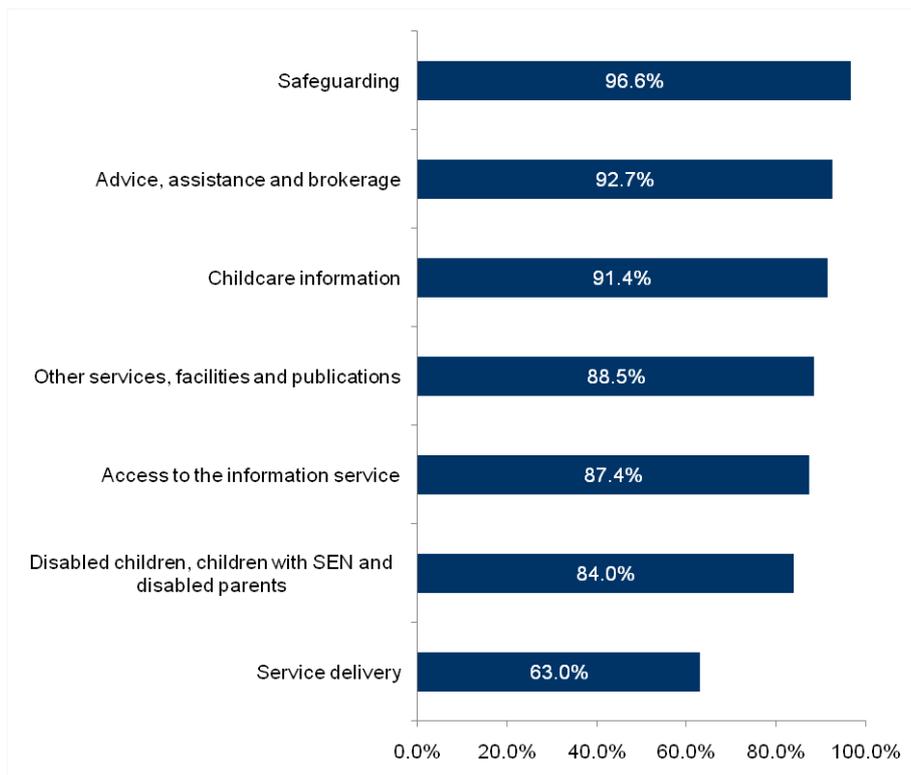
[2] This graph shows an average of the percentage stating "well" or "very well" for the actions that make up each of the 7 elements. A breakdown of actions is shown in Appendix 1.

Other aspects of FIS service delivery

FIS respondents were asked about a number of other areas that relate to the section 12 duty. It should be noted that these findings are based on the views expressed by FISs which have not been independently validated.

Strategic / partnership links
- FISs were most likely to have strategic involvement in childcare sufficiency assessments, children's centres and parent and family support strategies
- FISs were most likely to report working "very closely" or "quite closely" with children's centres (95%), private / voluntary / independent childcare providers (92%) and extended services (78%)
- The majority of FISs were not represented on their Children's Centre Advisory Board, Children's Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board or the Local Strategic Partnership Board
- They were least likely to provide / share information with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (13%), NHS / PCT childcare co-ordinator (18%) and the Children's Trust Board and Voluntary Organisations (21%)

Reaching parents / carers
- FIS respondents stated that most clients contact FISs or find out information by telephone (99%) or word of mouth (97%)
- FISs reported that they could be more effective in reaching groups of parents/carers commonly referred to as "hard-to-reach". For instance, FISs reported that they could be more effective in reaching parents/carers who are disabled (67%), parents/carers whose first language is not English (59%) and parents/carers from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (54%)
- Qualitative responses suggest that FISs could be better at co-ordinating with other services in order to avoid duplication, and could plan more strategically in relation to targeting outreach efforts

Performance monitoring methods
- 100% of FIS respondents felt that service users were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the service they received.
- Only 19% of FISs reported having undertaken the Families First Award[3], although 66% were planning to undertake the award. Of these, half were planning to undertake the award within 3 months
- The most commonly used performance monitoring methods were feedback forms (98%) and user satisfaction surveys (80%)
- Performance monitoring methods have not changed much since the 2008 survey

Information collection & updating
- At least 87% of FIS respondents reported that their FIS collects/records information on enquiry type/content, call outcome, complaints, nature of complaint and any follow up action
- 71% of FIS respondents reported that when they were notified by a service provider of a change to a record they update their records within 24 hours
- The findings suggest that FISs generally update childcare information with more regularity than information about other services and facilities

---

[3] Feedback from the FIS survey steering group questions the accuracy of this figure. It is the case that fewer than 15 FISs have received the Families First Award. This finding should be treated with caution.

Family Information Directory

- 84% of FISs managed the Family Information Directory[4].
- 72% of FIS respondents stated that the Family Information Directory was available on their FIS website. This could include just having a link to Directgov.
- 53% of FISs have the Directory of Childcare available on their websites
- FIS respondents generally felt that they had the right levels of skills in supporting the delivery of the Family Information Directory – the area where managers were least likely to feel they had the right skills was in managing vendors / contracts (1 in 4 reporting that they did not)
- At least 64% of FIS respondents felt they were well enough resourced to support the Family Information Directory in the areas of information technology, relationship management, managing vendors / contracts, data analysis and information management

Key challenges

Based on this self-report survey of 136 FISs, we[5] believe that key challenges include:

Regional differences
There are regional differences in FIS performance. For example, 86% of FISs reported fulfilling the section 12 duty in London compared to 38% in the East of England. 71% of FISs in the East Midlands reported being effective or very effective in reaching parents/carers who are disabled compared to 17% in Yorkshire & the Humber. There are also within region-differences concerning FIS performance. This poses the question does where you live affect the quality of service that you will receive from your FIS?

Accessibility of information and the services that FISs provide
FISs report that they could improve the accessibility of information and the services that they provide to disadvantaged groups. Providing information to and reaching out to parents/carers with disabilities and those parents/carers with children who have disabilities was highlighted as a key issue.

Responses from FISs on hours of business for FIS telephone helplines also suggest that accessibility may be a challenge. For instance, less than 15% of FISs have their telephone helplines available during weekends and less than 13% of FISs reported have helplines available outside office hours. The timeliness of information that FISs provide may also be an issue. For example, only 1 in 5 FIS report updating information on other services, facilities and publications on a quarterly basis. This may mean that information that some FISs provide may be out of date.

Consulting with parents/carers about the services FISs provide
1 in 5 FISs do not use regular service user satisfaction forms or monthly/weekly enquiry handling reports to performance manage their services. 1 in 3 do not conduct internal audits of their services.

FIS respondents highlighted consultation with disadvantaged groups to gauge the effectiveness of their services as a challenge. In particular, FISs reported that they could be more effective in consulting with disabled parents/carers, parents/carers with disabled children or children with special educational needs. As a result, it is not clear how effective

---

[4] Feedback from the FIS survey steering group questions the accuracy of this figure. Further research may be required to establish whether this is, or is not an accurate figure
[5] In this case, "we" refers to Cordis Bright with support from the members of the FIS survey steering group.

FISs are at knowing whether they are reaching those parents/carers who perhaps most need the information and support provided under the section 12 duty.

Improving partnership working
Based on the evidence provided by respondents FISs tend to be more involved in service delivery and less involved strategically. Most FISs are not represented on key strategic boards and they tend to work more closely with partners that directly share their service delivery priorities. Related to this, FISs reported that disengaged partners were a key challenge to the effective implementation of the section 12 duty. For instance, they highlight that the strategic role of the Children's Trust could be strengthened, as could the local authority role in establishing a coherent strategy to ensure joined up information provision.

Systems / Information Technology (IT)
FISs reported that IT issues and information management issues were key challenges to delivering their service, with a large number stating it was a major challenge to service delivery. That said, there are some areas of IT where FISs are more comfortable, e.g. in relation to the delivery of the Family Information Directory, where most FISs reported that they had the right resources and skills to deliver the directory.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 extended English Local Authorities' (LAs) existing duty to provide information to the public on childcare and related services. Since April 2008, in addition to information on childcare, LAs are required to provide a range of information which parents may need to support their children through to their 20th birthday. LAs are also required to ensure that the information is made available to all parents who wish to use the service and be proactive in ensuring that parents who might otherwise have difficulty in accessing the services they need are reached.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) commissioned Cordis Bright to design and host an online survey of FISs and conduct an analysis of the results from this survey. This is a follow up from a previous evaluation of FIS services which included a survey of FISs[6].

This report:

- Assesses and reports on FIS performance against the section 12 duty statutory guidance. The guidance outlines actions that LAs must or should take to fulfil the section 12 duty under the following elements:
    - Childcare information
    - Advice and assistance – brokerage service
    - Safeguarding children
    - Information about other services, facilities and publications
    - Information on services for disabled children, for children with special educational needs and for disabled parents
    - Access to the information service
    - Service delivery

  Further information is provided in Annex 1 of the statutory guidance[7]. Indicators used to measure actions and elements in the statutory guidance are shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

- Compares results, where appropriate, from the previous survey of FIS managers in June 2008[8].

- Establishes areas of possible strength and weakness, in particular, in areas of the delivery of the section 12 duty.

---

[6] *Families Information Services. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF-RR082
[7] *Duty to provide information, advice and assistance: guidance for local authorities, childcare act 2006.* DCSF
[8] See, *Families Information Service. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF–RR082

2.2 Methodology

Overview

Cordis Bright, in collaboration with a steering group including representatives from the DCSF, the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) and from Family Information Services, designed an online questionnaire to gather the views of FISs on fulfilling the section 12 duty. The questionnaire survey was live between 23rd March and 30th April 2010. A full version of the questionnaire can be found Appendix 2.

Designing the questionnaire

When designing the questionnaire the steering group was conscious to strike a balance between not overburdening FIS representatives with a long questionnaire, but at the same time collecting information to answer the objectives of the research.

The questionnaire was designed to address the objectives of the research (see section 2.1). It built on the 2008 survey so that comparisons over time could be made. The questionnaire was also based on the DCSF's statutory guidance: *Duty to provide information, advice and assistance: guidance for local authorities, childcare act 2006*.

The questionnaire was designed using Annex 1 of the statutory guidance which summarises the actions that LAs and their FISs will need to take to fulfil the information duty in section 12 of the Childcare Act, 2006. These actions were a combination of things that the DCSF stated that a FIS "must do" and "should do".

Hosting the questionnaire

The questionnaire was hosted online using SurveyMonkey (see www.surveymonkey.com). An online questionnaire was chosen as this represented a cost effective, efficient and easy-to-use method for collecting the information required.

Piloting the questionnaire

Before being emailed to all the 152 FISs in England, the questionnaire was piloted with a small number of FIS managers who were represented on the FIS survey steering group. Their comments, along with feedback from the DCSF and NAFIS were incorporated into the final questionnaire design.

The steering group met twice in order to design and finalise the questionnaire and agree the research process in terms of conducting the online survey of FISs.

Encouraging a high response rate

The FIS questionnaire was publicised and launched at the annual NAFIS conference held on 18th March 2010. It was also publicised in the DCSF's Local Authority circular to Directors of Children's Services, which asked them to make FIS managers aware of the questionnaire.

The DCSF provided the names and email addresses of named contacts from FISs from the 152 LAs across England. Using this information, an email containing a link to the questionnaire was sent to FISs on 23rd March 2010. This email outlined the purpose of the survey and instructions for completing it. A copy of an electronic letter that was attached to the email can be seen in Appendix 3. The letter made it clear that responses to the questionnaire were confidential.

Cordis Bright tracked which FISs responded to the questionnaire. This allowed Cordis Bright to target reminders to FISs that initially did not respond. Reminder emails were sent on 12th

April. NAFIS also sent an email reminder on the 19th April to those FISs that had not responded. Following this, in the week of the 26th April, Cordis Bright offered telephone support to those FISs that had not responded. This approach helped to ensure that FIS respondents were not overburdened, whilst helping to achieve a high response rate, which is important for research of this nature.

Achieving a 90% response rate
In all, 136 FISs responded to the survey from a possible total of 152 LAs in England at the time of the research. This is a response rate of 90% which is an impressive achievement by FISs given the voluntary nature of the research. This represents an improvement upon the 65% response rate of the previous report[9].

Figure 2 shows that there were regional differences in response rates. For instance, 78% of FISs responded in the East Midlands, compared to 96% in the North West. Only 16 FISs, out of 152, did not respond to the online survey. Given such a high response rate across each region, we can be confident that the evidence provided in this report is a fair and representative reflection of the views of FISs across England.

Figure 2: Sample by region

Region	Total number of local authorities	Sample size	Response rate %
East Midlands	9	7	77.8
East of England	11	9	81.8
London	33	31	93.9
North East	12	10	83.3
North West	23	22	95.7
South East	19	16	84.2
South West	16	15	93.8
West Midlands	14	13	92.9
Yorkshire and The Humber	15	13	86.7
Total	152	136	89.5

Missing data
For most questions there are some missing responses, although most questions were answered by over 125 FISs. Where this is not the case, we state this in the analysis that follows. This report treats missing responses as missing. No estimations have been undertaken where missing responses occur.

Comparisons with the previous survey
Caution should be taken when making comparisons between the 2008 and 2010 survey owing to different response rates (90% in 2010, compared with 65% in 2008) – i.e. we are not comparing like with like.

Some questions including, for example, the question: "Is the FIS fully meeting the requirements of the information duty", were worded in a similar way in the 2010 questionnaire to help ensure comparability. In the report, where comparisons are made, any differences that may impact on the validity and reliability of the comparison being made are indicated.

Caution should be taken when interpreting findings at a regional level
This report also breaks down responses to some questions by region in order to identify areas of potential strength and weakness among FISs. Caution should be attached to interpreting these results due to the small number of FISs in some regions compared to others.

---

[9] In the previous evaluation report 98 of 149 FISs who received the questionnaire responded. This is reported as 66% in that report. In this report we state it as 65% to take into account the 152 LAs in England at the time of this research.

Most FISs completed the questionnaire in less than 45 minutes
FIS respondents could complete the questionnaire in more than one sitting. This was important as some questions required information about the FIS that the respondent may have needed to look up in order to complete the question.

Figure 3 shows that 1 in 3 FIS respondents completed the questionnaire in less than 30 minutes, with 2 in 3 completing it in less than 45 minutes.

Figure 3 Time FIS respondents took to complete the questionnaire

Time taken to complete the questionnaire	Number	Percentage %
0-30 minutes	39	34
31-45 minutes	30	30
46-60 minutes	24	24
61-120 minutes	17	17
121 minutes or more	5	5
Total	115	100

Analysis
The analysis that follows was undertaken using a combination of Excel, SPSS and MapInfo software packages. Analysis was undertaken using a range of descriptive statistics including univariate and bivariate techniques. The analysis is based on information that has been self-reported by FIS respondents. There has been no independent verification of FIS self-reports. In the analysis and findings in the report where findings do not appear to look right or have been called into question by members of the FIS survey steering group we report this.

Structure of the report
The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 3** provides findings on key background information about the FISs, e.g. how they are run, their finances, their staffing levels, details of telephone helplines and websites.

- **Section 4** provides detailed findings on how successful FISs are in implementing the section 12 duty based on the 7 elements outlined in the statutory guidance:
  - Childcare information
  - Advice and assistance – brokerage service
  - Safeguarding children
  - Information about other services, facilities and publications
  - Information on services for disabled children, for children with special educational needs and for disabled parents
  - Access to the information service
  - Service delivery
  This section includes an analysis of questions that are based on the "should do" and "must do" actions outlined in Annex 1 of the statutory guidance: *Duty to provide information, advice and assistance: guidance for local authorities, childcare act 2006*.

- **Section 5** presents findings around other aspects of FIS service delivery which the FIS steering group agreed were important to capture information on as part of this research:
  - Strategic/partnership involvement,

- o Reaching parents/carers,
- o Performance monitoring information,
- o Information collection and updating,
- o Customer service,
- o Family Information Directory and Family Information Direct Programme
- o Good practice examples.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 all begin with a section that draws out key messages.

The report also has several appendices:

- **Appendix 1** shows summaries of the 39 questions included in the questionnaire that were based on Annex 1 of the statutory guidance. These questions cover the actions that local authorities and their FISs "should" or "must" take in order to fulfil the information duty in section 12 of the Childcare Act, 2006.

- **Appendix 2** provides a hard-copy of the questionnaire that was conducted with FISs.

- **Appendix 3** presents a copy of the covering letter that was attached to the email that went to FISs asking them to take part in the research.

- **Appendix 4** compares question responses in the survey between those FISs that reported fulfilling the information duty and those that did not.

- **Appendix 5** presents an analysis of findings by region.

- **Appendix 6** provides a collation of FIS questionnaire respondent self-reported best practice examples. It should be remembered that these examples have not been independently evaluated and validated.

- **Appendix 7** provides a table of figures.

3. Characteristics of Family Information Services

Key Messages

The 2010 findings showed that the average FIS:

- Was run in-house
- Was located in the local authorities' Children and Young People's Services Directorate
- Had an annual budget of £279,556
- Most commonly reported the Sure Start Grant as a source of funding
- Spent 69% of its funding on staff costs
- Expected funding to remain stable over the next year
- Had 6.8 full time equivalent staff
- Used 59% of staff time engaging with clients
- Expected staffing to remain stable over the next year
- Ran a telephone helpline with dedicated staff who were not based in a call centre, which was open weekdays during working hours only
- Had less than 5,000 hits on its website per month

In comparison to 2008:

- A greater proportion of FISs had budgets greater that £300,000 per year (24% in 2010 compared to 11% in 2008)
- Less FISs had 6 or more staff (54% compared to 68%)
- 13% of FISs said their telephone helpline was available outside of office hours compared to 29% in 2008

3.1 Location of the FIS

96 out of the 136 respondents to the survey responded that they were FIS managers. Of the 40 respondents who did not identify themselves as FIS managers a variety of roles were reported including: project officer, strategic manager, information and communication manager, and development manager roles.

Figure 4 shows that 1 in 3 FISs (65%) were located in local authorities' Children and Young People's Services Departments. 16% were located in Childcare and Early Years Departments.

Figure 5 shows that over 4 in 5 FISs (88%) were run in-house.

Figure 4: Which department do FISs report to?

Department	Number	Percentage %
Children and Young People's Services Department	86	65.2
Childcare and Early Years Department	28	15.7
Other	10	6.7
Information, Business or Communications	6	4.3
Children's Trust	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

Figure 5: How is your FIS run?

How is your FIS run?	Number	Percentage %
In-house	120	88.2
Mixture of in-house / outsourcing	8	5.9
Outsourced	8	5.9
Total	136	100.0

3.2 Finances

Gross Annual Budgets

The mean average gross annual FIS budget for 2009-2010 was £279,556.

Figure 6 shows that a greater proportion of FISs had budgets of £300k or more per year in 2010 compared to 2008. One in 4 FISs report having budgets of over £300k per year in 2010 compared to just over 1 in 10 in 2008. However, this difference could be because of the 16% reduction in FISs who report not knowing their budget between 2008 and 2010. It may also be due to more FISs responding to the 2010 survey in comparison to the 2008 survey.

Due to the self-report nature of the survey we are unable to say whether the 21% of FISs who reported not knowing their budget is an issue of concern or whether respondents had difficulties reporting their budget due to time constraints.

Figure 6: Gross annual budget

Gross annual total budget	Number	Percentage	Percentage in 2008[10]
Less than £100k	11	8	7
£100k to £200k	37	27	27
£200k to £300k	27	20	18
£300k to £400k	17	13	4
£400k plus	16	12	7
Don't know	28	21	37
Total	136	100	100

Sources of FIS funding

Figure 7 shows that FISs reported their most common source of funding was the Sure Start Grant, followed by DCSF and local authority grants.

Among the 43 respondents answering "other", responses included: Choice Advice funding (19 respondents) and Aiming High for Disabled Children (6 respondents).

---

[10] See figure 17, page 54, *Families Information Services. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082

Figure 7: Sources of funding for your FIS? (Graph shows actual number. FISs were invited to tick all options that applied)
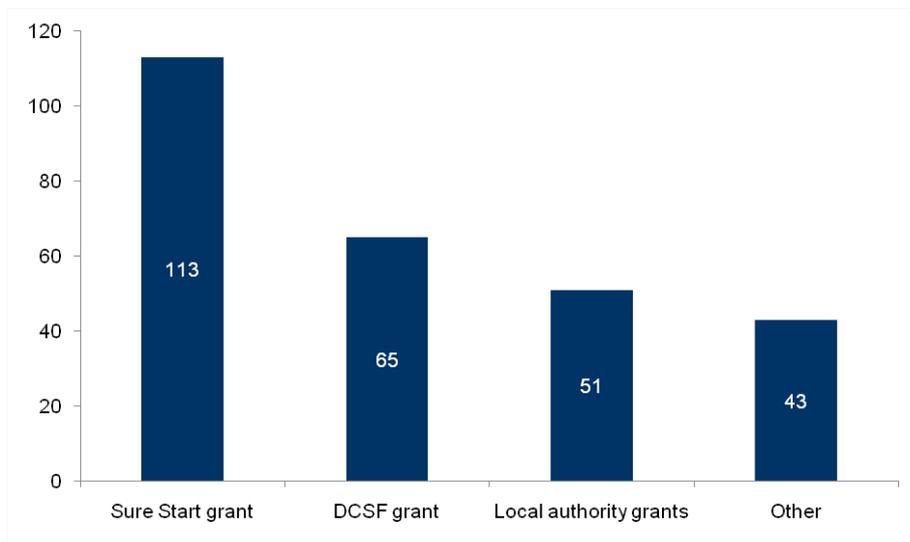
Where FIS budgets get spent

Figure 8 shows that on average the majority of FISs' budgets (69%) were spent on staff costs. We have been unable to find directly comparable benchmarking data for similar services.

Among the 6% of budgets spent on "other" areas, only 10 respondents gave examples and these mainly consisted of IT related costs such as software licences (9 respondents).

Figure 8: Percentage of budget spent on the following?
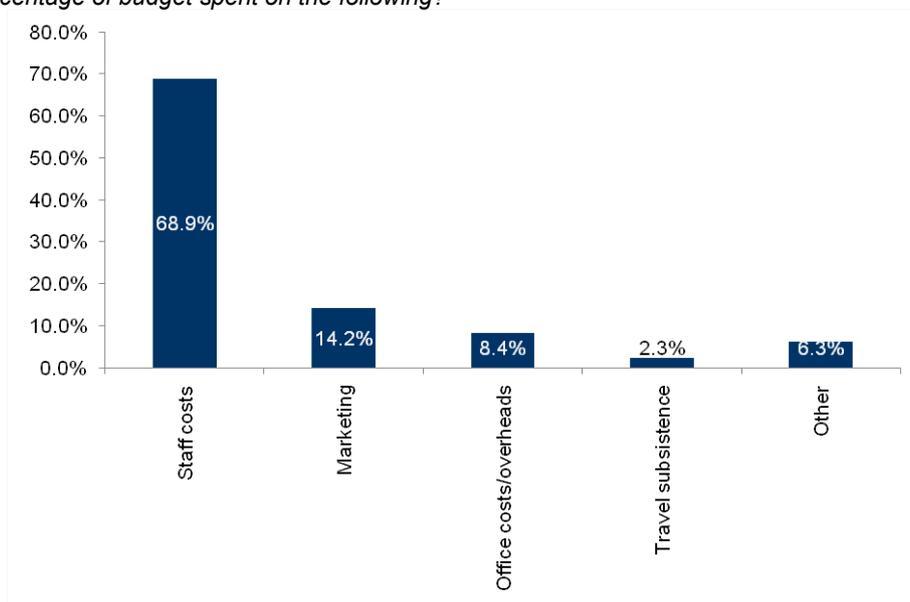
Will FIS budgets increase in 2010-2011?

Figure 9 shows that 59% of FIS respondents felt their budget for 2010-2011 would remain unchanged compared to 2009-2010. Only 13% felt that their budgets would increase, with 28% stating that it would decrease.

Figure 9: Will your budget increase, decrease or stay the same (in real terms) in 2010-2011 in comparison to 2009-2010?

Will your budget increase, decrease or stay the same?	Number	Percentage %
Decrease	34	28.1
Stay the same	71	58.7
Increase	16	13.2
Total	121	100.0

3.3 Staff

Total number of staff

On average, FIS respondents reported that there were 6.8 staff employed (on a full time equivalent basis) in the delivery of the FIS service. The smallest number of full time equivalent staff was 1.5 and the largest number was 23.

Figure 10 shows that slightly more FISs had 1 to 5 staff in April 2010 compared to June 2008[11] (37% compared to 31%) and less FISs had 6 or more staff in 2010 than in 2008 (54% compared to 68%).

Figure 10: Number of full time equivalent staff

Number of full time equivalent staff	Number	Percentage %	Percentage in 2008 %
1 to 5	50	36.8	31
6 to 10	57	41.9	45
11 to 20	14	10.3	15
21 or more	2	1.5	8
Don't know	13	9.6	1
Total	136	100.0	100.0

Time spent by FIS on activities

Figure 11 shows that FISs reported that their teams:

- Spent most of their time interacting with clients (59%) including: responding to enquiries from families (33%), outreach (16%) and brokerage (10%).
- Spent the least amount of time on strategic performance management with 9% of their time on this activity.
- Spent 2.3% of their time on "other" activities. These included: administration and attending meetings, childcare sufficiency assessments, partnership working and marketing and promoting the service.

It is difficult to find directly comparable information on where other similar services spend their time. However, benchmarking returns for the Parent Partnership Service have consistently shown that about 60% of employed staff time is dedicated to direct work with parents[12]. Jobcentre Plus personal advisors spend around 52% of their time interviewing

---

[11] See figure 16, page 52, *Families Information Services.Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082
[12] *Parent Partnership Services in England. National Benchmarking 2008.* National Parent Partnership Network, 2009.

clients, with other time being spent on training, performance monitoring and completing paperwork [13].

Figure 11: Percentage of FIS team time spent on the following activities?
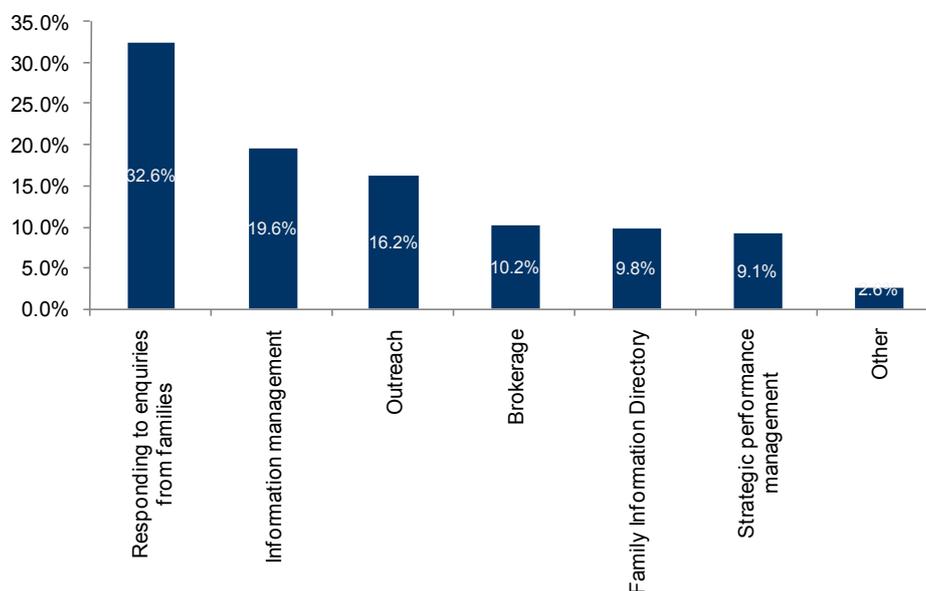
Anticipated changes in staff levels

Figure 12 shows that most FIS respondents felt staffing levels would remain stable:

- Approximately, 2 in 3 respondents (65%) felt staff levels would remain the same in 2010-2011 compared to 2009-2010.
- Slightly more respondents felt staff levels would increase than felt they would decrease (22% compared to 14%).
- Amongst those respondents who felt staff levels would decrease, the average decrease was 1.6 full time equivalent staff. The average increase among those that felt levels would increase was 1.7 full time equivalent staff.

Figure 12: Will your staffing levels increase, decrease or stay the same in 2010-2011 in comparison to 2009-2010?

Will your staffing levels increase, decrease or stay the same?	Number	Percentage %
Decrease	17	13.7
Stay the same	80	64.5
Increase	27	21.8
Total	124	100.0

3.4 Telephone support

Telephone helpline

100% of FISs reported that they had a telephone helpline of some kind. This is identical to the 2008 finding[14]. Figure 13 shows that the most common method to run a telephone

---

[13] *Jobcentre Plus. Delivering effective services through Personal Advisers.* National Audit Office, 2006.
[14] See Figure 1, page 15, *Families Information Services.Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082

helpline was to have dedicated staff not in a call centre, with 73% of respondents giving this answer. This is a similar finding to the 2008 survey of 79%[15].

Among the 12 respondents that answered "other", 6 answered that a call centre dealt with basic enquiries but forwarded more complex enquiries to the FIS back office team.

Figure 13: How is your FIS telephone helpline managed?

How is the FIS telephone helpline managed?	Number	Percentage %	Percentage in 2008 %[16]
Dedicated staff not in a call centre	94	73	79
General call centre	12	9	14
Call centre with dedicated staff	11	9	5
Other	12	9	2
Total	129	100	100

.
Figure 14 shows that just over 7 in 10 FISs reported that their telephone helpline received less than 500 calls per month. In a typical month, a FIS telephone helpline took an average of 578 calls. The minimum number was reported as 35 calls and the maximum was 13,934. This latter number is an outlier.

Figure 14 On average, how many calls per month does your telephone helpline receive?

On average, how many calls per month does your telephone helpline receive? Number of calls (range).	Number	Percentage %
0-250	49	40
251-500	38	31
501-750	17	14
751-1,000	12	10
1,001-2,500	5	4
2,501+	2	2
Total	123	100

---

[15] Figure 2, page 16, *Families Information Services.Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082 .
[16] See figure 2, page 16, *Families Information Services.Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082.

Availability of telephone helpline

Figure 15 shows that:

- Almost all (over 96%) FIS telephone helplines were available during weekdays but only a minority (under 15%) reported that their helplines were available during weekends
- Less than 13% of respondents said the telephone helplines were available outside of office hours on any day of the week
- This compares with 29% of respondents that said that their telephone helpline was available outside office hours in the 2008 report[17].

Figure 15: Days of the week the FIS telephone helpline is available. Availability in and outside office hours?

---
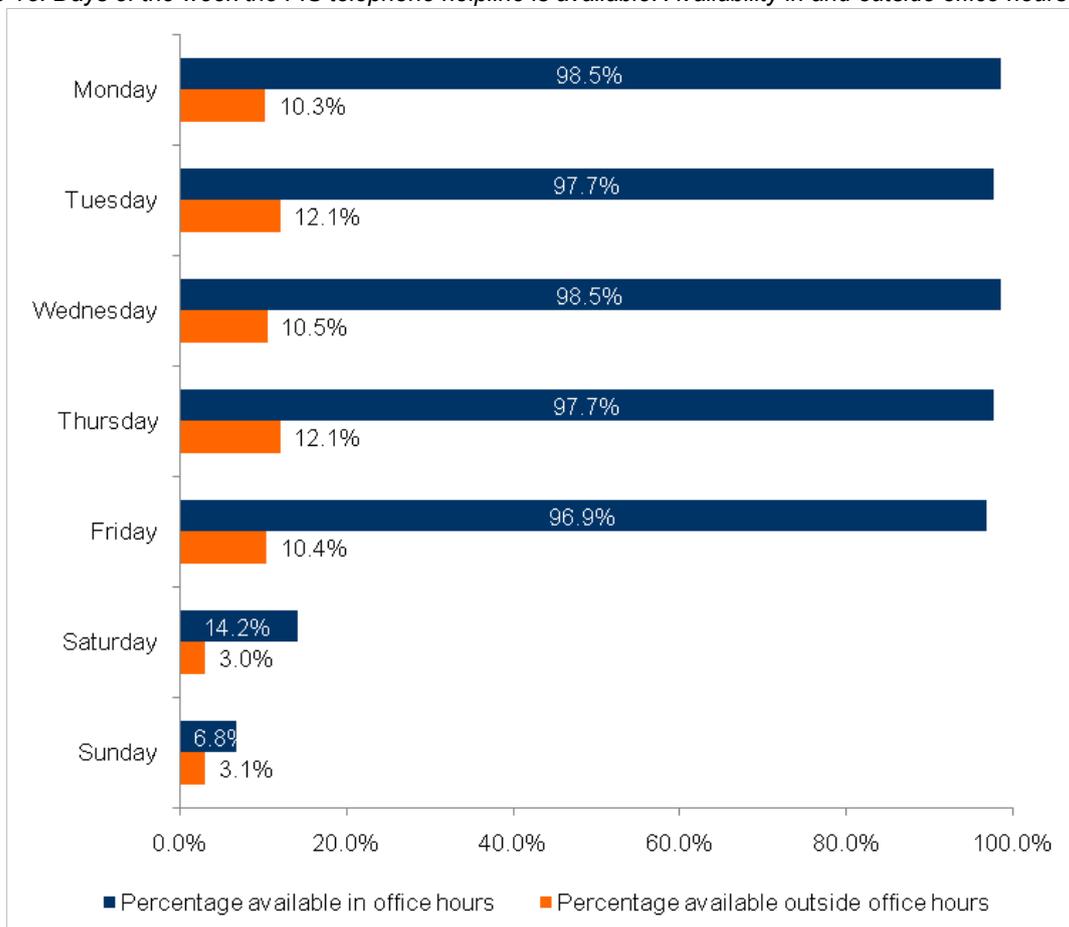
[17] See page 16, *Families Information Services. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082.

Enquiry response time

Figure 16 shows that over 9 in 10 telephone enquiries (95%) were responded to within 24 hours.

Figure 16: On average, how quickly are telephone enquiries responded to?

How quickly are telephone enquiries responded to?	Number	Percentage %
Within 24 hours	123	94.6
Within 48 hours	3	2.3
Within 72 hours	4	3.1
Total	130	100.0

3.5   Website

Hits on the website

Figure 17 shows that of those FISs that responded to the question, 73% reported having less than 5,000 hits on their website per month. The question asked: "on average how many hits (this refers to the number of users accessing your website) per month does your website get?

Figure 17 On average how many hits (this refers to the number of users accessing your website) per month does your website get?

On average how many hits (this refers to the number of users accessing your website) per month does your website get? Numbers (range).	Number	Percentage %
1-1,000	26	36
1,001 – 5,000	27	37
5,001 – 10,000	8	11
10,001 – 100,000	9	12
100,001+	3	4
Total	73	100

Nature of website

Figure 18 shows that FISs reported that the majority of websites were either standalone (23% of respondents) or part of the local authority website (62% of respondents). Only one FIS answered that they did not have a website.

Among the 18 respondents answering "other", 9 FISs answered that the website was a combination of a standalone website but with pages on the local authority website, whilst 4 FISs answered that their website was under redevelopment but would be part of the local authority website when complete.

In 2010, 99% of FISs have a website of some form which is identical to the 2008 report[18].

Figure 18: Is your FIS website…?

Is your FIS website…?	Number	Percentage %
Standalone website	30	23.3
Part of the local authority website	80	62.0
We do not have a website	1	0.8
Other	18	14.0
Total	129	100.0

---

[18] See Figure 1, page 15, *Families Information Services. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082

4. Section 12 duty

Key Messages

The following section shows:

- Two in 3 FISs reported that they were meeting the requirements of the section 12 duty. This contrasts with 50% of FISs stating this in the 2008 survey.
- FISs in London (86%) were most likely to report they were fulfilling the section 12 duty. FISs from the East of England (38%) were least likely to report they were fulfilling the section 12 duty.
- Safeguarding was the element where FISs were most likely to report achieving actions outlined in the statutory guidance "well" or "very well" (97%), followed by advice, assistance and brokerage (93%) childcare information (91%), other services, facilities and publications (89%), access to the information service (87%) and disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parents (84%). Service delivery was the element where respondents were least likely to report achieving actions "well" or "very well" (only 63%).
- Of the range of actions that the statutory guidance suggests that FISs "must do" the action at which FISs were least likely to be doing "well" or "very well" was reaching out to and ensuring information is available to the disadvantaged.
- Of the range of actions that the statutory guidance suggests that FISs "should do" the actions at which FISs were least likely to be doing "well" or "very well" were:
  - Consultation with parents / carers from disadvantaged groups
  - Establishing a coherent communication strategy to ensure joined up information provision
  - Children's Trust taking the lead strategically for delivery of the information duty
  - Regularly consulting with parents to ensure service delivery is effective
  - Ensuring services are available and accessible to parents with disabilities
  - Providing information as part of a joined up and co-ordinated offering to parents with other support services
  - Effectiveness of the FIS is evaluated regularly
  - Childcare information in relation to childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and SEN
  - Mystery shopping exercises to quality assure the service.
- Everyday challenges highlighted by FISs in meeting the section 12 duty include:
  - Systems / IT issues (77%) – with 57% of these stating this was a "very major" or "major" challenge
  - Disengaged partners (66%) – with 49% of these stating this was a "very major" or "major" challenge.

4.1   Overall delivery of the section 12 duty

More FISs are reporting meeting the section 12 duty than in 2008

Figure 19 shows that 1 in 3 respondents reported that their FIS was meeting the requirements of the section 12 duty. This contrasts with 50% of FISs in the previous survey[19].

Figure 19: Is FIS fully meeting the requirements of the information duty?

Considering your delivery of the section 12 duty as a whole, is your FIS fully meeting the requirements of the section 12 duty?	Number	Percentage %
Yes	83	66.4
No	39	31.2
Don't know	3	2.4
Total (11 of the 136 respondents did not respond to this question)	125	100.0

Comparison of FISs that report meeting the section 12 duty to those that report not meeting the duty

Appendix 4 contains a table comparing questionnaire responses between those FISs that report meeting the duty and those that do not. Please note that caution should be applied when interpreting these findings as the self-report information has not been independently verified and the small numbers involved makes percentage comparisons unreliable.

Appendix 4 shows that FIS respondents that report they are meeting the duty are more likely to (on the basis of a 10% gap in responses from those who report fulfilling the duty and those that report not fulfilling the duty):

- Be run in-house
- Have more strategic involvement (i.e. in developing strategies, being represented on boards and working closely with partners)
- Have a greater variety of methods to reach out to parent/carers
- Are more effective at reaching groups of parents / carers who are commonly referred to as "hard-to-reach"
- Update records and information more regularly
- Use a range of performance monitoring methods[20]
- Have successfully undertaken the Families First Award
- Have had the opportunity to access Government Office support
- Have a website that is part of the LA website
- Receive more hits per month on average on their website
- Manage the Family Information Directory
- Have the right levels of skills and resources for delivering the Family Information Directory
- Respond to telephone enquiries more promptly
- Have larger budgets
- Employ 0.5 more full time equivalent staff

---

[19] Page 1, *Families Information Services. Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082
[20] Although those FISs that reported not meeting the information duty were more likely to report external auditing – a possible interpretation may be that they are subject to external audit because they are not performing well

Differences by region

Figure 20 shows respondents in London were most likely to report that their FIS was fulfilling the section 12 duty, with 86% of respondents answering this way. Only 38% of respondents in the East of England felt that their FIS was meeting the duty.

Figure 20: Is FIS fully meeting the requirements of the information duty by region (percentage who answered yes)?
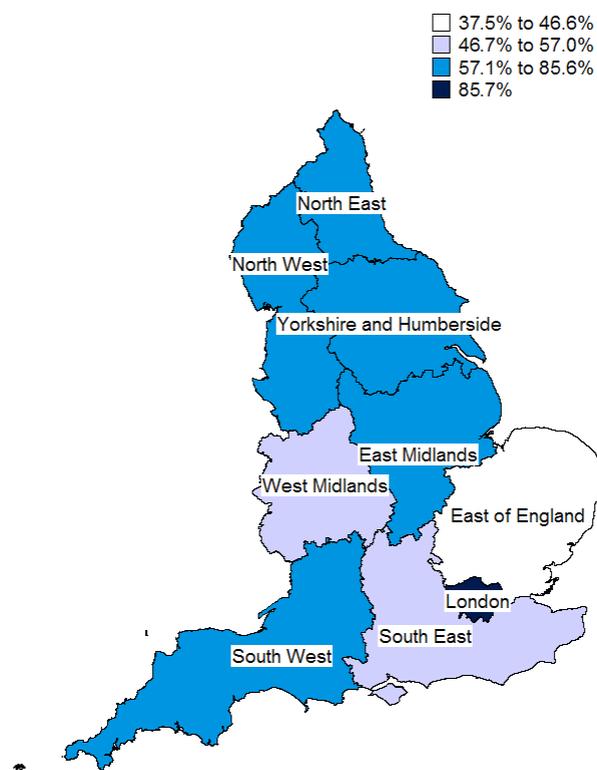
A regional analysis of FIS survey responses is shown in Appendix 5. Caution should be applied when interpreting these findings due to the small numbers involved and the self-report nature of the survey.

Elements of the section 12 duty

The statutory guidance outlines 7 elements that local authorities should consider in meeting the section 12 duty. These 7 elements are:

- Childcare information
- Advice and assistance – brokerage service
- Safeguarding children
- Information about other services, facilities and publications
- Information on services for disabled children, for children with special educational needs and for disabled parents
- Access to the information service
- Service delivery

Annex 1 of the statutory guidance summarises a range of actions which local authorities and their FISs either "should do" or "must do" to fulfil section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006. Cordis

Bright, in collaboration with the FIS survey steering group, designed 39 measures in the questionnaire that addressed these actions. These are shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23. FISs were asked whether they were meeting each action "very well", "well", "not that well" or "not at all well".

Figure 21 summarises responses under each element of the section 12 duty. It is based on an average of the measures under each element as outlined in Appendix 1. This figure gives a general overview of how FISs are doing in each element but does not take account of variation of the measures within each element; therefore caution should be applied in interpreting this figure.

Measures relating to the service delivery area of the statutory guidance are relatively weak with 63% of FIS respondents stating they undertake these "well" or "very well". When interpreting these findings it should be remembered that not all these actions are necessary for FISs to meet the section 12 duty.

Figure 21: Percentage of FISs doing "Very well" or "Well" in each element of the Section 12 duty
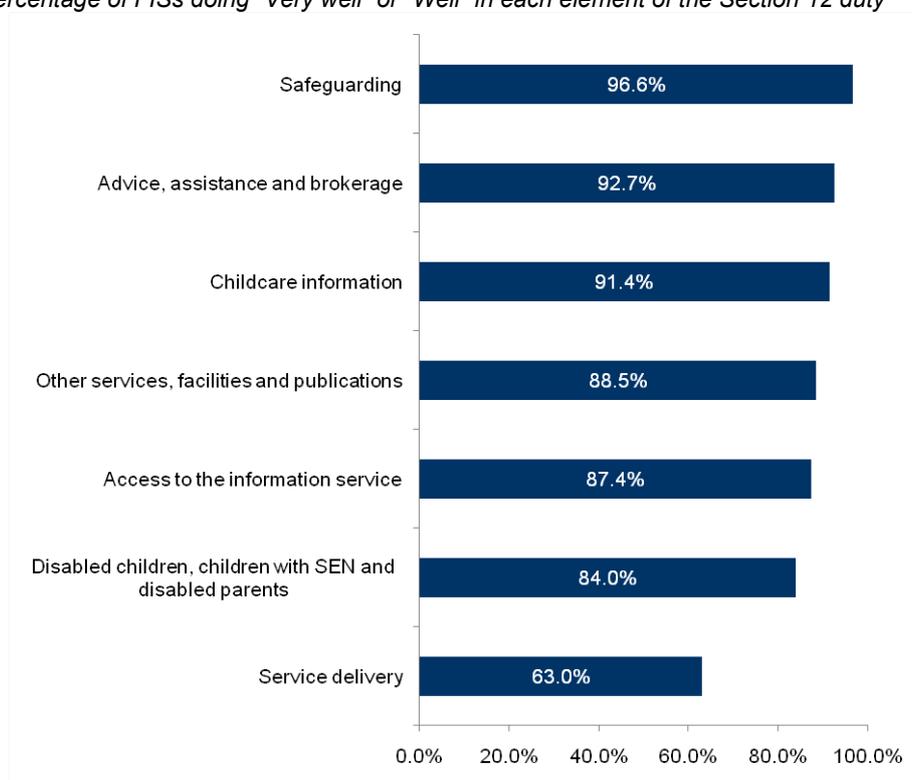
Actions of the section 12 duty

Figure 22 shows responses by each action. For those actions that the guidance states that local authorities "must do":

- Taking a mean average of the 7 "must do" actions 9 in 10 (89%) FISs report doing these "very well" or "well". However, caution should be applied in interpreting this finding as it does not take account of variation in each of the 7 measures. For example, 1 in 4 FIS respondents report that they are reaching out to disadvantaged groups "not that well" or "not at all well". This means that 1 in 4 FISs are finding a "must do" action outlined in the statutory guidance challenging.
- At least 4 in 5 FIS respondents report doing 6 of the 7 "must do" actions "very well" or "well".

22

Figure 22 shows that those actions where the lowest percentage of respondents responded with "very well" or "well" are in the service delivery element.

- FIS runs mystery shopping exercises to quality assure services (25%)
- FIS regularly consults with parents from disadvantaged groups to ensure service delivery is effective (40%)
- Local Authority has an established and coherent communication strategy (41%)
- Children's Trust takes the lead strategically for delivery of the information duty (41%)

It should be noted that these actions are "should do" or recommended actions. This means that FISs can meet the information duty without necessarily undertaking these actions.

For all other actions, at least 69% of FISs report that they are undertaking the actions "well" or "very well".

A full list of questions used to assess whether local authorities are meeting each of the 7 elements of the section 12 duty outlined in the statutory guidance is shown in Figure 23 and the complete questionnaire is shown at Appendix 2.

Figure 22 Percentage who responded "well" or "very well" in fulfilling actions of the section 12 duty. Orange = "must do" actions, Blue = "should do" actions

99.3% 99.3% 99.2% 98.5% 98.5% 98.5% 97.7% 96.9% 96.3% 96.2% 94.6% 94.0% 94.0% 93.2% 92.5% 91.7% 91.0% 90.2% 88.8% 87.4% 87.1% 86.4% 85.8% 85.6% 85.0% 82.4% 82.1% 78.8% 77.9% 74.0% 74.0% 72.5% 70.5% 68.7% 68.5% 41.3% 40.6% 40.3% 25.0%
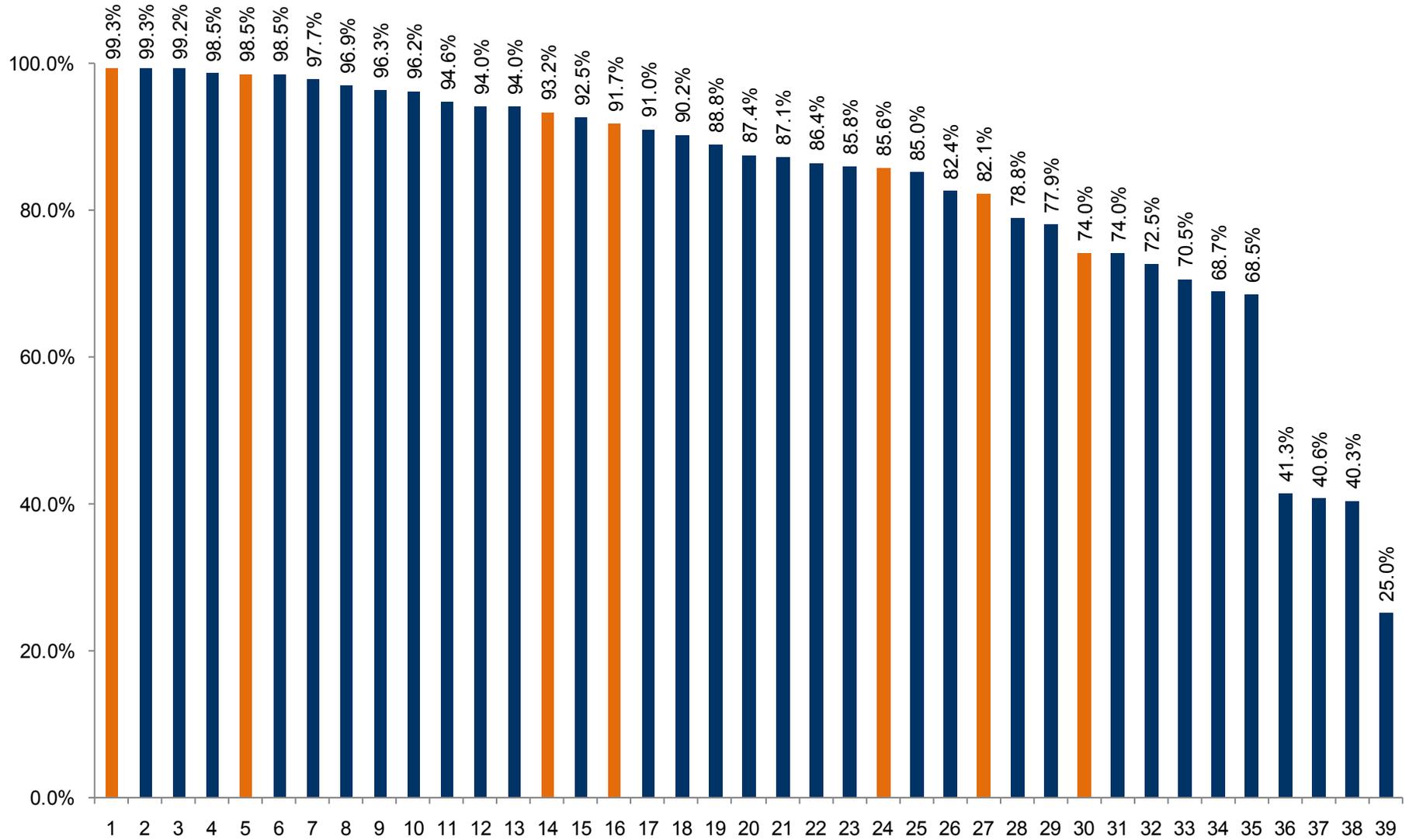
Figure 23 Legend - showing measures of "should do" and "must do" actions that LAs may undertake to meet the section 12 duty (Based on the statutory guidance)

	Legend		
1	**Childcare information**: FISs must provide comprehensive information about registered childcare	21	**Access to information:** Identifying and meeting the varying information needs of parents
2	**Childcare information:** Information about free entitlement to Early Years provision	22	**Disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parent:** Provide information on the provision of suitable childcare for disabled children
3	**Safeguarding:** Ensure FIS staff are CRB checked as appropriate	23	**Advice, assistance and brokerage:** Feedback information about gaps in childcare provision
4	**Advice, assistance and brokerage:** Help parents understand the childcare system	24	**Access to information:** Ensuring information is accessible to people who might otherwise have difficulty in accessing services they need
5	**Access to information**: Ensure personal data is processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998	25	**Information on other services, facilities and publications:** Maintain a directory/directories of local services and facilities available to parents, and make this available in an informed manner
6	**Access to information:** FIS makes information available to users other than parents as appropriate	26	**Access to information:** Promote information to all parents but a particular effort is made to help those who might otherwise find it difficult to access information
7	**Childcare information:** information about children's centres	27	**Childcare information:** Information on non-registered childcare
8	**Service delivery**: Arrangements are in place to deal with complaints from parents about the delivery of FIS services	28	**Childcare information:** Childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and SEN
9	**Advice, assistance and brokerage:** Help parents reassess needs and widen childcare search	29	**Service delivery:** Effectiveness of the FIS is evaluated regularly
10	**Access to information:** Ensure information is made available through a wide range of outlets	30	**Access to information:** Reaching out to and ensuring information is available to disadvantaged groups
11	**Service delivery**: Information is delivered by appropriately qualified staff	31	**Service delivery:** Local Authority and FIS ensure that the information duty is delivered in a way that complements other Local Authority and third sector services
12	**Advice, assistance and brokerage:** Help clients to identify funding support sources	32	**Access to information:** Ensure key people working with children in care have access to the same information as parents
13	**Safeguarding:** Provide information and answer parents' questions relating to safeguarding	33	**Service delivery:** FIS provides information as part of a joined up and co-ordinated offering to parents with other support services
14	**Information on other services, facilities and publications:** Provide information on other (non-childcare) services, facilities and publications	34	**Disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parent:** Ensure that their services are available to and accessible by parents with disabilities
15	**Advice, assistance and brokerage**: Provide a brokerage service for parents having difficulty finding childcare that meets needs	35	**Service delivery:** FIS regularly consults with parents to ensure service delivery is effective
16	**Access to information:** Ensure information is available to all prospective parents and parents of children up to their 20th birthday (up to 25 for children and young people who are disabled)	36	**Service delivery:** Children's Trust takes the lead strategically for delivery of the information duty
17	**Disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parent:** Assist parents of children with disabilities to find information about services they need	37	**Service delivery:** Local Authority has an established and coherent communication strategy to ensure joined-up information provision
18	**Disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parent:** Assist parents of children with special educational needs to find information about services they need	38	**Service delivery:** FIS regularly consults with parents from disadvantaged groups to ensure service delivery is effective
19	**Advice, assistance and brokerage**: Help clients to identify specialist support sources	39	**Service delivery:** FIS runs mystery shopping exercises to quality assure service
20	**Information on other services, facilities and publications:** Provide information on national support services		**Key:** ■ Must dos **No shading**: should dos

Regional Variations

Figure 24 focuses on those measures where less than 50% of respondents overall felt that they were doing "well" or "very well". All of these measures are ones that the statutory guidance states that local authorities "should do" (rather than "must do"). It looks at responses at a regional level and shows that:

- In all four measures, London is rated the highest.
- FISs in the East Midlands have lower levels of positive responses than other regions in terms of the Children's Trust taking the lead strategically and undertaking consultation with parents from disadvantaged groups.
- FISs in the North East, East Midlands and South West are least likely to report running mystery shopping exercises.
- FISs in the South West are least likely to report that their LAs have an established and coherent communication strategy to ensure joined-up information provision.

Caution should be applied in interpreting these findings due to the small numbers involved. A more detailed regional analysis is shown in Appendix 5.

Figure 24 Maps showing regional variation in percentages of FISs reporting they are undertaking actions that may help them meet the section 12 duty "well" or "very well"

Service Delivery: The Children's Trust takes the lead strategically for delivery of the section 12 duty	Service Delivery: The Local Authority has an established and coherent communication strategy to ensure joined-up information provision

Service Delivery: The FIS regularly consults with parents from disadvantaged groups to ensure service delivery is effective	Service Delivery: The FIS runs mystery shopping exercises to quality assure service

Challenges to delivering the section 12 duty

Figure 25 shows which areas FIS respondents felt were everyday challenges in meeting the section 12 duty. This shows that:

- Overall, there were sizeable numbers of FISs identifying each area as a challenge to delivering the duty.
- The area most respondents felt was a challenge was "systems/IT issues" with 77% of respondents identifying this as a challenge. 57% of these reported this was a "very major" or "major" challenge[21].
- The area least likely to be identified as a challenge was skill gaps, with 40% of respondents identifying this as a challenge – of these 18% reported this as a "very major" or "major" challenge.
- 29 respondents identified "other" challenges. Examples included organisational restructuring, the pace of new initiatives and amount of information that needs to be known.

---

[21] This finding suggests that FISs have general concerns about IT / Systems issues. Later on in this report FISs generally suggest more confidence in their IT skills and resources to manage the Family Information Directory. This could be interpreted that generally IT is a challenge, but in certain areas of IT FISs feel more confident.

Figure 25: Challenges to fulfilling the Section 12 duty (percentage who responded that it was a challenge)?
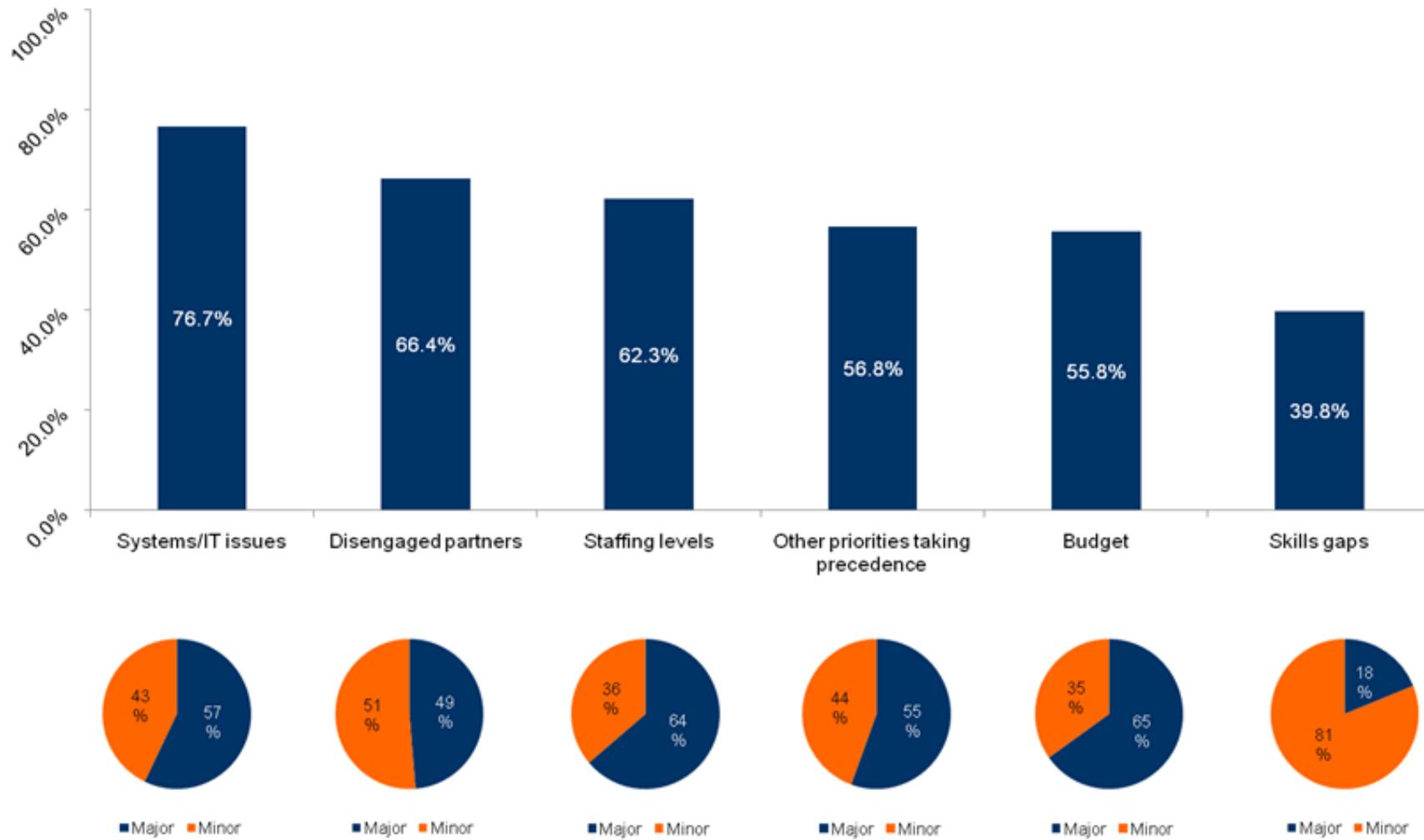
5. Other aspects of FIS service delivery

Key Messages

Based on FIS self-reports the following can be said.

Strategic / partnership involvement
- FISs were most likely to have strategic involvement in childcare sufficiency assessments, children's centres and parent and family support strategies
- FISs were most likely to report working "very closely" or "quite closely" with children's centres (95%), private / voluntary / independent childcare providers (92%) and extended services (78%)
- The majority of FISs were not represented on their Children's Centre Advisory Board, Children's Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board or the Local Strategic Partnership Board
- They were least likely to provide / share information with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (13%), NHS / PCT childcare co-ordinator (18%) and the Children's Trust Board and Voluntary Organisations (21%)

Reaching parents / carers
- FIS respondents stated that most clients contact FISs or find out about the FIS by telephone (99%) or word of mouth (97%)
- FISs report that they could be more effective in reaching groups of parents / carers commonly referred to as "hard-to-reach". In addition, 67% of FISs reported that they could be more effective in reaching parents/carers who are disabled (67%), parents / carers whose first language is not English (59%) and parents/carers from BME backgrounds (54%)
- Qualitative responses suggest that FISs could be better at co-ordinating with other services in order to avoid duplication, and could plan more strategically in relation to targeting outreach efforts
- Reaching-out to parents from disadvantaged and "hard-to-reach" groups in order to provide information and consult on the effectiveness of FIS service delivery is an area of improvement for a number of FISs based on the evidence provided in this report

Performance monitoring methods
- 100% of FIS respondents felt that service users were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the service they received.
- Only 19% of FISs reported having undertaken the Families First Award[22], although 66% are planning to undertake the award. 51% are planning to undertake the award within 3 months
- The most commonly used performance monitoring methods were feedback forms (98%) and user satisfaction surveys (80%)
- Performance monitoring methods have not changed much since the 2008 survey

Information collection and updating
- At least 87% of FIS respondents reported that their FIS collects / records information on enquiry type / content, call outcome, complaints, nature of complaint and any

---

[22] Feedback from the FIS survey steering group questions the accuracy of this figure. It is the case that fewer than 15 FISs have received the Families First Award. This finding should be treated with caution.

follow up action
- 71% of FIS respondents reported that when they were notified by a service provider of a change to a record they updated their records within 24 hours
- The findings show that FISs generally update childcare information with more regularity than information about other services and facilities

Family Information Directory
- 84% of FISs managed the Family Information Directory[23].
- 72% of FIS respondents stated that the Family Information Directory was available on their FIS website. This could include just having a link to Directgov.
- 53% of FISs have the Directory of Childcare available on their websites
- FIS respondents generally felt that they had the right levels of skills in supporting the delivery of the Family Information Directory – the area where FIS respondents were least likely to feel they had the right skills was in managing vendors / contracts (1 in 4 reporting that they did not)
- At least 64% of FIS respondents felt they were well enough resourced to support the Family Information Directory in the areas of information technology, relationship management, managing vendors / contracts, data analysis and information management

5.1 Strategic/partnership involvement

Involvement of FISs in wider strategy development

Figure 26 shows that:

- FISs were most likely to report having direct involvement in:
    - Childcare Sufficiency Assessments (94%)
    - Children's Centres (82%)
    - Parent and Family Support Strategy (69%)
- FISs were least likely to report having direct involvement in:
    - Connexions Partnership Plan (4%)
    - CAMHS strategy (6%)
    - Anti-bullying strategy (12%)
- 20 respondents answered that they had direct involvement in "Other" strategies/activities, among which included Child Poverty Strategy (4 respondents) and Aiming High for Disabled Children (3 respondents)

---

[23] However, feedback from the FIS survey steering group questions the accuracy of this figure. Further research may be required to establish whether this is, or is not an accurate figure

Figure 26: Is your FIS directly involved in developing any of the following activities/strategies (percentage responding yes)?
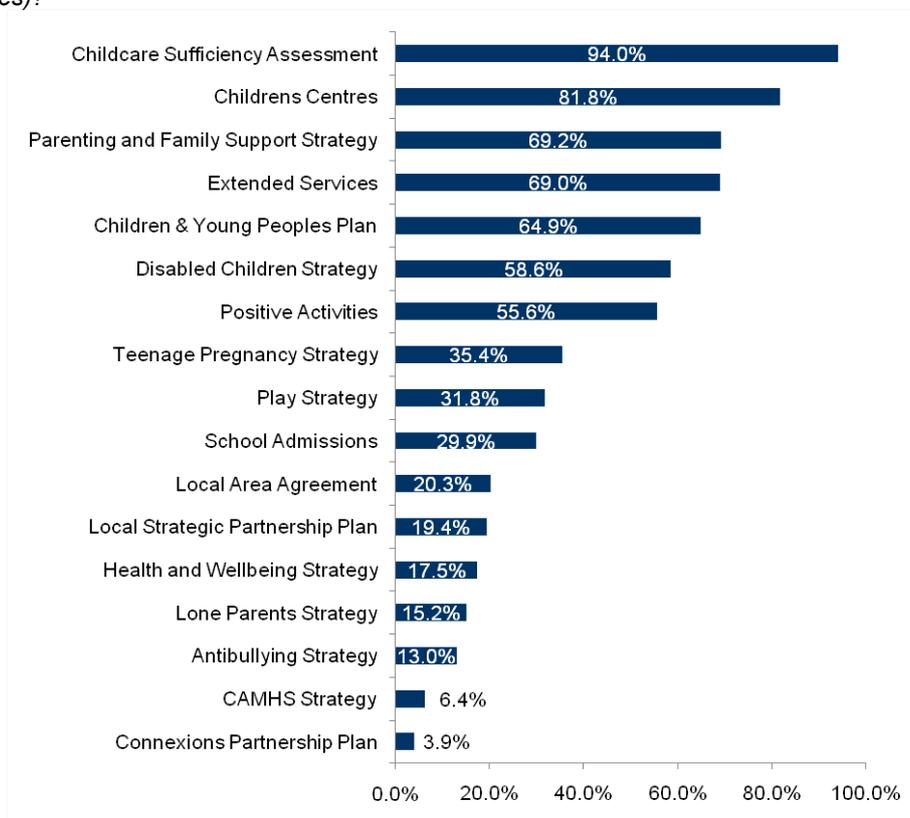
Representation at board level

Figure 27 shows that the majority of FISs are not represented on their Children's Centre Advisory Board, Children's Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board or the Local Strategic Partnership Board. 21 respondents mentioned being represented on "other" boards. Examples included: Parenting Strategic Groups and Childcare Sufficiency Steering Groups.

Figure 27: Is your FIS represented on the following board (percentage responding yes)?
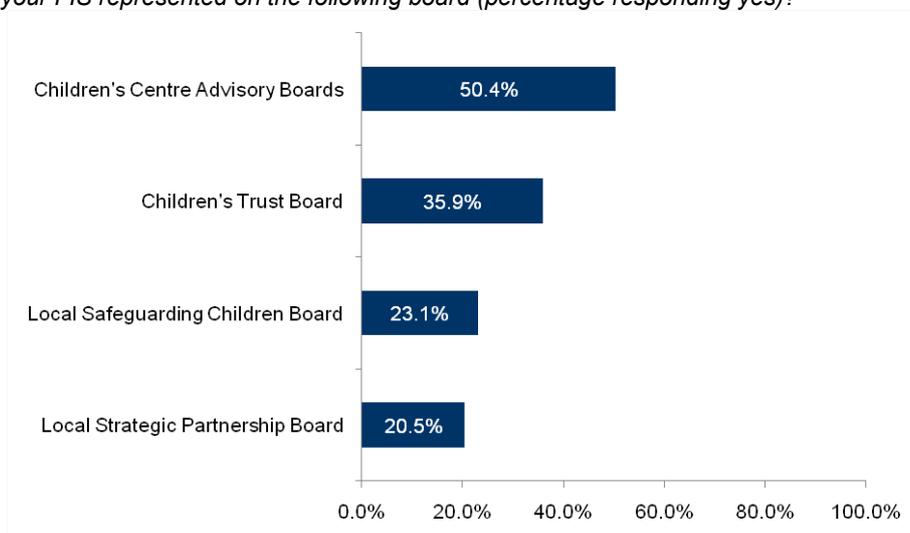
Partnership working

Figure 28 shows that:

- Respondents were most likely to answer that their FIS works "very closely" or "quite closely" with;
    - Children's Centres (95%)
    - Private/Voluntary/Independent Childcare Providers (92%)
    - Extended Services (78%)
- Respondents were least likely to answer that their FIS works "very closely" or "quite closely" with;
    - Local employers (13%)
    - Secondary Schools (24%)
    - Citizens Advice Bureau (25%)
- 78% of respondents answered that they work "very closely" or "quite closely" with "Other" organisations/services. Some of the other organisations/services mentioned included;
    - Aiming High for Disabled Children (5 respondents),
    - Connexions (4 respondents)
    - Neighbouring Local Authorities and FIS teams (3 respondents)
    - Police , National Childminding Association (2 respondents each)

In comparison with the 2008 survey[24], there appears to be little change in the degree to which FISs work closely with services/organisations. For example, 88% of FISs answered that they worked "very closely" or "quite closely" with Children's Centres in 2008, compared to 95% in 2010 and 14% worked "very closely" or "quite closely" with local employers in 2008 compared to 13% in 2010.

Figure 28: Percentage of FISs that work "Very closely" or "Quite closely" with the following organisations

---
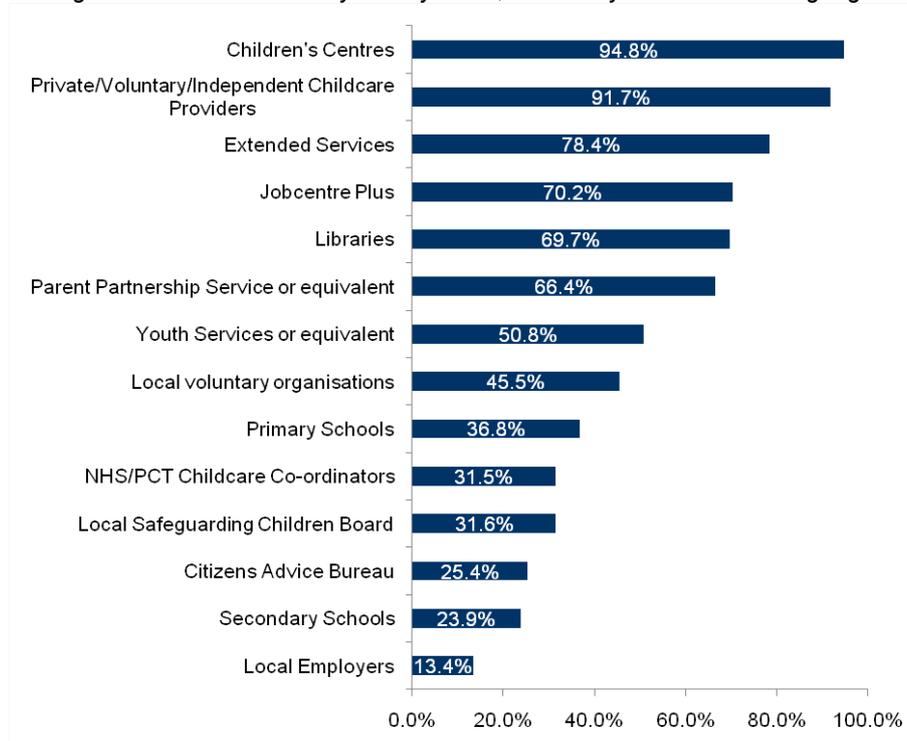
[24] See figures 11, 12 and 13, pages 42 – 43, *Families Information Services*. *Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082
.

Information sharing

Figure 29 shows that FISs reported:

- They were most likely to provide/share information with:
    - FIS staff (91%)
    - Childcare Sufficiency Leads (81%)
- They were least likely to provide/share information with:
    - Local Safeguarding Children Board (13%)
    - NHS/PCT Childcare Co-ordinator (18%)
    - Children's Trust Board (21%) and Voluntary Organisations (21%)
- 28 respondents cited other stakeholders. The stakeholders listed were varied and included; Aiming High team, Schools, the Local Authority, Children's Services and Children's Centres.

Figure 29: Do you provide/share information with any of the following stakeholders (Number of responses, respondents could tick all that applied)?
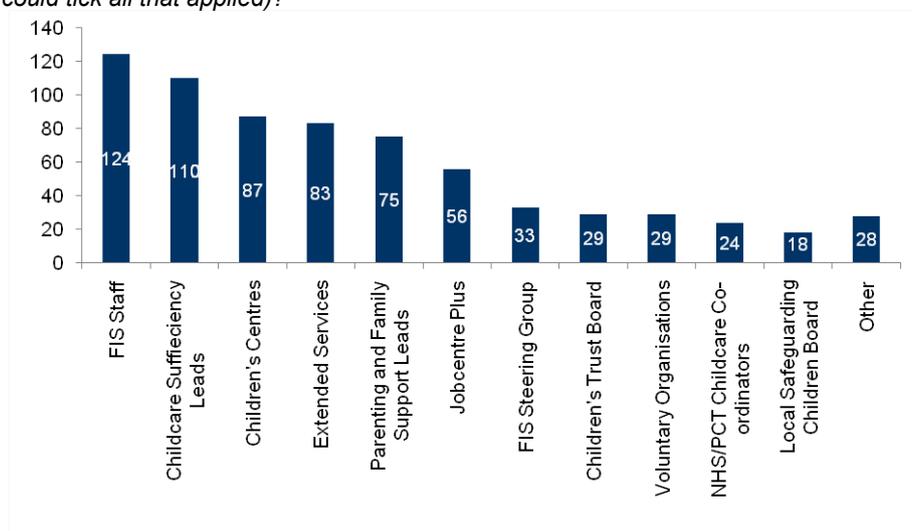
5.2   Reaching parents/carers

How do clients contact / find out information about / from the FIS

Figure 30 shows:

- Respondents were more likely to answer "very common" or "common" to clients finding out information / contacting the FIS using the following means:
    - Telephone helpline (99%)
    - Word of mouth (97%)
    - Children's Centres (95%)
    - Outreach (91%)
- Respondents were least likely to answer "very common" or "common" to the following means of finding information/contacting the FIS:
    - SMS/Text messaging (8%)
    - Drop in/shop front (32%)
    - Via Family Information Directory or non-Local Authority website (55%)
    - Schools (56%)

- 34 respondents cited other means of clients finding information/contacting the FIS. Examples included via health visitors, Libraries and Jobcentre Plus.

Figure 30: Which are the most common means clients use to find out information/contact the FIS?

Reaching out to parents / carers

Figure 31 and Figure 32 shows that FIS respondents felt that they could improve their effectiveness in reaching certain groups of parents / carers.

Respondents were most likely to answer that they were "very effective" or "effective" at reaching lone parents/carers (82%) and parents/carers who are seeking employment or training (78%). This finding is consistent with an earlier finding where FISs generally reported close or very close working relationships with Jobcentre Plus. However, some FISs did report that they could improve information sharing with Jobcentre Plus.

Figure 32 shows that over 1 in 2 FIS respondents answered that they "could improve this area of our work" or "could improve this area of our work greatly" in reaching the following groups:
- Parents/carers who are disabled (67%)
- Parents/carers whose first language is not English (59%)
- Parents/carers from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (54%)

Figure 31: How effective is your FIS in reaching the following groups of parents/carers (those who stated "effective" and "very effective")?
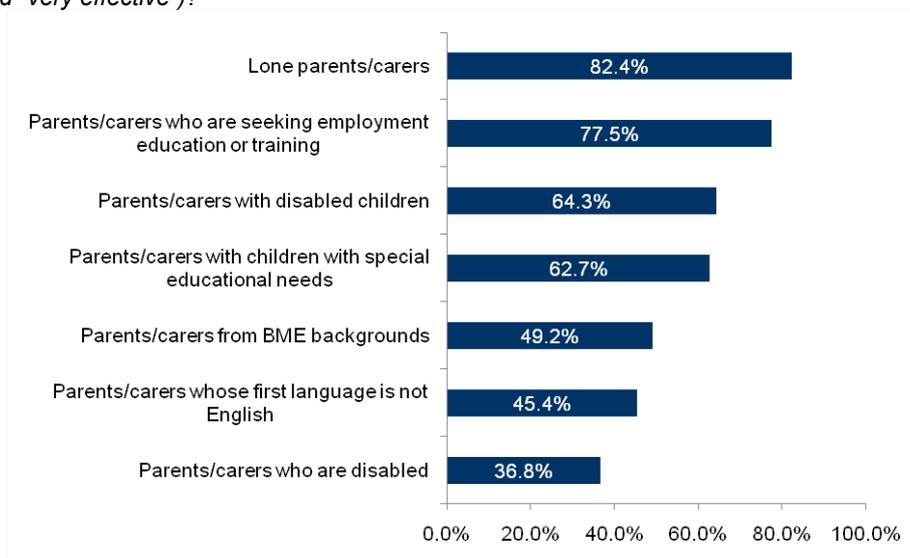
Figure 32: Effectiveness reported by FIS respondents in reaching groups of parents / carers

How effective is your FIS in reaching the following groups of parents / carer?	Very effective (%)	Effective (%)	Could improve this area of our work (%)	Could improve this area of our work greatly (%)	Total	Number responding
Parents and carers who are...						
Who are disabled	7.8	25.5	57.4	9.3	100.0	129
Whose first language is not English	9.9	31.3	50.0	9.1	100.0	131
From BME backgrounds	12.4	34.1	48.1	5.4	100.0	129
With children with special educational needs	18.9	40.9	35.6	4.5	100.0	132
With disabled children	20.5	40.9	34.1	4.5	100.0	132
Who are seeking employment education or training	29.8	46.6	22.1	1.5	100.0	131
Lone	25.2	57.3	17.6	0	100.0	131

Regional comparison in effectiveness at reaching parents/carers

Figure 33 shows regional variations in the effectiveness of reaching parents/carers from BME backgrounds, whose first language is not English, and in reaching parents/carers who are disabled. Based on FIS respondents' self-reports, the maps show that London FISs are more likely to report strengths in these areas. The weakest regions in reaching parents/carers:

- From BME backgrounds are the North East (22%) and North West (30%)
- Whose first language is not English are the Yorkshire and Humber (17%), the North East (22%) and the West Midlands (31%)
- Who are disabled are the West Midlands (7%), the South East (8%) and the East of England (11%)

A more detailed regional analysis is shown in Appendix 5.

Figure 33 Maps showing regional variation in the effectiveness of reaching groups of parents / carers

% "Very effective" or "Effective" in reaching parents / carers from BME backgrounds

- 22.2% to 35.6%
- 35.7% to 42.8%
- 42.9% to 69.9%
- 70.0%

% "Very effective" or "Effective" in reaching parents/carers whose first language is not English

- 16.7% to 33.2%
- 33.3% to 44.3%
- 44.4% to 59.9%
- 60.0% to 71.4%

% "Very effective" or "Effective" in reaching parents / carers who are disabled

- 7.7% to 22.1%
- 22.2% to 38.0%
- 38.1% to 51.6%
- 51.7% to 71.4%
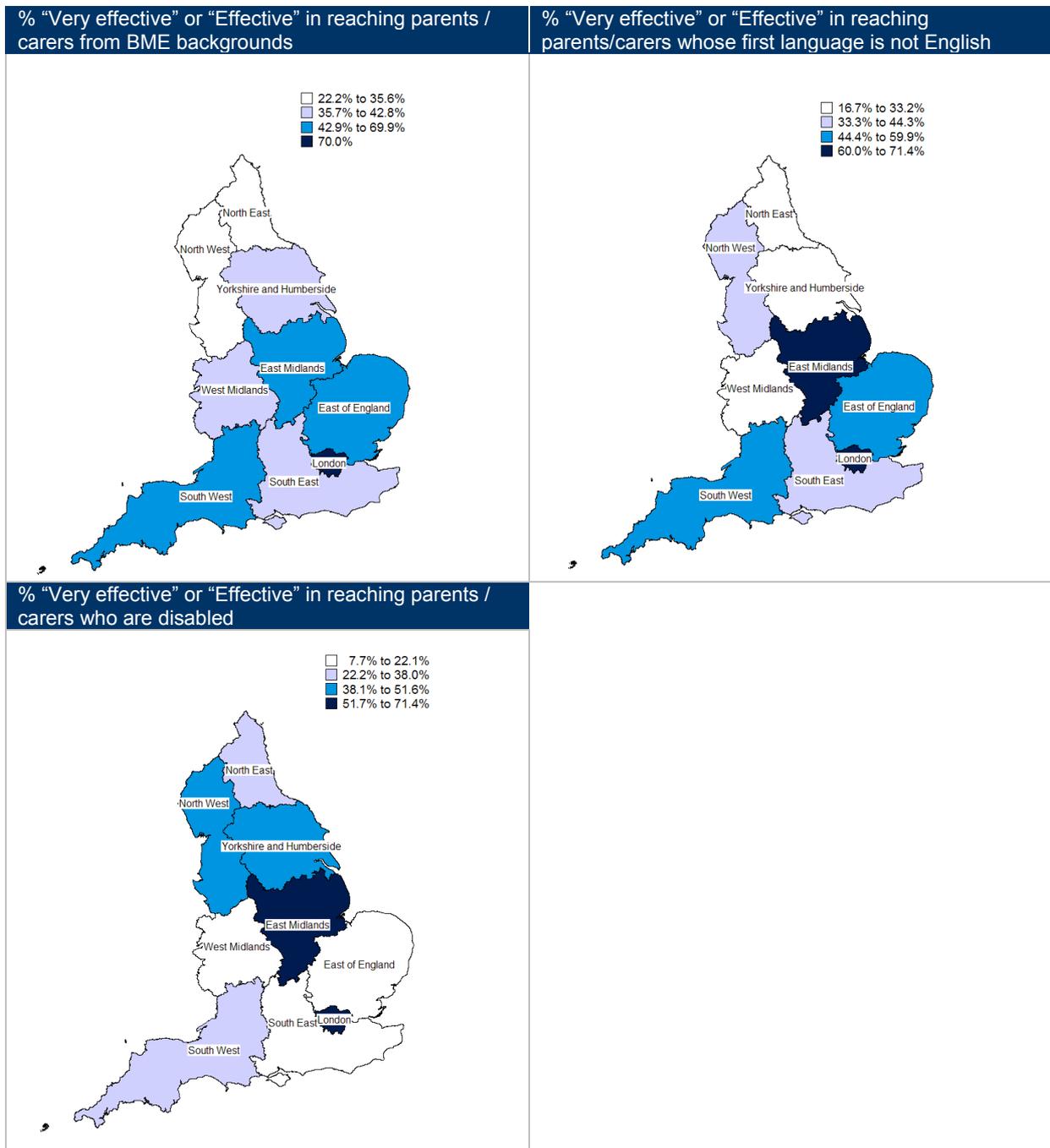
Areas of improvement in outreach

Respondents were also asked what areas they considered that their FIS needed to improve in terms of outreach. 104 FIS respondents gave answers[25]. Figure 34 shows the issues identified and some examples. Some of the frequently cited areas/issues were:

- Reaching specific "hard-to-reach" groups other than BME communities, families with disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parents/carers, for example gypsy / travellers etc. (25 respondents)
- Better co-ordination with other services to avoid a duplication of efforts (23 respondents)
- More strategic planning and targeting of outreach efforts (21 respondents),
- Expanding outreach/capacity issues (20 respondents)
- Reaching families with disabled children, children with SEN or disabled parents/carers (18 respondents)
- Reaching BME communities (15 respondents)
- Embedding with other services/developing a closer relationship with partners (14 respondents).

Figure 34: Areas of improvement for outreach work

Theme	Number	Examples
Reaching other specific "hard to reach" groups	25	*"We are seeking to improve our outreach to Gypsy and Traveller families and are working with local prison and probation services to improve outreach to families involved in the criminal justice system."*
Better co-ordination with other services to avoid duplication	23	*"… What could be improved is the coordination of all services within the Local Authority who have a similar outreach brief of working with families and promoting services. To ensure an integrated approach, avoid duplication work and encourage sharing of resources the FIS is trying to bring borough outreach officers together on a regular basis. We hope that this results in effective signposting to each other's services and a clear offer to borough residents and local stakeholders."*
More strategic planning and targeting of outreach efforts	21	*"We are very good at delivering services as a whole across the city but have identified, as a priority, the need to concentrate on and develop the service by drilling beneath the existing provision to meet the outreach needs of specific client groups and communities."*
Expanding outreach/capacity issues	20	*"We need more capacity to be able to brief teams of partner practitioners (intermediaries) on a more regular basis about how we can provide assistance to them and their clients. It would also be good to have more of a regular presence in schools - but again it's down to staffing resources."*
Reaching families with disabled children, children with SEN or disabled parents/carers	18	*"Targeting families where the children have additional needs"* *"Reaching parents who are disabled through adult services"*
Reaching BME communities	15	*"Engaging with the BME community has been considered an area for improvement. We have recently appointed a Parent/Carer Support Adviser from the local BME community …"*

---

[25] Note the themes identified are not mutually exclusive so totals will not add up to 104.

Theme	Number	Examples
Embed within other services/develop relationships with partners	14	*"We already have fantastic links with extended services, children's centres and many other organisations and need to build on their existing work to deliver our outreach in an effective, focused and targeted manner. These partners can assist us in identifying the areas of the community with whom we should be concentrating our work…".*

5.3   Performance monitoring information

Service user satisfaction

Figure 35 shows that all respondents felt service users were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the services they received. Please note that these responses are self-reported and have not been independently validated.

Figure 35: On average, how satisfied are FIS service users with the service they receive?

How satisfied are FIS service users with the service they receive?	Number	Percentage %
Very satisfied	84	65.6
Satisfied	44	34.4
Dissatisfied	0	0
Not at all satisfied	0	0
Total	128	100.0

Performance monitoring information collected

Figure 36 shows that:

- The most commonly used performance monitoring methods are feedback forms (93%) and regular user-satisfaction surveys (80%)
- The least commonly used methods are auditing, both internal (64%) and external (26%)[26]
- 26 respondents said that they used "other" methods, among which included:
    - Quarterly reports (8 respondents),
    - Family First Award/Matrix Award or other external quality assurance schemes (5 respondents),
    - Telephone helpline usage statistics (3 respondents),
    - Mystery shopper exercises (2 respondents).

Figure 36: What of the following methods are used to monitor the performance of the FIS?

Monitoring tool	Number	Percentage %	Percentage in 2008 %[27]
Feedback forms	116	93	89
Monthly/weekly reports on enquiry handling	95	80	84
Regular user satisfaction survey	97	80	78
Internal auditing	76	64	55
External auditing	28	26	18

Figure 36 also shows the proportion of FIS using the various performance monitoring methods has not changed much between June 2008 and April 2010. However, FISs were slightly more likely to use audits of either type (for example 64% of FIS used internal auditing in 2010 compared to 55% in 2008).

---

[26] External auditing can be taken to mean external independent review of the FIS service, which could be undertaken by the LA, for example.
[27] See figure 18, page 57, *Families Information Services*. *Evaluation of Services Provided.* Research Report DCSF – RR082
.

How performance monitoring information is used

100 respondents gave examples of how performance monitoring information was used. Figure 37 below shows common themes around these examples. Common themes identified included:

- Improve service offered (36 responses),
- Service planning (30 responses),
- Shared with partners (24 responses),
- Identify staff performance/training needs (17 responses).

Figure 37: How performance monitoring information is used

Theme	Number	Examples
Improve service	36	*"All comments that we receive back from our evaluation cards are analysed and have actions set against them. These comments help to ensure that we continually meet the needs of our client group and assist to move the service positively forward."*
Service planning	30	*"To inform commissioning decisions e.g. identified gaps in service areas, commissioning or de-commissioning of activities and services based on evaluations from service users…"*
Shared with partners	24	*"The quarterly monitoring reports are tabled at a partnership group chaired by the FIS Manager which consists of representatives from Children's Centres, Job Centre plus, Play team and the Childcare Sufficiency Team. The info is shared regarding referrals between our agencies to show gaps and improve communications. Info on childcare not found is shared at this meeting to demonstrate demand for childcare not being met to the Sufficiency team. Information about number of requests for childcare from parents of disabled children is shared with the Aiming High Manager at their Implementation Group meetings with other partners including parents."*
Identify staff performance/training needs	17	*"To inform assessment of individual's performance for staff annual appraisals - re time taken to action enquiries, frequency of updating, type of enquiry dealt with - this then feeds into training needs…"*
Feeds into Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	16	*"Information received concerning numbers of childcare enquiries and access to childcare is fed into the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the development of new childcare..."*
Feeds into marketing strategy and plan	16	*"We collate a report about quantity of calls per area and target marketing appropriately. All of the marketing and publicity undertaken is monitored and people calling are asked where they have seen the number or got our information and overall effectiveness of this determines whether it will be used again in the future and cost and maximum coverage is also taken into account"*
Evaluate performance / benchmark	16	*"Quarterly reports to line manager. Benchmarking with other LA FIS services in development."*
Identify gaps and needs to target service	13	*"The information is used to ensure we are supporting and providing appropriate information, workshops, surgeries to the most in need groups in the borough. Were we to notice a lack of calls from a certain group of the community, we are able to re-focus work where appropriate. The data is used to target work where needed."*

Families First Award

Figure 38 shows that 2 in 3 FISs were planning to undertake the award, with 19 FISs having already done so. Feedback from NAFIS indicates that at the time of this research 19 FISs had not successfully achieved the Families First Award. This means there may have been some confusion among FIS respondents in relation to this issue. As such caution should be applied when interpreting these findings.

Figure 38: Are you undertaking, or planning to undertake, the Families First Award in the next 12 months?

Are you currently undertaking, or planning to undertake, the Families First Award in the next 12 months?	Number	Percentage %
No	24	18.9
Yes, we are planning to undertake the award	84	66.1
Yes, we have successfully undertaken the award	19	15.0
Total	127	100.0

Figure 39 shows that of those planning on undertaking the award 1 in 2 FISs are planning on undertaking the award within 3 months, with just over 1 in 5 reporting that they are planning to undertake the award in 4 to 6 months.

Figure 39: If yes, when are you (approximately) anticipating starting the award?

If yes, when are you anticipating starting the award?	Number	Percentage %
3 months	42	50.6
6 months	18	21.7
9 months	9	10.8
12+ months	14	16.9
Total	83	100.0

The 24 FIS respondents that reported that they did not plan to undertake the Families First Award said that this was because: capacity issues or organisational restructuring meant that this was not feasible (12 responses) and that they hold or were planning to undertake the Matrix Award (4 responses).

Accessing Government Office support

Figure 40 shows 85% FISs answered that they had the opportunity to access Government Office support. A regional analysis, that includes FIS access to Government Office support, is shown in Appendix 5.

Figure 40: Have you had the opportunity to access support from your Government Office to help improve FIS delivery?

Have you had the opportunity to access support from your Government Office to help improve FIS delivery?	Number	Percentage %
No	19	14.7
Yes	110	85.3
Total	129	100.0

5.4   Information collection and updating

What information do FISs collect?

Figure 41 shows that the majority of respondents (at least 87%) answered that their FIS collects/records information on; enquiry type/content, call outcome, complaints, nature of complaint and any follow-up action.

42 respondents said that they collected/recorded "Other" information; the majority of this other information was monitoring/demographic information (20 responses). Marketing information (such as how the client found out about the service) was cited by 4 respondents.

Figure 41: What information do you collect/record about contacts?
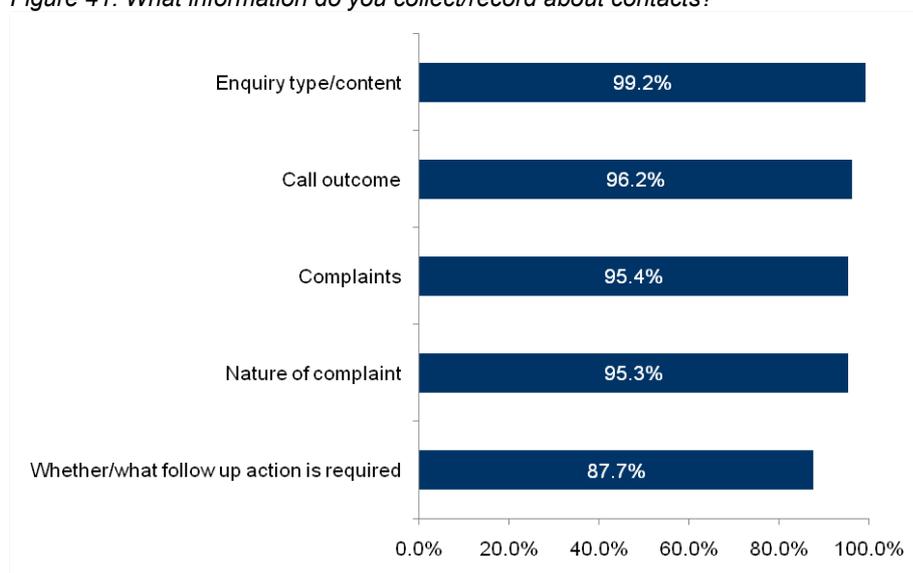
Updating service provider records

Figure 42 shows that over 9 in 10 FISs answered that service provider records are updated within 48 hours once they are notified of a change, with over 7 in 10 reporting that this happens within 24 hours.

Figure 42: How quickly are records updated, when notified by a service provider of a change to a record?

When notified by a service provider of a change to a record, how quickly are records updated	Number	Percentage %
Within 24 hours	93	71.0
Within 48 hours	27	20.6
Within a week	10	7.6
Longer than a week	1	0.8
Total	131	100.0

Updating Information

Figure 43 shows that FISs report updating core childcare provider information more regularly than information about other services and facilities[28].

One in 5 FISs updates information about childcare providers annually. Over 2 in 5 FISs report updating their childcare provider information at least quarterly. Only 1 in 5 FISs report updating information on other services and facilities at least quarterly.

---

[28] 129 respondents answered the question about childcare provider information. 128 respondents answered the question about information concerning other services and facilities.

Figure 43 Regularity of updating childcare provider and other services and facilities information (percentages)
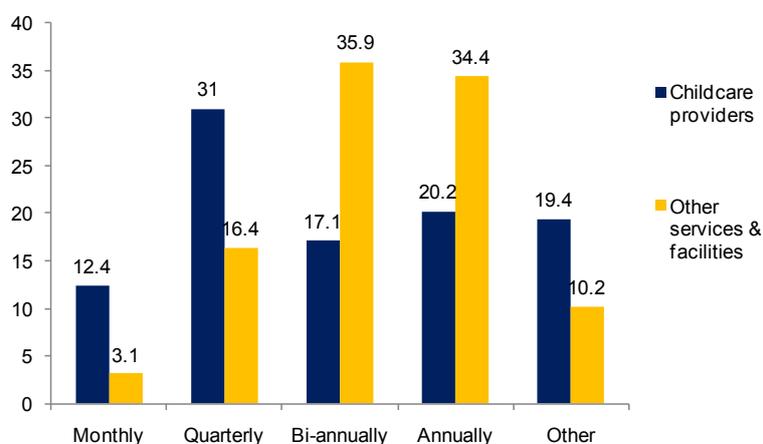
National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact

Figure 44 shows that only 16.9% of FISs collected information about National Indicator 14 - reducing avoidable contact[29].

Figure 44: Does your FIS collect information about National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact?

Does your FIS collect information about National Indicator 14?	Number	Percentage %
Yes	22	16.9
No	98	75.4
Don't know	10	7.7
Total	130	100.0

5.5   Family Information Directory

Introduction

The Family Information Directory was developed in England to ensure that information on any national and local childcare and family services that might benefit parents could be easily found. The Family Information Directory brings together data from 152 local authorities, national bodies such as Ofsted and a dedicated database of family services, to create a comprehensive bank of information. An online search tool, generating data from that information bank can then be embedded on different websites, enabling its data to be accessed across different websites.

Findings from a series of questions in relation to the Family Information Directory are reported below. It is important to note when interpreting these findings that they are based on self-reported information from FIS representatives. Their answers have not been independently validated.

---

[29] National Indicator 14 was one of 198 indicators against which local government was assessed. As part of the Smart Government Initiative this indicator has been removed from the National Indicator Set. Data was to be collected and recorded up to April, 2010. The indicator aimed to reduce "avoidable contact" between the citizen and their local authority. Examples of contacts include: calls from citizens to chase progress on previous service requests and contact resulting from the citizen not being able to find the information they need on the council's website.

Who manages the Family Information Directory

Figure 45 shows that 84% of FISs reported managing the Family Information Directory. However, feedback from DfE suggests that this may not be accurate, since a number of LAs manage part of the directory from their Adult Services Directorate. The information is based on self-reports from FIS representatives. It may be that they manage that part of the Family Information Directory that relates to their remit. Further research would be needed to establish whether or not this is an accurate picture.

21 FIS respondents stated "other" organisations were responsible for the Family Information Directory. Examples of "other" included: within Children's Services team (3 respondents), Parent Partnership (2 respondents) and a joint enterprise between two neighbouring Local Authorities (2 respondents).

Figure 45: Who manages the Family Information Directory?

Who manages the Family Information Directory?	Number	Percentage %
FIS	108	83.7
Other	21	16.3
Total	129	100.0

Availability of directory of family services on FIS websites

Figure 46 shows the majority of FIS respondents (72%) stated the directory was available on the FIS website. This may include FIS representatives who have answered "yes" when they have a link to Directgov on their website. To understand FIS respondent's responses in more detail further research would be required.

Among the 23 respondents answering "other", 12 respondents reported that their directory and/or the website to host it were under development, 2 respondents replied that it was linked through the DCSF website and 2 respondents answered that the directory was hosted by the Local Authority.

Figure 46: Is your directory of family services available on your website?

Is your directory of family services available on your website?	Number	Percentage %
Yes	93	71.5
No	14	10.8
Other	23	17.7
Total	130	100.0

Availability of directory of childcare on FIS websites

Figure 47 shows about half of FISs (53%) have the directory available on their websites. Among the 26 FIS respondents that answered "other", answers included the website/and or directory was under development..

Figure 47: Is your directory of childcare available on your website?

Is your directory of childcare available on your website?	Number	Percentage %
Yes	68	52.7
No	35	27.1
Other	26	20.2
Total	129	100.0

Family Information Directory linked from the FIS website?

Figure 48 shows that the Family Information Directory was most commonly linked from the FIS website via a link to Directgov (66 respondents).The least common response was "there is a link to other Family Information Directory channels to allow users to search for childcare and family services" and "the Family Information Directory is not available on our webpage" with 15 respondents respectively. Among the 19 "other" responses, 7 FISs answered that the website was being redeveloped.

Figure 48: How does your FIS website link to the Family Information Directory (number of respondents answering, respondents could tick all that applied)?
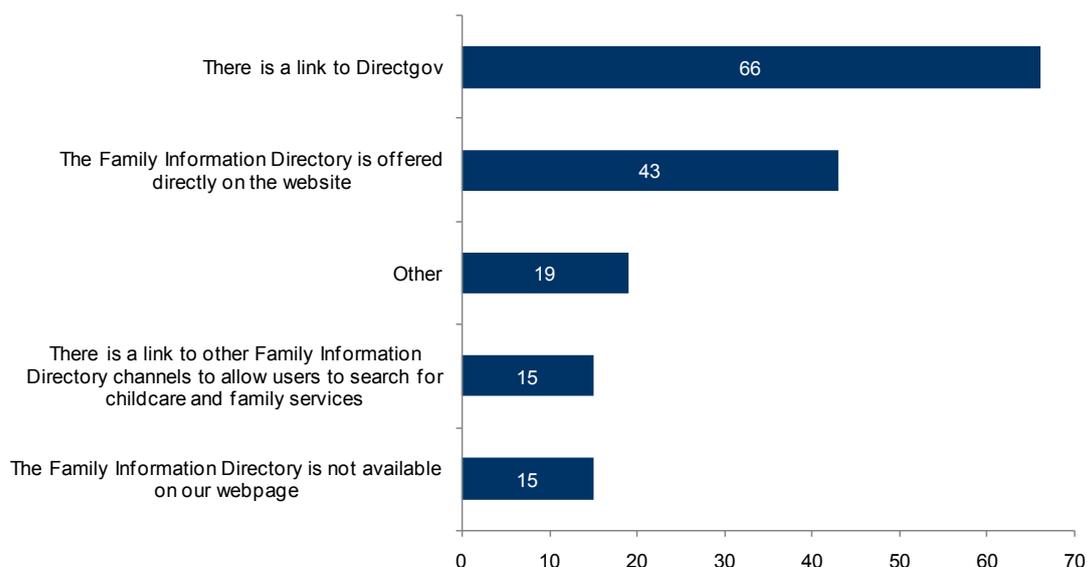
Resourcing the Family Information Directory

Figure 49 shows that FISs were more confident in their skills to deliver the Family Information Directory, but less confident about the resources they had to deliver it. FISs felt least confident in their skills concerning managing vendors / contracts.

FIS respondents reported more positively about the skills and resources they had in relation to the IT requirements of the Family Information Directory than they did overall in relation to IT challenges in meeting the information duty. 77% reported IT as a challenge in meeting the information duty with 57% of those reporting it a major challenge.

FISs generally felt most confident with their information management and relationship management skills. However, approximately, 1 in 3 FISs reported that they did not have the information management and relationship management resources to deliver the Family Information Directory.

Figure 49 Percentage of FISs responding (yes) that they have the right skill levels and resources to deliver the Family Information Directory (percentages)
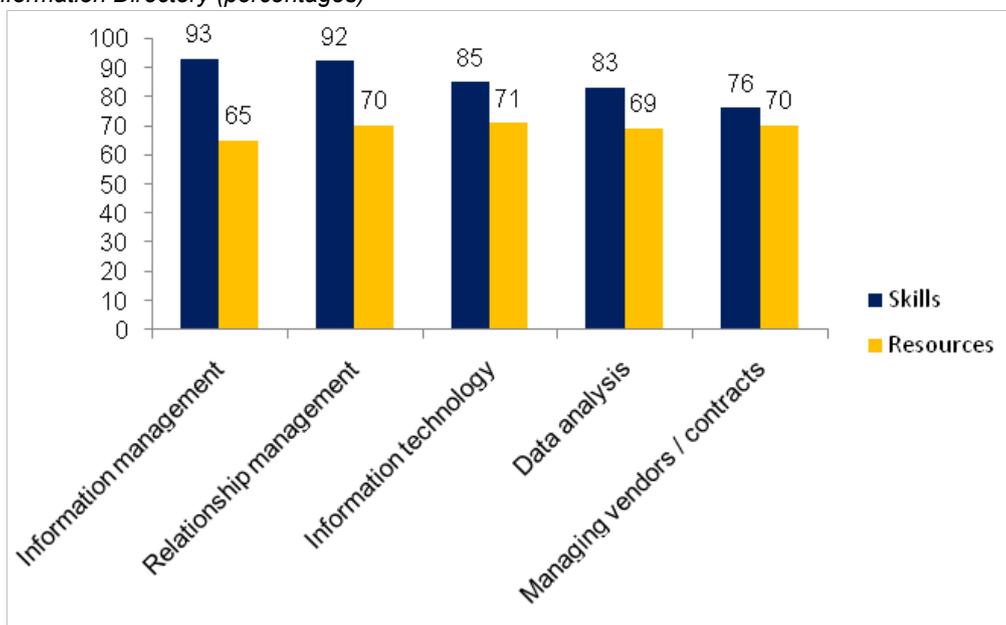
Plans to promote the Family Information Directory and the Family Information Direct Programme

The Family Information Direct programme brings together expert advice from key voluntary and private sector partners, to support mums, dads, grandparents or other adults with parental responsibility when and where they want it and in a form that suits them. The programme aims to take help to parents and families in innovative new ways, identifying unmet needs and stimulating the development of new services to meet them[30].

118 respondents highlighted in the questionnaire what plans their FIS had to promote the Family Information Directory and 106 respondents highlighted how their FIS planned to promote the Family Information Direct programme. The examples given were similar for both.

Figure 50 shows the common themes. Some of the commonly cited themes were:

- Nearly half of respondents either had no plans or plans in development to promote both the Family Information Directory and the Family Information Direct programme.
- Linking or promoting through the FIS or Local Authority website.
- Through in-house publications distributed through key partners or outreach efforts.

---

[30] *Family Information Directory*. Department for Children, Schools and Families. (see, http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/familyinformationdirect/downloads/DCSF-PAR-KH-A6-AccWEB.pdf)

Figure 50: Does FIS promote the Family Information Directory or the Family Information Direct Programme

Theme	Number promoting Family Information Directory	Number promoting Family Information Direct Programme	Examples
None/in development	54	49	"We will depend on national publicity. There are too many problems with data feeds at present for us to want to actively market locally."
Linked or promoted on FIS or Local Authority website	35	29	"We promote our local service directories… Web links provided to other directories including the ECD are including on our site We also have a team of 26 volunteers who develop the content on the FID We have web links on promotional materials and within publications"
Through in house publications distributed through key partners and outreach efforts	34	24	"FIS team have a range of FID leaflets available to enquirers, and which can also be taken to outreach events. Articles regarding the FID have appeared in various… newsletters and publications, and will continue to be published as appropriate…"
Events/visits	18	7	"We are promoting Family Services Directory and Family Information Direct by: - a programme of systematic presentations at team meetings with practitioners all over the borough, including voluntary sector organisations. - during Family Week we will be doing 'show me' sessions jointly with local libraries to promote the information available on the web - and showing and helping parents and children how to access the information."
Local advertising	16	5	"The FSD and FID was recently promoted through a Local Radio campaign which culminated in a free exclusive Saturday showing which staff attended to reinforce the message. The promotion of the FSD and FID is now fully included in all our marketing"
Promoted to key partners	13	16	"We have a regular newsletter which this edition features a centre page spread promoting the FID partners (Dad Talk, Relate for parents etc) - this goes to all childminders, childcare professionals and local partners…"
Parents are directed to after contacting call centres	5	6	"… We have links with the Council's call centre, where callers to that number are asked if they would like to find out about services for Children Young people and Families, and are re-directed to the FIDy or the FIS helpline."

Theme	Number promoting Family Information Directory	Number promoting Family Information Direct Programme	Examples
Social marketing	2	1	*"This will be done through Social Marketing predominantly linking with professionals that work with families."*

5.6   Good practice examples

75 respondents gave examples of good or innovative practice. Figure 51 summarises the examples according to theme[31]. Most frequently cited examples were in relation to:

- Partnership work (39 respondents),
- Innovative or good service examples (19 responses),
- Brokerage (18 examples),
- Outreach (15 respondents),
- Information systems/website development (13 responses),
- Ways to promote the FIS to other partners and parents (11 examples).

Please note that these examples have not been validated as "good practice". Appendix 6 displays a selection FIS respondent's self-reports of good practice.

---

[31] Groups are not mutually exclusive so totals will not add up to 75.

Figure 51: Examples of good or innovative practice

Theme	Number	Examples
Partnership work	39	*"We have been working with the Disabled Children's team and produced a Rainbow Pack - a resource for parents of children with a disability or additional need. This has been shared with the regional FISs and we have been approached by other FISs to take the concept and information and localise it."*
Innovate or good service example	19	*"… In response to unmet need we have developed an "At Home Childcare Service" that matches Childcarers registered on the VCR with families seeking childcare. Our FIS "recruits" suitable qualified and/or experienced childcare workers and supports them through VCR registration and the process of becoming self employed. There is no cost to the childcarer and we offer: Paediatric First Aid Training All registration fees Public liability insurance two full days of training in safeguarding, lone working and risk assessment A part-time co-ordinator was recruited in March 2009 and to date we have 26 At Home Childcarers registered with around another 20 pending registration."*
Brokerage	18	*"… We provide brokerage to social workers looking for short term childcare placements for children who are at risk through the sponsored daycare scheme. The FIS has only been doing this since August 2009 and the Information Officers have picked up the procedures very quickly and find placements to timescales and the satisfaction of the social workers."*
Outreach	15	*"Strengths of the FIS are the comprehensive outreach programme … FIS Officers attend approximately 30 different venues each month and try to vary this as much as possible to meet with parents and carers of children of all age ranges. This could be anything from the local time for a rhyme session at the library to a secondary school parents evening or a targeted session such as a domestic violence workshop or group for young parents…"*
Information systems/website development	13	*"We are launching our new interactive website in May with our entire range of factsheets in an easy-to-download format, including full versions where required and introduced by simple bullet-point introductions to each area of information. Within the new website there will be a function to ask any question not answered by the factsheets via a simple online form. If the question is a good one, or regularly asked, we will add it to an expanding list of FAQs that can be accessed from this section…"*
Ways to promote the FIS to other partners or parents	11	*"… We have also coordinated a multi agency marketing strategy by getting partners to agree to have an Information Kiosk in their venues, i.e Youth service, adult education, clinic's, Children Centre's offering 0-19 services, Libraries etc. This initiative will bring all these partners together to ensure the information that their user is needing is available on the Kiosk…"*

Theme	Number	Examples
The value added from a particular role	9	*"We have a Training & Development officer whose role is to cascade out information messages to front-line staff. She has developed a number of core modules - paying for childcare; fun, cheap places to go; why reading with your children matters; support for teenage mums & dads; information for dads & mums of teenagers about the careers options open to their children. She goes to existing team meetings for health visitors/social workers/outreach workers/family support workers/ housing workers and has a slot for between 15 mins to 2 hours depending on their availability. She tailors each session to the particular needs of the team."*
Focus on excellent customer service	6	*"This is a team that is passionate about customer service and is always going out of their way to help customers and go the extra mile. Brokerage is not a separate or specialist service it is something we have done for many years and is quite simply good customer service, it is nothing more than identifying customer need and working with your customer until that need is satisfied, whether that is a brief initial phone call lasting a few minutes or several calls/visits/appointments over several weeks to get the job done. This is the attitude adopted for all enquiries, not just childcare. This is also a team that is passionate about inclusion and actively fights to break down barriers within society. All parents are given the same level of service whether they are the parent of a disabled child or not and they are also given the same level of choice regarding childcare, services or other activities…"*
Events to share information	4	*"Art in the Park - engaging parents and children in creative activities FOC in the local play parks for 2 hr sessions, usually delivered over 5 weeks (2 per week) in the summer holidays covering all areas in the LA. Engages parents in play with their children Highlights the FIS and Family Support Service Involves working with partner organisations Targets hard to reach groups, like fathers and grandparents."*
Social networking/ word of mouth	3	*"The use of Facebook, Bebo and Twitter to engage with parents and families and promote the FIS service. Originally a pilot, to test the waters, Facebook and Twitter have seen the number of followers grow steadily since its launch and opportunities to provide regular snippets of useful information have also grown alongside…"*

6. Key Challenges

Based on this self-report survey of 136 FISs, we[32] believe that key challenges include:

Regional differences
There are regional differences in FIS performance. For example, 86% of FISs reported fulfilling the section 12 duty in London compared to 38% in the East of England. 71% of FISs in the East Midlands reported being effective or very effective in reaching parents/carers who are disabled compared to 17% in Yorkshire and The Humber. There are also within-region differences concerning FIS performance. This poses the question: does where you live affect the quality of service that you will receive from your FIS?

Accessibility of information and the services that FISs provide
FISs report that they could improve the accessibility of information and the services that they provide to disadvantaged groups. Providing information to and reaching out to parents/carers with disabilities and those parents/carers with children who have disabilities was highlighted as a key issue.

Responses from FISs on hours of business for FIS telephone helplines also suggest that accessibility may be a challenge. For instance, less than 15% of FISs have their telephone helplines available during weekends and less than 13% of FISs reported having telephone helplines available outside office hours during weekdays.

The timeliness of information that FISs provide may also be a challenge. For example, only 1 in 5 FISs report updating information on other services, facilities and publications on a quarterly basis.

Consulting with parents/carers about the services FISs provide
1 in 5 FISs do not use regular service user satisfaction forms or monthly/weekly enquiry handling reports to help evaluate and performance manage their service. 1 in 3 FISs do not conduct internal audits of their services.

FIS respondents highlighted consultation with disadvantaged groups to gauge the effectiveness of their services as a challenge. In particular, FISs reported that they could be more effective in consulting with disabled parents/carers, parents/carers with disabled children or children with special educational needs. As a result, it is not clear how effective FISs are at knowing whether they are reaching those parents/carers who perhaps most need the information and support provided under the section 12 duty.

Improving partnership working
Based on the evidence provided by respondents FISs tend to be more involved in service delivery and less involved strategically. Most FISs are not represented on key strategic boards and they tend to work more closely with partners that directly share their service delivery priorities. Related to this, FISs reported that disengaged partners were a key challenge to the effective implementation of the section 12 duty. For instance, they highlight that the strategic role of the Children's Trust could be strengthened, as could the local authority role in establishing a coherent strategy to ensure joined up information provision.

---

[32] In this case, "we" refers to Cordis Bright with support from the members of the FIS survey steering group.

Systems / Information Technology (IT)
FISs reported that IT and systems issues are key challenges to delivering their service, with a large number stating it was a major challenge to service delivery. That said, there are some areas of IT where FISs are more comfortable, e.g. in relation to the delivery of the Family Information Directory, where most FISs reported that they had the right resources and skills to deliver the directory.

Appendix 1 Further detail on the actions within the section 12 duty

Figure 52 shows the 7 areas of the Information Duty outlined in the statutory guidance. It shows the actions we have used to measure whether Local Authorities are meeting the duty. These are based on those outlined in *Annex 1 Summary of Actions* in the statutory guidance. These actions contain actions that local authorities "should do" and "must do" in order to fulfil the section 12 duty.

Figure 52 The elements of the statutory guidance in relation to section 12 duty and actions FISs "should" or "must" take

Element of the duty	Action areas within that element	Element of the duty	Action areas within that element
Childcare information:	Childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and SEN	**Access to information:**	Ensure key people working with children in care have access to the same information as parents
	Non-registered childcare		Reach out to and ensure information is available to disadvantaged groups
	Children's Centres		Promote information to all parents but a particular effort is made to help those who might otherwise find it difficult to access information
	Registered childcare		Ensure information is accessible to people who might otherwise have difficulty in accessing services they need
	Free entitlement to Early Years provision		Identify and meet the varying information needs of parents
Advice, assistance and brokerage:	Feedback information about gaps in childcare provision		Ensure information is available to all prospective parents and parents of children up to their 20th birthday (up to 25 for children and young people who are disabled)
	Help clients to identify specialist support sources		Ensure information is made available through a wide range of outlets
	Provide a brokerage service for parents having difficulty finding childcare that meets needs		FIS makes information available to users other than parents as appropriate
	Help clients to identify funding support sources		Ensure personal data is processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998
	Help parents reassess needs and widen childcare search	**Service delivery:**	FIS runs mystery shopping exercises to quality assure service
	Help parents understand the childcare system		FIS regularly consults with parents from disadvantaged groups to ensure service delivery is effective
Safeguarding:	Provide information and answer parents' questions relating to safeguarding		Local Authority has an established and coherent communication strategy to ensure joined-up information provision
	Ensure FIS staff are CRB checked as appropriate		Children's Trust takes the lead strategically for delivery of the information duty
Information on other services, facilities and publications:	Maintain a directory/directories of local services and facilities available to parents, and make this available in an informed manner		FIS regularly consults with parents to ensure service delivery is effective
	Provide information on national support services		FIS provides information as part of a joined up and co-ordinated offering to parents with other support services
	Provide information on other (non-childcare) services, facilities and publications		Local Authority and FIS ensure that the information duty is delivered in a way that complements other Local Authority and third sector services
Information on services for disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parents:	Ensure that services are available to and accessible by parents with disabilities		Effectiveness of the FIS is evaluated regularly
	Provide information on the provision of suitable childcare for disabled children		Information is delivered by appropriately qualified staff
	Assist parents of children with special educational needs to find information about services they need		Arrangements are in place to deal with complaints from parents about the delivery of FIS services
	Assist parents of children with disabilities to find information about services they need		

Appendix 2 Questionnaire

This appendix contains a copy of the survey sent to FIS managers. As it was conducted online using SurveyMonkey it was in a different format from the one below.

Figure 53: FIS Managers Survey

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

1. Thank you for your help

Dear FIS Manager,

The Government wants all families to have access to high quality local information and advice services and section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to provide this. Statutory guidance sets out how the section 12 duty should be implemented.

To evaluate delivery and to follow up the previous FIS evaluation (DCSF-RR082) on the section 12 duty, DCSF has appointed Cordis Bright to run an online survey of Family Information Services (FIS) Managers.

We are asking all 152 local authorities to participate. The research report will be published on the research section of the DCSF website and shared with local authorities and FIS Managers at that time.

We would like your help in participating in the survey. The survey has been developed by a steering group which includes FIS Managers and the National Association for Family Information Services.

We are aware this is a very busy time, but hope you can complete the survey to feedback on how FISs are contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people and families and to aid DCSF with future policy development.

We would like responses by 30th April, 2010. If you are not the right person to complete the survey, please either arrange for the right person to complete it, or let us know.

All reporting will be anonymous and will not identify local authorities or individual FIS Managers. Names of local authorities are collected only for analysis (for example by Government Office region) and to identify LAs to follow up with response reminders.

Please note:

• Cordis Bright will hold the data; information about individual authorities will not be shared with DCSF

• You should complete the questionnaire at one computer, so you can revisit and amend information before the final submission. We would recommend completing it in one session

• You will be asked how long the survey took to complete. After piloting it, we think it should take you around 30 minutes to complete

• If you have any questions or require support with the questionnaire please contact Steve Boxford at Cordis Bright on 020 7330 9170 or stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk

Thank you for your help in completing the questionnaire.

Barbara Mielniczek, Family Engagement Division, DCSF

Steve Boxford, Cordis Bright Consulting

2. About you

This section asks questions about your local authority. **The information you provide will be kept anonymous in any reporting that is produced.** Please also remember that at the end of this questionnaire we will ask how long it has taken you to complete. Please be as honest as possible in all

Page 1

57

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

your answers.

1. What is the name of your local authority?

2. What is your job title?

3. Who do you directly report to within the local authority?

Job title

Description of their role

Department in the
Local Authority

3. About your FIS

Please answer the following questions about your FIS which will help us understand more about the type of service and where the service is located strategically.

1. Are your FIS services managed:

○ In-house   ○ Mixture of in-house / outsourcing

○ Outsourced

If a mixture of both in-house / outsourcing please explain how this works:

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

2. Is your FIS directly involved in developing the following:

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Children & Young People's Plan	○	○	○
Connexions Partnership Plan	○	○	○
Local Strategic Partnership Plan	○	○	○
Local Area Agreement	○	○	○
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	○	○	○
Parenting and Family Support Strategy	○	○	○
Anti-bullying Strategy	○	○	○
Play Strategy	○	○	○
Disabled Children Strategy	○	○	○
Extended Services	○	○	○
Positive Activities	○	○	○
CAMHS Strategy	○	○	○
Lone Parents Strategy	○	○	○
School Admissions	○	○	○
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	○	○	○
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	○	○	○
Children's Centres	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

59

3. Is your FIS represented on the following:

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Children's Trust Board	○	○	○
Children's Centre Advisory Boards	○	○	○
Local Strategic Partnership Board	○	○	○
Local Safeguarding Children Board	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○

If other (please specify)

4. Information Duty: childcare information

FISs are expected, in accordance with the Childcare Act (2006), to provide comprehensive expert information, advice and guidance to parents on childcare and early years services as part of the information duty. This section examines how well FISs are meeting the childcare information element of the duty and explores barriers that may stand in the way.

1. How well is your local authority doing in fulfilling the childcare information element of the information duty:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Providing comprehensive information about registered childcare	○	○	○	○
Providing comprehensive information about non-registered childcare	○	○	○	○
Providing comprehensive information about Sure Start Children's Centres	○	○	○	○
Providing comprehensive information about the free entitlement to early years provision	○	○	○	○
Provides comprehensive information about childcare settings suitable for children with disabilities and special educational needs	○	○	○	○

5. Information duty: advice and assistance - brokerage service

Section 12 (5) of the Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to parents or prospective parents who use or propose to use childcare in the area of the local authority. This should be delivered through a brokerage service. Further assistance should be offered where parents do not find childcare that readily meets their needs.

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

1. How well do you think that your local authority is doing in fulfilling the assistance, advice and brokerage element of the information duty:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Providing a brokerage service for parents having difficulty in finding childcare that meets their needs	○	○	○	○
Helping parents to understand the childcare system	○	○	○	○
Helping parents to re-assess their needs and widen their childcare search	○	○	○	○
Helping clients to identify sources of funding support, i.e. specialist benefits advice	○	○	○	○
Helping clients to identify sources of specialist support, i.e. specialist childcare	○	○	○	○
Feeding back information about gaps in childcare provision, which highlights local needs and informs the degree to which LAs are meeting the duty to secure sufficient childcare	○	○	○	○

6. Information duty: safeguarding children

FISs have a key role in ensuring that parents and carers have appropriate information to help them take decisions on the suitability of childcare providers. They should ensure that parents seeking childcare have the information they need to safeguard their children.

1. How well is your local authority doing in terms of fulfilling the safeguarding element of the information duty:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Providing information and answering parents' questions relating to safeguarding in the provision of childcare and family services	○	○	○	○
Ensuring FIS staff are CRB checked as appropriate	○	○	○	○

7. Information duty: other services, facilities and publications

Parents and prospective parents should be given information about a range of services, facilities or publications that are likely to be of benefit. This section asks questions concerning this element of the information duty.

1. How well is your local authority doing in terms of the following:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Providing parents with information on other (non-childcare) services, facilities and publications which might be of benefit to them in their parenting roles	○	○	○	○
Maintaining a directory / directories of local services and facilities available to parents, and making this available to parents in an informed manner. These services include education, employment, health, leisure and parenting	○	○	○	○
Providing information on national support services	○	○	○	○

2. How closely does the FIS work with each of the following services / organisations?

	Very closely	Quite closely	Work with but not closely	Relationship under development	Do not work with at all
Children's Centres	○	○	○	○	○
Primary Schools	○	○	○	○	○
Secondary Schools	○	○	○	○	○
Extended Services	○	○	○	○	○
NHS / PCT Childcare Co-ordinators	○	○	○	○	○
Jobcentre Plus	○	○	○	○	○
Private / Voluntary / Independent Childcare Providers	○	○	○	○	○
Libraries	○	○	○	○	○
Local voluntary organisations (e.g. Women's Refuges, Alcohol Advice, Drug Advice etc.)	○	○	○	○	○
Citizens Advice Bureau	○	○	○	○	○
Local Employers	○	○	○	○	○
Youth Services (or equivalent)	○	○	○	○	○
Local Safeguarding Children Board	○	○	○	○	○
Parent Partnership Service (or equivalent)	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

If other (please specify)

8. Information duty: disabled children, children with SEN and disabled parents

This section examines the actions required to fulfil the information duty in relation to the provision of information on services for disabled children, for children with special educational needs and for disabled parents.

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

1. How well is your local authority doing concerning the following:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Assisting parents of children with disabilities to find information about the services they need	○	○	○	○
Assisting parents of children with special educational needs to find information about the services they need	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that services are available to and accessible by parents with disabilities	○	○	○	○
Providing information on the provision of suitable childcare for disabled children	○	○	○	○

9. Information duty: access to the information service

Section 12 (6) of the Childcare Act (2006) requires local authorities to be pro-active in establishing and maintaining their information service in ways that best facilitate access to it, in particular, that reach out to people who might otherwise have difficulty in taking advantage of the service. This section explores these issues.

1. How well is your local authority doing concerning the following:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
Identifying and meeting the varying information needs of parents in your area	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that information is accessible to people who might otherwise have difficulty in accessing the services they need	○	○	○	○
Reaching out and ensuring information is available to disadvantaged groups in the local area - including those commonly referred to as "hard-to-reach"	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that key people working with children in care have access to the same information as that available to parents	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that information is made available through a wide range of outlets, particularly in places frequently visited by parents, including Sure Start Children's Centres and schools	○	○	○	○
Promoting information to all parents, but a particular effort is made to help those who might otherwise find it difficult to access information	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that personal data (including storage) is processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that information is available to all prospective parents and parents of children up to their 20th birthday (up to 25 for children and young people with disabilities)	○	○	○	○
The service is primarily for parents, but the FIS makes information available to other users as appropriate	○	○	○	○

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

2. Which are the most common means clients use to find out information / contact the FIS?

	Very common	Common	Not that common	Never	Not applicable
Telephone helpline	○	○	○	○	○
Local Authority online directory of services	○	○	○	○	○
Via Family Information Directory or non Local Authority website (eg Directgov)	○	○	○	○	○
Email help service	○	○	○	○	○
Drop in / shop front	○	○	○	○	○
Other face-to-face contact for providing information	○	○	○	○	○
Outreach	○	○	○	○	○
Via intermediaries / other organisations	○	○	○	○	○
Children's Centres	○	○	○	○	○
Schools	○	○	○	○	○
SMS / Text messaging	○	○	○	○	○
Word of mouth	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

If Other (please specify)

3. How effective is your FIS in reaching the following groups of parents / carers?

	Very effective	Effective	Could improve this area of our work	Could improve this area of our work greatly
Parents / carers with disabled children	○	○	○	○
Parents / carers with children with special educational needs	○	○	○	○
Parents / carers who are disabled	○	○	○	○
Parents / carers from BME backgrounds	○	○	○	○
Parents / carers whose first language is not English	○	○	○	○
Parents / carers who are seeking employment, education or training	○	○	○	○
Lone parents / carers	○	○	○	○

64

4. What do you consider the areas that your FIS needs to improve in terms of outreach?

10. Information duty: service delivery

This section explores the actions required to fulfil service delivery elements of the information duty.

1. How well is your local authority doing concerning the following:

	Very well	Well	Not that well	Not at all well
The Children's Trust takes the lead strategically for delivery of the information duty	○	○	○	○
The FIS provides information as part of a joined up and co-ordinated offering to parents with other support services including health, education and parenting support services	○	○	○	○
The local authority has an established and coherent communication strategy to ensure a joined-up approach to provision of information for both parents and children	○	○	○	○
Information is delivered by appropriately qualified staff	○	○	○	○
The effectiveness of the FIS is evaluated regularly	○	○	○	○
The FIS regularly consults with parents to ensure service delivery is effective	○	○	○	○
The FIS regularly consults with parents from disadvantaged groups to ensure service delivery is effective	○	○	○	○
The FIS runs mystery shopping exercises to quality assure service	○	○	○	○
The local authority and FIS ensures that the information duty is delivered in a way that complements other local statutory and third sector services	○	○	○	○
Arrangements are in place to deal with complaints from parents about the delivery of FIS services	○	○	○	○

2. What information do you collect / record about contacts?

	Yes	No
Enquiry type / content	○	○
Call outcome (i.e. whether able to assist / provide required information)	○	○
Whether / what follow-up action is required	○	○
Complaints	○	○
Nature of complaint	○	○
Other	○	○

If yes to other please provide more information:

3. Do you provide / share management information with any of the following stakeholders (please tick all that apply)

☐ FIS Staff   ☐ Jobcentre Plus   ☐ NHS / PCT Childcare Co-ordinators

☐ FIS Steering Group   ☐ Local Safeguarding Children Board   ☐ Voluntary Organisations

☐ Children's Trust Board   ☐ Childcare Sufficiency Leads ☐ Extended Services

☐ Children's Centres   ☐ Parenting and Family Support Leads   ☐ Other

Other (please specify)

4. When notified by a service provider of a change to a record how quickly are records updated?

○ Within 24 hours   ○ Within a week

○ Within 48 hours   ○ Longer than a week

66

5. How regularly does the FIS update the core information held on registered childcare providers? If it varies, please select the most usual frequency.

○ Monthly   ○ Bi-annually   ○ Other

○ Quarterly   ○ Anually

Other (please specify)

[text box]

6. How regularly does the FIS update the core information held on other services and facilities? If it varies, please select the most usual frequency.

○ Monthly   ○ Bi-annually   ○ Other

○ Quarterly   ○ Annually

Other (please specify)

[text box]

7. Does your FIS collect information about National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact?

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

If yes, how is this data collected and how is it used?

[text box]

8. Which of the following methods are used to monitor the performance of the FIS?

	Yes	No
Monthly / weekly reports on enquiry handling	○	○
Regular user satisfaction survey	○	○
Feedback forms	○	○
Internal auditing	○	○
External auditing	○	○
Other	○	○

Other (please specify)

9. On average, how satisfied are FIS service users with the service they receive?

○ Very satisfied ○ Dissatisfied

○ Satisfied ○ Not at all satisfied

10. Are you currently undertaking, or planning to undertake, the Families First Award in the next 12 months?

○ Yes, we have successfully undertaken the award

○ Yes, we are planning to undertake the award (go to question 11)

○ No (go to question 12)

11. If yes, when are you (approximately) anticipating starting the award?

○ 3 months ○ 9 months

○ 6 months ○ 12+ months

12. If no, please briefly describe why you have made this decision?

Page 12

68

13. Have you had the opportunity to access support from your Government Office to help improve FIS delivery?

○ Yes   ○ No

14. If you collect performance monitoring information, how do you use it? Please give examples.

11. Website and Family Information Directory

This section asks questions about your FIS website and the Family Information Directory.

1. Is your FIS website:

○ Standalone website   ○ We do not have a website

○ Part of the local authority website   ○ Other

Other (please specify)

2. On average how many hits (this refers to the number of users accessing your website) per month does your website get? (please insert a number here)

3. Who manages the Family Information Directory?

○ FIS   ○ Other

If 'Other' please state who is responsible for the Family Information Directory?

4. Is your directory of family services available on your website?

○ Yes   ○ Other

○ No

If other (please specify)

5. Is your directory of childcare available on your website?

○ Yes   ○ Other

○ No

If other (please specify)

6. How does your FIS website link to the Family Information Directory (please tick all that apply)?

☐ The Family Information Directory is offered directly on the website

☐ The Family Information Directory is not available on our web pages

☐ There is a link to Directgov

☐ Other

☐ There is a link to other Family Information Directory channels to allow users to search for childcare and family services

Other (please specify)

7. Does your FIS have the right levels of skills in supporting the delivery of the Family Information Directory?

	Yes	No
Managing vendors / contracts	○	○
Data analysis	○	○
Information management	○	○
Relationship management (e.g. with service providers)	○	○
Information technology (IT)	○	○

8. Is your team well enough resourced to support the delivery of the Family Information Directory in the following areas?

	Yes	No
Managing vendors / contracts	○	○
Data analysis	○	○
Information management	○	○
Relationship management (e.g. with service providers)	○	○
Information technology (IT)	○	○

Page 15

9. What plans do you have to promote the Family Information Directory?

10. What plans do you have to promote the Family Information Direct programme?
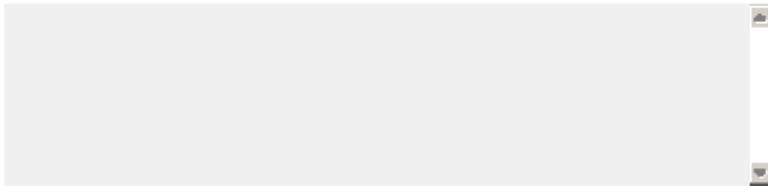
12. Telephone support

1. Does your FIS have a telephone helpline?

○ Yes ○ No

2. How is the FIS telephone helpline managed?

○ General call centre ○ Dedicated staff not in a call centre

○ Call centre with dedicated staff ○ Other

If Other (please specify)
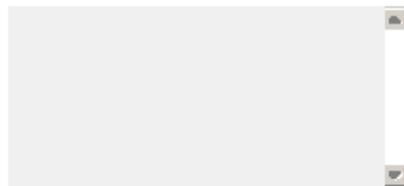
DCSF FIS Managers Survey

3. Please answer Yes/No to the days of the week your telephone helpline is available? Please also say whether on these days the service is open outside office hours (i.e. 8am - 6pm).

	Yes / No	Open outside 8am - 6pm?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

4. On average, how many calls per month does your telephone helpline receive (please insert a number here)?

5. On average, how quickly are telephone enquiries responded to?

○ Within 24 hours   ○ Within 72 hours

○ Within 48 hours   ○ Over 72 hours

13. About your Family Information Service (FIS)

Please answer the following questions about your FIS.

1. What was the total gross annual budget of your FIS in 2009-2010 (including from all sources available to run the FIS)?

2. What are the sources of funding for your FIS? Please tick all that apply.

☐ DCSF grant (e.g. ISPP)   ☐ Local authority grants

☐ Sure Start grant   ☐ Other (e.g. funding for choice advice etc.)

If other (please specify)

3. What percentage of your budget is spent on the following (please ensure your answers add up to 100%):

Staff costs (including costs of FIS manager)	
Office costs / overheads	
Marketing	
Travel & subsistence	
Other costs	

4. Will your budget increase, decrease or stay the same (in real terms) in 2010 / 2011 in comparison to 2009 / 2010?

○ Increase   ○ Stay the same   ○ Decrease

5. What is the total number of people employed (full time equivalent) in the delivery of your FIS service?

6. Please estimate the percentage amount of time spent on the following tasks by your FIS team (Please check and make sure that the total adds up to 100%)

Responding to enquiries from families	
Brokerage	
Outreach	
Information management (e.g. gathering information, updating records etc.)	
Strategic & performance management (e.g. planning, evaluation etc.)	
Family information Directory	
Other (as well as % please state what)	

7. Thinking about staffing levels will they increase or reduce in 2010 / 2011 in comparison to 2009 / 2010 (in terms of full time equivalent)?

	Increase by (number of staff):	Stay the same	Reduce by (number of staff):
They will:			

14. Overall delivery of section 12 duty

The information duty of section 12 of the Childcare Act sets out the requirements on local authorities for fulfilling the duty to provide information, advice and assistance for parents.

This section looks at how well FISs are meeting the requirements around the information duty of section 12 and what challenges, if any, they may face.

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

1. Considering your delivery of the section 12 duty as a whole, is your FIS fully meeting the requirements of the information duty?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't know

2. If there are challenges to fulfilling the information duty, please indicate to what degree the following factors are a challenge:

	Yes / No	Degree
Skills gaps		
Other priorities taking precedence		
Budget		
Disengaged partners (e.g. providers etc)		
Systems / IT issues		
Staffing levels		
Other		

If other (please specify)

15. Good practice

Thank you for your help so far. This is the last section of the questionnaire. It asks about good practice.

DCSF FIS Managers Survey

1. We would really like to hear any example of good or innovative practice in your FIS that you would like to highlight:
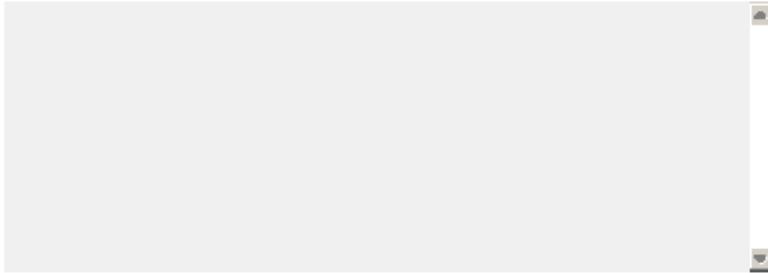
2. How long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?
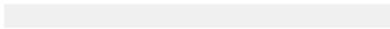
Once you click the submit button below your survey will be submitted. Thank you for all your help. Remember, your answers are **confidential and will remain anonymous.**

Appendix 3 Copy of letter to FISs

The letter below was attached to the email sent to FISs that contained the link to the survey.

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
LONDON
SW1P 3BT

Tel: 08700012345
Fax: 020 7925 6000
Email: info@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
www.dcsf.gov.uk

DCSF: FIS Managers Survey

Dear FIS Manager,

The Government wants all families to have access to high quality local information and advice services and section 12 of the Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to provide this. To evaluate delivery and to follow up the previous FIS evaluation (DCSF-RR082) on the section 12 duty, DCSF has appointed Cordis Bright to run an **online survey of Family Information Services (FIS) Managers**. We are asking all 152 local authorities to participate. The research report will be published on the research section of the DCSF website and shared with local authorities and FIS Managers at that time.

This letter is to ask you to participate in the survey. The survey has been developed by a steering group which includes FIS Managers and the National Association for Family Information Services. We are aware this is a very busy time, but hope you can complete the survey to feedback on how FISs are contributing to improving outcomes for children, young people and families and to aid DCSF with future policy development. We would like responses by **30th April, 2010**. If you are not the right person to complete the survey, please either arrange for the right person to complete it, or let us know.

All reporting will be **anonymous** and will not identify local authorities or individual FIS Managers. Local authority names are collected only for analysis (for example by Government Office region) and to identify LAs to follow up with response reminders.
The questionnaire needs to be **completed online** at: http://tinyurl.com/FISsurvey

Please note:

- Cordis Bright will hold the data; information about individual authorities will not be shared with DCSF

- It would be helpful to look at the copy of the questionnaire attached before completion

- You should complete the questionnaire at one computer, so you can revisit and amend information before the final submission. We would recommend completing it in one session

- You will be asked how long the survey took to complete. After piloting it, we think it should take you around 30 minutes to complete

- If you have any questions or require support with the questionnaire please contact Steve Boxford at Cordis Bright on 020 7330 9170 or stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk

Thank you for your help in completing the questionnaire.

Lorna Howarth
Family Engagement Division

Steve Boxford
Cordis Bright Consulting

Appendix 4 Comparing FISs that report meeting the information duty to those reporting not meeting the duty

Figure 54 provides a breakdown of FISs self-report answers by those FISs that report fulfilling the section 12 duty and those that report not fulfilling the section 12 duty.

Caution should be applied when interpreting these findings as the self-report information has not been independently verified and the small numbers involved makes percentage comparisons unreliable. Also the self report information does not take into account the size and demographic profiles of the areas which FISs operate in.

Figure 54 Comparison of FISs that report fulfilling the information duty and those that report they do not

Question	Fulfilling section 12 duty overall		Not fulfilling section 12 duty overall	
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %
What is your job title?				
FIS Manager	60	72.3	24	61.5
Other	23	27.7	15	38.5
How are FISs services managed?				
In-house	77	92.8	30	76.9
Mixture of in-house / outsourcing	3	3.6	5	12.8
Outsourced	3	3.6	4	10.3
Is your FIS involved in developing any of the following?				
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	79	96.3	34	89.5
Children's Centres	67	81.7	30	81.1
Parenting and Family Support Strategy	60	74.1	22	61.1
Extended Services	61	75.3	19	54.3
Children & Young Peoples Plan	57	69.5	21	55.3
Disabled Children Strategy	49	64.5	18	51.4
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	30	38.5	12	34.3
Positive Activities	44	57.1	17	48.6
Play Strategy	29	37.2	8	22.9
School Admissions	22	27.8	10	29.4
Local Area Agreement	19	25.3	3	9.1
Local Strategic Partnership Plan	16	20.8	6	17.6
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	16	21.3	4	12.5
Lone Parents Strategy	14	20.3	3	9.4
Anti-bullying Strategy	12	16.2	3	9.1
CAMHS Strategy	5	6.7	1	3.0
Connexions Partnership Plan	2	2.8	1	2.9
Is your FIS represented on?				
Children's Centre Advisory Boards	45	58.4	14	36.8
Children's Trust Board	31	40.3	10	26.3
Local Safeguarding Children Board	20	26.0	6	15.8
Local Strategic Partnership Board	18	24.0	6	16.2
FIS works very closely of quite closely with each of the following services/organisations?				
Children's Centres	80	96.4	36	92.3
Private/Voluntary/Independent Childcare Providers	79	96.3	34	87.2
Extended Services	67	80.7	30	76.9
Jobcentre Plus	64	80.0	23	59.0
Libraries	63	77.8	21	53.8
Parent Partnership Service or equivalent	61	73.5	20	51.3
Youth Services or equivalent	46	56.1	14	35.9
Local voluntary organisations	43	51.8	14	35.9

Question	Fulfilling section 12 duty overall		Not fulfilling section 12 duty overall	
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %
Primary Schools	33	40.2	13	33.3
NHS/PCT Childcare Co-ordinators	25	31.6	12	31.6
Local Safeguarding Children Board	31	37.3	8	20.5
Citizens Advice Bureau	27	32.5	5	12.8
Secondary Schools	25	30.1	5	12.8
Local Employers	10	12.0	6	15.4
FISs for which the following are very common or common methods clients use to contact the FIS?				
Telephone helpline	83	100.0	38	97.4
Word of mouth	80	98.8	38	97.4
Children's Centres	82	98.8	34	87.2
Outreach	77	93.9	35	92.1
Via intermediaries/other organisations	72	86.7	29	78.4
Email help service	69	84.1	28	73.7
Local Authority online directory of services	68	88.3	25	69.4
Other face-to-face contact for providing information	62	78.5	27	77.1
Schools	47	57.3	21	55.3
Via Family Information Directory or non-Local Authority website	42	56.0	19	51.4
Drop in/shop front	25	43.9	12	48.0
SMS/Text messaging	7	14.3		0.0
FISs that report they are very effective or effective at reaching the following groups of parents?				
Lone parents/carers	69	84.2	31	79.5
Parents/carers who are seeking employment education or training	67	81.7	25	64.1
Parents/carers with disabled children	58	69.9	15	38.5
Parents/carers with children with special educational needs	57	68.7	15	38.5
Parents/carers from BME backgrounds	41	50.0	15	40.5
Parents/carers whose first language is not English	36	43.9	15	38.5
Parents/carers who are disabled	32	39.0	9	24.3
FISs collecting the following information about contacts?				
Enquiry type/content	83	100.0	39	100.0
Call outcome	82	98.8	36	92.3
Complaints	79	95.2	37	97.4
Nature of complaint	79	96.3	37	97.4
Whether/what follow up action is required	75	91.5	34	87.2
Numbers of FISs who provide/share management information with the following?				
FIS Staff	79	N/A	36	N/A
Childcare Sufficiency Leads	70	N/A	32	N/A
Children's Centres	56	N/A	23	N/A
Extended Services	56	N/A	21	N/A
Parenting and Family Support Leads	50	N/A	18	N/A
Jobcentre Plus	36	N/A	17	N/A
FIS Steering Group	19	N/A	12	N/A
Children's Trust Board	20	N/A	8	N/A
Voluntary Organisations	21	N/A	6	N/A
NHS/PCT Childcare Co-ordinators	16	N/A	6	N/A
Local Safeguarding Children Board	13	N/A	5	N/A
How quickly are records updated when notified by a service provider of a change?				
Within 24 hours	59	71.1	27	69.2
Within 48 hours	19	22.9	7	17.9
Within a week	5	6.0	4	10.3
Longer than a week	0	0.0	1	2.6
How quickly does the FIS update the core information held on registered childcare providers?				
Monthly	11	13.3	3	7.9
Quarterly	32	38.6	7	18.4
Bi-annually	9	10.8	10	26.3
Annually	17	20.5	9	23.7

Question	Fulfilling section 12 duty overall		Not fulfilling section 12 duty overall	
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %
Other	14	16.9	9	23.7
How regularly does the FIS update the core information held on other services and facilities?				
Monthly	2	2.5	1	2.6
Quarterly	16	19.8	4	10.5
Bi-annually	30	37.0	13	34.2
Annually	24	29.6	16	42.1
Other	9	11.1	4	10.5
Does your FIS collect information about National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact?				
Yes	16	19.5	6	15.4
No	59	72.0	31	79.5
Don't know	7	8.5	2	5.1
FISs using the following methods to monitor performance				
Feedback forms	73	93.6	35	92.1
Regular user satisfaction survey	64	83.1	27	73.0
Monthly/weekly reports on enquiry handling	61	82.4	27	75.0
Internal auditing	51	69.9	21	56.8
External auditing	15	22.4	12	36.4
Are you currently undertaking or planning to undertake the Families First Award in the next 12 months.				
No	12	15.0	10	26.3
Yes, we are planning to undertake the award	50	62.5	27	71.1
Yes, we have successfully undertaken the award	18	22.5	1	2.6
If yes, when are you anticipating starting this award?				
3 months	27	54.0	11	42.3
6 months	12	24.0	5	19.2
9 months	4	8.0	5	19.2
12+ months	7	14.0	5	19.2
Have you had the opportunity to access support from your Government Office to help improve FIS delivery				
Yes	73	89.0	29	76.3
No	9	11.0	9	23.7
Is your FIS website…?				
Standalone website	19	23.2	9	23.1
Part of the local authority website	54	65.9	22	56.4
We do not have a website	0	0.0	1	2.6
Other	9	11.0	7	17.9
On average, how many hits per month does your website receive				
Number of hits	21,752.6	N/A	4297.4	N/A
Who manages the Family Information Directory				
FIS	75	90.4	26	68.4
Other	8	9.6	12	31.6
Is your directory of family services available on your website				
Yes	60	72.3	26	66.7
No	9	10.8	5	12.8
Other	14	16.9	8	20.5
Is your directory of childcare available on your website?				
Yes	45	54.9	18	46.2
No	23	28.0	12	30.8
How does your website link to the Family Information Directory				
There is a link to Directgov	43	N/A	21	N/A
The Family Information Directory is offered directly on the website	27	N/A	11	N/A
The Family Information Directory is not available on our webpage	9	N/A	5	N/A
There is a link to other Family Information Directory channels to allow users to search for childcare and family services	9	N/A	6	N/A
Does your FIS have the right levels of skills in supporting the delivery of the Family Information Directory?				
Information management	76	95.0	35	89.7

Question	Fulfilling section 12 duty overall		Not fulfilling section 12 duty overall	
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %
Relationship management	78	96.3	35	89.7
Information technology	72	88.9	30	78.9
Data analysis	71	88.8	29	74.4
Managing vendors/contracts	66	81.5	27	69.2
Is your team well enough resourced to support the delivery of the Family Information Directory in the following areas?				
Information technology	61	76.3	22	57.9
Relationship management	63	78.8	21	55.3
Managing vendors/contracts	61	76.3	22	57.9
Data analysis	58	73.4	23	60.5
Information management	55	68.8	21	55.3
How is the telephone helpline managed?				
General call centre	8	9.8	3	7.7
Dedicated staff not in a call centre	61	74.4	27	69.2
Call centre with dedicated staff	6	7.3	4	10.3
Other	7	8.5	5	12.8
Days of the week telephone helpline is open?				
Monday	83	100.0	37	94.9
Tuesday	83	100.0	37	94.9
Wednesday	83	100.0	37	94.9
Thursday	82	98.8	37	94.9
Friday	81	98.8	36	92.3
Saturday	7	10.6	7	21.2
Sunday	3	4.8	3	9.1
Day of the week outside office hours that telephone helpline is available				
Monday	5	6.6	6	18.2
Tuesday	6	8.1	7	20.6
Wednesday	5	6.8	6	18.2
Thursday	6	8.1	7	20.6
Friday	5	6.8	6	18.2
Saturday	1	1.6	1	3.3
Sunday	1	1.7	1	3.3
On average, how many calls per month does your telephone helpline receive				
Number of calls received	456.5	N/A	908.3	N/A
On average, how quickly are telephone enquiries responded to?				
Within 24 hours	82	98.8	34	87.2
Within 48 hours	0	0.0	2	5.1
Within 72 hours	1	1.2	3	7.7
What was the total gross annual budget of your FIS in 2009-2010?				
Amount	£300,993.89	N/A	£235,108.92	N/A
Sources of funding				
Sure Start grant	73	N/A	34	N/A
DCSF grant	45	N/A	16	N/A
Local authority grants	32	N/A	17	N/A
What percentage of budget is spent on the following				
Staff costs	N/A	67.6	N/A	72.0
Marketing	N/A	14.7	N/A	12.7
Office costs/overheads	N/A	8.5	N/A	8.4
Travel subsistence	N/A	2.2	N/A	2.6
Other	N/A	7.0	N/A	4.3
Will your budget increase, decrease or stay the same in 2010/2011 in comparison to 2009/2010?				
Decrease	23	29.9	8	21.6
Increase	6	7.8	10	27.0
Stay the same	48	62.3	19	51.4
What is the total number of people that the FIS employs?				
Average full time equivalent	7.0	N/A	6.5	N/A
Percentage amount of time spent on the following tasks by your FIS team				
Responding to enquiries from families	N/A	34.0	N/A	28.8
Information management	N/A	18.7	N/A	21.0
Outreach	N/A	16.0	N/A	17.3

Question	Fulfilling section 12 duty overall		Not fulfilling section 12 duty overall	
	Number	Percentage %	Number	Percentage %
Brokerage	N/A	9.8	N/A	11.1
Family Information Directory	N/A	8.9	N/A	12.3
Strategic performance management	N/A	9.7	N/A	7.9
Other	N/A	2.9	N/A	1.7
Will staffing levels increase, decrease or stay the same in 2010/2011 in comparison to 2009/2010?				
Increase	15	18.5	12	32.4
Stay the same	53	65.4	21	56.8
Reduce	13	16.0	4	10.8
Are the following challenges to fulfilling the Section 12 duty				
Skills gaps	25	35.2	15	41.7
Other priorities taking precedence	35	50.0	24	68.6
Budget	41	56.9	19	52.8
Disengaged partners (e.g. providers etc)	41	57.7	30	81.1
Systems / IT issues	56	77.8	27	71.1
Staffing levels	42	58.3	25	67.6
Degree to what the following factors are a challenge				
Skills gaps	22	73.3	14	77.8
Other priorities taking precedence	29	82.9	22	91.7
Budget	33	76.7	14	70.0
Disengaged partners (e.g. providers etc)	35	81.4	21	72.4
Systems / IT issues	42	75.0	19	65.5
Staffing levels	27	65.9	16	66.7

Appendix 5 Regional comparison of findings

Figure 55 shows a regional comparison of breakdown of the findings from questions in the survey. These findings should be interpreted with caution due to small numbers involved and the self-report nature of the survey. FIS self-reports have not been externally validated. Caution should also be applied because analysis does not take account variation in the demographic profiles of the FISs' LAs.

The data suggests that:

- The percentage of FISs reporting fulfilling the section 12 duty varies from around 86% in London and Yorkshire and The Humber to a 38% in the East of England
- All FISs were run in-house in East Midlands, London and North East (100%) and least likely to be run in-house in the East of England (67%)
- The East of England typically had the lowest percentage of FISs reporting being directly involved in developing various plans and strategies. For example, no FIS in the East of England was involved in:
    - Local Area Agreement
    - Local Strategic Partnership Plan
    - Lone Parents Strategy
    - Anti-bullying strategy
    - CAMHS Strategy.
- The East of England also typically had low representation on various boards. For example, only 11% of FISs were represented on the Children's Trust Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- By region, there are few clear patterns in whether FISs are "very effective" or "effective" in reaching various groups of parents / carers.
- By region, there are few clear patterns in what information FISs collect about contacts or with whom they provide/share management information with.
- By region, there are few clear patterns in how quickly records are updated when notified by a service provider or in how quickly core information on registered childcare providers is updated.
- By region, there was not large variation in use of performance monitoring methods.
- FISs in the East Midlands (43%) and the East of England (44%) were least likely to be undertaking or planning to undertake the Families First Award, in all other regions the figure exceeded 70%.
- FISs in London (71%) were least likely to report having accessed support from their Government Office to help improve FIS delivery.
- FISs in the East Midlands reported that they did not have standalone websites.
- The number of hits per month to FIS websites varies widely by region
- At least two in three FISs report managing the Family Information Directory in each region.

- Only 29% of FISs in the East Midlands have their directory of family services available on the website, over 50% of FISs in all other regions have their directory on their website
- FISs are least likely to have their directory of childcare available on the website in the East of England (29%), FISs in the South West are most likely (67%)
- There are few clear patterns in how closely FISs work with other services/organisations by region
- There are clear findings in how FIS websites are linked to the Family Information Directory
- There are no clear geographical patterns in whether FISs have the right levels of skills or enough resources to deliver the Family Information Directory
- FISs in the East of England are least likely to have a helpline run by dedicated staff not in a call centre (57%) but most likely to have a call centre with dedicated staff (29%).
- There are few geographical differences in the availability of telephone helplines: most FIS have a helpline available during weekdays but not at weekends.
- FIS in the East Midlands and North West are most likely to have a telephone helpline available outside office hours (20% of FISs have this available during weekdays) and Yorkshire and The Humber is least likely with no FIS having a helpline available outside office hours.
- FISs in the North East receive the lowest number of telephone enquiries on average with 223.3 calls per month. FISs in the North West receive the most with 988.1.
- Telephone enquiries are typically responded to within 24 hours within all regions.
- Annual budgets are lowest in the South West on average (£178,612.63) and highest in the West Midlands (£574,803.00). Again, caution should be taken in making comparisons as this does not take into account different populations of Local Authorities and different labour costs, for example.
- There are no clear differences in sources of funding by region.
- FISs in the East of England spend the lowest proportion of the budgets on staff costs (60%) and office costs (5%) but the highest on marketing (25%) and travel/subsistence (4%).
- FISs in the East of England are most likely to feel budgets will increase in 2010/11, with 43% of respondents feeling this. FISs in the North West are least likely to feel this - only 5%.
- FISs in the North East typically have lower numbers of full time equivalent staff with an average of 4.5, compared to West Midlands with the most (9.3).
- FISs in the East of England (44%) are most likely to believe staff levels will increase in 2010/11, while FISs in the South West (13%) are least likely to believe this.
- There are few clear regional patterns in what areas FISs think are challenges to fulfilling the section 12 duty. However, FISs in the North West are least likely to cite; Skills gaps (29%), Budget (38%) and Staffing levels (33%) as a challenge.

Figure 55 Regional comparison of findings

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of Local Authorities who responded from each region?																		
Total number	11		9		33		12		23		19		16		14		15	
Number that responded	9	81.8	7	77.8	31	91.3	10	83.3	22	95.7	16	84.2	15	93.8	13	92.9	13	86.7
Overall, does your FIS fulfil the section 12 duty?																		
Yes	3	37.5	4	57.1	24	85.7	5	71.4	14	70.0	7	46.7	9	60.0	5	71.4	11	84.6
What is your job title?																		
FIS Manager	7	77.8	5	71.4	23	74.2	8	80.0	12	54.5	11	68.8	12	80.0	11	84.6	7	53.8
Other	2	22.2	2	28.6	8	25.8	2	20.0	10	45.5	5	31.3	3	20.0	2	15.4	6	46.2
How are FISs services managed?																		
In-house	6	66.7	7	100.0	31	100.0	10	100.0	19	86.4	13	81.3	12	80.0	11	84.6	11	84.6
Mixture of in-house / outsourcing	2	22.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	9.1	1	6.3	2	13.3	0	0.0	1	7.7
Outsourced	1	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	2	12.5	1	6.7	2	15.4	1	7.7
Is your FIS involved in developing any of the following?																		
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	7	77.8	7	100.0	30	96.8	9	90.0	21	100.0	14	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	11	84.6
Children's Centres	6	66.7	5	71.4	25	80.6	9	100.0	20	95.2	11	78.6	13	86.7	11	84.6	8	66.7
Parenting and Family Support Strategy	7	77.8	4	57.1	22	73.3	6	66.7	14	70.0	11	78.6	7	50.0	11	84.6	8	61.5
Extended Services	4	44.4	4	66.7	21	70.0	6	66.7	17	85.0	10	71.4	9	60.0	10	76.9	8	66.7
Children & Young Peoples Plan	5	55.6	5	71.4	23	74.2	6	60.0	14	66.7	10	71.4	8	53.3	7	53.8	9	69.2
Disabled Children Strategy	5	55.6	5	71.4	16	59.3	5	55.6	12	63.2	10	71.4	8	61.5	5	41.7	9	69.2
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy	1	11.1	5	71.4	9	32.1	1	11.1	7	36.8	7	50.0	6	42.9	3	23.1	6	50.0
Positive Activities	5	55.6	4	57.1	18	62.1	3	33.3	12	66.7	8	57.1	9	69.2	5	38.5	6	50.0
Play Strategy	1	11.1	4	57.1	9	33.3	2	22.2	9	45.0	4	28.6	5	35.7	3	23.1	4	33.3
School Admissions	3	33.3	3	42.9	7	24.1	1	11.1	9	47.4	4	30.8	7	50.0	2	15.4	2	16.7
Local Area Agreement	0	0.0	1	16.7	10	37.0	2	20.0	4	21.1	3	21.4	3	23.1	1	8.3	2	16.7
Local Strategic Partnership Plan	0	0.0	2	33.3	9	32.1	1	11.1	3	15.8	2	14.3	2	15.4	3	23.1	3	25.0
Health and Wellbeing Strategy	1	11.1	1	16.7	3	11.5	1	11.1	6	31.6	2	15.4	3	23.1	0	0.0	5	41.7
Lone Parents Strategy	0	0.0	2	33.3	7	28.0	1	11.1	1	6.3	1	7.7	2	18.2	1	8.3	4	33.3

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anti-bullying Strategy	0	0.0	1	16.7	2	9.1	1	11.1	3	15.8	1	7.1	3	21.4	2	15.4	3	25.0
CAMHS Strategy	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	18.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.1	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	8.3
Connexions Partnership Plan	1	12.5	0	0.0	2	7.7	0	0.0	1	5.6	0	0.0	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Is your FIS represented on?																		
Children's Centre Advisory Boards	3	33.3	2	28.6	15	53.6	3	30.0	14	73.7	9	56.3	5	35.7	5	41.7	10	76.9
Children's Trust Board	1	11.1	3	42.9	13	44.8	4	44.4	9	45.0	6	37.5	3	21.4	3	25.0	5	41.7
Local Safeguarding Children Board	1	11.1	0	0.0	10	34.5	1	11.1	7	36.8	4	25.0	2	14.3	1	9.1	4	30.8
Local Strategic Partnership Board	0	0.0	1	14.3	8	29.6	2	22.2	6	33.3	4	25.0	1	7.7	1	8.3	3	23.1
FIS works very closely of quite closely with each of the following services/organisations?																		
Children's Centres	9	100.0	7	100.0	28	93.3	8	88.9	21	95.5	15	93.8	15	100.0	13	100.0	11	84.6
Private/Voluntary/Independent Childcare Providers	6	66.7	7	100.0	28	93.3	9	100.0	20	95.2	13	86.7	14	93.3	12	92.3	12	92.3
Extended Services	6	66.7	6	85.7	24	80.0	8	88.9	16	72.7	11	68.8	12	80.0	11	84.6	11	84.6
Jobcentre Plus	6	66.7	7	100.0	17	58.6	7	77.8	17	81.0	6	37.5	10	71.4	11	84.6	11	84.6
Libraries	5	55.6	7	100.0	22	75.9	5	55.6	18	81.8	9	60.0	8	53.3	12	92.3	6	46.2
Parent Partnership Service or equivalent	8	88.9	6	85.7	23	76.7	3	33.3	14	63.6	9	56.3	10	66.7	7	53.8	9	69.2
Youth Services or equivalent	7	77.8	3	42.9	19	65.5	3	33.3	14	63.6	6	40.0	6	40.0	4	30.8	5	38.5
Local voluntary organisations	4	44.4	5	71.4	18	60.0	2	22.2	11	50.0	6	37.5	7	46.7	5	38.5	3	23.1
Primary Schools		0.0	2	28.6	14	46.7	2	22.2	12	54.5	5	31.3	6	42.9	5	38.5	3	23.1
NHS/PCT Childcare Co-ordinators	2	22.2	3	42.9	10	34.5	1	11.1	10	45.5	3	21.4	5	35.7	2	16.7	4	36.4
Local Safeguarding Children Board	2	22.2	4	57.1	11	36.7	3	33.3	7	31.8	5	33.3	3	20.0	4	30.8	3	23.1
Citizens Advice Bureau	2	22.2	3	42.9	11	36.7	1	11.1	6	27.3	2	12.5	3	20.0	3	23.1	3	23.1
Secondary Schools	1	11.1	1	14.3	8	26.7	1	11.1	10	45.5	2	12.5	5	33.3	1	7.7	3	23.1
Local Employers	1	11.1		0.0	4	13.3		0.0	6	27.3		0.0	3	20.0	1	7.7	3	23.1
FISs for which the following are very common or common methods clients use to contact the FIS?																		
Telephone helpline	8	88.9	7	100.0	29	100.0	9	100.0	21	100.0	15	100.0	15	100.0	13	100.0	13	100.0

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Word of mouth	8	88.9	7	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	20	95.2	15	100.0	15	100.0	13	100.0	13	100.0
Children's Centres	9	100.0	7	100.0	30	100.0	7	77.8	19	90.5	14	93.3	14	93.3	12	92.3	13	100.0
Outreach	8	88.9	7	100.0	27	96.4	7	77.8	17	81.0	13	86.7	14	100.0	13	100.0	13	100.0
Via intermediaries/other organisations	7	77.8	7	100.0	26	86.7	5	62.5	18	90.0	10	66.7	11	73.3	13	100.0	11	84.6
Email help service	8	88.9	6	85.7	25	86.2	5	55.6	16	76.2	11	73.3	12	80.0	11	91.7	10	76.9
Local Authority online directory of services	5	62.5	5	71.4	24	85.7	5	71.4	20	100.0	11	78.6	9	75.0	10	83.3	9	69.2
Other face-to-face contact for providing information	7	100.0	6	85.7	23	79.3	8	88.9	14	70.0	5	38.5	13	92.9	10	83.3	8	66.7
Schools	4	44.4	2	28.6	18	60.0	3	33.3	13	61.9	7	46.7	12	85.7	9	75.0	5	38.5
Via Family Information Directory or non-Local Authority website	6	66.7	4	66.7	15	55.6	2	25.0	13	65.0	8	53.3	6	46.2	9	75.0	5	41.7
Drop in/shop front	1	20.0	3	60.0	12	54.5	5	71.4	3	20.0	5	50.0	4	44.4	5	55.6	3	60.0
SMS/Text messaging	2	40.0		0.0	5	33.3		0.0	1	7.7		0.0	1	11.1		0.0	1	9.1
FISs that are very effective or effective at reaching the following groups of parents?																		
Lone parents/carers	9	100.0	7	100.0	24	82.8	5	55.6	21	100.0	9	60.0	13	86.7	9	69.2	11	84.6
Parents/carers who are seeking employment education or training	8	88.9	7	100.0	26	89.7	6	66.7	19	90.5	8	53.3	10	66.7	8	61.5	8	61.5
Parents/carers with disabled children	4	44.4	5	71.4	19	63.3	5	55.6	13	61.9	9	60.0	8	53.3	8	61.5	10	76.9
Parents/carers with children with special educational needs	4	44.4	5	71.4	19	63.3	4	44.4	13	61.9	8	53.3	8	53.3	8	61.5	10	76.9
Parents/carers from BME backgrounds	5	55.6	3	42.9	21	70.0	2	22.2	6	30.0	5	35.7	8	53.3	5	41.7	5	38.5
Parents/carers whose first language is not English	4	44.4	5	71.4	18	60.0	2	22.2	7	33.3	5	33.3	7	46.7	4	30.8	2	16.7
Parents/carers who are disabled	1	11.1	5	71.4	15	51.7	2	22.2	8	38.1	1	7.7	5	33.3	1	7.7	5	38.5
FISs collecting the following information about contacts?																		
Enquiry type/content	9	100.0	7	100.0	29	100.0	9	100.0	21	100.0	15	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Call outcome	9	100.0	6	85.7	27	93.1	9	100.0	21	100.0	14	93.3	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0
Complaints	9	100.0	7	100.0	28	96.6	9	100.0	19	90.5	13	86.7	15	100.0	13	100.0	11	91.7
Nature of complaint	8	88.9	7	100.0	29	100.0	9	100.0	19	90.5	13	86.7	14	100.0	13	100.0	11	91.7
Whether/what follow up action is required	9	100.0	6	85.7	25	89.3	7	77.8	18	85.7	12	80.0	14	93.3	11	84.6	12	92.3
FISs who provide/share management information with the following? (Number of FISs)																		
FIS Staff	9	N/A	7	N/A	27	N/A	8	N/A	20	N/A	13	N/A	14	N/A	13	N/A	13	N/A
Childcare Sufficiency Leads	7	N/A	6	N/A	25	N/A	7	N/A	18	N/A	13	N/A	11	N/A	12	N/A	11	N/A
Children's Centres	5	N/A	7	N/A	18	N/A	8	N/A	14	N/A	11	N/A	7	N/A	8	N/A	9	N/A
Extended Services	4	N/A	6	N/A	21	N/A	6	N/A	14	N/A	9	N/A	8	N/A	7	N/A	8	N/A
Parenting and Family Support Leads	5	N/A	6	N/A	20	N/A	4	N/A	15	N/A	11	N/A	3	N/A	7	N/A	4	N/A
Jobcentre Plus	4	N/A	5	N/A	8	N/A	5	N/A	11	N/A	5	N/A	4	N/A	8	N/A	6	N/A
FIS Steering Group	2	N/A	1	N/A	8	N/A	2	N/A	8	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A
Children's Trust Board	1	N/A	0	N/A	5	N/A	1	N/A	6	N/A	4	N/A	2	N/A	5	N/A	5	N/A
Voluntary Organisations	2	N/A	2	N/A	8	N/A	0	N/A	5	N/A	5	N/A	2	N/A	2	N/A	3	N/A
NHS/PCT Childcare Co-ordinators	1	N/A	2	N/A	8	N/A	0	N/A	5	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A	1	N/A	3	N/A
Local Safeguarding Children Board	1	N/A	0	N/A	4	N/A	0	N/A	5	N/A	2	N/A	1	N/A	2	N/A	3	N/A
How quickly are records updated when notified by a service provider of a change?																		
Within 24 hours	7	77.8	5	71.4	20	69.0	2	22.2	14	66.7	14	93.3	9	60.0	11	84.6	11	84.6
Within 48 hours	2	22.2	2	28.6	5	17.2	4	44.4	6	28.6	0	0.0	4	26.7	2	15.4	2	15.4
Within a week	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	13.8	2	22.2	1	4.8	1	6.7	2	13.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Longer than a week	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
How quickly does the FIS update the core information held on registered childcare providers?																		
Monthly	0	0.0	1	14.3	7	24.1	0	0.0	3	14.3	1	7.1	3	20.0	1	8.3	0	0.0
Quarterly	2	22.2	3	42.9	12	41.4	4	44.4	5	23.8	5	35.7	1	6.7	3	25.0	5	38.5
Bi-annually	3	33.3	1	14.3	3	10.3	2	22.2	6	28.6	1	7.1	2	13.3	2	16.7	2	15.4
Annually	3	33.3	1	14.3	3	10.3	1	11.1	4	19.0	3	21.4	6	40.0	2	16.7	3	23.1
Other	1	11.1	1	14.3	4	13.8	2	22.2	3	14.3	4	28.6	3	20.0	4	33.3	3	23.1
How regularly does the FIS update the core information held on other services and facilities?																		
Monthly	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	0	0.0	2	9.5	0	0.0	1	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Quarterly	1	11.1	1	14.3	5	17.2	2	22.2	4	19.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	2	16.7	3	23.1
Bi-annually	1	11.1	4	57.1	15	51.7	3	33.3	9	42.9	2	16.7	4	28.6	1	8.3	4	30.8

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Annually	5	55.6	1	14.3	7	24.1	3	33.3	5	23.8	8	66.7	6	42.9	8	66.7	3	23.1
Other	2	22.2	1	14.3	1	3.4	1	11.1	1	4.8	1	8.3	3	21.4	1	8.3	3	23.1
Does your FIS collect information about National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact?																		
Yes	1	11.1	1	14.3	7	24.1	2	22.2	6	30.0	0	0.0	2	13.3	0	0.0	3	23.1
No	8	88.9	6	85.7	20	69.0	6	66.7	11	55.0	14	93.3	12	80.0	12	92.3	9	69.2
Don't know	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.9	1	11.1	3	15.0	1	6.7	1	6.7	1	7.7	1	7.7
FISs using the following methods to monitor performance:																		
Feedback forms	9	100.0	7	100.0	25	96.2	8	88.9	17	85.0	13	86.7	13	92.9	12	92.3	12	100.0
Regular user satisfaction survey	8	100.0	5	71.4	22	81.5	5	55.6	16	80.0	9	64.3	11	84.6	9	81.8	12	92.3
Monthly/weekly reports on enquiry handling	8	88.9	6	85.7	19	82.6	3	37.5	17	85.0	13	92.9	8	61.5	9	75.0	12	92.3
Internal auditing	7	77.8	4	57.1	16	66.7	5	55.6	12	60.0	8	57.1	7	58.3	10	83.3	7	63.6
External auditing	4	50.0	2	28.6	4	21.1	2	22.2	2	10.0	3	25.0	3	27.3	5	50.0	3	27.3
Are you currently undertaking or planning to undertake the Families First Award in the next 12 months?																		
No	5	55.6	4	57.1	6	21.4	1	11.1	1	5.0	4	26.7	1	7.1	1	7.7	1	8.3
Yes, we are planning to undertake the award	4	44.4	3	42.9	18	64.3	7	77.8	16	80.0	11	73.3	9	64.3	8	61.5	8	66.7
Yes, we have successfully undertaken the award	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	14.3	1	11.1	3	15.0	0	0.0	4	28.6	4	30.8	3	25.0
If yes, when are you anticipating starting this award?																		
3 months	1	33.3	2	66.7	9	47.4	3	50.0	11	73.3	5	41.7	4	44.4	5	62.5	2	25.0
6 months	1	33.3	1	33.3	6	31.6	2	33.3	1	6.7	3	25.0	1	11.1	0	0.0	3	37.5
9 months	1	33.3	0	0.0	2	10.5	0	0.0	1	6.7	3	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	25.0
12+ months	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	10.5	1	16.7	2	13.3	1	8.3	4	44.4	3	37.5	1	12.5
Have you had the opportunity to access support from your Government Office to help improve FIS delivery?																		
No	1	11.1	1	14.3	8	28.6	1	11.1	0	0.0	3	21.4	2	13.3	1	7.7	2	15.4
Yes	8	88.9	6	85.7	20	71.4	8	88.9	21	100.0	11	78.6	13	86.7	12	92.3	11	84.6
Is your FIS website…?																		
Standalone website	3	33.3	0	0.0	6	20.7	4	57.1	4	19.0	2	13.3	2	13.3	5	38.5	4	30.8
Part of the local authority website	4	44.4	6	85.7	22	75.9	1	14.3	14	66.7	10	66.7	8	53.3	7	53.8	8	61.5
We do not have a website	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	2	22.2	1	14.3	1	3.4	1	14.3	3	14.3	3	20.0	5	33.3	1	7.7	1	7.7

Question	East of England N	%	East Midlands N	%	London N	%	North East N	%	North West N	%	South East N	%	South West N	%	West Midlands N	%	Yorkshire & The Humber N	%
On average, how many hits per month does your website receive? (Average number of hits)																		
	4,204.3		925.0		27,983.3		2,209.8		4,995.8		6,208.1		4,871.6		2,029.9		76,443.8	
Who manages the Family Information Directory?																		
FIS	6	66.7	6	85.7	23	82.1	8	100.0	19	90.5	13	86.7	11	73.3	9	69.2	13	100.0
Other	3	33.3	1	14.3	5	17.9	0	0.0	2	9.5	2	13.3	4	26.7	4	30.8	0	0.0
Is your directory of family services available on your website?																		
Yes	8	88.9	2	28.6	21	72.4	6	75.0	16	76.2	13	86.7	10	66.7	7	53.8	10	76.9
No	0	0.0	1	14.3	3	10.3	1	12.5	5	23.8	0	0.0	1	6.7	2	15.4	1	7.7
Other	1	11.1	4	57.1	5	17.2	1	12.5	0	0.0	2	13.3	4	26.7	4	30.8	2	15.4
Is your directory of childcare available on your website?																		
Yes	2	28.6	4	44.4	15	51.7	5	62.5	7	33.3	11	73.3	10	66.7	6	50.0	8	61.5
No	1	14.3	4	44.4	7	24.1	2	25.0	11	52.4	1	6.7	3	20.0	4	33.3	2	15.4
How does your website link to the Family Information Directory?																		
There is a link to Directgov	5	N/A	4	N/A	14	N/A	1	N/A	16	N/A	6	N/A	8	N/A	7	N/A	5	N/A
The Family Information Directory is offered directly on the website	1	N/A	4	N/A	5	N/A	2	N/A	7	N/A	9	N/A	5	N/A	4	N/A	6	N/A
The Family Information Directory is not available on our webpage	2	N/A	0	N/A	5	N/A	3	N/A		N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	2	N/A
There is a link to other Family Information Directory channels to allow users to search for childcare and family services	1	N/A	0	N/A	4	N/A	0	N/A	3	N/A	3	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	2	N/A
Does your FIS have the right levels of skills in supporting the delivery of the Family Information Directory?																		
Information management	7	77.8	7	100.0	26	92.9	8	100.0	20	100.0	11	73.3	14	93.3	13	100.0	12	100.0
Relationship management	6	66.7	7	100.0	26	92.9	7	87.5	20	100.0	13	86.7	13	86.7	13	100.0	13	100.0
Information technology	7	77.8	6	85.7	23	85.2	8	100.0	19	95.0	10	66.7	13	86.7	11	84.6	11	84.6
Data analysis	7	77.8	5	71.4	22	81.5	6	75.0	19	95.0	11	73.3	12	80.0	11	84.6	12	92.3
Managing vendors/contracts	7	77.8	6	85.7	21	75.0	6	75.0	14	70.0	11	73.3	12	80.0	11	84.6	9	69.2
Is your team well enough resourced to support the delivery of the Family Information Directory in the following areas?																		

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Information technology	7	77.8	5	71.4	20	71.4	8	100.0	15	78.9	7	46.7	11	73.3	7	58.3	9	69.2
Relationship management	6	66.7	4	57.1	20	71.4	5	62.5	17	89.5	7	50.0	9	60.0	9	75.0	11	84.6
Managing vendors/contracts	6	66.7	5	71.4	20	71.4	6	75.0	14	73.7	9	60.0	11	73.3	7	58.3	10	76.9
Data analysis	6	66.7	4	57.1	19	70.4	5	62.5	16	84.2	7	46.7	10	66.7	8	66.7	11	84.6
Information management	7	77.8	5	71.4	18	64.3	4	50.0	16	84.2	5	35.7	8	53.3	8	66.7	10	76.9
How is the telephone helpline managed?																		
General call centre	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	13.8	1	12.5	3	14.3	1	6.7	3	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dedicated staff not in a call centre	4	57.1	7	77.8	21	72.4	5	62.5	15	71.4	10	66.7	9	60.0	12	92.3	11	91.7
Call centre with dedicated staff	2	28.6	1	11.1	1	3.4	2	25.0	2	9.5	1	6.7	1	6.7	0	0.0	1	8.3
Other	1	14.3	1	11.1	3	10.3	0	0.0	1	4.8	3	20.0	2	13.3	1	7.7	0	0.0
Days of the week telephone helpline is open:																		
Monday	9	100.0	7	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	20	95.2	15	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0
Tuesday	9	100.0	7	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	20	95.2	14	93.3	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0
Wednesday	9	100.0	7	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	20	95.2	15	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0
Thursday	9	100.0	7	100.0	29	100.0	8	100.0	20	95.2	15	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	12	92.3
Friday	9	100.0	7	100.0	27	93.1	8	100.0	19	95.0	15	100.0	14	93.3	13	100.0	13	100.0
Saturday	1	12.5	1	16.7	3	15.8	1	20.0	3	16.7	1	7.1	3	23.1	1	9.1	1	8.3
Sunday	1	12.5		0.0	2	11.1		0.0	2	11.8		0.0	1	7.7		0.0	1	8.3
Day of the week outside office hours that telephone helpline is available:																		
Monday	1	12.5	1	20.0	3	12.0	1	12.5	4	20.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Tuesday	1	12.5	1	20.0	4	17.4	1	12.5	4	20.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0
Wednesday	1	12.5	1	20.0	3	13.0	1	12.5	4	20.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Thursday	1	12.5	1	20.0	4	17.4	1	12.5	4	20.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0
Friday	1	12.5	1	20.0	3	13.0	1	12.5	4	20.0	1	7.7	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Saturday	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.6	0	0.0	2	11.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sunday	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.6	0	0.0	2	11.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
On average, how many calls per month does your telephone helpline receive? (Average number of calls)																		
Average calls per month		452.9		483.4		505.5		223.3		988.1		567.2		659.1		464.8		405.1
On average, how quickly are telephone enquiries responded to?																		
Within 24 hours	9	100.0	7	100.0	28	96.6	7	87.5	19	90.5	14	93.3	14	93.3	13	100.0	12	92.3
Within 48 hours	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.4	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Within 72 hours	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	9.5	0	0.0	1	6.7	0	0.0	1	7.7

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
What was the total gross annual budget of your FIS in 2009-2010? (Average)																		
Total	£213,794.44		£300,736.33		£250,313.96		£285,640.50		£217,490.33		£243,569.44		£178,612.63		£574,803.00		£317,784.09	
Sources of funding:																		
Sure Start grant	8	N/A	7	N/A	27	N/A	7	N/A	17	N/A	13	N/A	13	N/A	11	N/A	10	N/A
DCSF grant	3	N/A	4	N/A	18	N/A	0	N/A	10	N/A	10	N/A	5	N/A	6	N/A	9	N/A
Local authority grants	3	N/A	3	N/A	12	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	4	N/A	8	N/A	6	N/A	7	N/A
What percentage of budget is spent on the following?																		
Staff costs	N/A	60.3	N/A	74.9	N/A	73.1	N/A	66.2	N/A	57.7	N/A	75.1	N/A	75.0	N/A	64.1	N/A	71.9
Marketing	N/A	25.1	N/A	8.8	N/A	13.1	N/A	21.9	N/A	22.2	N/A	8.2	N/A	6.8	N/A	12.8	N/A	11.2
Office costs/overheads	N/A	5.0	N/A	11.0	N/A	8.3	N/A	10.4	N/A	8.9	N/A	9.2	N/A	10.0	N/A	7.8	N/A	5.3
Travel subsistence	N/A	4.1	N/A	3.1	N/A	1.2	N/A	1.1	N/A	2.7	N/A	1.5	N/A	3.0	N/A	3.7	N/A	1.9
Other	N/A	5.5	N/A	2.2	N/A	4.4	N/A	0.4	N/A	8.4	N/A	6.0	N/A	5.2	N/A	11.7	N/A	9.7
Will your budget increase, decrease or stay the same in 2010/2011 in comparison to 2009/2010?																		
Decrease	1	14.3	4	44.4	9	34.6	1	14.3	6	31.6	4	28.6	4	26.7	2	16.7	3	25.0
Increase	3	42.9	1	11.1	3	11.5	1	14.3	1	5.3	1	7.1	1	6.7	4	33.3	1	8.3
Stay the same	3	42.9	4	44.4	14	53.8	5	71.4	12	63.2	9	64.3	10	66.7	6	50.0	8	66.7
What is the total number of people that you employ? (Average)																		
Total full time equivalent		5.5		7.5		5.5		4.5		6.8		7.0		7.6		9.3		7.9
Percentage amount of time spent on the following tasks by your FIS team:																		
Responding to enquiries from families	N/A	49.4	N/A	38.3	N/A	30.5	N/A	24.3	N/A	30.2	N/A	29.3	N/A	28.8	N/A	30.1	N/A	40.0
Information management	N/A	10.9	N/A	18.6	N/A	18.8	N/A	35.7	N/A	18.4	N/A	16.6	N/A	19.4	N/A	19.3	N/A	23.0
Outreach	N/A	11.9	N/A	17.0	N/A	18.8	N/A	8.4	N/A	12.8	N/A	19.4	N/A	20.0	N/A	20.8	N/A	11.0
Brokerage	N/A	8.1	N/A	9.7	N/A	12.0	N/A	9.6	N/A	11.8	N/A	8.5	N/A	10.0	N/A	9.4	N/A	8.7
Family Information Directory	N/A	12.3	N/A	8.8	N/A	7.9	N/A	14.0	N/A	13.4	N/A	11.2	N/A	8.5	N/A	7.7	N/A	7.1
Strategic performance management	N/A	6.6	N/A	5.5	N/A	8.4	N/A	8.0	N/A	11.0	N/A	12.1	N/A	10.5	N/A	9.5	N/A	7.6
Other	N/A	0.9	N/A	2.2	N/A	3.5	N/A	0.0	N/A	2.4	N/A	2.9	N/A	2.8	N/A	3.2	N/A	2.6
Will staffing levels increase, decrease or stay the same in 2010/2011 in comparison to 2009/2010?																		
Increase	4	44.4	2	28.6	4	14.3	3	37.5	3	15.0	3	21.4	2	13.3	3	27.3	3	25.0
Stay the same	5	55.6	2	28.6	21	75.0	4	50.0	17	85.0	10	71.4	8	53.3	6	54.5	7	58.3
Reduce	0	0.0	3	42.9	3	10.7	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	7.1	5	33.3	2	18.2	2	16.7
Are the following challenges to fulfilling the Section 12 duty?																		
Skills gaps	4	50.0	3	42.9	14	53.8	4	57.1	5	29.4	5	41.7	4	30.8	1	9.1	5	41.7
Other priorities taking	5	62.5	3	42.9	16	61.5	4	57.1	8	44.4	6	54.5	9	75.0	6	54.5	6	54.5

Question	East of England		East Midlands		London		North East		North West		South East		South West		West Midlands		Yorkshire & The Humber	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
precedence																		
Budget	4	50.0	5	71.4	13	52.0	2	33.3	7	38.9	9	75.0	11	78.6	6	54.5	6	50.0
Disengaged partners (e.g. providers etc)	5	62.5	5	71.4	17	68.0	6	85.7	13	72.2	8	66.7	6	50.0	7	63.6	8	61.5
Systems / IT issues	5	62.5	6	85.7	20	76.9	5	71.4	15	78.9	10	83.3	10	76.9	8	72.7	10	76.9
Staffing levels	4	44.4	6	85.7	19	76.0	5	83.3	6	33.3	9	75.0	10	71.4	5	45.5	7	58.3
Degree to what the following factors are a challenge:																		
Skills gaps	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	33.3	1	20.0	1	16.7	2	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7
Other priorities taking precedence	2	50.0	3	100.0	9	56.3	3	75.0	4	50.0	2	33.3	7	77.8	3	42.9	2	33.3
Budget	1	25.0	4	100.0	8	57.1	1	33.3	6	75.0	7	77.8	9	81.8	5	71.4	2	33.3
Disengaged partners (e.g. providers etc)	3	60.0	3	75.0	10	58.8	3	42.9	4	33.3	3	37.5	3	42.9	3	37.5	5	62.5
Systems / IT issues	3	60.0	4	66.7	12	60.0	1	20.0	9	60.0	5	50.0	8	80.0	5	55.6	5	45.5
Staffing levels	2	50.0	4	80.0	10	55.6	2	40.0	4	66.7	7	77.8	7	70.0	5	83.3	3	50.0

Appendix 6 Good practice

FIS respondents were asked to self-report examples of good practice that they would like to highlight. The table below provides a selection of responses. It should be remembered that these are self-reported examples, which have not necessarily been independently evaluated or quality assured.

Good practice examples
We are launching our new interactive website in May with our entire range of factsheets in an easy-to-download format, including full versions where required and introduced by simple bullet-point introductions to each area of information. Within the new website there will be a function to ask any question not answered by the factsheets via a simple online form. If the question is a good one, or regularly asked, we will add it to an expanding list of FAQs that can be accessed from this section.
In collaboration with our extended schools and children centres we have developed an Extended School Portfolio with information about all provisions in and around the vicinity of the school/children centre. The resource has been quite useful for parents and practitioners in finding out what is in their local area.   We are also working in partnership with Children Centres to have both the local and national service directories on information portals that will be stationed in reception areas of the centres.
We have recently supported and undertaken the Brokerage for the 2 year old pilot scheme and are continuing to do this   We also held a very successful Looking for childcare event where we brought together childminders and private nurseries and children centres to promote their services to parents and prospective parents   We have continual regular contact with providers, good partnership work with other services and outside agencies.
Currently developing a tiered strategy for brokerage delivery with the more intensive support to families delivered by locality-based teams clustered around children's centres. Continuing development of integrated information management centred around the FIS Synergy childcare provider database. Integration with the children act register, and further development of an integrated team delivering outreach and information. Close links with Short Breaks and Parent Partnership Service relating to delivery and support, with FIS offering initial complex needs helpline.
Engaging stakeholders in the use of the local FISD as the main communication portal for residents to find out about services for 0-19 year olds in the borough
Being located in the same team as Extended Services has assisted with parents rooms being established in schools, contribution to parents newsletters, outreach and attendance at parents evenings and establishing a leaflet service for the schools to access.
Family Service Directory joint with two other LAs, everything in one place.   First point of contact for families to get information, including Free School Meals and grants, School admissions and transport, activities, childcare, benefits and children at risk. We deal with well over our target of 80% resolved at first point of contact, the attitude being, if we don't know we find out and call you back as soon as possible. Our customer satisfaction rates are maintained at above 93%.
We feel at our local authority the depth and quality of the childcare information we gather from our providers is extremely comprehensive.   This allows parents to be more informed at first point of contact and therefore better equipped to be able to make the right choices based on the information that we provide. This in turn leads to fewer parents re-contacting the service for extra information and promotes good customer satisfaction feedback. As we have robust systems in place to gather up-dated and supplementary information, this in turn leads to a quality service We consider this to be a vital part of supporting parents back into employment.
We work very closely with our local hospital and attend the monthly event for expectant parents where we engage with over 200 parents. We also work closely with the Green Team promoting cloth nappies and have attended clothes coffee mornings held in our local country park.

Good practice examples
Strengths of the FIS are the comprehensive outreach programme and partnership working arrangements. FIS Officers attend approximately 30 different venues each month and try to vary this as much as possible to meet with parents and carers of children of all age ranges. This could be anything from the local time for a rhyme session at the library to a secondary school parents evening or a targeted session such as a domestic violence workshop or group for young parents.   Partnership working enables families to have quick access to relevant information and the service currently has arrangements in place with Jobcentre Plus and the team that supports asylum seekers, refugees and travellers. Joint home visits take place and FIS can provide interpreter support if required.   FIS is also the contact point for parenting support and courses and a pathway has just been implemented in the borough to reflect this.
We are having 2 information officers dedicated to brokerage of the 100 flexible hours entitlement of Short Breaks based within FIS
Our FIS uses a call centre as one of its primary delivery methods. Using our local City Council Call Centre staff and providing them with appropriate training means that the relevant support and information is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through the Call Centre. Staff receive appropriate training and updates and handle a large volume of the queries. Any more complex or specialist enquiries are forwarded on to the FIS service which will then respond to those queries.
The FIS was commissioned last year to run an anti-bullying helpline for parents in response to an identified need. The anti-bullying co-ordinator provided training to front line staff and the system was rolled out in stages throughout the year. Working in partnership in this way has proved extremely successful and enquiries from parents are increasing. There have also been positive knock on effects of closer working relationships within our Safeguarding team, shared marketing opportunities and a co-funded publication for parents which has been well received.
We have been working with the Disabled Children's team and produced a Rainbow Pack - a resource for parents of children with a disability or additional need. This has been shared with the regional FISs and we have been approached by other FIS to take the concept and information and localise it.   The Structure of our FIS is innovative, as we are core members of the Multi-Agency Team approach, and we support the Team Around the Child meetings, and deliver information to MAT members who are supporting families. This has seen an increased percentage of enquiries from professionals.   We have strong links with Extended Services, and have a member of staff linked to every school and children's centre in the county. We are therefore delivering the information to parents part of the core offer. We are working on a new website for the FIS and also exploring social networking. eComms are keen to support our proposal because of our work with safeguarding We have been successful in completing the NAFIS Family First Award, and was one of the first in the region to be awarded this. We have emerging joint working with other teams and departments, which is resulting in the sharing of budgets.
We have developed an annual Family Services Fair that provides families with an opportunity to access a large number of services in one place. This year's Fair will have more than 70 services exhibiting & will be advertised widely all over the authority through schools. We have also developed multi-agency outreach events at primary schools (Family Information Events) we organise approx. two events per term and have up to 10 partner agencies attending. This includes welfare rights, housing support, childcare providers, children's centres, adult education providers, libraries etc
Early adopters of a stand-alone integrated system (the Tribal System) that enabled the CIS (then FIS) to meet the requirements of the Information Duty from a very early stage.

Via our local FSD/ECD (called Know How) we are developing a number of themes within the directory. The first two are CAMHS and 14-19 Transitions. The CAMHS theme will streamline all services which come under the CAMHS umbrella. The transitions theme has attracted additional funding to further develop and widen accessibility, for example - FAQ's and answers available in text, but also being delivered verbally by film clips featuring local people. The pages will also have a BSL signer/makatron for those who cannot access information using any other format and will also include a tickertape along the bottom, highlighting other chapters within the theme and will include widgets, again to improve accessibility. The use of Facebook, Bebo and Twitter to engage with parents and families and promote the FIS service. Originally a pilot, to test the waters, Facebook and Twitter have seen the number of followers grow steadily since its launch and opportunities to provide regular snippets of useful information have also grown alongside. Whilst Bebo did not take off, we have also since introduced a blog as a way of high-lighting and promoting specific videos on parentchannel.tv

Aiming High for Disabled Children funding has allowed the FIS to develop the range and accessibility of support service/ short breaks/ activities and childcare information to families of children and young people with disabilities. The project also includes a website, developed by children and young people with disabilities for the group, which will mirror the information available to parents but be delivered in a more child friendly format, this will also include signage and widgets to improve and broaden accessibility.

Working with Re-assurance Plus on "Down our Street" initiative. Outreach has attended market stalls in disadvantaged areas of town and also knocked on doors with other services.

Working closely with the Aiming High Manager and parents of disabled children has resulted in some factsheets about services for children with disabilities being developed which have been well received by parents and intermediaries alike.

Simple marketing to providers/ Children's Centre on how the FIS can complement their services and support sustainability.

We send targeted information fo families using health data, for example, a magazine is sent to all households with 0-11 year olds (approx. 37,000) to inform them about childcare, entitlements, support, healthy eating etc. This may be extended to 0-19.   We distribute a magazine to families with additional needs and also one to early years and childcare settings. Both magazines include information specific to the audience, from funding to activities. We send a magazine to all children moving on from year 6 to year 7 which covers transitional issues, including worries about bullying and getting to school safely. We include local children and parents, stating what they are worried about and what they are looking forward to when the move to 'big school'.   We send a personal notification to families whose children are coming up to the eligibility term for free entitlement to early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.   We work very closely with Youth Support Services and have developed a website for 13-19 year olds to promote positive activities and other issues.

Three online systems- 1) fisd, 2) what's on and 3) practitioner zone

We work with the local Registrars Office providing new parents with a pack of information when they are registering the birth.

This is a team that is passionate about customer service and is always going out of their way to help customers and go the extra mile. Brokerage is not a separate or specialist service it is something we have done for many years and is quite simply good customer service, it is nothing more than identifying customer need and working with your customer until that need is satisfied, whether that is a brief initial phone call lasting a few minutes or several calls/visits/appointments over several weeks to get the job done. This is the attitude adopted for all enquiries, not just childcare. This is also a team that is passionate about inclusion and actively fights to break down barriers within society. All parents are given the same level of service whether they are the parent of a disabled child or not and they are also given the same level of choice regarding childcare, services or other activities. The team work hard with providers in emphasising their duty under the DDA not to discriminate and segregate disabled children and work hard with parents in ensuring they are empowered to get what their child/family wants, needs, deserves and has as much right to as any other child. With a team working so hard towards an inclusive society it is particularly disappointing to see disabled children and parents treated as a separate issue within the Section 12 duty and a further emphasis on providing information on segregated provision.

Presenting the details of Children's Centre activities from the central FIS database to 42" screens within the Centres and plans to show the information in other local authority offices.

FIS's SIGN service was specifically set up to support parents of children with disabilities and learning difficulties 6 years ago and since then has gone from strength to strength with staff delivering presentations to new health authority staff.   The SIGN service is based at Children's Hospital where initial assessments are made enabling staff to get parents at the very earliest stages of their child's diagnosis and provide valuable information on benefits, funding, support groups etc. Language support can be offered by a number of information offices in the Enquiry Team in Arabic, Somali and Urdu where needed.

Disabilities officer funded by children with disabilities team. This has enhanced the work within this area and ensured commitment from other areas within the local authority due to their funding of this post.

Work to support army families - ante natal information evenings   - contact with all new Children's Centre baby registrations   - information work with local prison (and links with other local FISs where partner of prisoner is out of borough)   - brokerage with all families linked to 2 year old pilot

Planning on using Twitter to promote people looking for childcare. As well as empowering the parent with information, we can use new media to allow childcare providers to contact us (or even parents details, pending permissions) and use this as new-age form of simple but effective brokerage, where the FIS has provided the medium for communication. This way the process could become more of a 2-way process from the beginning.

The FIS is very well integrated within the local authority, i.e. the Children's Trust, with representation on relevant boards, early intervention panel meetings, and meets regularly with children's services partners across the council.   The FIS produces an FSD website which promotes services effectively to residents and practitioners. It is well used and appreciated as a complementary tool to the council's own corporate website. It is currently in development with a unique section on disabilities and SEN services for families.   In order for the FIS to provide cross-borough/nationwide searching of information and services, we provide a helpline, email, face to face, web and outreach service through which clients can expect to be signposted to the most relevant contacts in relation to their request. Although this service may not be innovative, it is a very effective way of assisting clients and is very much in line with the requirements of Section 12 of the Information Duty.

At Home Childcare Service. In response to unmet need we have developed an "At Home Childcare Service" that matches childcarers registered on the VCR with families seeking childcare. Our FIS "recruits" suitable qualified and/or experienced childcare workers and supports them through VCR registration and the process of becoming self employed. There is no cost to the childcarer and we offer: Paediatric First Aid Training, All registration fees Public liability insurance, two full days of training in safeguarding, lone working and risk assessment A part-time co-ordinator was recruited in March 2009 and to date we have 26 At Home Childcarers registered with around another 20 pending registration.

We have a dedicated Information Officer for Accessible Childcare, funded by the Childcare strand of our Aiming High for Disabled Children programme. This officer is a dedicated resource for families with disabled children, offering a brokerage service to help families find childcare which meets their needs. This involves liaising directly with providers in order to help them access training, support or equipment in order to meet the needs of disabled children.   We co-ordinate the Outreach element of the authority's 2-year-old nursery funding project which is aimed at the 15% most vulnerable families in the county. A member of the FIS team is responsible for liaising directly with the families to ensure that their wider needs are being met.

Brokerage for free nursery places for children from disadvantaged families - we are working closely with the local authority on this and the joint working is having an impact in terms of families being placed in childcare that meets their needs and providers being well informed about the project. We also have formal brokerage arrangements with drug and alcohol services. This enables clients to access childcare (paid for by the drug and alcohol services) while attending treatment appointments. Information for parents of disabled children - we produce a directory of services and this is distributed through the Children and Young People's Disability Partnership to families.

We attend a local hospital on a monthly basis to chat to pre-birth parents to let them know about the FIS.   We meet regularly with our neighbouring boroughs as managers and as a whole group on Away Days to discuss training etc and share good practice.

Good practice examples
Mobile Information Unit and good links with key partners.
Working with AHDC Parent Led Forum to provide a texting service for families with children with additional needs. JobCentreplus staff work in our office one session a week.
We feel that our partnership work is continually improving, for example:- We have set up every fortnight surgeries at the Children Specialist Services venue where, GP'S, Speech and Language Team, Portage, Social workers, Nurse's SEN team, Autism team etc all work in that building. Therefore the parents that visit are parents with very high needs. The Information and Outreach officers have coordinated with a housing Officer and a Benefits officer to be available at the sessions to go through individual parents issues. The amount of referrals that my officers receive has meant that we are having to increase the sessions on offer.   We have also coordinated a multi agency marketing strategy by getting partners to agree to have a Information Kiosk in their venues, i.e Youth service, adult education, clinic's, Children Centre's offering 0-19 services, Libraries etc. This initiative will bring all these partners together to ensure the   information that their user is needing is available on the Kiosk.   We are leading and coordinating the 2 year old pilot which has generated a huge number of 'Brokerage support. We are also leading and coordinating on the 'Safe @ Home program, which again ensure we work across all our partners to ensure they are referring families most in need of safety equipment for free.   We have ring fenced additional funding called 0-5 year old program, this program was put together from all the calls and referrals we received that fell outside of the other projects criteria, for example families that had 5 or more under 5's, Domestic violence, families who have no recourse to public funding, Families with Mental health needs,children under the CP plan etc. This funding is available to pay for childcare for at least 3 months, so it enables the Referrer to look at other alternatives or other forms of support.
Advisors now work in Localities so that it improves the relationship between the FIS and our Partners   The role of the Choice Advisor being placed in the FIS has supported the up skilling of staff in the admissions area   An advisor that is paid for by the Extended Services team has support the relationship between FIS, schools and extended schools co-ordinators   FIS advisor now based in the job centre one day a week
We are currently working with and training our library staff so that they are able to provide a more basic level information service - so if a parent has a simple enquiry about a service, the library staff can respond rather than having to re-direct them to the FIS. With regards to more complex queries then parents would be referred to the FIS. We are also purchasing a laptop, smartphone and mobile printer for the mobile library so that outreach can be delivered from that. This means that through a 3G signal staff can access the internet and therefore the online directory when they are out and about.
Children with Additional Needs (CAN) Network - We have a dedicated information officer who provides information, advice and assistance to families with a child with additional needs and maintains a database of children and young people in the borough with Additional Needs.
We have developed an extensive extended services outreach programme with schools that is exceeding expectations in terms of their engagement and contacts it generates. We are receiving far more calls from children and young people as a result of this programme. We have a dedicated outreach officer to cover this function
CIS Childcare Brokerage Service was shortlisted for National Excellence Award   CIS piloted on-line data gathering for Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.
We have a Family Agent to support the Polish community - 10 hours per week. Outreach - able to reach 5 of the 6 district council areas currently - 6 by September 2010 Working with Jobcentre Plus on brokerage and childcare tasters Brokerage to support Aiming High Working with forces families.
So that we can communicate with our front line partners and ensure that we all have the same information about new initiatives to help customers, the Family information Service produce a bulletin entitled 'Every Customer Matters'. This is a quick reference for front line practitioners and is available on web site.   We are currently producing a guide for parents of disabled children - to let them know about the services that are available to them locally.
Our Family Service Directory (1bigD) is developed & maintained with 2 neighbouring authorities which enables easy access to cross border information.

Good practice examples
We have been working very effectively with Prisoner's families We are linking to the TellUs Once Project
We have designed and use an excellent contact centre script and model for FIS enquiry that has both enthused customer service officers and made it possible to deliver high quality fulfilment to family information enquiries across 25 frontline staff.
There are some good links developing between the Childcare Brokerage Officer and the Parents Forum that is part of Aiming High for Disabled Children. The parents are being consulted on the new Family Service Directory and their comments sought in how easy it is for them to access the information they need. Their feedback will be used to try and improve the Directory further.
Our FIS Broker Service works very well coupled with funding from the local authority to help fund childcare to assist parents to enter employment or stay in work. Funding is also available to help disabled children access childcare (staffing, equipment, and training). We have an SLA with the disability team which funds a f/t information officer post, due to the success of this we have been successful in securing funding for a further 3 locality information officer posts. These posts will be 25 hours and will be based in children's centre and line managed by the FIS Manager and will be primarily working with parent of children with additional needs.
Recent borough wide partnership approach to promotion of tax credit campaign to improve benefits take up and raise the profile of tax credits. Guide to Service for children and young people with a disability or special need
The partnership with the short breaks pathfinder to develop brokerage for short break opportunities e.g. cubs or swimming club.
All childcare enquiries receive a vacancy matching service. FIS contacts providers to ensure they can match the specific needs of the client e.g. days, hours etc. and clients receive a list of providers who are interested in providing the care.
We are planning an information day to link with our careers fair in May 2010. This will involve inviting services to exhibit, i.e. the FIS, Job Centre Plus, Connexions, Parent Partnership etc to display their information. We will then invite social workers, health visitors, pre-school settings, day nurseries, extended school's heads, Children's Centre managers, call centre staff, housing and any professionals who work with children and families to come along. We do feel that there is a lot of information around that people, such as social workers, are not aware of and this would create an ideal opportunity for them gain this information and to network. This would also support FIS in our role as information providers as we can only give information that we are aware of or are told about.
The FIS has worked in partnership with the commissioner for Short Breaks, Extended Services and other voluntary agencies to produce a comprehensive guide of Short Break services for families. The FIS produces the guide twice a year to cover Easter and Summer holidays. This publication has been very well received by both professions and families
Our best practice is keeping our webpages informative and up to date. I have a team member trained to make uploads and alter text.
We have a Training & Development officer whose role is to cascade out information messages to front-line staff. She has developed a number of core modules - paying for childcare; fun, cheap places to go; why reading with your children matters; support for teenage mums & dads; information for dads & mums of teenagers about the careers options open to their children. She goes to existing team meetings for health visitors/social workers/outreach workers/family support workers/ housing workers and has a slot for between 15 mins to 2 hours depending on their availability. She tailors each session to the particular needs of the team.
We have examples included in the recently produced booklet and I have included some in the body of this questionnaire
Well used, established, drop in centre. Very approachable staff who are representative of the diverse community we serve

Good practice examples

Development and distribution of Professional Information Packs, distribution has greatly increase FIS opportunities to attend key partner meetings and raise professionals awareness of FIS role.

We use Children Centres and ESCO's to deliver Brokerage which enables the FIS to cover a greater distance with no additional staff and for the team to be supported by a larger network of staff in addition to our own headcount. This seems to be really effective especially as we are one of the larger Counties.

We have opened a small office in a shop in a local shopping centre We have our own Marketing & Promotions staff in the team Dedicated information officer for children with a disability/additional need Dedicated information officer for 13-19 age group Speaking of 7 community languages in team   Staff who concentrate on specialist areas of knowledge e.g. tax credits/benefits

We work very hard within the 13 - 19 side of the service and we have been successful in the accreditation of services dedicated to supporting young people. We have been commissioned by health to undertake a healthy lifestyle audit for the healthy weight management programme and we will be listed on the letters supporting parents where their children have been identified as overweight. I am the chair of Youth Offer which supports the development and delivery of positive activities and these are held on the FSD   We deliver Choice advice and have had fab feedback from our admissions department   We work closely with Parent Carer Council a voluntary organisation that is led by parents for disabled children for parents of disabled children where we have undertaken some very positive working.   We administer a funding stream for Real Choices which supports families remaining in work by accessing childcare where an issue with the family creates issues. We have successfully supported 120 families and have expressions of interest from 10 of them to become parent champions for us.

Although we were highlighted in the last evaluation as operating good practice I would say that this has ceased.

We were the first FIS to complete the NAFIS quality award. We were an Early Adopter Pathfinder and a fast track authority. Our evidence was of such a high quality we needed very little supplementary evidence for our portfolio and despite teething problems with being one of the first to complete we were awarded very quickly. Also a brokerage case we were involved in where we had a deaf Lithuanian woman looking for childcare and we arranged a Lithuanian sign language interpreter for her. This was a great example of what the brokerage service can achieve.

Links with Youth, Extended Services and Disabled Children's Team are very good.

We have good strategic links with our children and young people's trust which help us to be involved in planning for the future and to be recognised for the valuable service we provide. We provide brokerage to social workers looking for short term childcare placements for children who are at risk through the sponsored daycare scheme. The FIS has only been doing this since August 2009 and the Information Officers have picked up the procedures very quickly and find placements to timescales and the satisfaction of the social workers.

Our brokerage with the aid of texting our childcare providers has resulted in 100% success rate. The FIS also have managed the early learning entitlement for two year olds to access Effective Early Years provision which has resulted in a high proportion of two year old making the Seamless transition to 15 hours early education funding. 81 families have been supported to achieve employment and taking up tax credit entitlements through the CAP and Outreach. 1,000 parents have been seen at outreach events and informed of entitlements over the past year. We have 95% of the detail required within the FSD and we are 100% on top of our ECD information. We have Memorandums of Understanding between us and Children Centres, Extended Schools managers and have supported the dissemination of the Disadvantage Subsidiary. There are strong links with early Intervention and Prevention teams particularly with regard to detailing two year olds that fail to attend their allocated ten hours a week.

Offer of one to one support in agreed location for all parents dedicated desk based advisers and outreach team attendance at area meetings of other professional groups eg schools confederations presence on safeguarding communications board close relationship with contact centre including training staff and contact with 'champions' maintained by FIS team member with dedicated responsibility invited external professionals to monthly FIS meeting to inform or train e.g. CAF, benefits, safeguarding

Appendix 7 Table of figures

August 2010