



Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd  
Family Information Service



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Choosing Childcare



# What is a Family Information Service?

The Family Information Service (FIS) is a free, impartial information and guidance service for parents/carers of children and young people, and the professionals provided by your local authority who work with them. They can provide information, assistance and advice to help you find:

- Childcare
- Children and young people's activities
- Family Support Organisations

The FIS can also provide information on:

- Help with the costs of childcare
- Careers in childcare
- Childcare training

The FIS is your ideal starting point if you have any questions regarding support for your family. Your local FIS will be able to provide you with information tailored to your individual needs. Please contact them directly or visit your local FIS website for further information.

## How to contact your FIS?

There is a FIS in every local authority and you can find their contact details on pages 12-14.

The FIS work closely with childcare providers in your area to provide you with accurate and up to date information about what they offer. This booklet takes you through the things you need to consider when choosing childcare and the options that are available to you.



# Sections:

1.	How to choose a childcare service	4
2.	Help with the costs of childcare	6
3.	Types of childcare	7
4.	National Minimum Standards	9
5.	Childcare for all	10
6.	Useful links	11



# 1. How to choose a childcare service

- a) Contact as many childcare providers as possible before deciding which one is best for you and your child, and check with your local FIS which providers are registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) – please see section 3.
- b) The following questions may be helpful in considering what you are looking for in a childcare service:
- Is it welcoming?
  - Are the premises clean?
  - Where there is an outside play area, is it safe and secure?
  - Do the children appear to be busy, happy and at ease?
  - Are the hours when childcare is available suitable for your needs?
  - Are meals, snacks, and nappies provided?
  - Are healthy food options available?
  - Will there be good opportunities for your child to exercise and rest?
  - What is the cost?
  - Do they have places available for your child?

For more questions to ask, contact your local FIS or visit their website.

See section 6 (pages 12-14) for FIS contact details.

- c) Once you have found a childcare service you are happy with, try to have a settling in period with a few short visits for your child and you. This will help you both feel more confident and at ease.



# United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under the age of 18. It recognises not only their basic rights, but also gives additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society. All those caring for and working with children and young people have a role in enabling their rights and helping them reach their potential as individuals. Together, all the UNCRC articles contribute to ensuring that children are kept safe, nurtured and treated with respect. The UNCRC also recognises and supports parents' role in bringing up their children.



## 2. Help with the costs of childcare

Childcare may seem costly, but did you know families may be entitled or eligible for financial help such as:

1. Tax Credits/Universal Credit;
2. Employer-supported childcare, including voucher schemes/ Tax-Free Childcare scheme;
3. Local assisted places and helping hands schemes;
4. Free part-time early education for 3- and 4-year-olds;
5. Flying Start;
6. Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) or Communities for Work if you want help returning to work or training; or
7. Support for Higher and Further Education students.
8. The Childcare Offer for Wales which will be tested in specific areas of some local authorities from September 2017.

Your FIS can provide you with further details and provide you with information about work life balance, Jobcentre Plus and other local programmes.

*For more detailed information please read the leaflet:  
Support for parents and financial help with childcare costs.*



## 3. Types of childcare (registered and unregistered)

Anyone who provides childcare for children under the age of 12 for more than 2 hours a day for reward must be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CССИW).

This section provides a brief description of the types of registered and unregistered childcare provision that are available to you. For more details contact your local FIS (contact details on pages 12-14).

### Registered

#### Childminders

Childminders are childcare providers working in their own homes who may offer full and part time care, including before and after school, wrap around provision, (childcare that schools provide outside of normal school hours, such as breakfast clubs or after school) holiday, evening, overnight or weekend care.

#### Day Care:

Day care providers may offer full or part time care, wrap around provision, out of school care and holiday provision. They include:

- Day nurseries
- Children's centres
- Family centres
- Playgroups
- Cylchoedd Meithrin
- Out of School Childcare Clubs
- Crèches
- Play schemes
- Open access play



## Part-time early education for three- and four-year-olds:

Your child is entitled to a minimum of 10 hours of free, part-time, good-quality Foundation Phase education in a school, or an early education setting approved by your local authority, in the term following their third birthday.

## Unregistered

Some childcare options do not have to be registered with CSSIW. These are generally where sessions are run for less than 2 hours a day or where the provider does not receive reward for the childcare, although there are further exceptions. Unregistered childcare can also include:

- au pair services
- babysitting or care provided by friends and family members

If you are in any doubt and wish to check whether registration is required, contact CSSIW for advice. If you use childcare which is not registered or approved you will not be able to claim financial assistance from the UK Government where you would otherwise be eligible.

## Childcare at home Voluntary Approval Scheme, Wales:

Anyone, other than a close relative who provides childcare in the child's home may apply to become an approved childcare provider, as long as they:

- are aged 18 or over;
- have a relevant qualification; for advice please contact CSSIW ([www.cssiw.org.uk/](http://www.cssiw.org.uk/));
- have a relevant first aid certificate; and
- have received clearance from an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.



Call your local FIS for more information on the approval of childcare workers in your home and how to access any related financial support from the UK Government you may be eligible to receive.

*Please note the Childcare at home Voluntary Approval Scheme in Wales is an approved scheme.*

*Although it does not include registration, you may be eligible to claim financial support from the UK Government, subject to your specific circumstances and relevant scheme criteria.*

## 4. National Minimum Standards

All settings which are regulated by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) need to comply with National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care. You can access the document by visiting the link below:

<http://cssiw.org.uk/docs/cssiw/publications/160411regchildcareen.pdf>



## 5. Childcare for All

*Your local Family Information Service can support you to find childcare in your area for your child's needs.*

### Individual needs

It will also have information about how to access help to cover childcare costs. Referral schemes across Wales help children with additional needs to attend playgroups/cylchoedd meithrin and other types of childcare with other children of the same age.

### Accessibility

All childcare providers must meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments to include disabled children. They must not treat a disabled child less favourably than a non-disabled child because of any impairment or health condition. You can phone the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) on 0808 800 0082 for advice or information.



# 6. Useful Links

## Family Information Service – Local Authority contact details

Anglesey	01248 725888 <a href="mailto:fis@anglesey.gov.uk">fis@anglesey.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/community/children-and-families/family-information-service/">www.anglesey.gov.uk/community/children-and-families/family-information-service/</a>
Blaenau Gwent	08000 32 33 39 (freephone from a landline) <a href="mailto:fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk">fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/support-for-children-families/family-information-service/">www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/support-for-children-families/family-information-service/</a>
Bridgend	01656 643643 <a href="mailto:familyinfo@bridgend.gov.uk">familyinfo@bridgend.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.Bridgend.gov.uk/FIS">www.Bridgend.gov.uk/FIS</a>
Caerphilly	01443 863232 <a href="mailto:fis@caerphilly.gov.uk">fis@caerphilly.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.your.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis/">www.your.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis/</a>
Cardiff	029 2035 1700 <a href="mailto:fis@cardiff.gov.uk">fis@cardiff.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.cardiff-fis.info/">www.cardiff-fis.info/</a>
Carmarthenshire	01267 246555 <a href="mailto:childreninfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">childreninfo@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk">www.fis.carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Ceredigion	01545 574187 <a href="mailto:fis@ceredigion.gov.uk">fis@ceredigion.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.fis.ceredigion.gov.uk/">www.fis.ceredigion.gov.uk/</a>
Conwy	01492 577788 / 577850 <a href="mailto:plant.children@conwy.gov.uk">plant.children@conwy.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.conwyfamilyinformation.co.uk">www.conwyfamilyinformation.co.uk</a>



Denbighshire	01745815891 <a href="mailto:fis@denbighshire.gov.uk">fis@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/community-and-living/childcare-and-parenting/childcare-and-parenting.aspx">www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/community-and-living/childcare-and-parenting/childcare-and-parenting.aspx</a>
Flintshire	01352 703500 <a href="mailto:fisf@flintshire.gov.uk">fisf@flintshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.fisflintshire.co.uk">www.fisflintshire.co.uk</a>
Gwynedd	01286 675570 Text for information 07920083909 <a href="mailto:Gwynedd-Ni@gwynedd.llyw.cymru">Gwynedd-Ni@gwynedd.llyw.cymru</a> <a href="http://www.gwynedd-ni.org.uk">www.gwynedd-ni.org.uk</a>
Merthyr Tydfil	01685 727400 <a href="mailto:fis@merthyr.gov.uk">fis@merthyr.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.merthyrfis.org">www.merthyrfis.org</a>
Monmouthshire	01633 644527 <a href="mailto:info@monfis.org.uk">info@monfis.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.monfis.org.uk">www.monfis.org.uk</a>
Neath Port Talbot	01639 873018 <a href="mailto:fis@npt.gov.uk">fis@npt.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.nptfamily.com">www.nptfamily.com</a>
Newport	0800 328 84 83 / 01633840669 <a href="mailto:family.informationsservice@newport.gov.uk">family.informationsservice@newport.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.newport.gov.uk/fis">www.newport.gov.uk/fis</a>
Pembrokeshire	01437 770014 <a href="mailto:fis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk">fis@pembrokeshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk">www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk</a>
Powys	01597 827666 <a href="mailto:fis@powys.gov.uk">fis@powys.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.powys.gov.uk/fis">www.powys.gov.uk/fis</a>



Rhondda Cynon Taf	0800 180 4151 FREEPHONE from landlines 0300 111 4151 FREEPHONE from mobiles <a href="mailto:fis@rctcbc.gov.uk">fis@rctcbc.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ChildrenandFamilies/ParentandFamilySupport/Financialsupportforfamilies/FamilyInformationService/WhatistheFamilyInformationService.aspx">www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ChildrenandFamilies/ ParentandFamilySupport/Financialsupportforfamilies/FamilyIn- formationService/WhatistheFamilyInformationService.aspx</a>
Swansea	01792 517222 <a href="mailto:fis@swansea.gov.uk">fis@swansea.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.swansea.gov.uk/fis">www.swansea.gov.uk/fis</a>
Torfaen	FREEPHONE 0800 0196330 <a href="mailto:fis@torfaen.gov.uk">fis@torfaen.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.torfaenfis.org.uk">www.torfaenfis.org.uk</a>
Vale of Glamorgan	01446 704 704 <a href="mailto:FIS@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk">FIS@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/fis">www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/fis</a>
Wrexham	Tel: 01978 292094 <a href="mailto:fis@wrexham.gov.uk">fis@wrexham.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/fis">www.wrexham.gov.uk/fis</a>

## Welsh Government

[http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/  
children-and-young-people/parenting-support-guidance/help/  
familyinformationservices/?lang=en](http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/parenting-support-guidance/help/familyinformationservices/?lang=en)

The official website for the Welsh Government containing national information on Family Information Services (FIS).

## Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

[www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk)

Tel: 0300 7900 126

Email: [cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cssiw@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

The role of CSSIW is to make sure that care services meet standards that people have a right to expect. It is an operationally independent part of the Welsh Government.

**The following are just a number of organisations that are able to provide information, help and support. For further contacts, please contact your local FIS.**

### Disability Service Centre

[www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline](http://www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline)

### DWP Disability and Health Benefits

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a tax-free benefit for disabled people who need help with mobility or care costs. You can claim for DLA if you are under 16, or were born after 8 April 1948 and you make a claim in the same year you stopped receiving DLA.

#### Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for Children –

Telephone: 0345 712 356 (DLA can only be claimed for children under 16 – anyone over 16 must apply for Personal Independence Payment)

#### Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for Adults –

Telephone: 0345 605 6055 (Your DLA will continue if you were born on or before 8 April 1948)



## Personal Independence Payment (PIP) –

Telephone 0345 850 3322

## Attendance Allowance –

Telephone: 0345 605 6055

## Jobcentre Plus

[www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus](http://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus)

Telephone:

0345 604 3719 (English)

0345 604 4248 (Welsh)

Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions. It provides services that support people of working age from welfare into work, and helps employers to fill their vacancies.

## Tax Credits

[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/tax-credits)

Tax Credit Helpline

Telephone: 0345 300 3900

A link to the UK government site which explains tax credits and has a calculator to help you work out your entitlement.

## Universal Credit

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

Universal Credit helpline

Telephone: 0345 600 0723

Welsh language (make a claim): 0800 012 1888

Welsh language (report changes): 0345 600 3018

Textphone: 0345 600 0743



## **UK Government Tax-Free Childcare scheme**

[www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know)  
<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Links to UK government sites which provide details of the Tax-Free Childcare scheme and other help that is available to support parents to pay for childcare. You can access a calculator to help work out what will suit your family's needs.

## **Citizen Advice Bureau**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

The Citizens Advice service offers information and advice through face-to-face, phone and email services, and online. They deal with any issues including benefits, debt and housing.

## **Contact a Family**

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)  
0808 808 3555

Contact a Family provides information, advice and support to families of disabled children.

## **Mudiad Meithrin**

[www.meithrin.co.uk/](http://www.meithrin.co.uk/)  
01970 639639

Mudiad Meithrin aims to give every young child in Wales the opportunity to benefit from early years experiences through the medium of the Welsh language.



## **Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY Cymru)**

[www.pacey.org.uk](http://www.pacey.org.uk)

0845 880 1299 (Wales)

PACEY is the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. It is a standard-setting organisation which promotes best practice and supports childcare professionals to deliver high standards of care and learning.

## **National Day Nurseries Association**

[www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

01824 707823 (Wales office)

NDNA is the national charity and membership association for nurseries. It provides information, support, advice and resources for nurseries so that they can provide the best possible care to young children.

## **Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs**

[www.clybiauplantcymru.org](http://www.clybiauplantcymru.org)

029 2074 1000

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs promotes and supports high quality, affordable accessible out of school childcare.

## **Wales Pre-school Providers Association (Wales PPA)**

[www.walesppa.org](http://www.walesppa.org)

029 2045 1242

The Wales Pre-school Providers Association (Wales PPA) provides information, resources and support to parents and early years settings to enhance the development and education of children.



## **Play Wales**

[www.playwales.org.uk](http://www.playwales.org.uk)

029 2048 6050

Promotes high quality play provision, and provides support for all aspects of staffed play work, playground development, play work education and training.

## **Student Finance Wales**

[www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/)

0300 200 4050

All 22 local authorities in Wales have transferred their student finance responsibility to Student Finance Wales.

Information correct at time of publication.

