

Committee	Dated:
Grand Committee – Community and Children’s Services	13/01/2017
Subject: Families First Quality Award	Public
Report of: Neal Hounsell, Acting Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Pip Hesketh, Service Manager, Education and Early Years	

Summary

This report provides members with good news about the award of the Families First Quality Award, which was secured by the Education and Early Years Service.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Families First Quality Award is a national quality assurance process and quality improvement tool designed to help keep families at the heart of local authority practice. It also helps local authorities to provide gold standard information. The Families First Quality Award is for children’s centres, local authority Family Information Services and schools.
2. The award was first developed by the National Association of Family Information Services (NAFIS) in conjunction with the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2006 as a tool to measure the effectiveness of a local authority Family Information Service (FIS) and demonstrate how it meets statutory obligations in the Childcare Act 2006 (Information Duty Section 12). With the help of Suffolk County Council, this was later expanded to include schools. Other iterations of the award focus on children’s centres, and meeting the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2014.

Current Position

3. The Families First Quality Award recognises organisations that demonstrate excellence in providing information, advice and assistance to local families. The

various standards that make up the award are designed so that local commissioning or organisational requirements can easily be evidenced. The Families First Quality Award is available for:

- Children's Centres
 - local authority Family Information Services (including SEND standards)
 - schools
 - SEND for schools.
4. The City of London's Family and Young People's Information Service (FYi), part of the Education and Early Years Service, successfully completed accreditation for the Family and Childcare Trust's Families First Quality Award in November 2016. This is the second time the City of London's FYi team has gained the award, which lasts for three years before reaccreditation is required. To gain accreditation:
 5. FYi services were required to offer evidence against quality standards that now also include providing information for families with children who have SEND. The City of London FYi team is responsible for the published 'Local Offer' detailing information about services for families with SEND. This award is valuable recognition of what has been achieved so far in this important area of work.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

6. This is consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan objectives and, in particular, the work focuses on closing the gap in outcomes between children. The award also provides evidence to support the City of London in its future SEND inspection.

Conclusion

7. The City of London plays a vital role in providing families with clear, accurate, comprehensive and accessible information about the services, support and opportunities available to them. This award is important recognition of the quality of our services.

Appendices

Award letter from Family and Childcare Trust

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