

**Southampton
Local Offer Annual Report
2015**

Introduction

The Children and Families Act 2014 requires that the Local Authority must publish an annual report on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). This annual report details feedback, about the Local Offer, from children, young people and parent carers, what progress we have made, what we have learnt and our next steps.

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice states that Local Authorities must publish a 'local offer'. It also states that the purpose of the local offer is to:

- Include information on education, health, care and other provision
- Provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it
- Make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and 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 we are meeting the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 we must also ensure that we:

- Consult with all partners on the information to be held
- Involve children, their parents and young people in the preparation and review of Local Offer
- Publish comments on the Local Offer
- Ensure that the information is accessible to everyone

As with all aspects of our work in Southampton we co-produced the website with parents and young people and continue to work with them in developing and reviewing the Local Offer.

Our local offer is at www.southampton.gov.uk/localoffer

Please note that Local Offer refers to all of the available provision and how to access it. The primary means of holding all of this information is Southampton City Councils Southampton Information Directory (SID) website.

Local Offer Annual Report on feedback 2014-2015

We are ‘co-producing’ the local offer with children, young people and families. *Co-production happens when all team member’s together co-produce recommendations, plans, actions and materials as a collective. This process develops over time, blends a range of expertise and perspectives, is driven by a solution focussed approach from all participants and requires strong leadership. Communication that is transparent and open, relationships that are equitable and respectful help the team overcome complex challenges and continue the process of learning together.(SE7 definition)*

This report shows how we worked with young people and parent carers in developing the local offer, what they said and what we did in response to their comments.

Activity	What you said	What we did
<p>Consultation and co-production event held in Jan 2014 with parent carers, stakeholders i.e. health professionals, social workers, schools, educational psychologists.</p>	<p>You said that you wanted the Local Offer to follow the same Framework as co-produced through the SE7 SEND Local Offer Pathfinder.</p> <p>The principles for the Local offer Framework are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produced by parent carers/young people and professionals (core value) • Empowering for Parent Carers, Young People and Professionals • Accessible • Starting with what is widely available • Transparent • Sustainable and Sustained • Factual • Holistic <p>You wanted to Local Offer Website to be “more than just a directory”.</p>	<p>We seconded Tammy Marks from Southampton Parent Partnership to lead on the development and publishing of the Southampton Local Offer. Tammy co-lead the pathfinder parent carer engagement work, alongside Southampton’s parent carer forum. She is also a parent carer herself, thus offering a unique position for which to lead on this work and ensuring that parent carers and young people were always at the centre the Local Offer development.</p> <p>Building on the SE7 principle and to address some of the cross boarder issues that were likely to arise, Tammy worked closely with Hampshire Parent Voice, who had been commissioned by Hampshire County Council to lead on the development, design, and delivery of their Local Offer, to come up with “Service” and “Setting” questionnaires that could be used across the two areas.</p> <p>All Southampton SEND in house and commissioned services were asked to complete these questionnaires</p>

		<p>and responses were published on the Local Offer Website. Early year’s settings, schools and colleges were also given standardised templates for completion and these too have published on the website.</p> <p>We asked parent carers to tell us which services they access locally so that we could cascade this information to other parent carers through the Local Offer Website, enabling parents to easily see what events/activities and facilities were available for them to access.</p> <p>Some further co-production events were had to decide the “button” headings and “key information” that would create the Local Offer website “Front page” and then lots of work carried out amongst key service area’s to populate these pages.</p> <p>We commissioned Open Objects, the leading Local Offer Web provider to provide our Southampton Local Offer website and after a few hiccups in the development stage, went live with the site on September 1st 2014.</p>
<p>Young people engagement Autumn Term 2014 - Workshops held at:</p> <p>Great Oaks Special School, across a range of age groups (11-18) with young people with learning disabilities ranging from moderate to severe</p>	<p>Tammy Marks and Will Rosie, an experienced youth worker from choices advocacy joined these groups of children/young people to show them the Local Offer Website and asked what they would like included for them. The feedback received included:</p> <p>“We aren’t interested in the same things as our mums and dads, we don’t care about education plans...”</p>	<p>The first bit of feedback here was really telling for us, whilst we have published young person friendly posters and videos on the local offer, from sources such as “Preparation for Adulthood” relating to Education, Health and Care Plans and other processes and plans – it was overwhelmingly clear at these workshops that young people didn’t necessarily want the level of detail that parents might expect around</p>

<p>& Southampton Mencaps “Own2Feet” – a group for young people aged 16-25.</p>	<p>The topics that young people said they would like information on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going to work (including help with CV’s and interviews) • Meeting new friends • Activities in the local area • Safe sex and pregnancy • Social networking (including use of social media) • Pets – how to care for them and when is a good time to get one • How to get a boyfriend/girlfriend • Moving out (including getting a house or flat) 	<p>processes etc. but that they were more interested in the things that affect them personally.</p> <p>Work has begun to include information on all the topic subjects as requested from these workshops.</p> <p>In the “Children and Families” section of SID there is a specific “button” relating to “teenagers and young people”. It is the intention over the next 12 months to develop this area to include information aimed at young people with SEND and to then link this directly to the Local Offer “channel” of the website.</p> <p>We continue to publish the young person friendly versions of guidance, published by national charities.</p>
<p>Local Offer feedback stakeholder event November 2014.</p>	<p>Families would like to practice on the site and feedback on the usability.</p>	<p>Site testing was carried out in January 2015 where Southampton parent carers were invited to test the functionality of the Southampton Information Directory (SID) where the Local Offer content sits. Based on feedback from this session, changes were made to enhance the “usability” of the site.</p> <p>Some feedback was given re the colours/fonts on the pages but we explained that we were fairly restricted with this due to the website needing to be in line with corporate standards/colours. This does enable the user experience to feel more seamless if they access the local offer through the main Southampton City Council Website.</p>

	<p>Families are not familiar with the term 'Local Offer'.</p> <p>SID (Southampton Information) needs to be promoted.</p> <p>Parent carers want information on workshops and courses for them to attend, included in sub categories. These courses to include things such as learning BSL/Makaton.</p>	<p>We have worked on our 'Search Engine Optimisation' (SEO) and promoting the Local Offer in the City with all stakeholders. By enhancing the SEO, when parents search for key phrases like "Southampton SEND" the Local Offer should be one of the first pages to come up on search engines such as "Google". (Give it a go – it works!)</p> <p>Posters, email banners and screen savers were developed and shared across Local Authority Colleagues to promote SID. All commissioned services were made aware of the site and SEND specific services and colleagues were encouraged to both use and sign post to the site. The Local Offer Website was included in our "Buzz Network" newsletters, which goes to approximately 650 parent carers, as well as being sent to schools and SEND education, health and care service area's for distribution to service users.</p> <p>We add training that we're made aware of to the service directory area of the Local Offer website. Parents/professionals are invited to tell us about any training sessions that they are aware of so that we can publish this information and include in our Buzz Network Newsletters. This area will continue to develop.</p>
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	<p>Would like a telephone number on the 'contact us' page.</p> <p>Users would like us to look at the accessibility of the site and the information contained in it.</p> <p>Families hear about available services too late.</p> <p>Parent carers would like schools that have a specialist unit attached to be included as a sub category.</p> <p>Make the site accessible in other languages such as Polish.</p>	<p>Complete.</p> <p>We've given demos on how to use the site and professionals from a range of services will be available to help users do so if they can't access the site themselves. All pages are print friendly so individuals are able to keep a copy e.g. a SENCO in a school may find it useful to print specific pages for a parent.</p> <p>We are working on promoting SID and raising awareness of what's on there to get families support earlier. Through early years and SENCO training, as well as an increased knowledge from key SEND Service areas - staff and parents are aware that the SEND Local Offer Website exists. The aspiration is for this to be the first point of contact, where parents/carers/ young people and professionals can self-manage as much as possible so that they know which service's they can access and when.</p> <p>This is currently being looked at.</p> <p>There are current links, on the footer, for accessibility. There is information about how to use Google Translate and links to BBC help pages etc.</p>
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	<p>Video profiles - include information about what might happen at a first appointment, panel etc.</p> <p>There are some broken web links.</p>	<p>We've had feedback that this can be quite a non-user friendly process within itself so we encourage parent carers to ask someone who is working with them e.g. SENCO's, Social worker, Portage worker to support with this.</p> <p>We really like this idea and think that it's a great way to improve the accessibility of the site. This is something that will be looked at in the next stage of development.</p> <p>We use 'site crawler' which is able to search for broken links, report them back to us so that we can fix them.</p>
<p>Feedback directly through Local Offer website.</p>	<p>Can I have an EHCP application form?</p> <p>Can you post information on the Local Offer about a relaxed theatre performance for me?</p> <p>Please can I have advice on how to upload information onto the Local Offer myself?</p>	<p>Emailed the link to our EHCP assessment form from our Local Offer webpage. The information on our front page links directly to the referral forms and lots of information about EHC's and the process involved.</p> <p>Information was gathered from the service provider and was updated on the Local Offer webpage.</p> <p>Link and information provided on how to register for an account on the Local Offer webpage so they can update for themselves in the future.</p>

What the data tells us about activity

- In the first month, September 2014, we had approximately 12,000 “hits” on the site.
- At the 6 month mark, in March 2015, this had increased to approximately 63,000 hits per month.
- By September 2015, this raised to approximately 110,000 hits per month.
- The most viewed pages (the ones that consistently receive the highest number of visits) on the Send Local Offer are:
 - Education, Health and Care Plans
 - My child’s SEN
 - Buzz Network (Short Breaks)
- The most commonly typed search word/phrase is “Autism”

Positive feedback

We have had lots verbal positive feedback from colleagues and families saying that they found the information on the Local Offer to be really useful. Below is an example of published positive feedback:

- “Southampton (also) replied promptly and courteously and provided a clear template for uploading details to their Local Offer web pages as well as a facility to edit these pages ourselves in order to ensure they remain up to date once approved for publication. Very impressive.”
Solent Psychology Service - <http://www.specialneedsjungle.com/six-top-tips-for-using-and-managing-your-send-local-offer/>

Summary

In summary our first year has been a success. The local Offer website has been co-produced with children, young people and parent carers primarily. Through feedback we have been able to make necessary alterations so that the information available continues to be accessible to all. If a parent carer/young person can’t access the online tool themselves, we encourage a key professional working with them to access this information on their behalf.

We encourage our service providers to independently manage their information. They are able to make any necessary changes quickly and efficiently, ensuring that the information is always up-to-date. For those that don’t independently manage, we request updates from them regularly and they are able to contact us with any updates they may have in between.

The significant rise in site visits (detailed above) represents increased knowledge and use of the SEND Local Offer.

We have had a low number of feedback given the number of views on the site, which we hope is as a result of our SEND families finding the information they have been looking for. However, we know from our own use of the site that there are gaps in information, particularly around health pathways and preparation for adulthood.

Next Steps

Over the last year we have made good progress with the Local Offer. However we know that there is more to do to continue to improve. We need to:

- Focus on our Local Offer for young people, including further co-production events.
- Look at ways of generating good quality feedback, not just about the website, but about all of the services contained within the site.
- Ensure the information contained within it is useful, up-to-date and accurate.
- Improve/include more information in areas we know are lacking such as health pathways and preparation for adulthood. We are able to self-evaluate that the gaps in information around preparation for adulthood are due to gaps in services – we will need to look to commission services to fill these gaps.
- Further advertise the Local Offer to ensure we are reaching more people that require information and support at the earliest possible stage with the Local Offer Website acting as the first point of contact for SEND families and service's in Southampton.
- Hold an annual local offer event, for SEND families, colleagues and service's to provide face to face opportunities for children, young people and parents to find out more about services and give feedback on services already accessed.