

Wakefield District  
Families Information  
Service

**Handbook for Parents  
And  
Carers**

A one stop information, advice and support service has been developed by Wakefield Council. It brings together **Wakefield District Families Information Service**, the **Choice Advice Service** and **Wakefield Parent Partnership Service**. The new service will still be called Wakefield District Families Information Service and it will provide free impartial information and guidance on play, education and childcare services.

The service offers specialist advice, information and support for parents and carers of children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities and for parents requesting information about admissions to school.

The service has strict confidentiality and Impartiality policies.

## **Wakefield District Families Information Service**

Wakefield District Families Information Service (WDFIS) provides free, high-quality, up-to-date information to parents, carers and parents-to-be on the full range of information they might need to support them and their children right through to the child's 20th birthday. This could be information about:-

- childcare or early years services
- education and family learning
- health and well-being services
- social care and family support
- sports and recreational facilities
- youth services

## **Wakefield Parent Partnership Service (PPS)**

Wakefield Parent Partnership Service aims to make sure that parents and carers of all children with special educational needs, not only to those with a statement, have access to impartial information and guidance about the special educational needs (SEN) in Wakefield. They;

- support parents so that they are able to play an active role in their child's education,
- support parents who need help preparing for and attending meetings,
- help parents who may have problems filling in forms or writing letters and
- help resolve disagreements between parents,

the Local authority and schools.

- have links with local voluntary and support groups that may be able to help parents and carers in other ways.

Wakefield Parent Partnership Service works in partnership with parents, schools, the LA and voluntary groups, for the benefit of children with special educational needs.

## **Choice Advice Service**

The Choice Advice Service offers free and impartial information to parents and carers who are applying for a school place for their child. Help and support is available at any stage of a child's education including entry to part time nursery education, primary or secondary school. The Choice Advice Service is available to all parents and carers who need it but we aim to proactively offer support to those families who might normally find the process of applying for a school place difficult.

WDFIS keeps a wide range of information and also tells customers of other information points if necessary. WDFIS offers a prompt response to any enquiry.

## **Confidentiality**

Any person who contacts Wakefield District Families Information Service should be confident that their privacy and confidentiality will be carefully guarded at all times except where there is concern that a child may be suffering abuse and neglect, where the request is made in connection with crime and taxation, for example Tax Credits, or where childcare provision doesn't meet the required standards.

- All information obtained about families is treated as confidential.
- The service does not share information with other people or agencies unless their permission has given in advance.
- Permission must be obtained before others involved with the family are contacted
- WDFIS will not try to find information about individuals without permission
- Anyone can contact WDFIS anonymously and personal details won't be recorded
- Referrals may be accepted from schools, professionals or other agencies only if permission from individuals has been given.
- All staff complete Data Protection Training and are made aware of the confidentiality policy
- Computers in the WDFIS office are all password protected and information can only accessed by authorised staff. Paper information is kept in locked cabinets.

The complete confidentiality and privacy policy is published on the WDFIS and Wakefield Parent Partnership Service websites.

[www.wakefieldparentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldparentpartnership.org.uk)  
[www.wakefieldfis.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk)

## **Data Protection**

**WDFIS follows the 8 principles of data protection:**

We tell you what we will do with your information

We are clear about why we are collecting your information.

We will not hold more information than we need.

We take reasonable steps to ensure any personal information is accurate.

We update, remove or securely delete information if it goes out of date.

We will give you a copy of any personal information we hold about you if you ask for it.

We have procedures and systems to keep your information secure.

We will not send personal information outside of the European Economic Area.

### ***\*Exemptions***

In certain circumstances there will be exemptions to this policy, these are:

- Where there is a child protection issue.
- Where the request is made in connection with crime and taxation
- Where provision fails to meet legal or quality requirements

## **Impartiality**

It is important that parents are confident that the advice and support provided is impartial.

Wakefield District Families Information Service (WDFIS) believes impartial means:

- Providing accurate and up to date information
- Providing opportunities for everyone to express their views
- Having no vested interest in outcomes from meetings and discussions
- Not taking sides and treating everyone with respect

A key role of Wakefield District Families Information Service (WDFIS) is to help parents to become effective partners in their child's education in the choice of childcare, educational setting or school and other activities. Staff will provide information and advice that is free from bias so parents can make informed decisions and be able to state their views about their child's education.

To support this, the following statements will apply to all aspects of service delivery:

We will:	We will not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show equal respect to all individuals, organisations and their representatives.</li> <li>• Allow individuals to express their opinions.</li> <li>• Support those individuals who are unable to do so to express their views effectively.</li> <li>• Support parents taking part in negotiations and discussions with schools, organisations and other services.</li> <li>• Empower individuals to enable them to make the best choice for themselves and their children.</li> <li>• Maintain high standards of personal conduct through an honest, open and tolerant approach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take sides.</li> <li>• Support or endorse the views and opinions of any individual.</li> <li>• Represent an individual's viewpoint except to clarify the information provided.</li> <li>• Recommend any service, facility or publication over another.</li> <li>• Recommend any course of action or comment on the suitability, or lack of suitability of any service, facility or publication.</li> <li>• Offer a personal viewpoint on any of the issues being discussed.</li> </ul>

## Who is the Service for?

Wakefield District Families Information Service promotes the services it offers to all individuals.

It makes sure that people who may have difficulty taking advantage of the service can be reached. It uses information on the needs of parents within the area to identify a local picture and particularly those from the groups that find it difficult to access the service. These include groups such as:

- People from Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- Young parents
- Parents who are unemployed, on low incomes and from disadvantaged areas
- Parents of children with disabilities or special educational needs
- Parents with disabilities or learning difficulties
- Traveller families

- New arrivals, asylum seekers, refugees or people who have English as their second language

WDFIS also ensures that premises are made as accessible as possible to disabled parents. Information is made available in a range of media. Other support will be provided where needed

## **Leaflets and other information**

Wakefield District Families Information Service provides information about childcare, health and education services in a variety of media and in community languages. The information provided is impartial, comprehensive, accurate, and up-to date. The service will interpret information published by Government, schools, the LA and other bodies to make sure that service users can access the information provided.

All publications provide information based upon the law, Codes of Practice, procedures and the policies and practices of Wakefield Council, but will be impartial. They will state the rights, roles and responsibilities of service users within the processes and procedures. All information produced is high quality, easily understood and reflects the diversity of service users. All information is regularly checked to make sure it is accurate and up to date.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

An effective service regularly monitors and evaluates its impact on its users and its performance against other services. It helps the service;

- establish how well it is performing;
- identify strengths and areas for development;
- celebrate successes;
- allocate resources in the most effective way.

## **Complaints**

The service asks its customers to comment on the service that is being provided. If customers are not happy with the service they receive a leaflet explaining how to complain is available on request. All complaints received will be acknowledged in writing as soon as possible after it has been received will be thoroughly investigated by the manager of the service.

If the complaint cannot be resolved the line manager should advise the complainant of the Family Services Complaints procedure to start formal complaint procedures. The contact details of the Family Services Complaints Team are;

Family Services Complaints  
County Hall  
Bond Street  
Wakefield  
WF1 2QW  
Telephone : 01924 302840

## **Contacting Families Information Service**

Wakefield District Families Information Service (WDFIS) has a freephone contact number. The service provides individuals with impartial information, advice and support. Contact may also be made via text message, email, letter and links from its independent websites. The contact details are;

**Address:** Room 201  
County Hall  
Bond Street  
Wakefield  
WF1 2QW

**Telephone:** 0800 587 8042

**Text:** 07624 809247

**E-mail:** [fis@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:fis@wakefield.gov.uk)  
[parentpartnership@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:parentpartnership@wakefield.gov.uk)  
[choiceadvice@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@wakefield.gov.uk)

**Web:** [www.wakefieldfis.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk)  
[www.wakefieldparentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldparentpartnership.org.uk)

All callers will be treated with courtesy and sensitivity, and the call will be dealt within the most effective and appropriate way. If needed a call will be transferred to experienced and appropriately trained staff who will provide more detailed advice and information. Return contact will be made within 1 working day.