

**CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE, WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY,
PARENTS AND CARERS ON THE TOWER
HAMLETS LOCAL OFFER**

A Response to Key Findings

November 2014



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1) Introduction

In September 2014, all local areas in England were required to implement key reforms related to the new Children and Families Bill. These changes are to better support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. This is to make sure they have the same opportunities as everyone else and that they receive the necessary support to move smoothly into adulthood resulting in the introduction of a more effective, transparent and an accountable system of support for children and young people with SEND.

The key changes are as follows:

Production of a Local Offer: Placing a duty on local authorities to set out clear and searchable information on services available to parents and carers, children and young people.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children and young people with special educational needs from birth to age 25: Replacing Statements of Special Educational Needs, and Section 139a Learning Difficulty Assessments for post 16 education.

Personal Budgets: For some families and young people with an EHCP to give greater independence, choice and control over their support.

Joint Commissioning: placing a requirement on health services and local authorities to jointly commission and plan services for children, young people and families

2) The Local Offer

This report focuses on The Local Offer which aims to provide a single, accessible picture of services across education, health, social care and the voluntary and community sectors, to enable children and young people and their parents to have greater choice and control about provision in their area. The Local Offer is also a valuable tool for professionals and practitioners, and will help to inform commissioning and needs analysis, as well as supporting better integration between services.

As part of the Children's and Families Act 2014 (Part 3) local authorities must involve young people with SEN or disabilities and their parents in:

- ✓ Planning the content of The Local Offer
- ✓ Deciding how to publish The Local Offer
- ✓ Reviewing The Local Offer, including enabling them to make comments.

The SEN Code of Practice states "***The local offer should be collaborative, accessible, comprehensive and transparent.***" It also identifies areas which should be included and are a statutory requirement. (Please see appendix 1 for detailed

requirement) In brief it should include provision from birth to 25, across education, health and social care and be developed in conjunction with children and young people, parents and carers, including schools, colleges, health and social care agencies. It is a lot more than a directory of existing services but a result of engagement with children, young people and their parents on the information it contains. In the process of further developing our local offer it will support us to improve provision.

The aim of this report is to highlight the results of the consultations with children, young people with SEND their parents and carers on The London Borough of Tower Hamlets Local Offer and the actions that have been taken to date in response to the feedback from the consultations.

3) Methodology for Consultations with children and young people

In order to help develop our local offer, consultation sessions with young people and children took place during May and June 2014. The consultations were with a range of young people with special educational needs and disabilities across schools in Tower Hamlets. This involved children and young people with disabilities including learning difficulty, physical disability and hearing impairment. The age range of the young people was from 6 to 19 years old. A total of 27 children and young people were consulted with. The children and young people were identified with the support of the Support for Learning Services, specifically the specialist advisory teachers.

The consultations took place during school hours at the school the young person attends. The Schools who were involved in this consultation were a secondary specialist school, a secondary mainstream school which supports deaf young people, a sixth form which supports young people with a learning difficulty, a mainstream secondary girls school with young people with a physical disability and a mainstream primary school which includes children with a physical disability.

The method of data collection varied amongst the children and young people. This was dependent on their age and ability in order to ensure we obtained as much information as possible. A combination of power point presentations, visuals using communicate in print, the internet to show examples of other local offer websites and you tube videos of other young people speaking about the local offer. Individual interviews were undertaken with the primary school pupils with the support of their teaching assistants. Where it was a combination of primary and secondary school pupils, although they were all in one group they were asked each question individually and their response was logged each child was supported by their teaching assistant and speech and language therapists and Head teacher as and when required.

The children and young people consulted with are all part of the school council ranging from the ages of 7 to 16 years old, prior to the consultation visual prompts were created from the questions. These were used during the consultation when

required to ensure the young people had a better understanding of the questions asked. The visual prompts included a wide range of symbols that the children could choose from, including an option of “something else”. Further visuals were created to show a huge range of possible answers but were only used if required by the young person. The young person provided a substantial amount of information on the different activities they either currently do or would like to do in the future which they would need information and support to achieve this. (Please see Appendix 2 for examples of questions and options visuals)

The consultation at the mainstream girl’s school was with young people who have a physical disability aged between 13 and 15 years old. I facilitated the consultation with the support of one of their teaching assistants. A power point presentation was used to explain the local offer and followed by questions about what they would like to see in The Local Offer. The girls were able to go into detail with regards to the information they would like to see on the local offer web site, the kind of support they would require, the gaps in information and support that was missing and how they would like to provide feedback and review. Their feedback highlighted the need for information on accessible transport and careers information being made available from year 8 onwards.

At the mainstream primary school the children were between the ages of 6 to 10 years old. The consultation was facilitated by myself and supported by their individual teaching assistants who knew them well. Each child was interviewed individually and visuals were used as and when required. The children spoke about the current activities they do, the activities they would like to do and who would support them with this. They all talked about what they would like to do when they left school. These ranged from becoming a teacher to repairing cars to one young girl stating she would like to become **“a fashion designer instead of a doctor because that was less work”**

At the Sixth Form College the young people were between the ages of 16 to 19 years old. They were supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). A variety of methods were used including a presentation, the internet and you tube videos to find out what they would like to see in the local offer. Some of the young people used the internet to show what their interests are.

The deaf young people who participated in the consultations were between the ages of 13 and 16 years old. They were briefed by their SENCO prior to the consultation about The Local Offer. A power point presentation was used and they were also supported by their SENCO whom they knew very well. They all stated they would like to see video clips on the local offer webpage which should have subtitles and with lots of videos of young people showing **“how well they are doing, studying and in a job.”** Both parents and young people would like to see **“clear icons, a very visual website without too much writing, with lots of photos”**. They also wanted information on colleges and universities, more specifically the support they

would receive from them. They requested information on finding suitable housing when they are ready to live independently and how to obtain specific equipment for their homes to meet their needs. They also wanted see information on Hackney ARK the audiology unit on the local offer website which provides services for people with hearing impairment.

The consultation identified that young people would like a wide range of Post 16 options made available to them, more information on what colleges have to offer them and if they are suitable to meet their individual needs. Majority of the young people consulted with had an idea of what they would like to do beyond school but wanted to know how this could be achieved. Many of the young people consulted with have aspirations of finding employment, going onto training and some would like to go onto university but they need the right support and information at the right time to achieve this. There is also a need for support to be made available from Year 8 onwards to help young people plan their careers as early on. This has been recognised in the SEN Code of Practice. Young people requested comprehensive career information and ongoing support from a careers adviser on the options available to them.

Overall young people wanted to see video clips on the local offer web page. These video clips should include a variety of scenarios of young people who are already in employment moving to further education and training. What their experiences have been, the process that they went through. How were they supported and where they found information to support them. Parents and carers also requested to see similar video clips because they would like to know what is possible for their children in the future and positive role models.

4) Methodology for Consultations with Parents and Carers

To ensure participation and co production with parents on the local offer we have undertaken a substantial number of workshops involving parents and carers from the local area facilitated by The Parent Advice Centre. The aim of the workshops was to discuss and obtain feedback on the content and format of Tower Hamlets local offer with parents and carers. To date a total of 26 SEND Reform workshops have taken place from February 2014 onwards. This includes 10 schools (two others are booked), 3 sessions for parents groups (all autism support) and 6 sessions at The Parent Advice Centre of which 3 during the week day, 1 in the evening and 2 sessions during the weekend. A total of **287** parents have attended the workshops. During the workshop sessions parent carers were asked a series of questions in part to generate discussion but also to gather their views on the local offer. Facilitators asked the questions and then recorded the comments and responses given during the discussions. The key areas that emerged from the workshops with parents have .been categorised into the following themes of Information, advice, signposting,

Education, Leisure, Transition, Health and the way information should be presented online. In comparison the main themes that emerged from children and young people have been Leisure activities and support to access them, Education and careers advice, training and finding employment. Another theme which emerged was being part of a community including maintaining friendships, travel and independent living. They also suggested that online information is presented in a way that ensures it is accessible for example information in the form of a short video would be helpful.

Both parents and young people wanted leisure facilities to be disabled friendly. However it is clear from the consultations that the nearest and most suitable facilities for them are not always located in Tower Hamlets. It was also evident from the consultation that young people are interested in a variety of leisure activities that again are not always located in their local area. All the children and young people wanted information on leisure activities and things to do. This included activities like swimming, cinema, going to adventure playgrounds, sporting activities which included playing tennis, football, sailing, kayaking, also visiting a farm, going on The London Eye, going shopping at various shopping centres in London and going to concerts.

All the young people except those of primary school age would like information and access to a forum and or peer support group where they can meet other young people with disabilities.

The consultations have clearly identified the need for the local offer website to support a search facility that is dynamic, drawing information from multiple sources providing relevant and responsive information. In response to the findings from children young people, parents and carers LBTH have included relevant information and links to websites on our local offer website. This is all highlighted in the table below. The key findings from the consultations with parents and young people have been logged in the table below with a summary of responses to the actions achieved. For those that have not yet been achieved the reasons for this and if further action will be taken.

Themes	Consultation Feedback From Parents And Young People On The Tower Hamlets Local Offer.	Status as of 21st November 2014	Is It a Statutory Requirement?	Is It Required Based On Local Need Identified During The Consultations?	LBTH Response & Comments
Education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	A written description regarding the criteria for Special Educational Needs Assessment for parents/carers in the local offer online.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information can be found under Special Educational Needs and Disability.
	A standardised information sheet regarding each school's protocol regarding SEN. In other words their "school offer".	Achieved	✓	✓	Links are provided on The Tower Hamlets Local Offer website to schools in Tower Hamlets.
	Information on Afterschool clubs for SEND children and Extra curriculum activities such as chess, board games, baking, dancing, dramas, trampoline, gym, sports, music.	Achieved	✓	✓	Relevant information can be found in the schools Local offer and via links on Tower Hamlets Local Offer website.
	Parents would like to know what to expect from all professionals e.g. SENCO' their role and what support they can provide.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available in the local offer website within Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
	Regular parent support groups at mainstream schools that are advertised on the website.	Achieved	✗	✓	Links provided to information available in the individual Schools local offer website.
	How and when schools will update and review the pupil's progress in school so that parents are kept informed.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information should be provided in the Schools Local Offer Website.
	How to make a complaint and who will look at the complaint and how long before complaint is responded to.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information provided in the Schools local offer website.
	A contact for who can support them to make a complaint.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information and support is provided by The Parent Advice Centre.

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Leisure	Information on suitable swimming pools in the area.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on our local swimming pools
	Information and support to attend clubs and forums available for young people.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on our local clubs and forums
	Information on suitable parks in the area.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on our local parks
	Information on suitable cinemas	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on local cinemas
	Information on suitable museums	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on local museums
	Information on sporting activities including water sports.	Partially achieved	✓	✓	Information available on sporting activities, water sports will be added
	Information on activities like arts and crafts clubs	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available of local arts and crafts clubs.
	Information on sailing, kayaking going on The London Eye, going shopping at various shopping centres in London	Achieved	✗	✓	Information will be provided on sailing locally. A link to Disabledgo.com is available on Local Offer Website.
	Information on Suitable theatres Across London and the facilities available for wheelchair users	Achieved	✗	✓	Currently links available to only local theatres. Links to Disabledgo.com made available on The Local Offer Website.
	Links to Exhibitions, conventions at Excel and across London.	Achieved	✗	✓	Link to www.disabledgo.com made available on The Local Offer Website
	Links to information on pop concerts in London, specifically Information on facilities available for a wheelchair user.	Achieved	✗	✓	Link to disabledgo.com made available on The Local Offer Website.
Moving on to Post 16	Young people would like Careers information to be provided early on than is currently available.	Achieved	✓	✓	Careers information and contact details have been published on the local offer website.

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Moving on to Post 16	Information on a wide variety of career options.	Achieved	✓	✓	Links available to Connexions and Tower Hamlets Careers Service
	Information on a wide range of suitable work experience to be made available to them. Information on colleges in the local area with details of the support they can provide to disabled young people	Achieved	✓	✓	Links to information to Connexions and Tower Hamlets College. and links available to local college
	Information on colleges that support deaf students, for example facts about DSB (deaf support base)	Achieved	✓	✓	The Local offer includes links to local colleges.
	Information on the type of support available from teachers at local colleges.	Achieved	✓	✓	Links available on Local Offer website to local colleges.
	Information on how well the school and college is performing. The local offer website should provide information on colleges on the support available to young people with SEND.	Achieved	✓	✓	Links provided to schools and Colleges.
	Information on how to access scholarships for students.	Achieved	✓	✓	Links to information on careers advisers.
	Information on the kind of support will be available if they were to attend a college.	Achieved	✓	✓	Contact details of the careers service made available on the local offer web page via Connexions and Tower Hamlets Careers Service. Links to all Tower Hamlet colleges and sixth form colleges need to be made available.
	Information on Support to look for a job including writing a CV	Achieved	✓	✓	Contact details of the careers service made available via Connexions and Tower Hamlets Careers Service.
	Information on support to find suitable training for employment, Information and support on work placements.	Achieved	✓	✓	Contact details of the careers service made available Via Connexions and Tower Hamlets Careers Service.

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	Information on how to obtain support with getting a job and keeping a job.	Achieved	✓	✓	Tower Hamlets Careers Service.
	Information on support available in the work place.	Achieved	✓	✓	Tower Hamlets Careers Service
Health	Information on disable friendly dentists, opticians, GP surgeries.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information available on the TH local offer website with links to relevant sites for health providers as well as those who provide information on disability access, awareness and experience.
	Information on how to access a speech and language therapists.	Achieved	✓	✓	Contact information available on Local Offer Website
	The local offer website linking to other healthcare websites where they are able to make appointments online. This was important for young people with a hearing impairment.	Achieved	✓	✓	The local offer website provides links to other healthcare websites. To make appointments online is an option which can be explored by health services.
	Information on The Hackney ARK –audiology unit.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information of this service is available on The local Offer Website.
Social Care	Information on short breaks to have some time away from parents and also give their parents a break from caring.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information and contact details are available on local offer website.
	Support to go out with existing friends and keep in touch with them– e g someone to support them to organise a leisure activity at the weekend with their friends.	Achieved	✓	✓	Information and support available from Children and Adult with disabilities Team.
	Support with using public transport	Achieved	✓	✓	Support available from Children and Adult Disabilities teams

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Advice , Information and Support Services –Travel	Information about the taxi card scheme. There should be wider promotion of this facility. How to apply and the eligibility criteria.	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Travel information will be made available on The Local Offer Website. Currently there is a link provided to Transport For London website.
	Information on disabled friendly driving schools.	Not achieved	✘	✓	A link on the Local Offer website will be made available.
	Information for wheelchair users when travelling by bus.	Achieved	✘	✓	Information available of link to TFL website
	Information for wheelchair users when travelling by train.	Achieved	✘	✓	Information available to Transport For London accessibility website
	Information on learning to travel independently.	Achieved	✘	✓	Information made available on The Transport For London accessibility website
	Information on the blue badge scheme	Not achieved	✘	✓	Information will be made available Shortly
	Information on Motability Schemes.	Not achieved	✘	✓	Information will be made available shortly.
Tower Hamlets Local Offer online	Parents and carers suggested that there should be a really good search engine to ensure information they require can be obtained promptly and easily.	Partially achieved	✘	✓	LBTH currently have a search engine which is being further developed.
	The content should include schools, leisure, support and advice, feedback and review, health and social care.	Achieved	✓	✓	All the themes have been included in our local offer.
	Breakdown by age and disabilities.	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Requires further development Achieved but cannot analyse by age except for childcare.-
	A Contact page with a helpline number.	Achieved	✘	✓	A contact number and email address is available for The Family Information Service.
	The four most popular suggestions of making	Partially achieved	✘	✓	We have already included icons

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	the web page clear and accessible were through text, symbols and pictures/photos and video clips.				and simple text, photos will be included and video clips will be added on.
	The online local offer should be made easily accessible to all and consideration should be given to language, hearing and visual impairment.	Achieved	✘	✓	The website is speech enabled with browse aloud, to support those with visual and literacy impairments. The website is also approved by Plain English Campaign. There are further features and capabilities of Adobe Products that enhance electronic document accessibility for people with disabilities such as blindness, low vision and motor impairments.
	Front page of Website should not have too much information.	Achieved	✘	✓	
	Glossary of abbreviations –terms used in the local offer web pages. For example explanation of abbreviations used where necessary E.g. SENCO	Not achieved-	✘	✓	A glossary will be included in The Tower Hamlets Local Offer.
	A list of search criteria to enable the first search to be refined.	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Further options will be explored
	Young people would like to see “ clear large icons, a very visual website without too much writing, with lots of images and photos”	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Further development required. Photos, images and videos will be added.
	They would like the website to include a good search box whereby information can be found promptly with minimal number of clicks.	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Needs further refinement.
	They would like to see a series of video clips which shows examples of a young person who is in college and in employment, positive case studies of disabled young people who are successful. Videos that would help them find out how it would be like to work or be in	Partially achieved	✘	✓	Further video clips are being created for the local offer website showing examples of a young person who is at college, in employment and living independently, travelling

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	training for. Work and live independently.				independently and maintaining friendships.
	Text which can be increased in size for young people with a visual impairment or a learning difficulty	Not achieved	✘	✓	Further options will be explored.
	The most popular suggestion to provide feedback was via a forum for young disabled people which they can attend on a regular basis.	Achieved	✓	✓	A young people's forum has been set up and two meetings have already taken place. Further meetings have been scheduled. This will be ongoing.
	Another suggested option would be a short survey online with multiple choice answers.	Partially achieved	✓	✓	This could be an addition to other forms of feedback. We are in the process of devising a short online survey.
	The young people at the specialist school also suggested icons: ☺ ☹	Achieved	✓	✓	LBTH website already use this as a standard feedback method.

5) Conclusions and Next Steps

Summary of conclusions

The Tower Hamlets Local Offer went live on the 1st September 2014. Prior to this in August a User Acceptance Testing session took place with Parents and young people in August 2014 who highlighted some areas of improvement.

Substantial work has already been undertaken in producing the content of the local offer. However it will continue to be developed in discussion with relevant teams bringing together information around need and the processes and interventions that people are likely to experience and incorporating the feedback from parents, carers, children and young people.

Good progress has been made to date in setting up a forum for young people with SEND in response to the feedback from the consultations. Several meetings have already taken place. The young people who have attended have chosen the location day and time that suits them. This group could also be used for providing feedback on The Local Offer. This will continue to ensure the development of Tower Hamlets Local Offer is being co-produced with children and young people.

The Local Offer Website is work in progress and will continue to be developed will the continuous feedback gained from parents and young people in mind.

6) Next Steps

The look of the website is being further explored to ensure some improvements can be made to meet the needs of young people with SEND and their parents.

External links and additional links to universal services will continue to be added on to ensure that we not only support young people with SEND but also their parents and siblings.

In the coming months the local offer website will include a news page with current news and events.

Further engagement sessions are being carried out by PACSEN with providers to ensure they are addressing the needs of young people with SEND

There will be on-going communication with all stakeholders with updates on the SEND Reform developments.

A second phase of User Acceptance Testing will take place in the coming months after further improvements have been made to The Local Offer Website.

Feedback from The SEND young people's forum will be used to inform future decisions.

Appendix 1

The Local Offer must include information about:

Special educational, health and social care provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities – this should include online and blended learning

Details of how parents and young people can request an assessment for an EHC plan

Arrangements for identifying and assessing children and young people's SEN – this should include arrangements for EHC needs assessments

Other educational provision, for example sports or arts provision, paired reading schemes

Post-16 education and training provision

Apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships

Information about provision to assist in preparing children and young people for adulthood (see paragraphs 4.52 to 4.56)

Arrangements for travel to and from schools, post-16 institutions and early years providers

Support to help children and young people move between phases of education (for example from early years to school, from primary to secondary)

Sources of information, advice and support in the local authority's area relating to SEN and disabilities including information and advice provided under Section 32 of the Children and Families Act 2014, forums for parents and carers and support groups

Childcare, including suitable provision for disabled children and those with SEN

Leisure activities

Support available to young people in higher education, particularly the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the process and timescales for making an application for DSA

Arrangements for resolving disagreements and for mediation, and details about making complaints

Parents' and young people's rights to appeal a decision of the local authority to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and disability) in respect of SEN and provision

The local authority's accessibility strategy (under paragraph 1 Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010)

Institutions approved under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014

The Local Offer should cover:

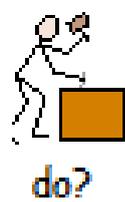
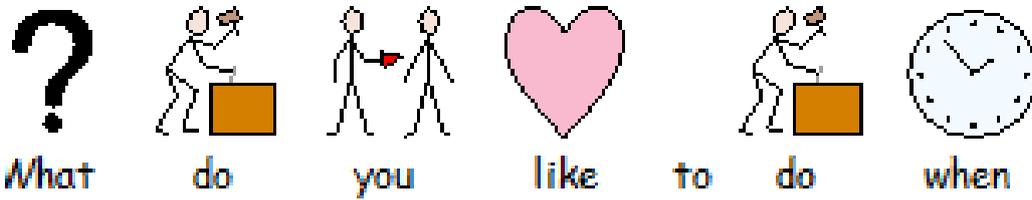
Support available to all children and young people with SEN or disabilities from universal services such as schools and surgeries.

Targeted services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require additional short-term support over and above that provided routinely as part of universal services.

Specialist services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require specialised, longer term support

Educational, health and care provision

Appendix 2



Appendix 2



