

Leicestershire's Local Offer Annual Report

▶ 2020 – 2021



Leicestershire
SEND



The 'Local Offer' is the phrase used to describe what is on offer for children and young people and their families with special educational needs and disabilities. The purpose of this report is to describe the things that we have done to develop our Local Offer and how we have responded to what children, young people and families have told us.

The Local Offer [website](#) is co-designed with Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum. We also gather the voice of children, young people and families through events, focus groups and other forms of feedback. We use this information to help us improve the website.

We actively encourage all users of the Local Offer to share their thoughts and suggestions for improvement. You can fill in an online form [Give feedback on the Local Offer](#) or you can email us Leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can share your views with a [Parent Carer Forum](#). This report is a requirement of the SEND (Local Offer) regulations 2014.



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1. Local Area Inspection

During February 2020, Leicestershire’s Local Area Inspection was carried out. We are proud to have Leicestershire’s Local Offer highlighted as a strength during the inspection, the report concluded that:



“The local offer for children and young people with SEND provides extensive education, health and care guidance and information to support children and young people and their families. Area leaders work with families to ensure that information is relevant and well promoted. Data collected by leaders and by inspectors during the inspection suggests significant use of the local offer website, including through social media.”



(you can read the report in full [here](#))

During the inspection, Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum created a survey which asked various questions relating to Leicestershire’s Local Offer, below are some extracts from the survey and our responses to some of the feedback can be found in the “Your Voice” of this report. We hope an annual repeat of the survey can be carried out to enable us to use this data to benchmark our performance.

Have you ever visited the local offer website?

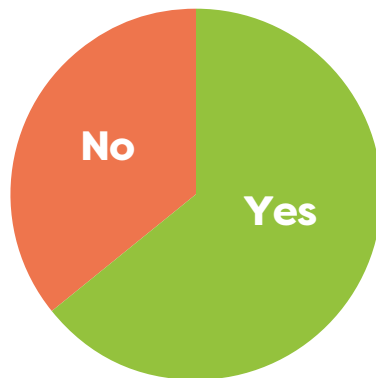


Figure 1. Graph showing percentage of 196 participants that answered

How easy is the website to use?

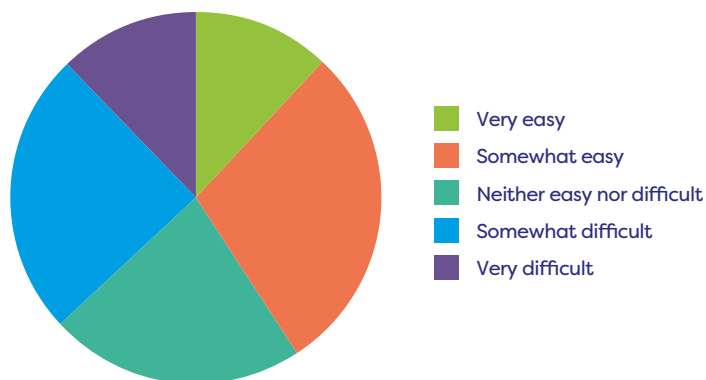


Figure 2. Graph showing percentage of 126 participants that answered

Did you find the information you were looking for?

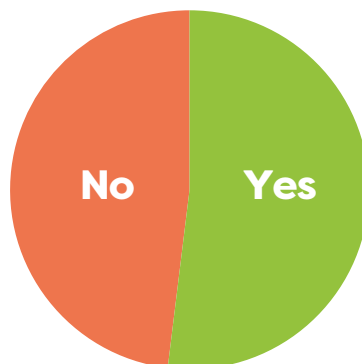


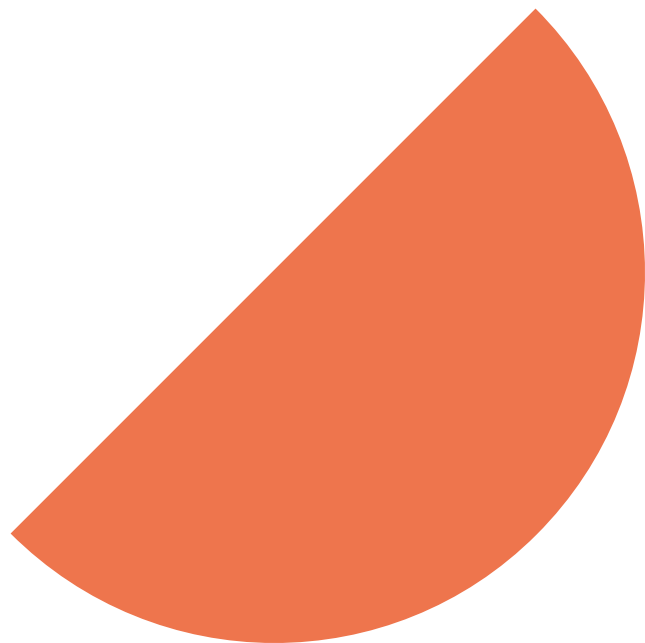
Figure 3. Graph showing percentage of 127 participants that answered


2. How has the Local Offer been developed during 2020 and how have families been involved?

Understandably this year has meant the usual way in which we work has had to change quite considerably, events cancelled, resources have been limited and priorities shifted to meet the demands Coronavirus has created.

That being said, we started the year with some exciting and engaging work with young people, 2 workshops were carried out with Children and family wellbeing service SEND Youth groups. 10 young people took part aged between 11-17. The workshops were designed to gather young people's views on website design, functionality and architecture to support the development of the Local Offer and SEND section of the council's website. The feedback gathered helped reassure we were taking the right approach for the design of our local offer. Findings from the sessions can be found in the "Your Voice" section of this report.

March 2020 required the creation of a new webpage on the Local Offer called "Information and support during coronavirus" We shared useful information and resources across both health and education which was constantly updated and improved as the pandemic evolved.





Leicestershire County Council's Play and Leisure Inclusion worker put together a compiled list of all the Free Play and Leisure Activity Ideas for children and young people with SEND during the Covid19 lockdown which was also uploaded onto this section of the Local Offer. We regularly used Facebook to share the innovative ways in which services and providers had adapted their offer of support for families. We also regularly asked for parent carers to contribute to Facebook feeds sharing useful information, resources and websites.

Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum helped shape the changes that were made to the Short breaks offer in Leicestershire during the Pandemic, whereby families had control of deciding what provision would best meet the needs of their child. This information was updated on the Local Offer and shared via the Local Offer Facebook page.

During this time we had some national feedback that families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities had been "Left in Lockdown" as a result of this we ensured we were routinely sharing the "Information and support during coronavirus" pages and promoting of the types of information available on the page. Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum were also provided with fortnightly briefings from Leicestershire SEND & Inclusion Management during the pandemic which they shared with their members and was also added to the Local Offer Website and Facebook page.

Recent developments in how we coproduce our Local Offer during Coronavirus includes an online forum using the "Confers" software. This is a format that allows parents, carers and young people to offer feedback on areas of the website. We plan to ensure we continue to offer this online forum post Coronavirus alongside any face to face co-production sessions in ensuring we are always improving our accessibility.

Alongside all of the above we routinely make improvements to the Local Offer responding to the ongoing feedback left on both our Facebook page and web pages and by working with internal departments to help improve their information on the Local Offer. A recent project saw the improvement and reworking of the Specialist Teaching Service's information which can be found [here](#). Feedback from our parent representative on the Local Offer Steering group included the importance of ensuring the text was written in plain font but unfortunately due to the design of the Leicestershire County Council website this is not possible however, we have ensured all our literature reflects this font style.

During the Autumn of 2020, in an independent review carried out of 148 Local Authority Local Offer websites, Leicestershire was proudly ranked 1st place in the UK in terms of accessibility achieving over 99% in user testing. This means our website is accessible for all users, including people with disabilities, using old or unusual technology and people with poor internet access.



3. Getting the Local Offer out to families

We were able to carry out 2 Local Offer Roadshows in 2020 before the Coronavirus pandemic, below is an infographic showing the reach of the Local Offer Roadshows over the last 3 years.



We are currently launching a virtual take on the Local Offer Roadshows, more information can be found [here](#).

We have continued to produce our SEND News which shares useful information and developments across Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Leicestershire. We currently have 900 individuals signed up to receive this electronically and 5 signed up to receive paper copies. Please email Leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk if you would like to be added to the mailing list. All editions are shared on the Local Offer Facebook Page and added to the Local Offer – they can be found [here](#).

Our Local Offer [Facebook page](#) continues to grow and has been a hive of support during 2020 with a following of over 1900. We share a variety of information from across the county as well as nationally and across various sectors covering a breath of needs, we always love to hear feedback via Facebook and tailor our feed accordingly.



4. Google Analytics for the Local Offer

We gather a wealth of information about the Local Offer webpages and use these to help inform our developments, some of the key statistics for 2020 are shown here:

39,961
sessions

120,425
page views

3,600
average
monthly
sessions

5. Your Voice

What have you told us during 2020?

You Said	We Did
<p>There appear to be no services to meet my child's needs, I think an overarching point of communication that can tell you if/what is available, or to register lack of availability of certain services</p>	<p>We are always keen to hear exactly that sort of information. You can register that information here:</p> <p>https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/sharing-your-views/register-or-suggest-a-service</p> <p>Gaps in opportunities are fed back to our Play and leisure inclusion officer who is in regular contact with providers and advises what it is parents want and need.</p> <p>We also have the new SEN support handbook and can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/send-support-in-schools/supporting-children-with-send</p>
<p>Support for families with children out of school who have social difficulties</p>	<p>The Inclusion Service have recently launched a hub of information which includes home education – it can be found here</p>
<p>Need an easier way to filter the results of a search - lots of generic info but difficult to work out what is suitable for specific needs</p>	<p>We have this option on the Information and Support Directory – by selecting the “All needs” filter on the left hand side. But we agree, when searching the main website it does bring up a large set of results due to the way the website functions. If there is something you have been unable to find, we always welcome the “Help us improve this page” form to help identify what we need to improve.</p>
<p>What each area special school offers support with</p>	<p>Each school is obligated to share their “Local Offer” which sets out their offer for children with Special educational needs & disabilities. We ensure we have a link to this information for each school on the “Find a school Directory” and can be found on the right hand side of the page.</p>

You Said	We Did
<p>A process map for parents giving contact details and clear instruction as to what support is available after diagnosis and issue of EHCP. Parents have to negotiate their own way through the process in order to find help.</p>	<p>Thank you for this feedback, a process map has been developed for during the process and can be found here. However we have forwarded your views on to the SENA service.</p>
<p>All schools and units listed including independent ones.</p>	<p>The “Find a school Directory” shows all schools in Leicester and Leicestershire including Independent provision. Work is being carried out to ensure schools with new units are also distinguishable.</p> <p>Out of area independents schools can be found by visiting the list of approved independent special schools outbound link on this page</p>
<p>Anything that is there is out of date, sometimes irrelevant to SEND families (generic holiday play schemes) or out of area</p>	<p>We feel it is important to include generic holiday play schemes and leisure and support providers because in lots of cases they are able to meet a breath of needs. We also believe it is important for families of SEND children to have access to universal information relevant to family life. We have recently carried out an extensive update of our Information and Support Directory ensuring the information on there is as current and up to date as possible. Indeed many children with SEND needs are able to access mainstream playschemes who are offered support from the Early Years Inclusion and childcare service. Play and leisure providers in general are offered SEND training, investing time and money in play and leisure providers to upskill them to enable them to include children with SEND into their service. We plan to continue to ensure the Directory of services remains up to date and current. If parent carers happen to come across anything out of date we would welcome them to fill in the “Help us improve this page” form to help identify what we need to improve.</p>



You Said	We Did
<p>What help parents can get for each child. What responsibilities the staff have to ensure children are educationally provided without battling with senco teachers and what sanction will be imposed if non-compliant</p>	<p>We have developed a SEND Support Handbook which includes a section on Best Endeavours and Reasonable Adjustments with a clear process to help families and professionals. You can find it here</p>
<p>More information and advertising respite care for families. What help families can get for a child with severe learning difficulties. We have had to find things out for ourselves eg summer respite for a few days with ftm dance. Very little help available and lack of information about moving on from year 9 into seniors and adult services on leics county council website.... or information offered to us about pathways instead of gcse.</p> <p>Alternative provision ...the LA have on information there and my sons EHCP says he needs alternative provision . There is more on the behaviour partnership site but his behaviour is good</p>	<p>Thanks – we are aware that we need to improve our information offer for Preparing for adulthood and this is something we are working on currently. We would love more parent carer input on the developments and will be sharing opportunities to help shape this work on the Local Offer Facebook page and in the SEND newsletter. Alternatively, you can email karen.hall@leics.gov.uk for more information.</p>

You Said	We Did
<p>Yes, which local places offer a carer to go free or have discounts for ASD kids.</p>	<p>This is a great suggestion for all types of special educational needs and disabilities, we often share similar types of information over on our Facebook Page however we are aware the Skybadger website is much better placed to support families and holds up to date information – we have added this service to our Information and Support Directory which forms part of our Local Offer and can be found here:</p> <p>https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/popular-now/directories/information-and-support-directory/sky-badger-finding-help-for-disabled-children-their-families</p>
<p>Not Fine in School Support group Information about alternative provision and EOTAS</p>	<p>Thank you – we contacted this organisation and liaised with them to get registered on the Information and Support Directory which forms part of our Local Offer.</p>
<p>More guidance for parents Questions to ask with your review Support available when attending</p>	<p>You're right, the information held on this topic on the Local Offer is minimal. SENDIASS can offer support with this therefor we have improved this page by adding a link to SENDIASS in the "Also See" section. We have also added SENDIASS to the "Where to start section" on the Local Offer.</p>
<p>Information for adopted children and their families regarding support and information. Eg therapeutic parenting</p>	<p>Thank you, the fostering and adoption team create useful and informative newsletters which can be accessed by contacting adoptionssupport@leics.gov.uk</p>
<p>Not enough on mental health or the affects of bullying. Self harming and the Support for young people who self harm should be addressed more, parents are blamed for things they are not their fault all to often.</p>	<p>We have a link through to the Leicestershire Anti-Bullying team website where they have an "Ask Us" function. We will focus on ensuring we are continually promoting these types of features.</p> <p>Our Wellbeing practitioners have designed a new section for the Children and Family Wellbeing service part of the website focussing on mental health – we hope this will be live in early 2021. Alongside this they will be creating useful articles which will be shared on our Local Offer Facebook page to support families that have children with low level mental health needs.</p>

You Said	We Did
<p>Yes I would like to see published thresholds for services such as early help do that I know if I should be entitled to them.</p>	<p>Thank you, we have passed this comment over to the relevant departments across Children and Family Services.</p>
<p>Holiday clubs, after school activities,</p>	<p>Please visit our Information and Support Directory https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/popular-now/directories/information-and-support-directory</p> <p>If something is missing you can complete this form to let us know.</p>
<p>Never saw so many updates during the time you were being inspected so very sporadic posting on social media</p>	<p>We feel this may be due to the algorithms of social media. We now have a Facebook live feed on the landing page of the Local Offer Website which shows each post and doesn't require being logged in to Facebook to view. We have worked hard trying to encourage users to view updates via this route to prevent missed posts due to algorithms.</p> <p>During the time of the inspection we had 2 local offer events which also usually create lots of Facebook activity alongside several parent involvement activities which required promotion of to ensure adequate participation.</p>
<p>Opportunities across the county that are actually relevant to send families not in other counties and just sharing posts for the sake of it</p>	<p>Due to the nature of Leicestershire's boundaries, we have many towns and villages that cut across the borders of neighbouring counties so we feel it is important to share opportunities that might be of interest for all of our Leicestershire families, including those who are willing or wanting to travel to various locations. However we have taken your feedback on board and have recently tried to explain this on the posts we share for out of area activities in case people are unaware.</p> <p>It is also expected as part of the Local Offer statutory guidance that we share opportunities within the wider local area.</p>

Local Offer Website Young People Workshops

Workshop summary

We ran 1-hour user experience workshops with 2 SEND youth groups at local children and families centres. In total 10 young people aged from 11 to 17 took part in the sessions, below are the findings from the sessions.

You said	We Did
The council's current Local Offer design was liked by the groups and was the favourite design of the young people taking part in workshop 1.	This is great to hear – we have worked hard to improve our Local Offer and it's nice to know young people like the design.
The website should not use cartoon characters or designs as this was seen as childish and 'not very reassuring'	We use photo's throughout our site and will ensure when developing any Young Person focussed sections we continue to use images.
The website should not have too much writing on navigational pages – both groups identified the left-hand text navigation on one site as too much and confusing	We have begun to use more Tiles throughout the website to help with navigation. We must continue to roll this out in all sections of the Local Offer in response to your feedback.
Both groups preferred websites that made prominent use of photographs. We should use photographs and text for navigation and not Graphical icons, which both groups found confusing and 'rubbish' at showing what content they related to. This was backed up by the results of the icon quiz game we played at both workshops where teams were unable to identify what the icons related to.	This fits well with Leicestershire's website. We will continue to use these and continue to check the images out with parent carers and young people to ensure they are suitable.

You said	We Did
The website should have bright and vibrant colours	We feel our site does have bright and vibrant colours and layout, we will make sure this is continued into further developments, such as the Preparing for adulthood section paying careful consideration to any visual needs.
The website should include video throughout – video was seen as a good way to provide information.	We have just started to use videos on our website, which is a positive step forward and can be found here , but we know we have a long way to go. We will keep this in mind for the future development of the Local Offer.
The website should be able to be viewed in different colours for accessibility eg. change background and foreground colours	Thank you – we ensure that our website is accessible for a variety of users and technologies enabling the users to alter their preferences on their own devices. The Local Offer has recently been ranked the highest in the UK for its accessibility.
The website should not use acronyms or technical words	We must make sure that any acronyms (if used) will have an explanation. We also have a “Jargon Buster” on the where to start section of the local offer.
The website content and structure must be clear	We have often received feedback that our Local Offer is hard to navigate, we hope that by using more tiles to break down the sections this may improve. During 2021 we want to carry out some further user testing to see if the changes made improve usability.
The website should have a good search tool	We know that due to the Local Offer searching the whole Leicestershire County Council Website that the search function can be frustrating. Each month we review what search terms have been used and review the pages as a result of this. We know it isn't great but hope it is getting better.
The website should offer web chat and instant chat options for support and help	Thank you, although this is not something we are able to develop at the moment – we have passed this information on to our digital and web development team.



