



Developing the Local Offer

Published July 2017

What does success look like?

A clear and accessible Local Offer sets out information on provision available for children, young people and their families. This includes provision for disabled children and young people, and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care plan. To be an effective tool it is vital that the Local Offer is coproduced.

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the provision available
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and young people with SEN, parent carers, and service providers in its development and review.

The development of a Local Offer creates an opportunity for Local Authorities (LAs) to highlight good practice and provision and identify what universal services are providing for disabled young people and those with SEN.

Aims

As part of their work as PfA demonstration sites, Cheshire West and Chester, Dudley and Leeds have been developing their Local Offer as one of their identified priority areas.

They have worked with the PfA team to develop a Context, Mechanisms and Outcomes (CMO) map which identified key aims they planned to work towards:

- Developing a clear and accessible Local Offer that is used by parent carers and young people
- Increasing awareness about, and accessibility and relevance of, the Local Offer

- Developing visual pathways (for Employment, Personalisation and other key PfA areas) for the Local Offer

Getting started

LAs were aware that their Local Offer would need to have a range of useful and good quality information on the available provision, presented in a visually exciting and engaging way.

This led to a range of activity across the areas:

- Bringing stakeholders together, including young people and parent carers to look at the range of local provision and how the Local Offer is presented
- Development of simple information request forms to help generate information for uploading onto the Local Offer
- Development of “rate and review” systems so that the Local Offer can help young people and parent carers share information about quality

Overcoming the challenges

Whilst each of the demonstration sites had some existing work on which to build the development of their Local Offer, LAs reported a lack of awareness amongst families about the Local Offer and how to use it.

They also flagged that the information and format were not necessarily right for young people. In addition, issues were identified regarding embedding appropriate technology to support the Local Offers and making them sufficiently accessible for children, young people, their families and other stakeholders.

In order to achieve these aims the LAs identified that:

- The Local Offer needs to be simple, easy to use, visually exciting and interactive

- The Local Offer needs to be coproduced with children, young people and families
- A clear description of the support for employment, independent living, friends and health is needed
- Information about those with accountability for effective practice and customer experience should be included

Making progress

Work on developing Local Offers is starting to create a change in thinking, aiding a culture shift towards personalisation and raised ambitions for young people. This remains a key area of work for LAs. Activities that have helped develop this include:

Cheshire West and Chester has focused on developing a user-friendly and visually appealing Local Offer. This included uploading videos and adding a self-assessment section for young people. Development has involved engagement of all local stakeholders to enhance the information provided and promote choice and control to children, young people and their families about what, when and how they access support and services.

There is a 'TripAdvisor' style rate and review system which asks users to provide feedback on the quality of the Local Offer provision and website accessibility. Visual pathways are being developed across key PfA areas. The LA is thinking creatively about how the Local Offer can be a portal to offer more choice and control to young people.

<http://www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk>

Leeds has focused on including the views of young people and parent carers in both the content and online functionality of the Local Offer. They used focus groups and held an event with post-16s to obtain feedback on the needs of its users. This has led to the coproduction of videos and amendments to the layout and presentation of the Local Offer. An important piece of learning has been identifying that children and young people

and parent carers use information in different ways. In response to this, Leeds are exploring different approaches aimed specifically at young people, including app development and social media channels. <https://leedslocaloffer.org.uk>

Newcastle has also shared that they have found success from involving young people in the coproduction of the Local Offer, which included designing a new logo and developing promotional materials. As a result, they have seen increased use of the Local Offer webpages.

Tools and resources

Developing the Preparation for Adulthood section of the Local Offer: <http://preparingforadulthood.org.uk/resources/all-resources/developing-the-preparation-for-adulthood-section-of-the-local-offer>

General Overview - SEND Pathfinder Information Pack on the Local Offer: <http://www.sendpathfinder.co.uk/local-offer-information-pack-resources>

The local offer - Provision the Local Authority expects to be made available by schools, early years and post-16 providers: https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/Local%20Offer_Online.pdf

How to Engage Young People in the Local Offer, CDC and EPIC, Oct 2015: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/making-ourselves-heard/resources/how-engage-young-people-local-offer>

