



# The SEND local offer

## Shropshire Local Offer Annual Report

September 2018 – September 2019

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## Welcome to the Local Offer Annual Report

During the last year the Local Authority and partners have had a real focus on improving the content, navigation and design of the Local Offer to ensure ease of access to information for parent carers of children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

We did this in a range of ways but primarily consulting and co-producing with parents and carers – helped by Shropshire’s Parents and Carers Forum (PACC) and the Independent Advice and Support Service (IASS).

We also actively engaged children and young people with SEND from across Shropshire who have been instrumental in developing icons to enhance the design and visuals of the Local Offer.

During the last 12 months, our focus has been on improving the Local Offer for parent carers, but we are equally committed to providing information to children and young people. We are starting conversations with young people about the information they currently access, and how they access this information. This research and the views of young people will help us to develop phase two of the Local Offer – a site specifically for young people, dedicated to their needs.

One of the purposes of the Local Offer is provide a single point of access to a huge range of information, advice, activities and provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities, and parents and carers which support families to enjoy life.

The other purpose is to provide a two-way street of feedback direct from family’s experiences of using provision or accessing information so that we can continually improve the ‘offer’ of support, information and help.

This annual report provides the opportunity to keep everyone informed of the work we have undertaken and the next steps and future direction we are working towards.

In May 2019, I was also delighted to be part of the co-production of new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy taking us from 2020 – 2023 and attended a planning workshop with over 80 children and young people – who provided us with a real insight into their lives, their hopes and their dreams for the future.



**Counsellor Ed Potter**  
**Portfolio Lead – Children and Young People**

## The Statutory Duty

The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory duty upon local authorities to publish a Local Offer and annual report.

Local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it, and
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review

## How have we developed the Shropshire Local Offer over the past year?

### Independent review

From May 2018-December 2018 an independent review of the Shropshire Local Offer was undertaken. This commissioned review by consultants FWL included consulting with young people, parent carers and practitioners on the content and navigation of the Local Offer. Recommendations from the review were presented to the SEND Strategic Board in December 2018. Since the review the Local Offer project now sits within the Family Information Service within Early Help.

### Involving children and young people

#### Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH)

In February 2019, we attended a Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH) workshop and worked with young people to design icons for the redesigned Local Offer website. Our web designer digitalised the young people's drawings during the workshop, so the young people could see what their drawing would look like on the website, they were impressed with one saying, 'that is so cool'. One of the young people mentioned they never got picked at school for a certificate, so we designed a certificate for them which we presented on the last session as a thank you for their art work. Here are examples of some of the images the young people designed.





Education



Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)



Things to do



Travel and transport



Health



Preparing for adulthood

### Severndale Specialist School

In July 2019 we started working with young people from Severndale Specialist School as part of phase two of the Local Offer project – considering a Local Offer specifically for young people. These workshops have been focussing on how young people currently access information, what information they currently access and what devices they use to access online information. This will help us to understand more about the user experience before we consider how a young person specific Local Offer would best respond to their needs.

### Review Focus Group

As part of the independent review, young people who attend a SEN youth group were asked their views on the Local Offer. The results showed that young people did not know of the term Local Offer nor could they relate to the term once it was explained. They could not explain the acronym SEND and phrases such as ‘directory’ did not help to explain the content within that area. There was however a positive response to segmenting content by audience type (young person or parent carer).

### Involving parent carers

#### Parent carer questionnaire and focus group

As part of the review parent carers were asked to take part in a questionnaire to gauge understanding and use of the Local Offer in Shropshire. Parent carers of young people who attend a SEN youth group were also involved in a separate focus group. These gave useful insight into the views of parents on the Local Offer. The general feeling was that although parents were generally aware of the Local Offer they had lost confidence in using the website, either because information was not being kept up to date by service areas or information was missing. Parent carers also told us that the site was difficult to navigate, which made finding information challenging. This is something which has been improved

on the new site, with top level categorisation and identifying content leads who have responsibility for updating specific sections.

## Local Offer Project Group

We are fortunate to have parent carers representation on the Local Offer project group from the Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC). Parent carers are key to the co-production of the Local Offer and it is vital to have their insight as part of the ongoing developments.

## Parent/carers workshop

In March 2019, an event was held with parents to talk about the usability and functionality of the Local Offer homepage. This event was led by a colleague from the Digital Services Team, who is a specialist in user experience. Whilst there were only small numbers attending, this co-production event, along with feedback from parents over several years, helped to shape the redesign of the Local Offer homepage, and in particular the top-level categories parents wanted to see on the home page.



Several parents said that they were keen to be involved but had been unable to attend the meeting. As such we have been considering other channels, such as social media, which give parents the opportunity to be involved in making decisions.

## Testing the new site

In August 2019 parent carers were asked to be involved in the testing of the new site. A short survey was developed which asked parents to test the navigation to find content on particular topics.

A link to the survey was promoted through PACC, IASS, through the Local Offer Facebook page and the Family Information Service Facebook page.

## Feeding back on videos

The project group has been working on enhancing the visuals of the Local Offer, from the use of icons to the production of videos. Some videos had previously been produced but viewing figures were low. In June 2019, we asked parents to feedback, so the videos could be edited and improved.

## Involving practitioners

### Focus group and usability testing

Practitioners were asked to be involved in the review of the Local Offer and to share their thoughts on the site. A test was set up asking practitioners to find information on the Shropshire Local Offer and then to find the same information on another Local Authority's Local Offer. Practitioners were asked to compare ease of navigation and quality of information. Whilst there was some success in

finding information on the Shropshire Local Offer the other Local Offer scored higher, this was primarily on the grounds on ease of navigation. This has been taken into consideration with the new site, the navigation system has been redesigned and tagging and metadata has been reviewed.

## Questionnaire

Practitioners were also asked to score several statements from 1-5, with 1 being disagree and 5 being agree.

1. I am clear about the type of information held in the practitioner area
2. I am confident I will find the information I am looking for in the practitioner area
3. I can easily navigate to the information I am looking for
4. I am confident the content on the site is up to date, with latest versions of documents
5. I know how to report information that is out of date

The results showed that whilst there is a cohort of practitioners who have confidence in the site and use it successfully, for several practitioners this is not the case, something which needed to be addressed as part of the developments.

As a result of feedback, the practitioner section of the Local Offer has been reviewed and streamlined. In the marketing and promotion of the Local Offer, we will put in place specific activities to raise awareness to practitioners and to support them in using the site, in their own professional role and also when they are supporting parents to access the site.

## Improving content

Feedback from parent carers and practitioners told us that they lacked confidence in the accuracy of the Local Offer as some sections of content were out of date. The compliance check undertaken as part of the review also showed that there were gaps in content. Work has happened to identify 'content leads' for sections of the Local Offer. This would be someone within a particular service area who would either prepare content or co-ordinate others within the service to prepare content. This content lead would be the point of contact for reviewing and updating the Local Offer.

A content tracker has also been developed, which included the details of the identified content leads, when there were contacted for content, when content was received and the date the content is to be reviewed. This tracker has been extremely useful in recording when service areas were contacted and whether the content has been received or not.

## Website usage

There has been a steady increase in website views since the end of the view which is very encouraging.

Timeframe	Page Views	Unique Page Views
April – June 2018	9,958	7,430
July – Sept 2018	9,815	7,226
Oct – Dec 2018	14,744	11,014
Jan – March 2019	17,007	13,136
April – June 2019	16,335	12,800

## Top Pages Viewed

Google analytics informs us on the most visited pages on the Local Offer site. With the launch of the new site, and changes to the structure of the homepage, the information we report on in the future will change as there is no longer a specific parent carer section or young people section.

April to June 2018	July to Sept 2018	Oct to Dec 2018	Jan to March 2019	April to June 2019
Parent and carers	Parent and carers	Parent and carers	Parent and carers	Parent and carers
Young People	Young People	Practitioners	Practitioners	Practitioners
News	News	Young People	Young People	Young People
Practitioners	Events	Events	Events	News
Events	About the Local Offer	News	News	Events
About the Local Offer	SEN vocabulary explained	About the Local Offer	FAQs	Local Offer Event Venues
Legislation and guidance	Legislation and guidance	SEN vocabulary explained	SEN vocabulary explained	About our Local Offer

## Social media

Local Offer social media pages (Facebook and Twitter) were set up several years ago, but there has not been any activity on these sites for over a year. Since the review there has been a significant increase in the posts on the site, which has in turn grown the number of followers and engagement with the audience. A calendar of national campaigns and standard posts has been created so that content is prepared in advance and ready to post.

Since September, the number of followers on Facebook has increased from 31 to over 415, and the number of followers on Twitter has increased from 20 to 81.

## Email Marketing Campaign

We have developed an email marketing campaign to enhance our communications with parents. Using a system called Gov Delivery, we will send 9 separate emails to parents who have subscribed to receive email communications about the Local Offer. There are currently over 2000 signed up to from organic growth alone, and with extended promotion this will increase.

Our drip marketing campaign will send subscribers an email on a weekly basis for 8 weeks, covering a variety of topics and push subscribers to the Local Offer for further information. At the end of the campaign they will then receive a survey asking what might have changed for them as a result of receiving the information.

Shropshire is the first Local Offer in the country to try this approach.

## **Local Offer Project Group**

Following the review, a Local Offer project group was established to steer the future development and implement recommendations. This group includes representatives from health, education, social care, the voluntary sector and parent carers. The group meets monthly.

## **Appointment of a part time Local Offer Development Officer**

In September 2019 a member of staff was identified to take on additional duties and to work on the development of the Local Offer on a part-time basis. The role is responsible for the maintenance and ongoing-development of the Local Offer, including content, social media, and marketing and promotion. At the same time the Local Offer was transferred to sit within the Family Information Service, within Early Help and for the FIS co-ordinator to have day to day management oversight of developments.

## **Promotional events**

### **Autism West Midlands Annual Conference**

In March 2019, the Local Offer Development Officer attended the annual Autism West Midlands conference to help to raise awareness of the Local Offer and to gain feedback from parents.

### **Preparing for Adulthood**

The Local Offer Development Officer attended a preparing for adulthood event to raise awareness of the Local Offer. This event was well attended by parent carers and young people. There was an opportunity to show the Local Offer and to gain feedback on the site which were taken into consideration as part of the future developments.

## **Launching a redesigned Local Offer**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019, we went live with the redesigned Local Offer information pages. This soft launch was to prevent content being updated on a live site and a test site, and to enable testing to continue until a more formal launch at a preparing for adulthood event in September 2019.

This redesigned content included new top-level categories identified by parent carers, category icons designed by young people, a reconfigured navigation system and updated content from service areas.



These screenshots show the previous site

**Shropshire Council** Search for... Search

Menu **The SEND local offer** Subscribe

More in The SEND local offer

## Welcome to The SEND local offer

The SEND local offer is a single place for information, services, and resources for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities, their families, and the practitioners who support them. You can also find local support services [using our directory](#) and local SEND events [using our events diary](#). Please also like and follow the local offer on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for regular updates.

SHROPSHIRE LOCAL OFFER

I am looking for... Search for... Search

**Young people**  
About our local offer  
How did the requirement for a local offer come into being and how can you access it?

**Parent/carers**  
Events diary  
Our events diary lists local SEND events in Shropshire.

**Practitioners**  
News  
All the latest SEND news.

**Feedback - your opinion matters**  
Tell us what you think about the Shropshire local offer service

**Frequently asked questions**  
Shropshire local offer FAQs

**Who should I contact?**  
A quick guide to who's who across SEND services in Shropshire.

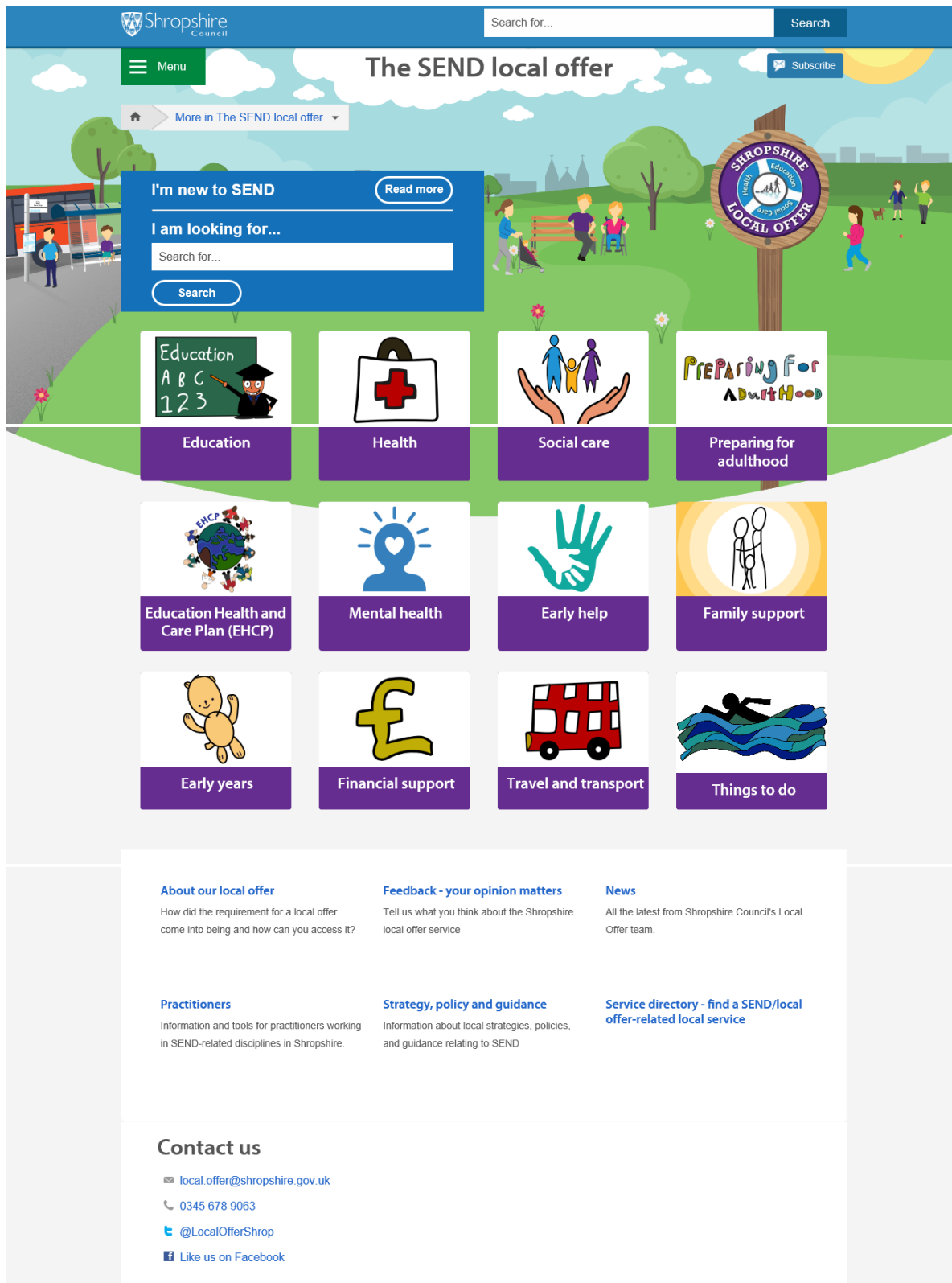
**Strategy, policy and guidance**  
Information about local strategies, policies, and guidance relating to SEND

**Service directory - find a SEND/local offer-related local service**

### Contact us

local.offer@shropshire.gov.uk  
0345 678 9063  
@LocalOfferShrop

These screenshots show the redesigned site



## Peer Review

At the Local Offer Regional meeting, it was agreed to undertake a peer review of Local Offers within the West Midlands. Shropshire was paired with Staffordshire, who undertook their review of the Shropshire Local Offer in September. The findings were:-

<b>Does the Local Offer include information on:-</b>	<b>Evaluation</b> 1 – Not evident 2 – Partially met 3 – Meets requirements 4 – Exceeds requirements	<b>Evaluation and comments</b>
The arrangements for identifying and assessing SEN	3	Really easy to find. Clear.
How to request an assessment for an EHC plan	4	Easy to find and different info for parents, young people and schools.
Who can request an assessment for an EHC plan	3	Very clear with separate guidance for the different people.
How EHC needs assessments are undertaken	3	Found it, may be useful to have guidance on as a page rather than a document?
Information about the EHC plan	4	FAQ useful for additional information. Found templates easily.
Local arrangements for collaboration between institutions to support those with SEN e.g. cluster groups of schools or colleges	1	Couldn't find information on this.

We will be in contact with content leads for this area of the Local Offer to ensure that information is reviewed, and comments have been taken into consideration.

## What are we going to do next?

### Children and young people's site

We have already started researching and understanding young people's information needs and the channels through which they access information. This will help to shape the development of phase two of the Local Offer – a site specifically for young people with SEND.

## **Improving mechanisms for gathering feedback**

A simple process has been developed for recording feedback and comments, this needs to be reviewed along with the channels through which users can provide their feedback. We want to ensure users can easily provide feedback and be confident that this will be taken into consideration and responded to.

## **Develop a marketing strategy**

With the launch of the new site, we need to develop a marketing strategy. This will ensure that as many parent carers and practitioners are aware of the Local Offer as possible. Marketing will include both online and offline.