

Report: **Overview of Family Information Service and Trafford Directory**

To: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

From: Sarah Butters, Early Years Manager

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**Trafford
Family
Information
Service**

1. Legislative Background

The Childcare Acts 2006 s12 and 2016 s5 place statutory duties on local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in the area and information about any other local services and support which may benefit children, young people and their families, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups. The Children and Families Act 2014 s30 requires local authorities to publish their special educational needs and disability (SEND) local offer of support and provide information about it to children, young people and their families in different ways. In Trafford, these duties are met by the Family Information Service and the online Trafford Directory.

The Care Act 2014 s4 places a duty on local authorities to provide information and advice to adults to help them make good decisions in relation to their care and support and the online element of this information duty is met by the Trafford Directory.

2. Family Information Service

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a free, universal service which has been established in Trafford for over 15 years. It is a key element of the universal early help offer for children, young people and their families, signposting them to local services, activities and organisations that can provide further support.

(a) Provision of Information

- Online through the Trafford Directory – for those families who are able to self-serve or who are working with a frontline professional who can support them to access the information.
- Telephone helpline – Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm.
- Social media – Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.
- Face to face through targeted outreach service providing information to families at community groups, events and in partnership with local services. Target groups include young parents, disabled parents, disabled children and young people, grandparents, dads, foster carers, adoptive parents, lone parents, BME families.
- Leaflets and promotional items available in key community venues such as libraries, schools, early years settings, early help hubs and through multiagency teams.
- Cascade model – promotion of the service and the directory to professionals who work with children, young people and their families.
- Childcare brokerage service offers enhanced support to families to find suitable childcare to meet their needs, including contacting providers on their behalf.

- SEND Local Offer Adviser provides extra help to families, for example through home visits, to support them to find suitable activities and access appropriate support services.

(b) Staff Team

All staff are qualified to at least Level 3 in Information, Advice and Guidance and the service has achieved the national Families First Quality Award. Trafford FIS represents the north west region on the National Association of Family Information Service (NAFIS) steering group. A Parent Champion scheme offers volunteering opportunities to support the work of the service in providing information to families.

(c) Annual Service Contacts up to 30 September 2018

- The outreach service attended 460 sessions and engaged with 7,448 people. Of these 86% were parents, 11% professionals and 3% employers.
- Office based services received 1,732 enquiries - 87% by phone, 12% by email and 1% through social media.

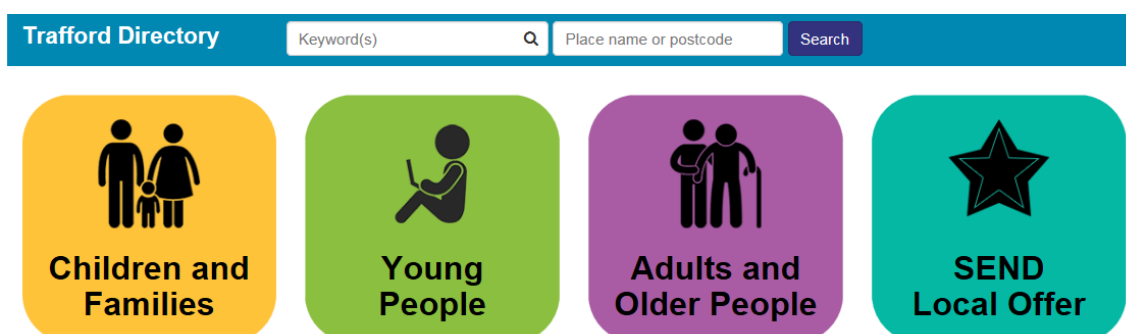
The following table shows the main reason for contact:

Main Reason for Contact	Outreach	Office Based
Childcare and early education	51%	65%
Activities and groups	29%	1%
Early help hubs and services	11%	5%
Safeguarding	0%	9%
Website query	0%	5%
SEN and disability (SEND)	3%	4%
Employment and training	2%	1%
Money matters	2%	0%
Young people	1%	0%
Other	2%	10%
Total	100%	100%

Family Information Service is a significant contributory factor to high take up levels for early education, in particular for disadvantaged 2 year old children where take up rates is one of the highest in England. The outreach team work out in communities to support families to understand the benefits of early education, what they are entitled to and help them to secure a place.

3. Trafford Directory

The Trafford Directory website is the council's single online platform to access information and advice about local activities and support.



It is an all age service directory with information about activities and services in an around Trafford and how to access them. Advice pages provide more detailed information and guidance on getting help and support. It is managed by the Family Information Service.

(a) Website Content

- Content updated daily and structured into 5 key areas - children and families; young people; adults and older people; SEND local offer; and events.
- 1,838 organisation, service and activity listings
- 544 Ofsted registered early years listings
- 240 advice and guidance pages
- 2,130 verified registered users who update content on the site, with moderation by Family Information Service.

(b) Annual Website Usage up to 30 September 2018

Measure	Whole Website		SEND Local Offer	
	Per Year	Per Month	Per Year	Per Month
No. Users	126,418	10,534	19,047	1,587
No. Page Views	570,458	47,538	73,679	6,140
No. Sessions	187,739	15,644	31,005	2,586
Average Session Length	2 minutes 10 seconds		4 minutes 17 seconds	

Over the year, the number of page views across the whole site has increased by 1.3%.

4. SEND Local Offer

Information about the services and support on offer for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is published on the Trafford Directory. The Family Information Service play a crucial role in engaging parents and young people to make sure we all work together to develop the SEND Local Offer website and the services which form part of the support.

There is a subgroup of the SEND Board which leads on SEND Communication and Engagement and has representation from parents, Trafford Parent Forum, Trafford Parent and Young People Partnership Service (PYPPS) and key partners from education, health and social care. Key workstreams of this group include developing and promoting the SEND local offer, planning events, coordinating parent and young person feedback and publishing the Link SEND newsletter. A current project is development of an easy ready Parent Guide to the SEND Graduated Approach to be made available for all parents at the point their child's needs are identified or when they start to receive SEN support in school.

A recent project was development of postcards for parents and young people to provide feedback about how involved they felt through the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan or EHC annual review process. A baseline survey was carried out with around 200 pupils in year 7 and above with an EHC Plan in both mainstream and special schools. 53% of respondents used the happy face with regards to how they found their annual review and 66% used the happy face to say they felt listened to. Progress against this baseline will be monitored through the postcard scheme.

Separate groups meet to plan and deliver specific events. For example, the annual Let's Talk SEND conference for young people is being co-produced this year by young people from Manor Academy and so all planning meetings are held at this school. Another smaller group recently worked in partnership with a media company to produce a series of short promotional videos to increase traffic to the local offer. These showcased original footage of children and young people in Trafford accessing local support services and activities.

The SEND Local Offer Adviser sits within the Family Information Service and provides extra help to families to support them to find suitable activities and access appropriate support services. This can be through home visits which may include an early help assessment. Referrals for this service are received by the Multi Agency Referral and Assessment Team (MARAT) and are triaged by the Complex Needs Social Care Team to ensure they are responded to by the appropriate service.

5. Feedback

Feedback is sought from families and partners on an ongoing basis to help improve the service delivered.

“The lady I spoke to was really helpful and patient and went the extra mile to secure holiday places for my 3 young children, giving me quality time to spend with my older disabled child. I also got information on support and help available for my disabled child which I never knew existed. This has made such a huge difference to my life and I cannot thank you enough.”

Trafford Mum of 4

‘The Family Information Service have proven an invaluable source when seeking information on local resources. Their Facebook page is a superb and well utilised source giving updates, invitations and competitions which provides in my opinion a great community feel. I look forward to the information given on a daily basis, reminders which are both timely and helpful providing accurate details in a ‘nutshell’ format! Keep up the good work!’

Trafford Parent

“The Link newsletter looks great – well done! It is packed with information and help for parents and young people”

Trafford Parent

“Huge improvements to the Trafford Directory – much easier to use. A great idea to help and guide individuals to the correct resources.”

Trafford Professional