How can the number of families supported and family outcomes be monitored?

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and SDA/GIDE are funded by DFE to provide a free online tool (called the Information System) to track all families working with family intervention services. All areas that have a family intervention service are able to input data on the Information System about the families they work with. This allows services to see how families’ lives have improved between the support plan being put in place and when they exit at around 12 months later. Local areas can also access the following outputs from the Information System:

- Online summary statistics of all family intervention services
- Online summary statistics for each individual service
- National and local level data is published as official statistics every September to enable areas to compare their performance against others. It is vital to use the service if you want to see your area included in the report. See: [http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000956/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000956/index.shtml)
- An annual evaluation report providing much more detailed analysis of all family intervention services and the families they work with. We know that some LAs have used this information to secure additional funding for their family intervention service. The last report was published in November 2010 and is available here: [https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR044.pdf](https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DFE-RR044.pdf)

What data does the Information System collect?
NatCen and GIDE are currently modernising the Information System so that it will be quicker and easier to use and will provide more helpful summary statistics. As a national dataset it provides you with robust evidence on your service or area’s effectiveness in comparison with other areas and nationally, and to support your assessment of good practice – useful, for example, in accountability to DCSs, commissioners or scrutiny.

What support is available for using the Information System?
NatCen runs a helpline and offers email support to all users of the Information System. Family intervention staff tend to contact the helpline for advice about how to use the IS, technical issues such as passwords, help with login problems, data entry errors and other queries. DfE is looking into setting up a much simpler Information System from April 2012.

**Contact details:**
NatCen’s Helpline: fipsinformation@natcen.ac.uk 0800 652 3751

**DFE Contact Details**
Caroline Prichard, caroline.prichard@education.gsi.gov.uk 0207 783 8109.
How will local and national progress be reported?

Information collected by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) from April 2010 onwards is now being used to provide local and national measures of the progress made in meeting the PM’s ambition to try to turn around the most troubled families and implementing Community Budgets for families with multiple problems. DfE currently publishes this information as Official Statistics every September.

DfE publishes the summary findings from this analysis as Official Statistics every September. We will continue to do this in order that we can track national and local progress towards meeting the PM’s ambition to try to turn around the most troubled families in the country.

Whilst there is no requirement to provide this information:

- most local authorities and family intervention projects or services currently do so
- areas which do not return this data will appear as a nil return in DfE’s annual official statistics
- it is the only national data set that measures the impact of family intervention services at national and local level. Using a national dataset to demonstrate good practice and performance in your area stresses consistency and credibility of evidence

The system is currently being adapted, in consultation with a group of local areas, to make it simpler and quicker to use and also to provide more useful summary statistics. A streamlined and simplified version will operate from September 2011. This will cut down the time needed to input the data significantly, and an improved facility to generate local reports. From April 2012, the system will be radically simplified and allow data collection across the full range of family services.

Please do get in contact if you have any questions/suggestions:

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