

POSITION STATEMENT - Hertfordshire Local Offer

Part 3 of The Children and Families Act 2014, the accompanying Regulations and with further guidance in the Code of Practice, sets out the statutory duty on a Local Authority (LA) to develop and publish a Local Offer. This must set out the provision they expect to be available for local children and young people (CYP) with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities.

The duty covers:

- Preparing and reviewing the Local Offer, including involving children & young people, their parents and those providing services
- Publishing the Local Offer
- Publishing users' comments on the Local Offer and the action to be taken in response
- What MUST be included in the Local Offer
- Access to Information, advice and support.

A Local Authority 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 an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP). It must specifically cover training for young people, travel arrangements and support for preparing for adulthood.

The Local Offer has 2 key purposes:

1. To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible and up to date information about the available provision and how to access it.
2. To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving CYP with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their parents and service providers in its development & review.

HPCI believes that the Local Offer:

- Must be the product of collaboration between parents, children and young people and the Local Authority.
- Must be free from jargon and complicated language and should be easy to understand.
- Should make it easy to find the information and that ALL information relating to services for children and young people with SEND can be found by searching the Local Offer website.
- Should be comprehensive and so allow parents and young people to know what support is available across Education, Health and Social Care from aged 0 – 25.
- Must include eligibility criteria for services if relevant.
- Be clear about where to get advice & guidance and how to make complaints.
- Should be used as a tool to enable the LA to identify areas of provision for development and improvement and in this way, it becomes more than just a directory of existing services.

- Should be promoted well to parents, relevant professionals and voluntary groups so that awareness and use are widespread
- Should be appropriately resourced to enable it to achieve the above
- That, as a statutory service, a dedicated local offer resource/team is best located within the LA and not outsourced to a third-party organisation. An in-house service is more easily and effectively able to access professionals in SEND services to ensure co-production of content and awareness of the local offer and statutory duties.