



The SEND local offer

Shropshire Local Offer Annual Report 2020-2021

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Welcome to the Local Offer Annual Report

The year 2020 was like no other any of us have ever experienced. It was a time when our usual routines and our familiar way of life had to be suspended. For many families this meant juggling working from home whilst caring for the needs of their children. It meant worrying about keeping their children both physically safe and looking after their emotional health and wellbeing. It put extra pressure on families.

During this time of uncertainty and challenge, parent carers told us that they wanted access to information specifically for them, as a parent carer of a child or young person with special educational needs and disabilities.

They wanted information to be easily available to them and which would help them to understand the impact of the pandemic so they could plan for their families. The Local Offer responded to parent carers request and developed to be able to meet their needs during these unprecedented times.

A SEND newsletter was introduced, co-produced by the Local Offer, the Parent Carer Council (PACC) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This newsletter included articles parent carers told us they wanted to read, and the feedback on the newsletter has been very positive, so much so that it will continue to be issued.

The Local Offer also developed a dedicated Coronavirus section. This section includes resources and support for families, easy read materials, and guidance and information documents, making it easy for parent carers to have access to the information and updates they need.

During 2020 work also continued to develop a Local Offer specifically for young people and although plans had to change, the research and development programme continued. This programme gave young people the opportunity to co-produce what their Local Offer should look like and the information it should contain.

Back at the beginning of 2020, a joint Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted SEND Inspection took place in Shropshire. The inspection was a review of the local area, which includes Shropshire Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and its commissioned health providers as well as schools, colleges and other education settings, care providers and other key stakeholders. The Local Offer was also reviewed as part of this inspection, and I was delighted to see that our Local Offer was identified as an area of strength by the inspectors.

This annual report provides the opportunity to keep everyone informed of the work we have undertaken during 2020 and the next steps and future direction we are working towards.

Karen Bradshaw
Executive Director of Children's Services
Shropshire Council

The Statutory Duty

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

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

The Local Offer has two key purposes:

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

SEND Local Area Inspection and Written Statement of Action (WSOA)

A joint Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted SEND Inspection took place in Shropshire in January 2020. The inspection was a review of the local area, which includes Shropshire Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and its commissioned health providers as well as schools, colleges and other education settings, care providers and other key stakeholders.

Inspectors looked at how effective all partners are in identifying the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of children and young people aged 0 up to 25, as well as any health and care needs that relate to their special educational needs. Inspectors also considered the effectiveness of partners in meeting those needs by providing or commissioning the right services to enable children and young people with SEND to achieve positive outcomes and prepare effectively for adulthood.

Most importantly inspectors were keen to review the impact of the reforms on the outcomes and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families and parent carers.

They looked at data and information provided by education, health and social care including health and care providers and education settings. They also spoke directly to parent carers, children and young people to find out what they thought of the support and services available to them.

The Local Offer was part of this inspection and inspectors reviewed the Local Offer to ensure it was compliant and spoke to parent carers and young people to gather their views on the Local Offer.

The outcomes of the inspection were published in May 2020. The [inspection letter](#) identified many strengths, including the Local Offer. This is an extract from the inspection letter which refers to the Local Offer:-

The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- *Area leaders continually look for ways to develop and improve the local offer. This includes the re-design of the local offer information page. A part-time local offer development officer has recently been taken on. Parents and young people did not always speak convincingly about how useful the local offer was to them. However, leaders' monitoring of the use of the local offer shows that a high number of people are regularly visiting the site.*
- *Co-production is well developed in some aspects of the area's work. For example, one of the next stages in the improvement of the local offer is to develop a local offer specifically for children and young people with SEND. Leaders are coproducing this with children and young people who are part of the Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH) group. Young people have designed icons for the new website and are currently producing videos for it. They value this opportunity.*



However, there were a number of concerns that were identified by the inspection and, as a result of these findings, the Chief Inspector determined that the local area was required to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA). Shropshire Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Parent Carer Council (PACC) have worked together to develop this co-produced document that identifies how all partners will work together to address the concerns identified during the inspection, and provide clarity about how we will know that the actions that we are taking are making a difference to improving the outcomes and lived experience of all children and young people with SEND.

There are six priority areas that must be addressed by the WSoA.

- Inconsistent strategic leadership and weak strategic planning across the area, most notably in the CCG, including the ineffective use of data to accurately commission and plan services
- The lack of inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan
- Significant waiting times for large numbers of children and young people on the ASD and ADHD diagnostic pathways
- Significant waiting times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy service
- Inconsistency in the quality of input from education, health and care into EHC assessment and planning
- The high rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the high rate of repeat fixed-term exclusions for those receiving SEND support.

You can find out more about these priorities and the actions that will be taken to address these [here](#).

A number of workstreams have been established to address each of the priorities and the actions, outcomes and impact of this work will be shared regularly with all stakeholders through updates in newsletters, the Local Offer, social media and through the publication of an annual report.

The impact of Covid-19 on plans

The Covid-19 pandemic obviously had an impact on the Local Offer work we had planned for 2020. We were no longer able to meet with young people face to face to continue our research and development of a local offer for young people.

We also couldn't go out into the community to develop visuals such as videos and photos, and we could not undertake any face to face promotion and marketing at events for parent carers or at team meetings with practitioners. We had to adapt and consider how we could continue our work virtually.

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

Co-produced newsletter

At the start of the first national lockdown, parent carers told us that they wanted information relating to the coronavirus specifically for them as a parent carer of a child with SEND. It was agreed for Shropshire Council, PACC and the CCG to co-produce an electronic newsletter. This newsletter was initially issued monthly and themed around a number of key topics parents told us they wanted information on. This included returning to school, services for young people aged 18-25 years, and health.



Feedback about the newsletter from parent carers has been very positive and it has been agreed to continue issuing the newsletter every half term. This is an example of the feedback received from a parent carers

Hi

I wanted to give feedback on the SEND newsletter. I have just read the newest edition and wanted to say thank you. It's a great way to share info.

With the focus on health in this edition it would be great if the next one could focus on social care.

Thank you and please keep them coming

Parent Carer

Covid-19 Information Section

At the start of the first national lockdown parent carers told us that they wanted information relating to the coronavirus specifically for them as a parent carer of a child with SEND. They wanted this information in one place, which was easy for them to access. We developed a specific section on the Local Offer for coronavirus information. This section includes



- Guidance and document
- Resources and support
- Educating pupils at home
- Easy read materials

This section continues to be updated and working with PACC, ensuring that information is archived, so that content remains current and relevant.

Research and development – working with young people



As a result of the pandemic we have been unable to implement our plans to meet with various groups of young people to continue our work with them on co-producing a Local Offer specifically for young people. We have had to make adaptations and to undertake this work virtually.

During the first lockdown we developed two activities for young people at Shrewsbury Sixth Form College Group to undertake as part of their online learning.

Ask Google

The first task was called Ask Google and was to understand more about the words young people use when searching for information online. This was the Ask Google task:-

A local company called LOYP is designing a brand-new website for young people aged 13-25

The website will be a place to go for information about growing up and support on issues many teenagers and young people face.

LOYP want you to be involved in the design and development of the website. This is your chance to have your say on what young people really want from a website.

The first task LOYP want your help with is making sure that young people can easily find information on the new website. They need your help to understand how young people search for information on the internet.

Imagine you're using Google to look for information on a wide range of topics, LOYP want to know how you would search for that information, what words you would use, what sentence you would put into Google – basically "What would you ask Google?"

Take a look at these questions and let LOYP know what you would ask Google.

The task then went onto cover topics such as travel, help and support, earning money, volunteering, options when finishing college, making new friends, and young people told us the words and phrases they would use if they wanted to find out information on any of these topics.

The results of this task were very insightful and helped us to understand more about the language and terminology that young people use. This will help to inform the words we will need to use on the site and in key meta data so that information from the Local Offer for young people can be found through internet searches.



Website Design

We set an online activity for students to design a homepage for the young people's Local Offer. This was the task we set,

A local company called LOYP is designing a brand-new website for young people aged 13-25, can you help?

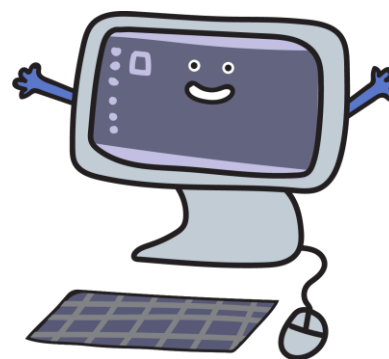
The website will need be easy to use and it should work on different devices like laptops, tablets and mobile phones – how would you layout a website homepage on these different sized screens so young people can find what they're looking for? What would the most important features be? You can design your website homepage any way you like and find easy:

- *use Word or a similar program and add shapes to create a layout, (like the examples shown here)*
- *if you like to use MS Paint or another graphics program you can use that*
- *or draw your homepage or create a collage using cut outs and take a photo to send to us*

The results from this task help to understand more about what young people expect to see from the homepage of a website, what layout they prefer and the use of images. This task will be repeated in 2021 but through MS Teams and using the chat function to gather further insight.

Website Structure

During the autumn term of 2020 we held two virtual sessions through MS Teams with students at Shrewsbury Sixth Form group. These workshops were to look at the structure of the young people's Local Offer, focusing on top level categories and the information that young people would expect to see contained in that category.



The students typed their thoughts into the chat function of teams which really benefitted those students who may not have had the confidence to talk face to face in class. There was great engagement from the students for this activity and they made lots of suggestions for information they thought should be contained in the Local Offer for young people. This will be carried forward onto the content tracker.

Student Placements

Thanks to our links with Shrewsbury Sixth Form College, who are represented on the Local Offer Project Group, we have been able to offer students work placement experience on the Local Offer. We offered students two types of virtual placements, one focusing on design and imagery, and one looking at preparing content for social media campaigns. These placements started in December 2020. The work that the students produced is incredible and enhanced the Local Offer, and examples of some of their work can be seen throughout this report. The students wrote about their experience of working with Shropshire Council.

Rosie – Social Media Content Writer

What an experience it has been these last 3 months. From the start of this work experience to where I am now I never thought I would have grown and become more knowledgeable on campaigns that aren't always expressed as important or talked about much. It has been an amazing experience to learn more about society and the ways we can help and support those in need. I loved that this was offered at college because it has widened my eyes and helped me to have hands on experience with this area of work.

I have loved every minute of this – working on campaigns that I am unfamiliar with at the start and then finishing the campaign with so much more knowledge and appreciation for those that help with the campaigns.

I have felt extremely involved and supported especially by Kate, and the encouragement is wonderful. I am so grateful for this experience, it has guided me into the career that I want to go into. The skills that I have learnt from researching to writing posts for social media has

benefitted me in so many ways which I will definitely take away with me as I move forward. Thank you!

Jamie – Social Media Content Writer

From my experience working with the Shropshire Council, I have gained valuable skills such as with my development of my organisation and in-depth researching skills from the various media campaigns which were set. I was also given weekly guidance on how I can improve and approach different aspects for each of the three campaigns. This helped me tremendously as it pointed me to the right direction for the main focus of each campaign which will stay with me for future endeavour such as higher education / jobs.

Maisie – Graphic Designer

Since December, I have been on a work experience placement with Shropshire Council designing images for their social media. While taking part in this placement, I have gained a valuable insight into the industry of graphic design, including communicating with a client, adhering to short deadlines and designing to a certain standard. It has been rewarding seeing my work on social media, and I have enjoyed creating images that are separate from my college course work.

This placement has improved my time management skills, as I have had to stick to shorter deadlines than I am used to and has also improved my knowledge on the Local Offer, which I have been producing images for. I would strongly recommend this work placement to anybody looking to develop their portfolio and to get an introduction to graphic design separate from their college work. I am grateful for the opportunity that this work placement has given me and the skills I have learnt and developed whilst taking part.

Seren – Animator

My experience working with Shropshire council has been a great benefit to me over the past months. I have had the opportunity to improve on a whole range of employment skills; from learning about and adapting to workplace culture to time management and meeting deadlines. It has helped me to build my confidence and has given me the opportunity to take responsibility for myself.

Work experience involving graphic design has helped me make informed further education decisions by assessing my aptitudes and interests and exploring potential career choices. It



has given me the opportunity to put what I have learned studying at college into practice and provided me with a better understanding of what a future career could possibly look like.

Working with Shropshire Council has given me insight into what the organisation does, I am now more knowledgeable on the Local Offer and what it entails. Alongside the research I did into the organisation, this particular work has also been beneficial because it has compelled me to consider how best to portray media and information in a way that is suitable for people of all backgrounds, as I have had to be careful in how I present work. For example, with guidance, I used a specific range of colours in my work as to create a comforting portrayal of certain aspects in everyday life, which is a skill I'm sure will be advantageous in the future.

Social Media

We noticed that from March 2020 when we entered the first national lockdown and schools were open only to children of key workers and those who were vulnerable, many families were accessing information through social media. Engagement statistics and page likes rose rapidly during the first few weeks of the first national lockdown.

This has continued during 2020, and we have responded by ensuring information is always shared through our social media channels.

The Local Offer now has its own YouTube channel and video content is being transferred across.

Shropshire Council implemented a new social media management tool called Orlo, which has the function to also post content to Instagram. The project group will discuss if this is a channel the Local Offer want to use.



Marketing and Promotion

We have produced a number of marketing materials including posters, flyers, postcard and business cards. We have developed a promotional pack for partners which will include copies of the marketing materials, along with template newsletter articles, website content, social media posts and an email to staff and a Local Offer presentation, for use in a team meeting or to be included on reception information screens.

These partner promotional packs will be distributed to schools, GPs and other places of importance and interest visited by parents.

Copies of the marketing materials, templates and logo will be included on the Local Offer.

We received this feedback from a practitioner about the marketing materials.

I just wanted to say how lovely your new promotional resources are for the local offer!

I saw them on Twitter and meant to mention it to you on Monday.

Best wishes,

Member of staff at Severndale Specialist Academy

A4 Poster



A5 Flyer and A6 postcard front and back



Content updates

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

Content updates are shared through social media and comments and feedback encouraged.

The impact of Covid-19 on workloads has resulted in some content owners not having the capacity to review and update their sections of the Local Offer, which has been a challenge.

Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH)

We continued to work with young people through DASH and plans were in place to co-produce an introductory Local Offer video.

The project involved staff from the communications team at Shropshire Council training and mentoring young people, to undertake a variety of video production roles including director, editing, sound, voice over. The young people would then develop these skills during a second video which focused on a particular topic. The first of these workshops was due to take place on Friday 13th March 2020, but with the spread of Coronavirus parents made the decision to withdraw their children from the workshop. The following week we were in national lockdown and this video project had to be put on hold.

We continued to work with DASH by preparing a list of words to young people to create designs for. These were emailed to young people during the first lockdown, to work on while at home

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. Here are some of the statistics the site has provided for 2020.

Summary for 2020

Visits	Page Views	Unique visitors	Returning visitors
16,032	36,747	10,001	2,279

Most popular pages 2020

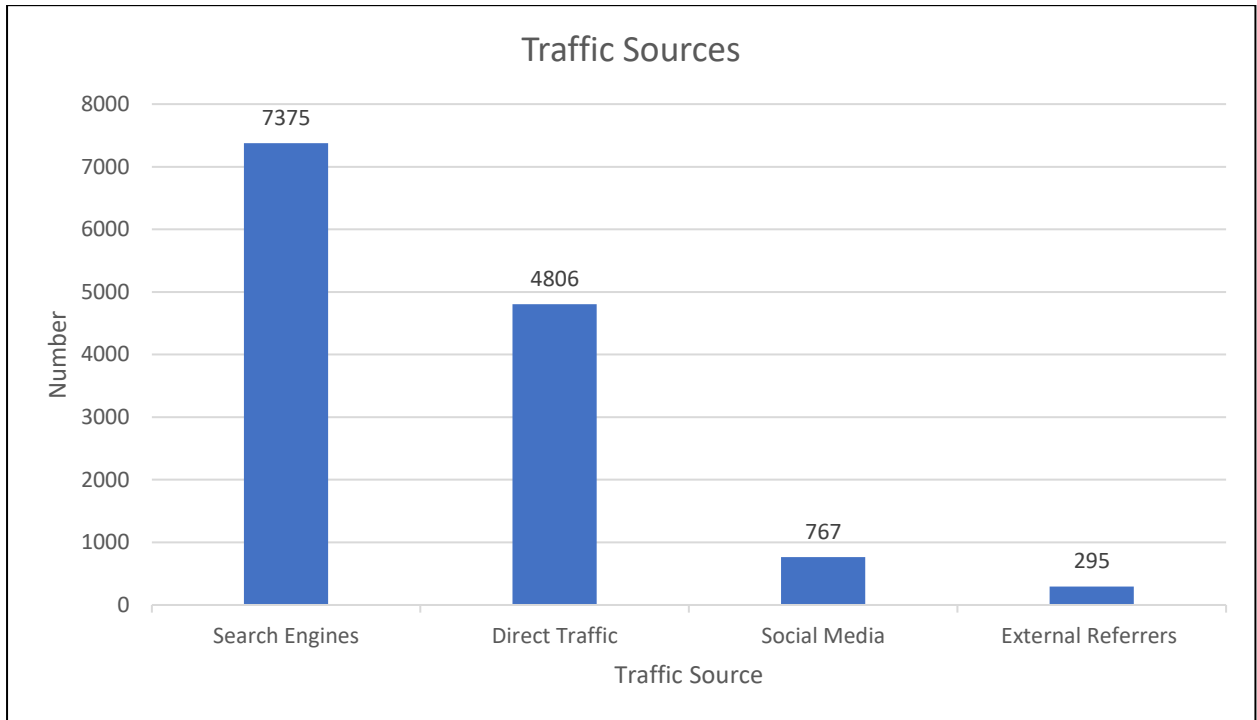
The table below shows the most popular pages viewed and visited during 2020. The table shows the path travelled to get to the page viewed, which is in bold. This information gives

us a useful insight into how parent carers and practitioners are using the Local Offer and the information they are interested in.

Rank	Path to page	Page views	Page visits
1	The SEND local offer Home page	4554	1637
2	Education/Education Services/ The SEN Team	1874	1680
3	Mental and Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service/ BEAM	1436	1245
4	Education	1358	913
5	Education/ Education, health and care plan	1272	852
6	SEN transport	910	579
7	Education/ Education, health and care plan/ How to request a statutory assessment for an EHCP	736	516
8	Mental and emotional health and wellbeing service	699	539
9	Social Care/Short Breaks/ All In Programme	518	399
10	Education/Education health and care plan/ EHCP annual reviews	490	425
11	Education/Education-health-and-care-plan/how-to-request-a-statutory-assessment-for-an-ehcp/ Parent carer's process for requesting an assessment	489	294
12	Education/ Special educational needs (SEN) support	452	332
13	Education/Education Services/ Educational Psychology Service	441	335
14	SEN Transport/ Apply	437	315
15	Education/ Education services	406	287
16	Preparing for transition into adulthood	371	211
17	Health	336	215
18	Practitioners/ Training and development	313	230
19	Early help/ The Parenting Team	309	247
20	Education/Education Health and Care Plan/How-to-request-a-statutory-assessment-for-an-ehcp/ School's process for requesting an assessment	302	221

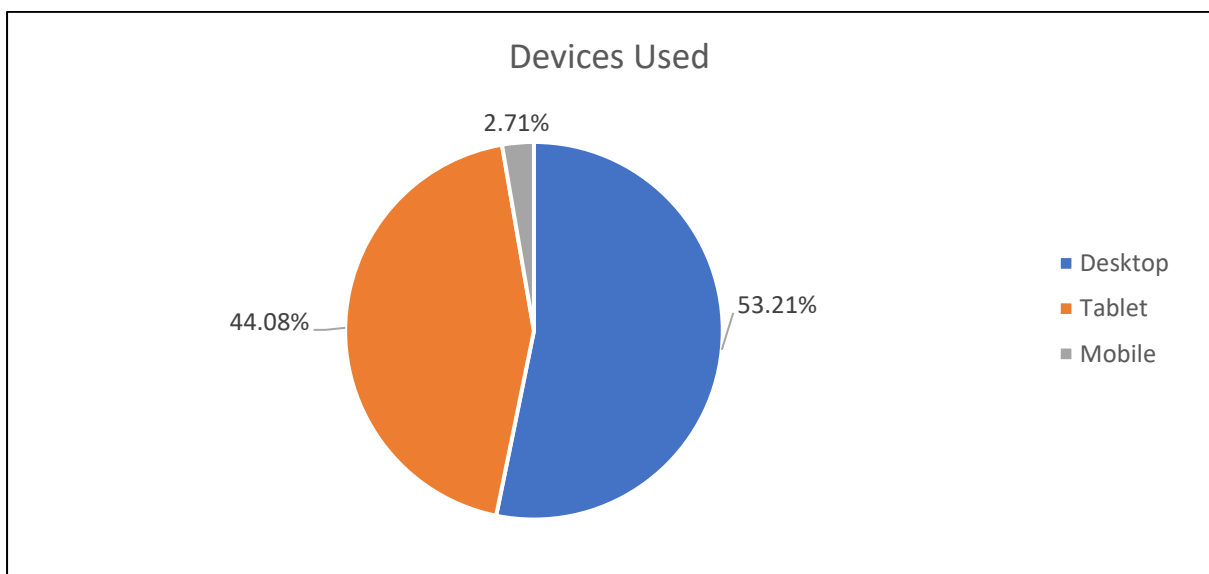
Traffic Sources 2020

This graph shows how visitors are accessing the Local Offer. The majority are coming through search engines, followed by direct traffic – which might be through links in newsletters for example. External referrers are partner websites.



Devices used

The majority of visitors are using desktop computers which also includes laptops.



Quality Assurance

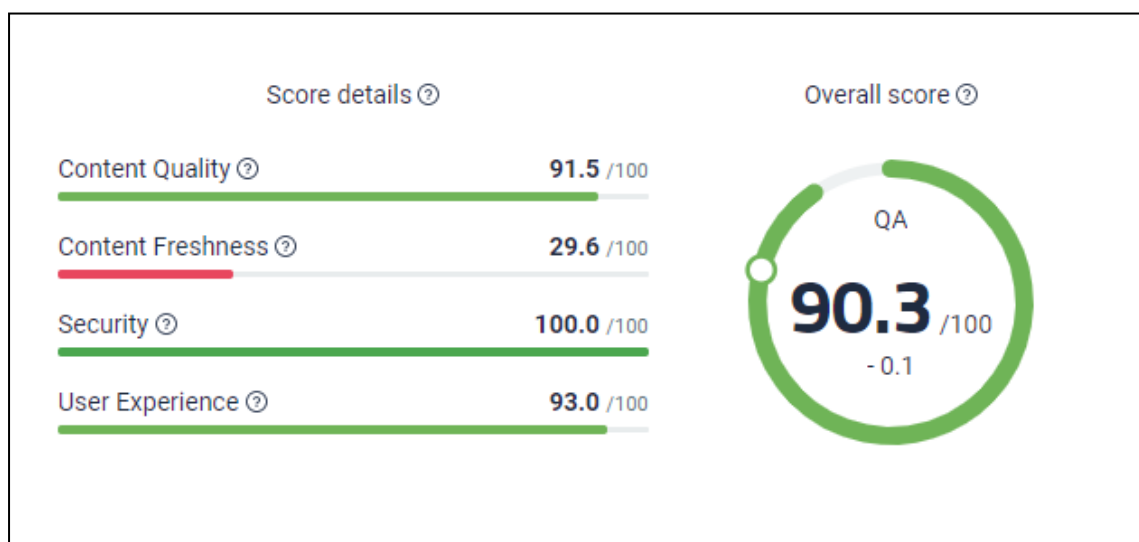
The industry benchmark is 78.9, whereas our Local Offer pages were 90.3 overall.

Content Quality - The quality of the site's content, which affects how quickly and accurately users are able to comprehend it.

Content freshness - How many new pages have been added. Although this figure may look low, we are frequently updating the News section, and we also added in the new Coronavirus section.

Security - How vigilant the site has been in only linking to safe domains and in keeping users' personal information private.

User Experience - How conducive content is to the usability of the site.



Accessibility Score

This shows that we are meeting our legal requirements of level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) for the site to be accessible to people with a disability. For the Local Offer this is particularly important due to the audience, as we know there will be people who have various disabilities using it.

The industry benchmark is 85.5%



What are we going to do next?

Young People's Local Offer

We are going to continue working with young people to co-produce a Local Offer specifically for them. This will include content, design and navigation.

Based on our research so far, we have produced a draft content tracker and need to consider who would be best placed to be content leads for co-ordinating information.

We know from our research that video content is a preferred route through which young people access information. We need to develop skills within the team to be able to produce video content, but we are also keen to support young people producing video content themselves.



Content updates and structure

There are several key sections which need to be reviewed and updated. This includes both content and structure. We want to continue to work with colleagues and partners in fulfilling their responsibility for providing and maintaining the information statutorily required and that parent carers have told us they want.

Feedback from users

We want to ensure users can easily provide feedback and be confident that this will be taken into consideration and responded to. We want to provide a variety of channels through which to gather feedback and have a system for recording that feedback.

Promotion

We will be distributing marketing materials to schools, GPs, and other places of importance and interest to parent carers. We want to continue to work with partners in supporting them in promoting the Local Offer to the parent carers they know.

Prepared April 2020

Kate Bentham