

Shropshire SEND Local Offer

Annual Report 2025–2026

Contents

Introduction.....	2
The Statutory Duty	2
Progress to Date.....	2
Challenges Faced	3
Areas for Improvement.....	4
Next Steps	4
Conclusion	5
Appendices	6
1 - Performance Data	6
1.1 Website statistics	6
1.2 Top ten most popular pages	7
1.3 SEND Newsletter	8
1.4 – Social Media	9
2 - You said, we did	12
3 - Feedback from Parent Carer	13
Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC)	13
4 - Feedback from Partners	15
Children’s Social Care	15
Clive CE Primary School	16
NHS Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin	16
Severndale Specialist Academy	17

Introduction

This annual report provides an overview of the progress made to the Shropshire [SEND Local Offer](#) over the past year, highlighting key achievements and the positive impact on parent carers and their families.

The Local Offer continues to develop and improve to meet the information needs of the SEND community. This has included regular content updates, strengthened engagement with stakeholders, the involvement of parent carers in its co-production, attendance at community events for parent carers and the introduction of a new directory element of the Local Offer.

The report outlines areas for improvement and highlights the challenges encountered, setting out plans for ongoing development over the next twelve months.

The Statutory Duty

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

(Taken from Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities)

An annual audit of the Shropshire SEND Local Offer is undertaken to ensure it is meeting the statutory duty and to highlight any gaps.

Progress to Date

Over the past year, the SEND Local Offer has made important advances in the delivery of information to parent carers and supporting the needs of the SEND community in Shropshire. This has included: -

- The introduction of a new [directory element](#) of the Local Offer which has greatly improved the organisation and visibility of available local services, making it easier for families to find relevant support.
- The information section of the Local Offer is designed with top level categories parent carers told us they wanted information on, making it easier for them to navigate to

particular topics of interest. This ranges from early years to preparing for adulthood, and includes some of the more common topics such as education, health and social care. (appendix 1.1 shows the most popular pages visited).

- The Local Offer is promoted directly to parent carers through a variety of channels and also promoted to partners who are working with the SEND community. We want to ensure as many families as possible are aware of the Local Offer and that is easy for them to access.
- Regular development meetings with content owners—including representatives from health, early help, education, children and adult social care—have fostered collaborative working and helped maintain the quality of information.
- In addition, frequent feedback sessions with PACC and other parent carers have provided valuable insights, enabling responsive adjustments to the Local Offer and ensuring that it meets community needs. (Examples of feedback from parent carers is under You Said, We Did in appendix 2 and general feedback in appendix 3)
- Regular reviews of the Local Offer Content Tracker ensure ongoing content updates and the development of new pages so that information remains current, accurate and responds to the needs of parent carers.
- In Shropshire we do not see the SEND Local Offer as a website or a directory of services but take a multi-channel approach to the provision and delivery of information to parent carers. This includes half termly co-produced newsletters, daily social media communications, supporting materials and attending face to face events. (Performance data on these various channels is available in appendix 1).
- The Local Offer Project Group continues to meet on a termly basis to guide developments. This group includes parent carer representatives, health, education, children's and adult social care, the community and voluntary sector and colleagues from a primary school, specialist school and college. (Members of the Project Group have provided feedback on the Local Offer in appendix 4.)
- The Local Offer has attended every SEND Meet and Chat event hosted by Early Help, held throughout Shropshire. This gives an opportunity to meet with parent carers face to face, demonstrate the Local Offer, gather any feedback and respond to any information needs they have.

Challenges Faced

The Local Offer has faced several challenges over the past year.

- The absence of a dedicated Development Officer has limited capacity for development and content management.
- Identified content owners providing regular updates continues to remain a challenge, often due to competing priorities and limited resources in partner organisations, but this means that some sections aren't being reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- The lack of a promotion budget has restricted efforts to raise awareness among families and professionals and the term Local Offer is generally not known.
- The new directory system launched with a number of errors in the data which needed to be manually corrected to ensure the information was accurate and categorised correctly.

- Funding constraints have hindered the creation of a youth-specific Local Offer and for young people to be an active partner in the co-production the Local Offer.

Addressing these obstacles will be vital to sustaining momentum and ensuring the Local Offer continues to meet the needs of the community.

Areas for Improvement

Despite the progress made, there remains important areas of future development.

- Continual content review is necessary to ensure information stays accurate, comprehensive, reflects the latest SEND developments and meets the needs of the SEND community.
- Greater engagement and buy in from content owners responsible for co-ordinating regular reviews of information about their service areas and providing any updates and amendments and have clear escalation processes if this is not happening.
- Feedback indicates that a restructure of certain sections could further improve navigation and user experience, making the Local Offer even more accessible.
- Ensure greater co-production of the Local Offer with a wide range of parent carers and young people
- Exploring new ways to gather and act upon user feedback, linking in with a wider range of parent carer groups and forums.
- Although data shows that the Local Offer is being well used (Appendix 1), feedback suggests that some parent carers aren't familiar with the term SEND Local Offer. Data shows that the majority of visits to the Local Offer are through organic website traffic such as search engines rather than direct visits. Greater promotion is needed aimed directly at parent carers and the partners who support them.

Next Steps

Looking ahead, the focus will be on addressing the identified challenges and exploring opportunities for improvement. Priorities for the coming year include:-

- Stabilising staffing and funding – so the Local Offer is adequately resourced in terms of staffing and budget, this will also include exploring offering a supported internship to a student with SEND attending a local college.
- To gather the views of parent carers and to develop a plan for change and improvement – feedback is vital to ensure the Local Offer continues to meet the needs of parent carers.
- Plans are also in place to restructure certain sections for improved navigation on the website
- To consider a variety of channels through which to deliver information on the SEND local offer, which complement the website.
- To develop creative approaches to promotion so that there is greater awareness of the SEND Local Offer.

- Strengthening engagement with content owners and parent carers will remain central, ensuring that the Local Offer evolves in line with stakeholder feedback and changing needs. Regular meetings and feedback sessions will continue to inform development, fostering a collaborative approach to service improvement.
- Involving a wider range of parent carer voices in the co-production of the Local Offer.
- Developing a youth-focused Local Offer which is part of the overall Youth Offer – so the Local Offer is incorporated into the wider Youth transformation programme and young people are involved in the co-production of information to support SEND needs.

Conclusion

The SEND Local Offer has made significant progress in enhancing service accessibility, supporting families, and building strong partnerships despite the resource constraints over the last 12 months.

For the next year efforts will focus on overcoming barriers, having a more systematic process in place to gather feedback from users and continuing to update and deliver a Local Offer that truly meets the needs of parent carers and their families.

Appendices

1 - Performance Data

1.1 Website statistics

We monitor the Local Offer website, and the figures below show that the Local Offer website continues to be well used, despite a drop in numbers compared to the previous year. There are a number of possible reasons for this.

One likely factor is that there has not been a dedicated Local Offer post during this period. In previous years, this type of post may have helped promote the website more directly and encouraged more people to click through to the Local Offer pages.

It is also important to recognise that our approach has developed. We are increasingly using social media to create an online community, rather than only using it to direct people to the website. This means we are sharing more information, updates and signposting directly through social media posts. Families may be accessing the information they need through those posts without needing to visit the website every time.

Another wider factor is the impact of emerging and developing technologies, which are changing how people search for and access information online. Search engines, AI tools and digital assistants are increasingly presenting short answers or summary information directly within search results, rather than only showing a list of websites to visit. For example, someone searching for “SEND transport support”, “how to request an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment”, “short breaks for disabled children”, or “support for children with additional needs in Shropshire” may now see an AI-generated summary at the top of the results page. This summary may include the key points, steps to take, or links to relevant services, meaning parent carers may get the basic information they need without clicking through to the Local Offer website. For a site like the Local Offer, where many searches are for practical information, this could reduce the number of visits even when the information is still being found and used.

As a result, a reduction in website hits does not necessarily mean that fewer families are being reached. It may show that families are engaging with Local Offer information in different ways, particularly through social media, where information can be shared quickly, regularly and in a more accessible format.

	Page visits	Page views	Unique visitors	Returning visitors
1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026	28,163	84,897	13,171	1,544
1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025	30,755	100,509	14,967	1,725
1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024	28,910	76,109	12,567	1,939
1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023	39,745	80,669	27,603	1,704

Direct traffic source – 4,562 visits

Organic traffic source – 13,131 visits

1.2 Top ten most popular pages

The pages visited the most on the SEND Local Offer are listed below, the sections on education, EHCPs and school transport are consistently in the top ten.

	Page Link	Page Views	Page Visits
1	Local Offer Homepage https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/	6,477	4,171
2	Education Health and Care Plans landing page https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/how-is-sen-funded-in-schools/education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/	3,630	2,072
3	The EHCP team https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/education-services/ehcp-team-previously-known-as-sen-team/ehcp-team/	3,591	2,484
4	Education landing page https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/	2,520	1,171
5	How do I apply for an education, health and care needs assessment? https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/how-is-sen-funded-in-schools/education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/how-do-i-apply-for-an-education-health-and-care-needs-assessment-ehcna/	2,271	1,235

How do I apply for an education, health and care needs assessment – parent carer section

6	https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/how-is-sen-funded-in-schools/education-health-and-care-plan-ehcp/how-do-i-apply-for-an-education-health-and-care-needs-assessment-ehcna/parentcarer/	2,012	1,116
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Travel and Transport landing page

7	https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/travel-and-transport/	1,803	1,160
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Children's social care – safeguarding

8	https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/social-care/childrens-social-care/safeguarding/	1,770	1,418
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Apply for school transport

9	https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/travel-and-transport/apply/	1,625	946
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Specialist schools and resourced provision

10	https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/education/nurseries-schools-colleges-and-specialist-provision/specialist-schools-and-resourced-provision/	1,433	1,048
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1.3 SEND Newsletter

The SEND newsletter was first issued in 2020 as a way of keeping families up to date and informed through the pandemic. It is co-produced with parent carers and Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin NHS and is issued every half term. It is primarily aimed at parent carers, although some professionals also subscribe.

There are **4,668** subscribers at the end of March 2026, this compares to 4,984 the previous year, so the number of subscribers is decreasing, however the SEND Newsletter has the biggest distribution lists of any other newsletter issued by Early Help.

	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025	October 2025	December 2025	February 2026	March 2026
Total Sent	4955	4965	4,965	4,742	4,679	4,668	4,653
Total opens	1905	1603	1,603	1,778	1,915	1,722	1,431
Unique opens	1271 (27%)	1111 (25%)	1,111 (24%)	1,114 (24%)	1,165 (26%)	1,070 (24%)	947 (21%)
Total Clicks	188	287	287	139	235	375	236
Unique clicks	168 (4%)	246 (5%)	246 (5%)	127 (3%)	225 (5%)	228 (5%)	165 (4%)
Number of links	45	55	55	44	69	58	56

1.4 – Social Media

Each month we review our social media schedule to evaluate the effectiveness of posts and to plan campaigns and messages for the next month. Social media continues to be a successful route through which to provide information to the SEND community. We have a Facebook page and an Instagram account. It is more difficult to get data from the Instagram account.

Total Followers: 2214 (Facebook) 247 (Instagram) = 2461 TOTAL

Overall Views/Reach: 346,816 (Facebook)

Views/Reach per Month: 28,901 (Facebook)

Total Interactions (saves, shares, comments, reactions, replies): 2200 (Facebook)

Overall top three posts by Reach/Views

- 1 – Announcement that Shaftsbury has been awarded the overnights Short Breaks contract
- 2 – An update from the EHCP team for parent carers whose child has an EHCP and is due to transfer to another phase of their learning and education
- 3 – The open access drop in clinics provided by Health Visitors

View post



[sendlocaloffershropshire](#) 18 Nov 2025 | 11:35

Shropshire Council is pleased to announce that Shaftesbury has been awarded the contract to provide Overnight Short Breaks to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for at least the next three years [read more...](#)



LIKES 9
COMMENTS 7
REACH 7.4K
ENG. RATE 1.23%

SHARES 7
CLICKS 118
IMPRESSIONS 11.6K
REACTIONS 10
SAVES NA

1
7.4K
REACH

View post



[sendlocaloffershropshire](#) 08 Jan 2026 | 09:43

The EHCP team at Shropshire Council have shared an update for parent carers whose child has an EHCP and is due to transfer to another phase of their learning and education, known as a phased transfer. This could be from:- • early years edu [read more...](#)



LIKES 7
COMMENTS 14
REACH 6.3K
ENG. RATE 1.5%

SHARES 11
CLICKS 130
IMPRESSIONS 10.8K
REACTIONS 7
SAVES NA

2
6.3K
REACH

View post



[sendlocaloffershropshire](#) 15 May 2025 | 08:00

Shropshire Health Visitors help families with children aged 0-5 years old. Offering information, advice and support on a range of topics, including: • Infant feeding and breastfeeding advice • Emotional health and wellbeing • Development, b [read more...](#)



LIKES 0
COMMENTS 0
REACH 3.1K
ENG. RATE 1.3%

SHARES 11
CLICKS 48
IMPRESSIONS 4.5K
REACTIONS 0
SAVES NA

3
3.1K
REACH

Top three posts by clicks

- 1 – Information on the Early Help Drop Ins offering support and advice for families.
- 2 – An update from the EHCP team for parent carers whose child has an EHCP and is due to transfer to another phase of their learning and education
- 3 – Announcement that Shaftesbury has been awarded the overnights Short Breaks contract

View post  sendlocaloffershropshire 09 Jun 2025 13:01  You can get free information, advice and support on all aspects of family life, at our family drop-ins. Come along for a coffee and a chat, and find out how we can help you with things like: ❤️ Family life ❤️ Parenting support ❤️ Domestic read more...	LIKES 3 COMMENTS 0 REACH 834 ENG. RATE 13.92%	SHARES 5 CLICKS 189 IMPRESSIONS 1.4K REACTIONS 3 SAVES NA	1 189 CLICKS
View post  sendlocaloffershropshire 08 Jan 2026 09:43  The EHCP team at Shropshire Council have shared an update for parent carers whose child has an EHCP and is due to transfer to another phase of their learning and education, known as a phased transfer. This could be from: • early years edu read more...	LIKES 7 COMMENTS 14 REACH 6.3K ENG. RATE 1.5%	SHARES 11 CLICKS 130 IMPRESSIONS 10.8K REACTIONS 7 SAVES NA	2 130 CLICKS
View post  sendlocaloffershropshire 18 Nov 2025 11:35  Shropshire Council is pleased to announce that Shaftesbury has been awarded the contract to provide Overnight Short Breaks to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for at least the next three years read more...	LIKES 9 COMMENTS 7 REACH 7.4K ENG. RATE 1.23%	SHARES 7 CLICKS 118 IMPRESSIONS 11.6K REACTIONS 10 SAVES NA	3 118 CLICKS

2 - You said, we did

When we receive feedback about the SEND Local Offer we use a 'you said, we did' approach to show what we've done to make improvements. Here are some of the comments we have received and what we have done in response.

There should be greater sharing of the Local Offer social media posts on the Shropshire Council social media account – Parent carer

We now regularly share posts about the Local Offer with colleagues who manage the Shropshire Council corporate account.

The SEND Newsletter for parent carers is jargon heavy – Parent carer

We have reminded all contributors to be avoid jargon and shared some principles of writing content with them

There's an overwhelmingly neurodiversity-focus – Parent carer

We now ensure support information covers a wide range of disabilities and additional needs.

It isn't easy to find a list of the All In short breaks activities from the Local Offer – Practitioner

We have now added a link from the Local Offer to the providers website where the activities are listed.

3 - Feedback from Parent Carer

We encourage parent carers to share their views on the SEND Local Offer website, but we find that instead they share their views on SEND services and the SEND system as a whole.

This is in part because of the name the SEND Local Offer and parent carers relate that to the SEND Offer they expect to be available locally, and not just the provision of information through the website.

These are some of the comments we received from a survey we promote

- I was looking for information on the process for assessment for capacity for a young person approaching adulthood: who the assessment should be carried out by e.g which professionals, how to request an assessment etc.
- There are no support or activities outside of Shrewsbury. It's an absolute waste of time if you live outside of Shrewsbury.
- Well, it's just information on how things are supposed to work, but they don't work like that do they. Just because a child legally should have all this support doesn't mean they do. Where you live plays a huge factor as professionals will literally tell you its not far to travel if you live outside of Shrewsbury. All services are based in Shrewsbury, everything.
- My child has a right to Salt but hasn't had it for three years. I am not alone. I have the right to a family assessment, but trying to get a social worker to actually complete one is not achievable. It's an awful service. It's not a local offer. Nothing is on offer. I've lost count of the amount of complaints we've had to put in, and other parents, just to get the needs of my child met, despite them being on a legal document.

Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC)

The Local Offer is a key resource for families to find information on local support and services in the Shropshire SEND System. Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC) regularly promote The Local Offer through Social Media Channels and through our Community Navigator Service.

Over the last 12 months we have seen an improvement in some areas of the Local Offer, where information has been coproduced with us. A lot of work has been done on Children's Social Care; however Early Help information is still confusing for families and information is not clear. Gaps remain despite these regularly being raised with the system over the last 18 months+, particularly in Adults Social Care and Education. Whilst information has improved for families in some areas, there is still a gap in information of who to contact and what families can do when things go wrong. It is disappointing that where key gaps have been raised that capacity has meant this cannot be addressed, however, PACC have produced guides and resources, some of which are now linked on The Local Offer.

PACC regular ask families where they have accessed information and 60% of Parent Carers that have accessed our Community Navigator Service have not heard of the Local Offer. We have

raised the lack of awareness of SEND on the main Shropshire Council Facebook Page and the missed opportunities.

PACC co-produce the SEND Newsletter, and we have seen great improvements in the format of the last 12 months, with information now being easier to access and broken down into key areas.

We hope that a new staff member joining the team will improve the timeliness of updates and information on the Local Offer, as one person being solely responsible for such a huge work area has been a massive challenge. We would like to acknowledge the commitment and hard work Kate has put into the Local Offer this year.

Abi Taylor

Community Support Strategic Lead- PACC

4 - Feedback from Partners

Children's Social Care

Work has been on-going during 2025/26 to review the Children's Social Care information available on the Local Offer.

This area of work is a key priority for the Designated Social Care Officer. This work has included revising the existing content and identifying new areas of information, some of which have been identified by parent carers and professionals from within the local area SEND system as current gaps.

To further progress the review Task and Finish Groups have continued to take place. These groups have included professionals from specific service areas and the Parent Carer Council (PACC) to ensure that collaboration and co-production consistently take place. Co-production of the information content with parent carers to ensure it is understandable and relevant to the SEND community has been of paramount importance.

Specific areas that have been reviewed have included the Social Care landing page, although there is further progress to be made with this, and the pages on the role of the Designated Social Care Officer, Parent Carer Needs Assessments and What you need to know about transitioning from Children's to Adult Social Care. A new page on Co-production in Children's Social Care has been developed in co-production with PACC ([Co-production in children's social care | Shropshire Council](#)). This details examples of where positive co-production has taken place at an individual, service level and strategic level. This page also promotes the Bench Model of co-production which Children's Social Care are proud to champion. Another new page that has been co-produced is Child Exploitation with a SEND specific focus. This has been in response to a gap in information available which was highlighted by parent carers, especially through the PACC Navigator Service.

The next areas we want to review and develop further are:

- Social Care Personal Budgets (Direct Payments)
- Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities
- The role of the Disabled Children's Team (to include staff roles and responsibilities)
- Children's Safeguarding.

New content that we are going to co-produce during 2026/27 includes:

- Personal Assistants including advice for parent carers on recruitment and employment responsibilities
- Social Care's role in Education Health and Care needs assessments and planning.

Content updates are shared through social media, specifically Facebook as we know this is the platform that parent carers prefer. Comments and feedback on all content is encouraged so that this can be incorporated into improving the information provided.

Sharon Griffiths

Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) for SEND

Shropshire Council's Children's Social Care and Safeguarding

Clive CE Primary School

Reference to Shropshire Council's Local Offer is a permanent feature of our weekly newsletter that goes out to all parents, staff and governors and published on our website. Additionally, FIS is promoted through the same publication every week. The Local Offer also features largely on the SEND page of the school website which then has the school's SEND Information Report as an attached document.

Referrals to external agencies frequently make reference to whether parents are aware of the Shropshire Local Offer and these are always noted during referral meetings with parents.

In the academic year 2024-25 we were very involved with the PINS project. Our work with this has also attracted some interest from the DfE and the follow up evaluation is ongoing. We are due to meet with the DfE's research team to give them the feedback involving all stakeholders.

We have continued our work around Neurodivergence and our understanding of this in the classroom. This academic year we have developed inclusive processes by continuing with our Parent-Carer forum (Clive Connect) with the much-appreciated support from PACC. We are due to fly solo shortly but the general feeling from the first group that this co-production approach will be a huge benefit to the school, parents and, above all, the children.

Dave Watts

SENCO – Clive Church of England Primary School

NHS Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

The SEND team at the NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board (ICB) works closely with the Local Offer to ensure Health information is up to date and accessible.

Accessible, accurate, and timely health information is vital to ensure children and young people receive the right support, improve their health outcomes, and can participate in decisions regarding their care. The Local Offer is key to this, enabling families and professionals to find information, knowledge and practical advice about what they can do to help their children.

Alongside the Local Offer, STW ICB have also been developing the information content on the [Healthier Together website](#). Together with Local Offer colleagues, we have worked hard to ensure information is cross-referenced across both websites and where updates are required it is only necessary to update in one place.

During 2025/26 the Health section of the Local Offer including the initial landing page, the page Health Services for children and young people with SEND and Universal Health Services page, have been reviewed and updated. These pages now clearly link into the support offer pages on Healthier Together in relation to [Support available while waiting for your appointment](#), [Support for neurodivergent children and their families](#), and [Support for Speech, Language and Communication Needs \(SLCN\)](#)

In addition, the following health pages have been created or revised:

- Epilepsy support services
- Ophthalmology and Orthoptics information

- Reasonable adjustments for health services
- Coproduction in health
- Health transitions

We have also worked with colleagues and PACC to revise the following pages which have information across health, education and social care.

- Young people's rights to make their own decisions
- Neurodiversity

Hilary McGlynn
SEND Change Programme Partner (Health)
NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

Severndale Specialist Academy

I use the Local Offer website as part of my job almost every day. As the Family Liaison Officer at Severndale Specialist Academy, I support my families through Early Help, signposting, and offering whatever is needed in the moment. Some families only require information to take away and act on, so I will become involved in an advisory role. Other families will have a higher need, so this might mean I will signpost, then provide ongoing support to complete forms, chase professionals, apply parenting strategies, build family relationships, etc. Due to the vast nature of my role, all of my families have different needs, so I constantly need to learn new ways of supporting them. The Local Offer has acted as my first point of reference for checking what is available to support my families in Shropshire. Since I have become familiar with the Local Offer website, I am able to navigate it mostly with ease, selecting one of the easy-to-understand tiles, and going down different rabbit holes to find the information I need.

I have found the biggest benefit of the Shropshire Local Offer is having all of the information in one place. It is tedious for parent carers to need to know multiple places to search for different things, so having somewhere I can always signpost to first is helpful. I am aware that not all of the information is fully up to date – I have had experiences where I have contacted organisations named on the website and been told that the contract is no longer held, or the organisation no longer offers what was named on the website. Thankfully, it is easy to provide feedback on the page by simply going to the “Feedback” tile on the home screen and completing the survey / sending an email.

When signposting to the Local Offer, I am aware that it can be an intimidating home page so will usually navigate to and go through the information with the parent carer, especially if they are not very familiar with the website. I do not often signpost to the Local Offer Team, who support parent carers to navigate the website, as I will take on that role myself as a familiar professional.

There are some areas of the Local Offer that I have found could do with improvement. Although the website seems easy to navigate with its strong visual elements, once you start clicking, these visual elements disappear and there is a lot of text, and a lot of this text is jargon – inaccessible to many parent carers.

Let's use the example of a child who exhibits unsafe behaviours in the home and parent carers who want to look at ways of keeping them safe. As a professional, I know to go to “Social Care” >

“Children’s Social Care” > “Children’s Occupational Therapy Team”, and consult the safety advice booklet. If the guidance in the booklet is not enough, I would know to call FPoC and request a housing adaptations assessment from the Occupational Therapy team. I can think of many parent carers who would not be able to follow this route and access the information without support – going to “Social Care” for housing adaptations is not the most intuitive. Parent carers might have additional needs of their own, or they just might not know what an occupational therapist is/does. For this example, I tried using simplified language in the search bar to see if it would get me to the right result. I searched “house safety” and was given many options, none of which being the Occupational Therapy team. A search bar specifically tailored to search only the SEND Local Offer categories and pages would minimise the confusion. Additionally, more simplified, parent carer focused tags to reach pages would enable those who are not so familiar with jargon to still find the information they are looking for.

Furthermore, although, as a professional, I know that parent carers can contact FPoC and request more specific information from a worker, I do not feel this is fully advertised on the Local Offer well enough for parent carers. It would be beneficial to have a button on the first home page around “I can’t find what I’m looking for”, which would inform parents to call FPoC and be directed to either Family Information Service (FIS) or the Local Offer team.

I spend a lot of my time supporting families to make requests for social work assessments, because I know it is a very tricky process. Parent carers have to know to call FPoC, then have an hour long phone conversation, answering questions that are emotional, confronting, and exhausting. They have to make sure they say all of the things they wanted to say, even though they have no chance to prepare for the phone call as they have no idea what to expect. To improve this process for my families, I will go through each of the 12 questions that parent carers are asked when they request a social work assessment, with the parents ahead of the phone call. This gives them time to think about their answers, review them, and get advice from professionals about how best to word things. The Local Offer website could support this by outlining more the process of self-referral to social care, listing the 12 questions on the website, providing a flow chart of what the process looks like from start to finish, etc. The same would be helpful for Occupational Therapy referrals through FPoC, which have the same problem to a lesser extent.

I joined the Local Offer Project Team when I was invited by Kate Bentham at a SEND Drop-In session at the Lantern. I attended as a parent rather than professional, as I had signposted many parents to this and wanted to make sure it was offering what I had promised. I would not have joined the project group if I did not believe the Local Offer is something that is so beneficial to our parent carers, and so sorely needed in a world that seems to give children diagnoses, then leave the parent carers to figure out the rest. I signpost to the Local Offer often, but even more often, I will use my knowledge of the Local Offer to advise parents myself, as I am aware that many families need more than signposting to access information. The families I work with all benefit from speaking with a real person who can translate the jargon and navigate the website with them – which is why I believe the Local Offer Team needs to be made more visible on the website. It is a fantastic service which should be advertised more to both parent carers and professionals.

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