



Shropshire SEND Local Offer Annual Report April 2023 – March 2024

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Local Offer Annual Report 2023-2024

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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.



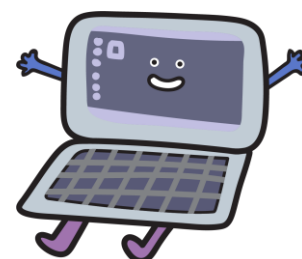
The Local Offer has two key purposes:

- 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 young people and those with SEN and their parent carers, and service providers in its development and review.

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

New website

Shropshire Council is working on a programme of website migration to a new platform and design standards, which includes the SEND Local Offer. The work on next.shropshire.gov.uk is the culmination of the lessons learned from building and managing the last few iterations of the Shropshire Council website and research into the design trends and best practices used across commercial organisations and both central and local government.



By following proven user experience best practices and user-centric design principles, and adhering to central government guidance on the accessibility legislation and security standards, the digital innovations team create web pages and online services that can meet the needs and expectations of the users and deliver a positive and satisfying experience, regardless of abilities or preferences.

They work to ensure the information provided is relevant by using the insights gained from reviewing the analytical data on visitors to current pages, which gives a much clearer understanding of what the public uses and looks for. Those same insights also allow them to work with service areas such as the SEND Local Offer, to produce the content required to fill any 'gaps' in what is presented online that otherwise would result in people phoning or emailing the council.

It is anticipated that the transfer of content from the existing platform will be completed for the SEND Local Offer in the first quarter of 2024. We will then gather feedback on the new site and consider any further developments.

Whole site review

As part of the transfer to the new site, we have undertaken a whole site review and developed an action plan of changes. This plan will involve content changes as well as some changes to navigation and structure. The actions which have come out of the review will in part respond to some of the feedback we have received about content and navigation.

Communications Scheduler

As part of a whole system approach to communications, a scheduler has been developed with members of a Communications Group, following on from the Quality Assurance Group. This scheduler is to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to the distribution of essential communication messages. The SEND Local Offer is part of this work as the key mechanism for getting news and information out to the SEND community.

Social media action plan

Our social media presence continues to develop, with the number of followers and engagement on posts increasing steadily. We have developed an action plan to enhance the way in which we deliver information through social media and engage with the SEND community. This social media action plan will work alongside the communications scheduler ensuring that key messages are shared.

Young People's Local Offer

During the last 12 months a lot of work has taken place in preparing content for the young people's Local Offer, which will then enable the build of the site to begin. We have also been working with designers to develop a young people's local offer brand, based on the comments we had from young people about colour, style, layout. Once the site is in draft format we will work with young people from schools and colleges across the county to gather feedback on the site to inform any changes or further developments. We also undertook a research project on other young people's local offer. This was an informative exercise as it enabled us to review the content, language and design of other sites. We aim to officially launch the Shropshire young people's local offer at the end of 2024.

Events in the community

We have had the opportunity of working with colleagues from the Early Help and wider partners, and have been attending various events to promote the SEND Local Offer to parent carers. These events have included:-

- Early Help hosted SEND Meet and Chat – these drop in sessions have been taking place throughout the county where parent carers had the opportunity of talking to a number of professionals, including members of the SEN team, the Designated and Associate Clinical Officers for SEND, a BeeU Assistant Psychologist, Neurodiversity practitioners, members of our Early Help team and representatives from PACC. Autism West Midlands, SEND IASS, and the Family Information Service were also in attendance at some of the sessions.
- Understanding your child with SEND – we attended two sessions attended by parent carers to introduce the Local Offer and support available. These sessions were held face to face and virtually. We were able to show the Local Offer introductory video and spoke about our

Meet n Chat SEND

social media sites, many of those attending followed the pages there and then. We also highlighted the newsletter for parent carers of children with SEND and all participants gave their email address to sign up for the newsletter.

- Early help and community drop ins - a number of drop in events are hosted by Early Help for all parent carers to access information and support. These drop ins take place within communities throughout Shropshire, giving parent carers access to early help workers, and support for their families. The SEND Local Offer attends various drops ins to promote the information available.
- School coffee mornings – we were approached by a number of schools to attend SEND specific coffee mornings for parent carers.

Attending sessions like this gives us the opportunity of gaining insight into the current information needs of parent carers, so we can make sure information is available and support then in accessing that information.

They also give us the opportunity of gaining meaningful feedback directly from parent carers about the Local Offer, and also their views on how the Local Offer could be improved.

Co-produced newsletter

The Local Offer co-produce a newsletter with the Parent Carer Council (PACC), NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and partners from education, social care and the voluntary sector. This newsletter has continued to be produced and is issued each half term. The contents are based on topics parent carers have told us they want information on and news and updates from services. Copies of the newsletter can be [viewed on the Local Offer](#).



SEN Portal

In April 2022 we launched the SEN Portal which is a Microsoft SharePoint Site for settings to securely send documents to the SEN Team. The portal can be accessed from the local offer homepage and we have links on the SEN portal to the local offer, the local offer news, the top level categories etc so it is helping to drive SENCO traffic to different sections of the local offer.

We began with asking settings to submit annual reviews and we are just in the process of adding a new requests folder so settings can also send in new EHCP and GSP requests. There are direct links to EHCPs, GSPs and Annual Reviews on the portal to direct SENCO to the information on the local offer where they can find the documentation.

We started we our 2 biggest specialist settings and in the last 12 months we have now rolled the SEN portal out to all 19 secondary schools in Shropshire, 4 additional specialist settings, 2 independent settings, 1 primary school and 1 college. We are currently in the process of setting up access to all colleges and aim to roll it out to all primary schools in the autumn term.

Section Updates

Changes are made to content on a regular basis. This includes information updates but also changes to the structure and layout of information, to continue to ensure it is easy to navigate.

We have a Local Offer content tracker which documents pages, content owners and when a review of the information is required (every 6 months) however some content owners will contact us as and when the content needs updating. It can sometimes be a challenge to get updated content for some section owners.

A lot of work has been undertaken on the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) top level category, as part of a new multi-agency PFA workstream established to undertake a larger scale review of the preparation for adulthood processes for education, health, and social care. The aim of the group is to review and provide easy to navigate PFA processes and information to young people, families and practitioners.

Membership includes education, health, social care, Shropshire's Parent and Carer Council (PACC) and a young person by experience. The group also links in with other workstreams and an employment forum. The work is informed by surveys, legislation, reports and personal experiences.

As part of this workstream the Local Offer content and ease of navigation has been reviewed. Several development areas were identified including duplication of links, old content and difficulties with navigation due to the lack of section clarity or requiring pages to be split into easy-to-read formats and placed into a different section. As a result, the PFA pages have been re-designed and put into a new format mock up site with information being updated or re-written. The new format will go live once completed.

Further work to inform the Local offer is on-going including mapping PFA pathways, reviewing the Transition Protocol and pathway guidance document and creating an overarching PFA strategy and transition plan for young people.

Feedback from parent carers

A key area of development for the Local Offer this year was to ensure we continually captured feedback from users about the Local Offer. The feedback we receive helps to fix urgent issues, but also helps us to plan future developments.



We now have a variety of channels through which to gather feedback and have a system for recording that feedback. We have developed a specific feedback form, which we share regularly with parent carers and have also shared with partners to share. We also update a 'You Said, We Did' section on the Local Offer to show how we are responding to feedback and comments.

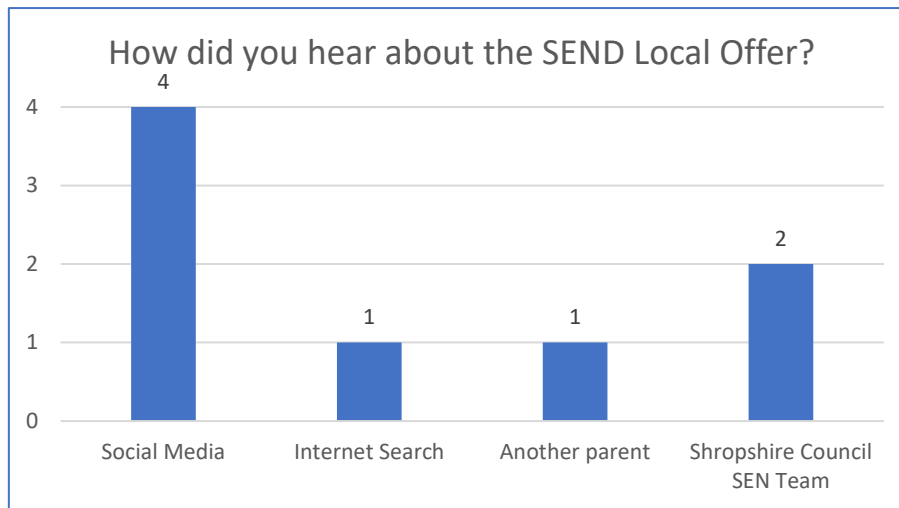
Local Offer Feedback Survey

We are keen to use the views of parent carers and practitioners on what they think of the SEND local offer website and we promote a feedback survey on the Local Offer website and through social media. The survey results help us understand if the information on the website is accessible, what users like and dislike, and if there are any gaps that need addressing.

We regularly promote the survey through social media, through email footers and to our partners.

In 2023-2024 we received 8 completed questionnaires, and although all feedback is helpful, it is disappointing that we haven't received more. An area for development is how do we increase the number of responses. All of these received were from parent carers of a child with SEND.

How did you hear about the Local Offer?



What information were you looking for?

- Whether there are any free or subsidised holiday clubs in Oswestry, that my daughter can do crafts etc, e.g . Qube
- Trying to find help with finances and food bank referral as my children only live with me part time I don't get any state benefits so was looking for help with cost of living, nappies etc
- SEN clubs, schools, help groups,
- Activities
- Getting an EHCP
- Everything for a 14 and 16 yr old in Ludlow
- Holiday activities

As you can see a number of parent carers were looking for information on activities and things to do, and various topics related to schools and education. This is really useful information and will be added into a development action plan, and fed back to the commissioner of Short Breaks activities.

How could the Local Offer website be improved?

- *I was looking for activities in Oswestry and it needed to be easier to navigate for the area we live in, and how to apply.*
- *Think about the range of young people and put yourself in parent's shoes and what they would be looking for help with. Bring it up to date.*
- *Update the information. Put information where I can find it.*
- *Some of the pages aren't written in simple language*
- *More parents need to be aware of this site.*
- *Find some activities for SOUTH SHROPSHIRE the forgotten land!!!!*
- *More information available on holiday activities and better links*

Do you have any other comments about the Local Offer?

- *Not all SEND children like doing sport related activities or clubs.*
- *Frequently professionals in Shropshire Council don't help and just fob you off with going to the Local Offer rather than giving their actual knowledge and then you can't even find what you're looking for anyway. I don't think the council realises what it is like for families of young people with SLD.*
- *I wish I'd have known about it sooner.*
- *My school didn't tell me about this*

The information received from these surveys are regularly reviewed and improvements made.

You Said, We Did

We regularly publish comments about the Local Offer on the website, and also any action we have taken in response to the comment. Here are some of the comments we received, and the actions we took.

You said: I was trying to find help with finances and food bank referral as my children only live with me part time I don't get any state benefits so was looking for help with cost of living, nappies etc

We did: Added information about [Cost of living help](#) to the [Family support section](#). This information includes help for those worried about money, food, energy, and a specific section for families and carers.

You said: There are no activities for SEND children near where I live.

We did: A research project is ongoing to identify more SEN activities in Shropshire.

You said: More parents need to be aware of this site

We did: We have increased our communications, and now issue regular updates to schools and partners.

You said: I was looking for information to support me and my son who had Autism but couldn't find what I needed.

We did: We have a new top level category on Neurodiversity which links through to the information on Healthier Together.

You said: Just ensuring the information is being kept up to date!

We did: We undertook a whole site review to identify updates, and have a content tracker which highlights partners who are responsible for co-ordinating updates for their service area.

Shared experiences

We have processes in place to capture views on the SEND Local Offer, but we also wanted to introduce processes which can capture the experiences of families using SEND services, as detailed in the Code of Practice:

'Where appropriate, local authorities should also feed back comments to commissioners of services and the services themselves, including those in neighbouring local authorities. Comments should be used to inform commissioning decisions and decisions about the specific nature and type of provision that local families want.'

We receive comments through the Local Offer's social media accounts, and these are shared with the service. We will be developing a process around sharing comments with partners and how best to respond to the comments made.

Partner Feedback

Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

IASS recognise that the Local Offer is a huge resource for families and professionals, providing a range of valuable information across education, health and social care. We believe there have been vast improvements in both content and ease of navigating the site, and we are committed to supporting the continued development of the Local Offer.

IASS frequently ask parents if they have heard of the Local Offer and/ or used it. This year we have had an increase of parents who are aware of the Local Offer and used it to find relevant information. We are also finding that many of those parents who have used the Local Offer have found helpful information and had a positive experience navigating the site. IASS continue to signpost all families that contact us to the Local Offer and information regarding the Local Offer is also included in our email signature.

IASS have established a collaborative relationship with the Local Offer Facebook, enabling us to share important information between our pages. This way of working helps to promote both the Local Offer and the IASS service ensuring we are reaching as many families as we can.

IASS have seen an increase in enquiry's regarding children and young people struggling to attend school due to emotionally based school anxiety. Parents often report that they find it challenging to obtain information regarding this issue and unsure what they can do and who they can contact. IASS feel this could be an area of development for the Local Offer.

IASS have also had an increase in parents calling looking for support to find specialist placements. Whilst we recognise there is a page on the Local Offer which lists the LA maintained schools, it does not extend to all specialist provisions available in Shropshire. As IASS are unable to recommend which schools could meet a child or young person's needs, we are often having to suggest parents

use google. It would be hugely beneficial for the Local Authority and IASS to be able to signpost parents to the Local Offer to obtain this information.

The Local Offer newsletter is a fantastic publication which is issued on a consistent and regular basis with up to date, relevant information for Shropshire Families. IASS will continue to contribute to the newsletter and also signpost clients to it.

Nick Willis - IASS Advice Services Manager

Parent and Carer Council (PACC)

PACC representatives always champion the need for honest, accurate, and meaningful information to be available to help the SEND community make informed decisions about the care and support they receive. The Local Offer provides one key place where all information can be housed and accessed quickly and with ease.

Over the last 12 months, PACC representatives have participated in multiple task and finish groups looking to improve the information provision available through the Local Offer. Most of this has resulted in improvements being made, or us becoming aware of where information provision suitable for the SEND community may be lacking and needs further development.

The Local Offer has the potential to be a fantastic resource, we will continue to work with the team to help them make improvements and ensure that services and providers are offering meaningful and valuable content that serves the SEND community well.

Zara Bowden - Chair, PACC

NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

This year progress has been made in using the Local Offer website as a communication tool. Updates related to Shropshire accelerated progress plan including the recent 'you said, we did' have been shared via the local offer website.

Additionally updates from the APP workstreams regarding neurodiversity, speech language and communication needs and education health and care plans have been routinely shared through the SEND newsletter on the local offer website

Across STW integrated care system the healthier together website has been developed which compliments the local offer website. Partners have worked to ensure linkage between the healthier together website and local offer website and avoid duplication.

Jen Griffin - Designated Clinical Officer for SEND

Feedback from the SEN Team

- As a Case Officer I find it very useful to send links to families and school to draw their attention to specifics - most notably LA Maintained Special School and Hibs and SEN Transport. I am not sure how intensely the Local offer is discussed at AR's as parents I come into contact with are not always sure of what this is and how it can be used. Possibly highlighting a training need for Schools?

- I like how under the EHCP section there are different sub headings and not too much information so makes it more accessible to all parents/carers. I don't know if this is a possibility at all but I think it might be helpful to have a section on there around communication from the SEN Team as that is something that is raised a fair bit. Hope this is helpful!
- In recent months the LO has vastly improved its layout and is far more accessible with less 'clicks' I have been able to better negotiate my way to information and the links are now all working which is a godsend. It now contains much more of the information I need (it may have done before but I spent too much of my precious working time attempting to find it). All in all I would say a 8/10 rating. And 8 only because there are still occasions where I have to spend time working through a couple of irrelevant pages to find what I need (it may be I need to think about how I search).
- I do use the LO quite a lot particularly for templates and for transport. It is good to be able to send links to key pages to parents and schools.

Reporting

Website Statistics

We use a system called Site Improve for website analytics, this provides useful information on page hits, devices visitors are using and the source route for visitors.

This table compares website data to the previous year, and although there is a decrease in overall numbers, the figures show that the Local Offer is still being well used.

	Page visits	Page views	Unique visitors	Returning visitors
1 st April 2023 to 31 st March 2024	28,910	76,109	12,567	1,939
1 st April 2022 to 31 st March 2023	39,745	80,669	27,603	1,704

Page visits - A visit is defined as a series of page requests from the same uniquely identified visitor with a time of no more than 30 minutes between each page request.

Page views - A page view is a count of how many times a page has been viewed on a website or the chosen group within the chosen period of time. All page views are counted no matter how many times a user has visited the website in the chosen period of time.

Unique visitors - The total number of unique visitors during the selected period.

Returning visitors - A returning visitor is a user that has visited our website prior to the selected period and is now returning.

The table below shows the top 20 most visited pages on the Local Offer for 2023-2024 and compared to the top 20 pages for 2022-2023

	Page/Link	Page views 2023-2024	Page visits 2023-2024	Page/Link	Page Views 2022-2023	Page Visits 2022-2023
1	The SEND local offer Homepage	7,194	4,947	The SEND local offer homepage	6,284	3,886
2	Education, health and care plan (EHCP)	3,076	2,333	Education	2,112	1,373
3	Travel and transport	2,172	1,532	Education, Health and Care plan	2,051	1,424
4	Education	2,040	1,523	Shropshire SEND reinspection - have your say	1,930	1,659
5	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment (ECHNA)?	1,933	1,490	Travel and Transport	1,704	1,219
6	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment echna? Information for parent carers	1,801	1,336	Contact the SEN Team	1,408	1,198
7	Safeguarding	1,550	1,264	Beam	1,276	1,107
8	Contact the SEN Team	1,477	1,304	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment (ECHNA)?	1,098	780

9	Specialists schools and provisions	1,352	1,134	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment (ECHNA)? – Information for Parent Carers	1,001	669
10	All In Short Breaks Programme	1,341	1,079	Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)	906	658
11	Beam	1,168	1,028	Travel and Transport – Apply	893	722
12	Apply for school transport	1,164	943	Safeguarding	609	505
13	Members of the SEN Team	1,107	943	All In Programme	566	476
14	Shropshire's Carers Support Team	1,066	898	Specialist schools and provision	562	474
15	Information and Support Services (IASS)	1,037	88	Shropshire Carers Support Team	549	455
16	Education Services	930	663	Early Years	549	317
17	Parenting Team	910	711	Preparing for adulthood	525	290
18	Early Years	833	515	Members of the SEN Team	507	449
19	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment echna? Information for education settings	760	637	How do I apply for an education health and care needs assessment (ECHNA)? – Information for Education Settings	477	390
20	Family Support	753	549	Early Help	473	290

Social Media

Our use of social media has continued to be a success, with an increase in the number of followers, engagement with our audience, and the reach of our posts, which shows that parent carers welcome information being delivered through this particular channel.

As of 31st March 2024, the Local Offer has a total of **2190 followers** on social media, which is an increase of 428 on the previous year.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	Difference
Facebook	1446	1784	+338
Twitter	231	246	+15
Instagram	85	160	+75
Total	1762	2190	+428

Our average **daily account reach**, which is the number of times our content has been seen by different people each day on Facebook and Instagram (Twitter doesn't measure this) was **852**. This is an increase of **170** on the previous year.

We have written and published **731** posts and shared many more from partner accounts. The number we have created is an increase of **162** on the previous year.

Post engagement, which includes people liking, commenting, clicking on links etc has increased over the last year. Hootsuite state that "most social media marketing experts agree that a good engagement rate is between 1% and 5%. Our engagement rate for Twitter is **2.45%**, Facebook is **2.2%** and **5.66%** on Instagram. These figures could be a little misleading, because there are fewer followers on Twitter each click or like counts for more percentage wise.

Our links have been clicked on **4532** times this is an increase of **843 or 19%** from the previous year.

Out of the **475** comments we received last year on our social media posts **97%** were positive, semi-positive or neutral.

Our top three posts for the year were:

The image shows three social media posts from the account 'sendlocaloffershropshire'. Each post includes a 'View post' button, the account name, a date and time, a text description, a thumbnail image, and engagement statistics (likes, shares, comments, reach, clicks).

Post Rank	Date & Time	Text Summary	Thumbnail	Likes	Shares	Comments	Reach	Clicks
1	17 Nov 2023 12:20	Dobbies Garden Centres in Shrewsbury, Telford and Wrexham are running a Quiet Santa's Grotto experience for children with additional needs on Friday 8 December. These are pre-booked sessions, with no queuing on the day and a reduced number of families attending in each slot. During yo...	Santa's Grotto	39	1.1K	54	115.2K	695
2	19 Sep 2023 09:12	The National Trust are giving away FREE visits to National Trust properties this autumn, including Attingham Park. The pass is valid for two adults and up to three children, one adult and up to four children, or two adults on their own. Click here to get your free tickets https://orlo.uk/kTmE9...	National Trust	14	22	7	3.1K	221
3	07 Nov 2023 14:05	The Keystone Academy opens its doors for 70 families to look around ahead of it's formal opening tomorrow. Read more on the local offer news page here: https://orlo.uk/h5JR6 #shropshiresendlocaloffer #sendlocaloffer #thekeystoneacademy	Keystone Academy	39	12	10	4K	158

SEND Newsletter

The SEND newsletter is co-produced by the SEND Local Offer, PACC and ICS and is issued each half term. The figures below show the total newsletters sent, how many were opened and the clicks from articles.

	May 2023	July 2023	October 2023	December 2023	January 2024	March 2024
Total Sent	4,729	4,837	5,036	5,010	4,933	4,928
Delivered	4,547 (96%)	4,558 (94%)	4,824 (96%)	4,777 (95%)	4,709 (95%)	4,689 (95%)
Bounced	182 (4%)	279 (6%)	212 (4%)	233 (5%)	224 (5%)	239 (5%)
Unsubscribed	4 (0%)	4 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	4 (0%)
Total opens	2,071	2,034	1,861	2,007	2,040	1,867
Unique opens	1,320 (29%)	1,395 (31%)	1,250 (26%)	1,224 (26%)	1,167 (25%)	1,206 (26%)
Total Clicks	235	1,620	877	316	869	464
Unique clicks	168 (4%)	973 (21%)	846 (18%)	303 (6%)	821 (17%)	421 (9%)
Number of links	55	41	42	67	58	42

Developments for 2024-2025

Content updates and structure

There are several key sections which need to be reviewed and updated, which includes both content and structure. The two key areas for development in 2024-2025 are

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health
- Early Help

The emotional wellbeing and mental health hasn't been reviewed for some time, primarily because it has been difficult to identify partners to help with this.

The Early help section will also be updated to reflect changes to the early help offer to children, young people and families following a programme of transformation.

There are also some gaps in information, including Alternative Provision, phased transfer and information on exploitation.

We will continue to work with colleagues and partners in fulfilling their responsibility for providing and maintaining the information statutorily required and which parent carers have told us they want.

New Marketing Materials

We want to make sure as many people as possible know about the Local Offer and so will be producing some new and updated marketing materials. These will be shared with partners who are supporting families and distributed to public places, including health services, community and family hubs and libraries.

New Service Directory

The SEND Local Offer also has a directory element which lists services and support, along with things to do and places to go, for children and young people and their families. Shropshire Council are looking at enhancing the directory offer across services, which means a new directory provider. We have been involved in initial discussions and attended presentations of potential new systems. PACC also attended these presentations, so that the new solution could be co-produced.

Young People's Local Offer

We will continue to work with young people on the Young People's Local Offer. This will include focused sessions on the design, content and also the name. We aim to launch the site next year.