

What is the Local Offer?

From September 2014 every Local Authority will be required to publish information about services they expect to be available in their area for children and young people from birth to 25 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and also services outside of the area which they expect children and young people from their area will use. This will be known as the 'Local Offer'.

The Local Offer will put all the information about education, health and care services, leisure activities and support groups in one place. It has two main purposes:

- to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available; and
- to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations.

The Government says the Local Offer must be developed and reviewed in partnership with children and young people, parent carers, and local services, including schools, colleges, health and social care agencies.

The SE7 areas (Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Medway, Surrey and West Sussex) and parent carer representatives from the local parent carer forums are working together and involving children and young people to plan exactly what should be included in our Local Offers and the best way to present them. At the end of this leaflet we tell you how you can get involved.

Who is it for?

The Local Offer is primarily designed for use by parent carers and children and young people with SEND. However, it will also enable practitioners and professionals to see clearly which services are available in their local area and how and when they can be accessed.

How will it help me?

Whether you are a young person, a parent carer or a professional the Local Offer will make it easier for you to find out what you need to know, making you less reliant on other people or word-of-mouth suggestions.

All the services involved with the Local Offer will be asked to provide and maintain up-to-date information that can be easily accessed by the user. For instance, information might include who the service will suit, opening hours, accessibility, or costs. The Local Offer will also help parent carers find the services that are nearest to them and most suitable for their child's needs.

There will also be guidance to help parent carers find out what they need to ask practitioners and professionals and how they can help them and their child or young person and similar guidance for the children and young people themselves.

The Local Offer will also include information on giving feedback and raising issues and concerns and making a complaint.

What makes the Local Offer different?

The Local Offer is not simply a directory of information or a list of services available. It should provide the information needed to help identify suitable support, to increase knowledge to inform decisions about the resources needed to enable the child or young person with SEND to be able to participate, enjoy and achieve their goals.

It will include transparent information on access to services, any eligibility criteria, how decisions are made and who makes them. Families, including the children and young people, will know how they can get involved in decisions and also how to become involved in strategic decision making and service planning.

The Local Offer will inform joint commissioning of services within education, health and care and provide information to support parent carers and young people who have a personal budget. Further information on personal budgets is on the SE7 website www.se7pathfinder.co.uk.

The content of the Local Offer will be jointly prepared with parent carers and children and young people. This will ensure that it is written and delivered in the most suitable way, so everyone can use and understand it.

The Local Offer will be clear and understandable so that families can see exactly what support is available to them. It will also help parent carers and young people to feedback and challenge when they are not getting what they have been led to expect or what they feel they need.

How do I get involved?

If you are a **parent carer** please contact your local Parent Carer Forum who will welcome your input and talk to you about any current opportunities. A list of forums can be found online: www.nnpfc.org.uk

If you are a **school, provider, or practitioner** you can help your organisation to prepare their Local Offer and involve your service users too.

If you are a child or young person you can get involved by helping your school or college and other people who work with you to understand what you want to know about services and how best to tell you about what is available.

Further information

To find out more about the Local Offer you can contact the SEN Pathfinder Team in your local area:

Brighton and Hove – Howard.nottingham@brighton-hove.gov.uk

East Sussex – viv.oliver@eastsussex.gov.uk

Hampshire – tesni.mason@hants.gov.uk

Kent – John.harmer2@kent.gov.uk

sarah@kentpeps.co.uk

Medway – jane.marriott@medway.gov.uk

Surrey – barbara.ingram@surreycc.gov.uk

West Sussex – chris.lewis@westsussex.gov.uk

Or you can visit the SE7 website –

www.se7pathfinder.co.uk

Or you can go to the Department for Education website – www.education.gov.uk

