

You said: We did.

Developing the Local Offer from 2017 to September 2019

1. Introduction

Local authorities must publish comments about their Local Offer received from children with SEN or disabilities and their parents and young people. This document captures the feedback received and the requests for change to the content of the Local Offer that have come through joint working and co-production meetings with parents and carers. It describes both the work undertaken to improve the Local Offer website and changes made to the quality of services and action taken to address gaps in provision. The feedback and action is presented below under these headings:

- Improving the experience of the system
- Improving education, health and care provision
- Improving leisure and community-based opportunities

2. Improving the Experience of the System

2.1 Improving the Structure and Content of the Local Offer Website

You said: In 2017 you said the Local Offer website was poorly structured and did not have the information parents and carers need. The Parent Carer Forum told us that they were keen to promote the website to their members but they were reluctant to do so because it was not fit for purpose.

We did: We held our first Local Offer website co-production meeting on 24 November 2017 and you told us:

- There is a lack of pictures and graphics. It needs to be made more engaging.
- That the Parent Carer Forum would look at other Local Offer websites and tell the Local Authority which features they like.
- There are gaps in information about Leisure. The providers need to be added, including the organisations who attended the market place event.
- It would be helpful if SENDIASS could prepare a list of 'musts', 'shoulds' and 'coulds' from the SEND Code of Practice.
- All service areas within the Local Authority which have information on the Local Offer website should know how to maintain their content and keep it up to date.
- There needs to be a named contact in Health to notify any gaps in information. (This had been Sam Barron).
- There needs to be a protocol for document management to give assurance that the version on line is definitely up to date.
- It should be easier for users to give feedback – the request was to create a 'pop-up' when users log-off or in each section e.g. Health section etc. inviting feedback from users.
- There should be a response to feedback saying, 'thanks and this is what we are doing about it.'

- Feedback is likely to fall into different categories e.g. ‘immediate’ issues that can be addressed straightaway; things that are broader or longer term; and expressions of dissatisfaction and a method of dealing with each of these is needed.
- Need early years providers, play groups, child minders engaged.
- Health Visitors are key and need a briefing.
- Community Navigators in Care and Connect - should be aware. Do they need to be briefed?
- The Sign Directory requires organisations with information in the directory, or wishing to be included, to adopt a ‘self-service approach’ to maintaining the information. Explore how we can apply the same approach to the Local Offer Website.
- A search for Local Offer in the Sign Directory does not bring it up and this needs to be addressed.
- Need to investigate join-up with Sign as some providers need to be included in both Sign Directory and the Local Offer website.
- The Early Years AEN Pathway diagram could be made clearer. It was suggested that it could be replaced with IPSEA diagram/timeline.
- A Glossary / Jargon buster is needed.
- Need to align the terminology used on the website with the language used in the SEND Code of Practice.

We did: On 2nd November 2017 we took a report and made a presentation to the Council’s Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee and agreed the activities to be delivered and the milestones to be achieved over the next 12 months to improve the content, usability and levels of usage of the website.

We did: we organised a Peer Review (another Local Authority came to look at how we were doing in relation to SEND). We asked the reviewers, who spent 3 days (15th – 17th January) looking at our arrangements for SEND in January 2018, to look at the website and review that action underway to improve it. Their finding was that:

The North Tyneside Local Offer website is not accessible or user-friendly. You are aware of this and we are impressed by the range of colleagues working on responding to this challenge. Whilst there is always room for improvement with content, the challenge is more to do with presentation (including language) and appearance and navigation. This is an urgent area for attention.

2.2 Local Offer Co-Production Workshops

We did: On 12th January 2018 we held another co-production sessions with parents and carers who suggested we needed to make a range of changes to the interface and presentation of the Local Offer website.

You said: A summary of the feedback you gave is as follows:

- The Parent Carer Forum identified [West Sussex](#) Local Offer Website as a good model and suggested we could use this as the 'blueprint' for the North Tyneside website.
- You felt we definitely needed additional colour with info-graphics to be placed at each category heading.
- You said we should deal with site navigation issues to make the website more accessible; for example, reduce the number of pages to reach information.
- You wanted the links to information to be simple and coherent, with the categories more succinctly descriptive.
- You asked for an easily accessible, feedback tab or pop-up. The questions on this feedback option also needed to be refined.
- You asked that we create a 'What's Happening Locally' calendar, where children and parents can view various service providers' events.
- You asked that the Parent Carer Forum's logo should be added to the Local Offer website.

2.3 Improving and Re-launching the Local Offer Website

We did: In response to the feedback from parents and carers we:

- Looked at the review of the thirty Local Area SEND Inspections undertaken in the year to May 2017 by Ofsted and the Care Quality to see what we could learn about good practice and what could be done to promote our local offer to parents and frontline staff.
- Recruited a graduate, in January 2018, to focus on website improvement. He worked with the Parent Carer Forum, looked at good practice, benchmarked the content of Local Offer against Council for Disabled Children toolkit and developed a new structure for the web site.
- Held a workshop session on 19th February with the Parent Carer Forum and Council web developers to design the architecture of the site.
- Held a Local Offer Consultation event with the Parent Carer Forum on 8 May 2018 to look at the new website before it went live. (See Separate notes).
- Continued with the development work with the Parent Carer Forum and launched it in May 2018.
- Set up a system for monitoring hits on website so we can see which pages are the most frequently visited. We are using this to help with the continuous improvement of the web site and this information is now part of the quarterly performance report to the SEND Board.
- Added new information about Preparing For Adulthood and Post-16 options, including a video about Project Choice, to tell more young people about Supported Internships.
- Created a leisure activities and things to do section. Added more information e.g. Smell The Roses ReTreat Days to mums and female carers.
- Developed a communications plan to promote the Local Offer, including publishing articles in editions of the Council's 'Our North Tyneside' magazine which is delivered to all homes in the borough.

2.4 Access to Information on the Local Offer Website

2.4.1 Information about changing-places

You said: We need information about changing places and toilets when we are out and about with our kids.

We did: Added information about changing places and information about accessible toilets to the Local Offer website.

2.4.2 Information About Health services

You said: It's hard to find information about health services.

We did:

- Added an easy health link and an accessible information page section under health and social care
- Added link to easy read weight management for LD and MH
- Separated out health and social care sections on home page.
- Revamped the health section to include dietetics, GP online, NHS Choices, NHS apps library, annual health check info, personal health budgets, community dental services, sexual health services, acute learning disability services, stomp and stamp, eric.
- Added information about NHS Continuing Care
- Added North Tyneside Health Visiting and school nursing into health section.

2.4.3 Responding to Consultation Exercises

You said: We want to be able to find consultation documents more easily on the Local Offer website.

We did:

- Added the whole life disability vision consultation to health and social care section
- Added consultation information around short breaks service.

2.4.4 Information About Voluntary Sector Organisations

You said: We need more information about voluntary sector and not for profit organisations

We did: Added information about:

- Tyneside deaf children's group
- Square Peg North East
- Scope and Scope's navigate service in a separate section
- Dyslexia North East
- Added special needs today website
- Radar key info

- North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People.
- Childline
- Young minds
- Mencap
- Child advice Law
- NCB
- The mix
- Reading well
- British Dyslexia Association.
- Pathological Demand Avoidance Society,
- National Careers Service
- Charlie Weller Memorial Trust
- Quantum Leap mentoring blog.

2.4.5 Local Area SEND inspections

You said: We want information about Local Area SEND inspections to be accessible on the website.

We did: Added Local Area SEND inspections information for families in the Resources section. We also added a 'how are we doing section,' based on the Self Evaluation Framework.

2.4.6 Advice and information about the rights of parents and carers

You said: We want to be able to find information about our rights as parents and carers

We did:

- Updated the links to SENDIASS minimum standards including an easy read version.
- Added the CDC animations to SENDIASS section.
- Added easy read guides to IAS, EHC Needs assessment, EHC plans, and personal budgets

2.4.7 Information about childcare

You said: We want to know more about Childcare for children with SEND.

We did: Added the video promoting 30 hour childcare offer for families of children with SEND.

2.5 Improving the Statutory Assessment Process

You said: The quality and timeliness of EHC plans needed to improve and North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum hosted an event on 22 January 2018 at Wallsend Town Hall.

We did: Worked with Parent and Carer reps to consider what change was needed to outcomes, what reports should look like, and how plans should be quality assured. We have worked with parents and carers to improve the documentation and to quality assure EHC plans.

2.6 Improving the System for Children and Young People with ASD

You said: We are concerned about waiting times for an autism assessment and the range of support post-diagnostic support for parents, carers, children and young people.

We did: Invested more resources in CAMHS through the CCG and commissioned additional provision from Helios a specialist online provider of mental health and neurodevelopmental services to reduce waiting times. We also began a review of CAMHS with the CCG. We held a consultation event at Tyne Met College in September 2018 and agreed to co-produce a borough-wide autism strategy by the end of 2019. WE refreshed our ASD self-assessment. We continued the discussion with Special Schools Heads about the educational provision needed for children and young people with ASD.

2.7 Planning the February 2019 North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum AGM

You said: We would like speakers to cover the Statutory Assessment process, health and CAMHS.

We did: Arranged speakers from: the Local Authority to present on plans to strengthen statutory assessment arrangements; Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to present on therapies; and the clinical lead for CAMHS to present on developments in children's mental health services.

2.8 Working on Shared Priorities

You said: In January 2019 you said that your three priorities for improving the SEND system are: the quality of EHC plans; addressing variations in the graduated response from mainstream schools; and improving access to health services and therapies.

We did: Committed to working with the Parent Carer Forum to address the three priorities. We designed a new SEND Support Team with additional staff which will be fully operational from September 2019. We worked together on improving the statutory assessment process. We made a commitment to review the graduated response and have a plan in place to start the review in September. The CCG has invested additional funding in therapies and is committed to on-going work to review and improve services.

3. Improving Education, Health and Care Provision

3.1 Our Plans for SEND Capital Funding

You said: Our initial thoughts were not focused sufficiently on children and young people with EHC plans.

We did: At the early stages of planning we were discussing the possibility of enhancing vocational opportunities for young people who needed a different educational offer. We refocused our plans to focus much more directly on the needs of children and young people with EHC plans in special school provision and agreed a much more targeted approach. We maintained a dialogue with the Parent Carer Forum as we developed and implemented our plans which were published on the Local Offer website.

3.2 Review of Additionally Resourced Provision and Commissioned Services

You said: You would like to be kept informed of the progress of the reviews. You said it would be important to engage young people, parents and carers if there is a change to post-16 provision at Woodlawn School.

We did: Agreed that should there be a definite plan to change post-16 arrangements there would be full engagement of young people, parents and carers. We kept the Parent Carer Forum up to date with the reviews at meetings of the Parent Carer Forum

3.3 Improving the Paediatric Continence Service

You said: We don't have enough support from the Paediatric Continence Service.

We did: Re-commissioned the service from September 2019

3.4 Clarifying the Short Breaks Offer

You said: The short breaks statement was out of date and unclear.

We did: Revised the short breaks statement and took it to the Parent Carer Forum for feedback. We listened to the comments and produced a new short breaks statement which was published in May 2018.

3.5 Consultation About Improving the Council's Respite and Residential Offer

You said: In response to a formal consultation proposal to deliver all short breaks from Addison Street, and enabling Heatherfield Mews to offer two additional permanent placements to children and young people who were placed out of area, parents and carers told us that they had a number of concerns. Your feedback underlined the importance of all families having a bespoke individual transition plan to support the transfer of existing clients to Addison Street.

We did: The initial proposal put forward a timescale of September for the transition. If the recommendation is accepted, in response to the consultation, we propose to move the transition timing to the end of October.

4. Improving Leisure and Community-based Opportunities

4.1 Improving Leisure Activities

You said: In the summer of 2017 parents, carers and young people said they wanted to know more about leisure activities for young people aged 0-25 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their families, and that the Parent Carer Forum would plan and organise a Market Place event.

We did: We agreed that a representative from Active North Tyneside would host a stall on the day.

The Parent Carer Forum planned and organised the event with leisure providers exhibiting and advertising their services. The event took place on 11th October 2017. Organisations that came along to talk about their services included:

- Active North Tyneside
- The Alan Shearer Centre
- Tim Lamb's Children's Centre
- SPARCS
- NTDF
- Contact a Family
- Smile through Sport
- Autism Northumberland

The Leisure event was well attended NTPCF had good feedback from both providers and parent/carers who attended. NTPCF identified that young children under the age of 8 are left out, as there are no providers that cater for younger children. Equally children with complex needs can't access services, because of medical/physical disability or requiring one to one support.

You said: On 14 November 2017 you also asked about these aspects of leisure:

- Is there the possibility of getting access to the Hydro Pool at Beacon Hill over the school holidays?
- We had Adaptive bikes in the local area, but we aren't sure where they are now, we have tried the Parks and they aren't aware of the whereabouts but if we could locate them some sessions on these bikes would be useful.
- Trampolining / rebound therapy – we know there is a session held at the Parks but this is held during the day on a Wednesday, it would be great if there could be more sessions available to those children who are in school. We are also aware that trampoline sessions are run at weekends (4 sessions between 10 to 1pm on Saturday and Sundays) at Marden Bridge and wondered if some of these sessions could be made accessible.

- We also wondered about other schools such as John Spence – who already run the fab Tuesday Club, and if sessions would be available during school holidays?
- We wondered about sessions at the Shiremoor activity playground and how they could be accessed.
- One of the biggest gaps was evident for the youngest children and also for those with more limiting medical and physical needs as well as those who have a high risk of absconding and display oppositional behaviours, so who often need 1:1 or even 2:1 sessions.

We did: Following feedback from the market place event and further consultation with the Parent Carer Forum the sport and leisure service took a number of actions. The Parent Carer forum helped us develop a No Limits Disability session for children and their families. This session which includes a variety of activities was trialed in July 2018 and then added to the general programme from September that year. It takes place every Monday early evening during term time.

An audit was also done on the adapted bikes stock and these were serviced in early 2018. The team have organised some adapted bike sessions over the 2019 summer holidays and are exploring continuing these in September. With regards to trampolining, there are 2 sessions across the service, one at The Lakeside Centre (Monday 1 – 3pm) and The Parks (Thursday 1.30 – 3.30pm). These sessions have been designed for adults (16+) but the team have worked to incorporate trampolining into the No Limits Disability session at the Parks on Monday evenings for children.

There are specific sessions running from Shiremoor Adventure playground for children with disabilities and their siblings and families. These are every Sunday 12.30 – 4.30pm and also Mondays (12 – 5pm during the holidays or 4 – 7pm during term time). This includes general access to the open play facility and on occasion group activities. These sessions do not need to be booked but on initial visit the family would need to complete some registration and medical details for the awareness of the team.

Unfortunately access to the school hydro pools during holidays and developing a rebound session at Marden Bridge has not progressed. The team will continue to work with partners to explore options wherever possible.

Other activities which have been developed include a Sign and Splash session and Sensory Sign and Play session. These sessions are for pre-school children and their parents / guardians. Sign and Splash is at Tynemouth Pool on Mondays 12.30 – 1.00pm and is to introduce young children to singing and also signing while splashing in the pool. The Sensory Sign and Play session uses soft play and multi-sensory equipment again to encourage play and teaching simple sign language. These sessions have been developed in partnership with LD North East who provide an instructor for the sessions. The team at The Lakeside Centre have also developed a programme of group swimming lessons for hearing impaired children which will start in September. For general swimming, there are designated swimming sessions for people of all ages who have a disability and their families at Waves and Hadrian Leisure Centre. Other programmed activities for people who have a disability include archery, badminton, boccia and football.

With regards to information and the North Tyneside Council Sport and leisure website pages; a specific section has been added for each leisure site which lists the accessible facilities available. There is a recognition that this could be improved and the team are Currently (August 2019) working to incorporate relevant photos galleries to support this.

4.2 Offering Max Cards

You said: In 2017 you said that parents and carers would like MAX cards and that the Parent Carer Forum would be happy to fund and administer them and to encourage parents and carers to complete the Disability Register. You asked if the Council could match fund the MAX cards.

We did: We agreed to the request for matched funding to purchase 100 MAX Cards for the Parent Carer Forum to distribute.