

Annual feedback report and local engagement in the SEN Local Offer 2016

August 2016

Your question or comment	Our response or action	Completed Y/N
Do you know of a parenting course for a parent of a child with ADHD?	There are courses listed in the Family Services Directory such as those run at Children's Centres and by Merton's Transforming Families team. We will check to make sure that any courses appropriate for parents of SEN children also appear on the SEN Local Offer.	Y Y
A new scheme is available in Merton for accommodation for care leavers. Who do I contact?	We have forwarded this email to the team who commissions housing for care leavers.	Y
I am looking for an SEN/inclusive youth club in Wimbledon. I checked under Clubs and Youth Activities and it came back with 0 results. Is this an error?	We refreshed the database just in case there was an error. We responded: if you visit the SEN Local Offer and enter your postcode, choose activities and leisure, clubs / groups a list of clubs appears in order of distance. For your area this will show Uptown's inclusive club and Your Shout, both in the Wimbledon area.	Y

We are also in the process of following up on our large consultation exercises, as described below, and will be updating the SEN Local Offer over the coming weeks. This will include linking it closely with the Family Services Directory so that you also have an easy way to find inclusive mainstream community activities.

In the Autumn, we hope to re-launch the SEN Local Offer to increase general awareness of the system. We hope to receive a lot more feedback next year to improve further. We hope and expect it to be the first stop for all parents and practitioners who want to find out about special educational needs services and information.

B Children and Young People

The Children and Families Act 2014 Implementation Steering Group commissioned an in-depth consultation with a range of **40 children and young people** with SEN during spring 2015.

We included Merton's 2 maintained special schools (Cricket Green and Perseid), our ASD additionally resourced provision (Raynes Park High School), a special needs youth forum (Your Shout), 2 short breaks clubs run by Merton Mencap, and Merton's residential respite care home (Brightwell). We continue to engage young people via regular feedback sessions in 2016/17.

Their views are summarised below alongside our actions or responses:

Children and young people said...	We did...	Completed Y/N
There were too many words and the lists that appeared were quite confusing - reduce the number of words used and simplify the language	<p>We are radically changing the layout of the Local Offer and have shorter,, factual entries.</p> <p>We are reviewing carefully all search criteria to make sure that what is expected to appear, appears first in the search results</p>	In progress
Searches brought up too much unexpected information e.g. searches for universal services like sports clubs brought up Merton Mencap clubs - include links to universal services such as sports, youth clubs, volunteering, cinemas, restaurants, and holidays	We have merged the SEN Local Offer with our universal services database, the Family Services Directory. This means a search for 'swimming' brings up Merton's leisure centres and pools as well as specialist clubs offering swimming outings.	Y
Searches for known services like "The Squad" were blank, and searches for some universal services were blank e.g. restaurants, youth clubs	<p>As above, the SEN Local Offer is embedded with our universal services database.</p> <p>SEN Local Offer entries are identified with a flag which means that they are an inclusive provider and/or should have content about supporting SEN children and young people on their website.</p> <p>We are in the process of adding providers to ensure that all services can be found.</p>	Y
It is not colourful enough - include bigger and more colourful buttons on our Local Offer	<p>We are subject to certain limitations in the short term regarding colour. However, we soon join the Family Services Directory with its colourful buttons and logos.</p> <p>Our entries are now short and we link to provider websites where generally there is more colour, video and pictures as we as up to date information.</p>	Y
Include short videos of services, wherever possible. We found that between 20 and 40 seconds was long enough. A 'good' website has pictures, photos, symbols, short videos, and sometimes music	<p>We have achieved this by relying much more on links to active websites some of which will have colour, photos, symbols and video content.</p> <p>We will include colour and symbols wherever we can and will include links to accessible and symbol versions of documents, if available.</p>	Y

Children and young people said...	We did...	Completed Y/N
The writing is too small, dense and detailed – increase size of text and simplify	We have a minimum size of text, as requested. We have shortened all entries including those for Merton schools and other providers, keeping the information factual.	Y
It is not targeted enough or designed with young people in mind - design a version specifically for children and young people, perhaps just their own front page in order to draw them in.	Very soon we will launch a new version of the Merton youth website, 'Young Merton', which was designed by young people and incorporates the feedback provided by SEN or disabled young people.	N But agreed
Make sure it is always accessible via an iPad	Our IT platform allows access via iPad, phone or tablet	Y
Some young people liked the idea of being able to find everything quickly with a small number of clicks	The Merton website has the option to limit searches to just the SEN Local Offer and narrow by age, disability and location. Everything should be accessible in 3 clicks using this system.	Y
Young people generally like websites like You Tube, Google, gaming sites, sites that they were involved in designing (the Squad), Club Soda, Ben 10, Giant Spiders, DC Super Pets, Sponge Bob, Dinosaurs	As above, we aim to encourage providers to keep an up to date, visual website that is accessible and designed by and for their users. This is the best way to ensure we meet the accessibility request.	Y
Include more about job choices, possible remuneration for certain jobs, entertainment, work, college, volunteering, and holidays	We are the process of updating all of the post 16 and adulthood information that should include good quality careers information	In progress
Young people tended to search for mainstream or universal services such as swimming or restaurants, or else services that they already know about e.g. the Squad, FE colleges	See above re. our universal offer with SEN Local Offer clearly defined within it and accessible separately, if you so wish	Y

C Parents of children and young people with SEN or disabilities

- There are **8 parents** on our SEN Local Offer Steering Group who meet once per month in term time to discuss the SEN Local Offer. They are volunteers from Kids First, Merton's forum for parents of children and young people with SEN or disabilities.
- **Parents are invited** to all SEN Local Offer steering group meetings any special work streams such as the recent SEN Support in Mainstream Settings Project.
- We make sure that meetings are held during the school day and dates are set well ahead so that parents can add them to their **schedule**.
- Parents have kindly helped us to update **schools information** filling in templates for us.
- On 28th January 2016, we held a meeting for the wider parent forum which was attended by **24 parents**. Another open meeting is scheduled for the autumn 2016.
- If you wish to join the SEN Local Offer group or come along to an open meeting either contact Kids First or email localoffer@merton.gov.uk

Below is a summary of parent feedback and comments from open meeting and steering group meetings alongside our agreed actions:

Parents said...	We did...	Completed Y/N
Add multiple disabilities search criteria and the option to remove all filters in one click	This is on our action plan and is being explored to find out if technically feasible	N But agreed
Build in a 'like' function for feedback or a 'Trip Adviser' style scoring system.	We currently have a Local Offer email address which is monitored daily and responses sent out as quickly as possible. We are exploring a more regular feedback mechanism. Parents accept that a low volume of reviews could give a skewed score to a service which would not be fair. However, we continue to explore some kind of tally for like/dislikes.	N But agreed
Parents want an eye-catching Merton Local Offer Logo	This has been added to the communications plan which includes having a recognisable SEN Local Offer logo at the bottom of all outgoing emails from the SENDIS Team and school SENCOs /special schools	N But agreed

Parents said...	We did...	Completed Y/N
Change age bands filtering system to be cleaner	Done	Y
Parents voted unanimously to remove the Universal/ Targeted/ Specialist filtering system as it was unclear what this means	This has been changed on the website. It may need to be included in some documents that refer to statutory guidance but it has been removed from the main filter	Y
Parents felt that filtering services by opening days created confusion and did not need to be there	We have fed back to parents that this is necessary for early years settings such as nurseries and childminders and for some drop-in short breaks as well as for activities, such as clubs	N
<p>Parents would like the following to be covered in the eligibility criteria for a service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you need a social services referral? • Do you need a GP referral? • Age range – including for Challenging Behaviour • Do parents/ carers need to accompany the child? • Who is funding the service? • EHCP bandings 	<p>In our provider template, we have a clear question about referral and what form that takes. It will be clear whether criteria apply e.g. your child needs to have an EHCP, or a referral from a GP or social services etc.</p> <p>We have added cost details so that parents know how services are funded including, for example, personal budget/direct payment, self-funding</p> <p>If there is any other restriction on the service, we will ensure that this is covered in the website link or in the notes describing the service</p> <p>EHCP bandings will be added to the SEN Local Offer for 2016 / 17</p>	Y
Add the Merton Council logo to all services that are commissioned/ part-commissioned by LB Merton to make it clear which are council run services	<p>We are adding a statement to the home page stating that the SEN Local Offer lists all services available in the local community suitable for SEN or disabled children and young people. This will make it clear that all services are not run by or commissioned by the London Borough of Merton.</p> <p>We also have a parent organisation section where LB Merton will be named, if appropriate. We also have a complaints section where LB Merton will be named, if appropriate. We suggest that these together will clarify this point but our next consultation will check the success of this solution.</p>	Y

Parents said...	We did...	Completed Y/N
<p>Items wanted on the SEN Local Offer are: supported internships; specialist colleges; vocational training providers; work experience opportunities; after schools clubs; holiday clubs; accessible youth clubs; leisure facilities; buddying schemes/ mentoring; life skills; travelling independently; respite; support groups; homework clubs; information services; parenting classes; childcare; children's centres; libraries; organised groups (e.g. cadets, guides); dial-a-ride; freedom passes and general guide to travel in London; cinemas and theatres, benefits</p>	<p>All of these are either on the SEN Local Offer or will be added soon.</p>	<p>Y</p>
<p>Legislation parents want to see are: Disability Discrimination Act; Children and Families Act; SEN Code of Practice; Information on ombudsman services and how to complain; Post 16 legal duties and provision; SEN support protocol for schools and post 16 providers; eligibility for EHCP + how to apply, appeal and the statutory deadlines. The above should be tagged on the LO under 'legal framework', 'duties', 'obligations', 'legal', 'statutory'.</p> <p>Parents would like the above legislation/ guidance to be accompanied by a summary explaining the document and where to find the information in it which is likely to be useful to parents.</p>	<p>All are on or being added.</p>	<p>Y</p>

D Other stakeholders

Another consultation exercise was conducted on 11 February 2016 with the **SENDIS team** (30 attendees).

They said that the SEN Local Offer will be useful as a market place for personal budgets, a place where families can access information before contacting SENDIS, a way for staff to provide a consistent response to queries, a directory for council services and to enable SENDIS staff to answer queries about other areas e.g. Adult Social Care, a move to modern communication methods and to link this in with social media, reduce costs by less reliance on leaflets.

They also said that it should be used as a tool to educate professionals on the work done in SENDIS.

They also value it as a referral tool for policy documents, to clarify confusion about what services are offered by SENDIS and to clarify access and assessment processes.

SENDIS staff welcome the transparency and preciseness now being encouraged e.g. making it clear that reassessment can mean an increase or reduction on packages of support.

Services they expect to see are:

- Your Shout (SEN Youth Forum)
- Advice and provision for: ASD, dyslexia, speech and language, challenging behaviour, emotional and social needs
- Childminders for SEN children
- Employment services
- Welfare benefits
- Carer's support
- Links to other council services e.g. Housing
- Core Assets (Independent Supporters)
- A page for each part of SENDIS
- Links to (e.g.) <http://www.rcslt.org/> - a tool for providing list of approved services (which is updated)
- Info on personal budgets

Guidance, protocols, legislation they expect to see are:

- Merton / SENDIS policies and procedures.
- Processes for schools to determine higher needs funding
- Transitions policy
- Guidance for children with Challenging Behaviour (and address the gap here for 14-16)
- SEN Code of Practice
- Complaints and mediation
- Out of borough services

- How to we engage families who do not speak English as their first language? The LO should include information relating to our obligations here.
- Brightwell: what is it? Who is eligible and who is it for?
- Children with Disabilities Team: who is eligible? Information on the referral and assessment processes. What do CWD do?
- SEN Transport: include policy up to 18 and policy for young adults
- MASH: Who should contact, when and what hours is the service available?

Eligibility criteria they expect to see are:

- Needs assessment to access the service
- Early help criteria
- Information for those who do not meet the criteria (e.g. Short Breaks, CWD). What else can we offer?
- Eligibility criteria must be kept under review
- Additionally Resourced Provision eligibility criteria was highlighted as being particularly important

General comments

- A FAQs page would be helpful
- Add a compliments page
- Only 2 staff had heard of Young Merton and few knew about Merton-i
- Statistics would be helpful e.g. numbers of children with disabilities in Merton

We have added these to the action plan and intend to consult health services in the Autumn Term 2016 as our next key stakeholder.