

## **THE LOCAL OFFER**

### **Background:**

All local authorities are required by Sections 27,28,30,32,41,49 and 51-57 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010 to publish a Local Offer setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health, and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled including those who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it, and
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents and carers, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its' development and review.

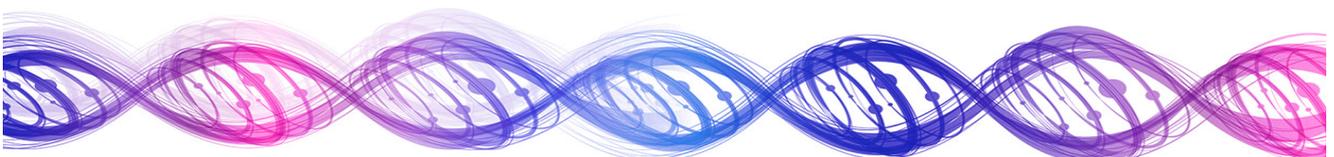
The Local Offer information is hosted on Darlington BC website via the former Families' Information Service website and uses information from Ofsted as well as providers to ensure that the information found is as up-to-date as possible.

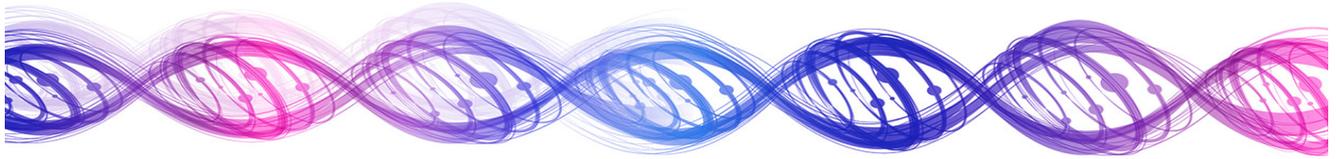
Users of the Local Offer are able to feedback their views on the site and these are published for people to see what issues are being raised and how they are being addressed. This review process is on-going. Feedback is also gathered directly from parents through the Parent Carer Forum as well as individual contacts with SEN team members, schools and other practitioners. In view of the comments being received it was felt pertinent to conduct an audit of the local offer to determine how it could be improved.

### **What we did:**

In 2016 an audit of compliance for the Darlington Local Offer was carried out to determine the compliance with the requirements in the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years and to triangulate the comments and feedback from parents, carers, young people and professionals.

In addition to the audit we spoke with parents/carers, and other stakeholders to find out their views on the Local Offer, how we can make it better and what is working well.





## **What we found**

- The Local Offer contains over 600 directory entries but often lacks overall details about a subject. For example, Apprenticeships contains three links to training providers but no link to the national Apprenticeships website or information about what they are and how the schemes work.
- It is difficult to differentiate between information and guidance, and entries for provision.
- Subject titles in the A to Z are not clear. A search will show a name but a user cannot tell that 'Anne Smith' is a childminder until they click on the entry.
- The search parameters need to include headline topics such as childminders, housing, accommodation and so on.
- Information is out of date or unclear especially around EHC Plans, Lifestages Service, and Home to School Transport.
- There is no evidence of the involvement of children, young people, parents and carers in the development of the Local Offer.

## **What we have done**

- People's Information Point has undertaken a review of all the issues raised by the audit and parents to resolve the problems and correct errors.
- Spreadsheet of 43 issues raised by parents/carers, young people and professionals has been addressed and amendments made to resolve issues where possible.
- Reviewing Ofsted/CQC inspection letters to obtain the view of Local Offers within areas and use the best practice as a guideline for future developments.

## **What we have to do**

- Remaining issues to be collated into an Action Plan for the future review and development of the Local Offer.
- Investigate Local Offer sites in other areas for examples of good practice and ease of use.
- Ensure regular input from parents/carers/children and young people about the Local Offer and ensure that all agencies keep their information up to date and relevant.

December 2016

