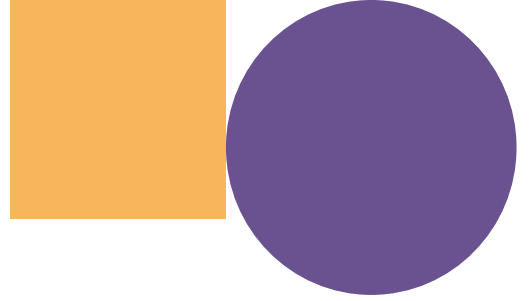


Leicestershire Local Offer Accessibility Strategy

▶ 2022 - 2025



Leicestershire
SEND



The **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (2015): 0 to 25 years** outlines that local authorities must provide a local offer that is ‘accessible for all’:



4.62 - Local authorities **must** make their local offer widely accessible and on a website. They must publish arrangements for enabling those without access to the internet to get information. They must also enable access for different groups, including disabled people and those with different types of SEND.

Introduction

This strategy seeks to outline our approach to having an accessible Local Offer, and to complement the Leicestershire County Council accessibility statement as well as the corporate equality, diversity and human rights statement.

Accessibility can be defined as:

“Providing alternative means (formats or options) to access what’s on offer if the ‘standard’ offer is not accessible”.

Background

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) emphasises the following three points:

1. Accessibility for all

The local offer needs to be accessible to all families with a child or young person with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND), not just to those with a computer and access to the internet. This ensures that reasonable adjustments are made in line with the **Equality Act 2010** by providing information in an alternative way.

2. Widening usage

Families do not just need to be technically able to access the local offer; they need to be aware of its existence and understand the benefits of accessing it. Raising awareness amongst professionals is considered to be key to facilitating wider usage amongst children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers.

3. Ensuring sustainability

Ensuring the local offer remains up to date is crucial in order for it to be useful (and used) by parents/carers, children and young people and professionals. The ongoing maintenance and updating of content on the local offer will require continued resource.

Leicestershire County Council website and Leicestershire local offer conforms to the best practice accessibility guidelines (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - WCAG), recommended for all UK government websites and is in line with the approach used by Gov.UK. Further details can be found at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/accessibility

What we have done

Leicestershire Local offer has its main body of information on webpages however it has 3 other significant strands of operation:

Local Offer Facebook Page – Helping people to find support and services for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and share information across Leicestershire and surrounding areas

Local Offer Roadshows – Our Roadshows bring together services which support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families, all in one place. You can meet with representatives from Health, Local Authority and voluntary sector services in various areas of the County

SEND NEWS – Local Offer news briefing is a termly publication that shares useful information from the Local Authority and its partners

Ongoing Improvements have been made to the website in terms of ease of accessibility for its intended service users which include:

- ▶ Increase the use of Youtube video clips
- ▶ Animation created to promote the Local Offer
- ▶ Tiles and images to better help navigation
- ▶ Ongoing oversight from digital colleagues to ensure content is in an accessible format





Needs analysis


The young people and families who will access our local offer are likely to have a wide range of different needs (i.e., visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility difficulties, learning difficulties, health conditions) and therefore will have different access requirements.

The population of Leicestershire is diverse and multi-cultural and therefore it is important that information is accessible to individuals for whom English is an additional language.

Outcomes and benefits

Ensuring information is accessible is essential to providing equal opportunities to all. The local offer seeks to enable families to ‘self-serve’ and access provision that meets their individual needs enabling their social, emotional resilience and capacity.

If information is not accessible it is likely that families may:

- ▶ be unaware of the range of opportunities/services, available to them. Some of these services or opportunities may provide young people and their families with a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.
 - ▶ be denied of the opportunity to “improve” their health and social wellbeing.
 - ▶ be denied the opportunity to access service provision (specialist and universal) that could support their needs or requirements.
 - ▶ respond to only some of the information provided.
 - ▶ require further information which may reduce the usefulness of the local offer.
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Our approach

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) requires local authorities to publish their local offer in one place; this will be the [Leicestershire County Council](#) website.

As the local offer is designed to support young people with SEND, it is particularly important to ensure information is presented in an accessible way.

In line with recommendations made through Leicestershire County Council equalities and communication champions' we have taken the following steps:

1. Completed an equality and human rights impact assessment in relation to the local offer.
2. Established that the needs of our families are individual and therefore a personalised approach is required. This will involve commissioning customised or adapted resources upon request, to meet individual need.
3. We have published an accessibility statement to ensure families know how to obtain information in alternative formats. **“If you require this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, audio or help in understanding it in your language, please contact 0116 305 6545”**
4. We have a standard feedback mechanism where users can leave feedback on the webpages at any time – we monitor these closely and act on these where we can. More information about how you can give feedback on the Local Offer can be found [here](#)
5. We monitor Website usage and search terms, if we find a term is being used that is not directing people to the correct information, we can create it so that the search term is added resulting in information being easily found.

Information we will adapt as standard

We will produce easy read versions of key documents as part of publishing these on our website – for example the [joint commissioning strategy](#).

We aim to provide written policies and guidance in a Dyslexia friendly font. These are considered by the British Dyslexia Association to be sans serif fonts, such as Arial and Comic Sans. Alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet, Calibri, Open Sans. Leicestershire County Council website, including the local offer uses Arial, Sari-Medium and News Gothic.

People without internet access can request publications in a printed format. Please telephone 0116 305 6545 or email Leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk

Leicestershire Local Offer Strategy 2020 - 2025

Leicestershire Local Offer Strategy shares our vision and aspirations for the Local Offer. Within this is a clear plan of action which includes details on how we will focus on improving access to information and the Local Offer

