Reading - SEND Local Offer

Annual Report 2015-2016

www.reading.gov.uk/servicesguide

Produced by the Family Information Service/DISC - December 2016
**Introduction**

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires that all Local Authorities publish an Annual Report on Special Educational Needs and Disability this includes the Local Offer. This report will provide a ‘snapshot’ of what has been achieved over the past year working with parent/carers, schools, community and voluntary organisation and our plans for the future in maintaining and developing the information.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that the purpose of the Local Offer is:

To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the provision available and how to access it

To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN, their parents, disabled young people and those with SEN, also service providers in its development and review

More information on what the Local Offer should include is in the SEN (Local Offer) regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015 - chapter 4.

To ensure Reading is meeting the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 we must also ensure that we continue to:

Consult with all partners on the information to be held

Involve children, their parents and young people in the preparation and review of the Local Offer

Publish comments on the Local Offer

Ensure that the information is accessible to everyone

Prior to the SEND Code of Practice Reading already provided a DISC Information Service that is a tailored specialist service for parents, carers and young people with SEND. The Local Offer is an extension of this service, DISC is well established and a well-known name amongst families and professional in Reading, the majority of families will recognize the Local Offer by the ‘DISC’ name.

Reading is a member of the Pan Berkshire Local Offer Group, which includes Reading, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wokingham and Slough Borough Councils; through this we are able to share information and good practice with other local authorities.
## What we have done in the past year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘You Said’</th>
<th>‘We did’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You wanted services to provide cost details (2015)</td>
<td>We have contacted service users and have asked them to provide this information next time they update their service record.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We have an events calendar on all sections of the directory including FIS, Adults and Youth. Events can be searched using the calendar option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We consulted with the system provider and have now changed the wording to ‘My Shortlist’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be useful to have a calendar or search by date facility (2015)</td>
<td>We have an events calendar on all sections of the directory including FIS, Adults and Youth. Events can be searched using the calendar option.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having added items to a shortlist, it’s not obvious how to view the list.</td>
<td>The phrase Local Offer is prescribed in the SEND Code Of Practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can my list be named to ‘my shortlist?’ (2015)</td>
<td>Unfortunately we cannot rename this phrase. However what we have done is link the local offer button to the SEN landing page, where users can read and find out about the local offer and can link that to special educational needs and disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2015) further updated (2016)</td>
<td>We have now created an advice and guidance page explaining ‘What is the Local Offer’ as many parents have stated they would like a page telling them what this phrase means in terms of the Code of Practice. The page has been welcomed by parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘It is very “local authority” the phrase ‘local offer’. This would mean nothing to me as a member of the public. (2015) further updated (2016)</td>
<td>The Reading Services Guide provides local and national support services where possible. We are planning to review all the national organisations and create links via the advice and guidance pages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for families who have a family member suffering from mental health problems</td>
<td>Under the ‘families’ section we have a search facility dedicated to mental health and the support services available locally and nationally. This information is also further supported by an advice and guidance page.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signposting to national support agencies, helplines etc. (2015) further developed in (2016)</td>
<td>The Reading Services Guide provides local and national support services where possible. We are planning to review all the national organisations and create links via the advice and guidance pages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have further enhanced the information on local and national services. To make it an easier journey we have created a sub section which clearly guides the user to either 'National' or 'Local' support services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You said, ‘for individuals with limited competency of internet usage this could be confusing, if there is a facility to arrange time with an advisor for this purpose’</th>
<th>The FIS team are based within the Contact Centre and can easily assist clients visiting RBC reception from 9am - 5pm. Staff based within Reading libraries have also been trained to assist users on the RSG.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Might be good to be able to read reviews about events, clubs and to have user rating system. (2015)</td>
<td>The Reading Services Guide has a ‘rate and review’ option available. However, we are still reviewing the legal implications of publishing the review and ratings comments. Once approved we will be looking to publish this information. Currently all review and ratings left by users, are actioned and addressed by the RSG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t mention the excellent Reading Advocacy Service in the Carers section (2015)</td>
<td>We have researched this service and added it to the Reading Services Guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Educational Needs - it not always clear of the best way to contact some of the services, e.g. when I have rung up about certain activities they often require Early Hub referrals to access, this seems to particularly apply to any services for respite. (2015)</td>
<td>To ensure users have access to comprehensive information about services listed on the Reading Services Guide, we are encouraging providers to provide referral criteria and access routes for families to use their service, this information is a requirement of local offer. However, some services unfortunately do not provide us with the information. We are proactively contacting these providers to gather this information so that it makes it a seamless process for families. We are also working closely with partner agencies for example. The Children’s Action Team and early help hub, to ensure families can access services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Reading Families Forum (RFF) Parent. (2016)</td>
<td>This feedback highlighted the need to add some information on the service name listed, so the end user is made aware that by clicking the name of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that we have to click on the service link to access the full information on what they offer.

service will provide further information on what they offer. The following caption has been applied to the whole directory ‘click here to view full details on this service’

Feedback from Reading Families Forum (RFF) Parent (2016)

The Carer's Assessment page needs to be reviewed to make it an easier read - clearer pathway to access the service.

This information was fed back to the relevant team at the council; the page was re-visited and streamlined to make it an easier read for the end user. We were also asked to add a link to the Contact a Family - Carer's Assessment guidance document, which was added to the page. Because the directory is shared between children & adults all duplication was removed and we now only have one page on Carer's Assessment which is shared within the directory.

Parent Feedback (2016)

There are a lot of acronyms used within the local offer and I appreciate that you can't display the full words every time; however is there any way you can make it easier for people like me who are new to the SEND world.

We now have a glossary app as part of the system, where the back office function allows us to add an acronym - with the full meaning, therefore when the end user put's their mouse over the word it will provide the full meaning. This function is available throughout the directory.

Parent Feedback (2016)

Can some of the categories within the local offer be split further? Currently the heading take us in to a full list of services, sub categories would be really helpful.

This year we went through all the categories and have refined them to provide sub sections. The following areas now have sub headings to give the user an easier, more accessible journey when looking for a service.

Education, Schools & Services; Special Needs Support; Health & Social Care; Transition 16-25; Special Needs Activities

Parents Feedback (2016)

The DISC Newsletter is the best

The DISC Newsletter is in its seventh year of publication. It has grown significantly in size and distribution,
thing the council do to provide information to families, and keeping us informed on activities, support and new legislation etc. especially as I am new to the SEND world. One parent commented ‘it’s a life line’ for me and my family. and is very popular with families. The DISC Newsletter is a collation of information from the Local Offer provided in an alternative format, which many families prefer. Alongside this we keep families up to date with weekly ‘updates’ which covers events, activities, support services etc.

Parent Feedback (2016)

2 Year Funding Page - Parents wanted a prominent link to the online application form (Citizen Portal). We currently have a highlighted link.

We consulted with our IT providers of the Reading Services Guide and came up with a solution parents liked, which was a green box on the right of the screen; this would then link directly to the application form. We also made sure the 2 year funding logo can link to the application form. This page now has all the information a parent/carer would need to access a 2 year funded place.

Autism Partnership Board & Parent Feedback (2016)

What is Autism? This is an advice & guidance page set up to provide general information on Autism. However feedback was that more information was needed and for the page to be slightly re-worded and to incorporate local links.

Reading Families Forum (RFF) and other voluntary organisations in Reading reviewed the page. The information was streamlined and useful links to national and local organisations was added.

Page completed in December 2016
Local Offer Entries

The Local Offer information and the range of services available have increased significantly in the last year. The information below provides a breakdown of services available under each section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carers Advice &amp; Support</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years &amp; Childcare</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Schools &amp; Services</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Social Care</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Impairment</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Breaks</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs Activities</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs Support</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition 16 - 25</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All above are further supported with a robust advice and guidance page, which provides in-depth information and pathways to accessing services within each category.

Web Statistics

Local Offer is part of the ‘all services hub’ which includes Adults, Family Information Service and Youth; this provides huge benefits to families accessing information. The records are integrated and can be accessed through simultaneous routes. The Web stats below include the data for the whole site, using Google analytics, which picks up the landing page information and the Open Objects own web stats, which provide data on individual records visited by users.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>WEB HITS</th>
<th>MOBILE VERSION HITS/LAUNCH MAY 2015</th>
<th>Open Objects Web Stats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Google Data</td>
<td>Open Objects Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>31,398 hits - 22,446 unique visits</td>
<td>11,758</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>27,551 hits - 20,117 unique visits</td>
<td>10,775</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>28,500 hits -</td>
<td>9,723</td>
<td>46410 hits -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Local Offer Additional Support

As part of the support provided to families who have a child or young person with SEND - Between 1st January 2015 – 14th December 2016 - the Family Information Service provided in depth information, advice and guidance to 401 families who contacted the service with a SEND enquiry, this includes providing brokerage to access services, on support, childcare, schools, health, special needs activities, short breaks, carers support etc.

A note from the Chair of Reading Families Forum (RFF)
“The Local Offer team work extremely hard with families to develop the Local Offer and are always open to suggestions. Parents tell the Reading Families' Forum how useful the DISC newsletters and the Local Offer are. We are all very proud of it! The number of hits per month shows just how useful the Reading Local Offer is.” Ramona Bridgeman (Chair RFF)
The Reading Services Guide - Feedback Survey.

Reading’s Local Offer is part of the ‘all service hub’
www.reading.gov.uk/servicesguide

There is a static link on the website which is available throughout the directory, and provides a feedback option to all users. Below are the statistics taken from the 2015/2016 data collected from users completing the survey.

There were 123 respondents to the survey; of those surveyed we received the following feedback.

91% of those surveyed thought the information contained in the website (Reading Services Guide) was clear and concise.

91% of those surveyed thought the information contained on the website was easy to access.

95% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website easy to understand.

92% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website user friendly.

88% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website accurate and up to date.

93% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website to be useful and appropriate.

84% of those surveyed found the information was presented in a logical order with good use of heading and sub heading.

96% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website easy to read (typeface, font size and colours).

93% of those surveyed found the information contained in the website had an attractive, look and feel.

We asked those surveyed ‘Is there any other information you would like to see available on the Reading Services Guide’ 68% of those surveyed were happy with the information available 32% would like to see even more information available on Reading Services Guide.
Other Feedback Options on the Local Offer

Everyone accessing the services listed on the Local Offer can provide feedback through the ‘rate & review’ this option is available on all records listed within the Local Offer.

There is also a ‘contact us page’ which provide email and contact details for the Family Information Service.

Parent/carers can contact the Family Information Service Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm; they also have the option to email the service disc@reading.gov.uk

Additional Publications to Support the Local Offer

Since 2009 the Family Information Service has produced a DISC Newsletter which provides information on events, new legislation, SEND support services, SEND activities etc. The DISC newsletter is an established and well used resource by families in Reading. In essence it is a collection of service from the Local Offer, provided in a format that many parents/carers like, especially those who have limited or no access to the internet. The DISC Newsletter is produced three times a year, spring, summer and winter, and is sent out to over 800 families, 150 professionals and school SENCO’s.

Over 800 families who have a child or young person with SEND, and 150 professionals have signed up to receive regular updates. On average two emails a week are sent out to families keeping them informed about activities, events, surveys etc. This list is also widely used by other organisations wanting to cascade information to families.
Feedback from Parent/Carers

Below is a snapshot of feedback received from parents and carers accessing the Local Offer/DISC

‘Thank you for your extended support with all the information that I was looking for. I did apply for school immediately online yesterday and gave your reference. I'm constantly in touch with them for right help for my child.’

‘Can you also add me to your DISC mailing list so that I can get updates which can be very helpful for my child.’

‘Thank you so very much for your email my brother found all the information really helpful’

‘Thank you very much for your email and the information attached. I have reviewed the local offer and other links and will come back to you should I have any queries.’

‘I found your Disc Newsletter really helpful for my families, would you mind sending me an updated one when it comes out.’

‘Thank you so much. I always find going to the show at Rivermead quite emotional. Just makes me realise how hard this life is. You keep going and keep smiling but it's getting harder every day. Especially seeing his siblings lives affected by everything. That's why I feel the need for extra help really. I'd just get on with it if it was just myself and George!’
What is next for the Local Offer - 2016 - 2017?

We have made good progress with the Reading Local Offer over the last year, however to ensure we continue to improve and develop it further, we need to:

Further develop the Local Offer, to ensure continued promotion to families, children & young people, health, voluntary and community services and statutory services

To monitor, and identify gaps in the provision of information

Respond to ongoing feedback and aim to make changes where possible

Continue to work with Reading Families Forum as part of our co-production to ensure the information meets the needs of Reading families

To better engage with young people in the production and review of the Local Offer