



The SEND local offer

Shropshire Local Offer Annual Report 2021-2022

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Welcome to the Local Offer Annual Report

For many families, March 2020 saw significant changes to our lives. Our usual routines and our familiar way of life was 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, and as the pandemic has continued, so too has the worry and pressure for many families.

Throughout 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 was developed to be able to meet their needs during these unprecedented times, this included regularly collecting updates from SEND services and publishing these on the Local Offer, so parent carers were aware of any changes to service delivery as a result of the pandemic.

A SEND newsletter was also 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 continues to be issued.

For the SEND community communication is key to ensuring families are up to speed, following on from the success of the newsletter – thoughts turned to what more can we do to ensure families know about the Local Offer. A simple and accessible video has been produced in co-production with parents and carers, that tells families just that – what is the Local Offer, what information does it contain, and how to navigate it to find the information needed to support family life.

Back at the beginning of 2020, a joint Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted SEND Inspection took place in Shropshire. The Local Offer was also reviewed as part of this inspection, and at the time our Local Offer was identified as an area of strength by the inspectors. During 2021/22 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. We hope that this further strengthens the Local Offer and makes it even more relevant, accessible, and informative for both parents and carers, and children and young people alike.

This annual report provides the opportunity to keep everyone informed of the work we have undertaken during 2021 - 2022 and the next steps and future direction we are working towards.

Councillor Kirstie Hurst Knight
Children Lead portfolio holder
Shropshire Council

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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.

The continued impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on the development and promotion of the Local Offer work during 2021-2022. The year started coming out of a second national lockdown, where schools had been closed to most children and young people, and many families had been caring for children without their usual network of support.

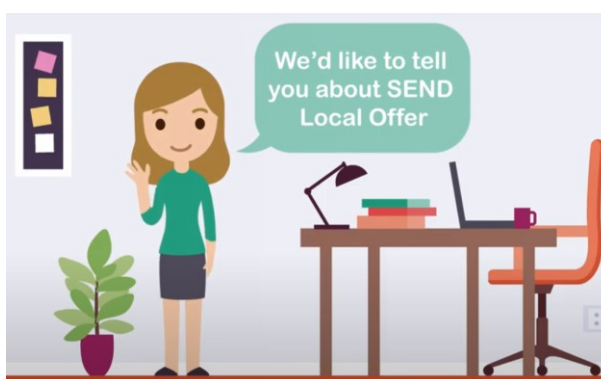
Being able to meet with young people face to face to continue our research and development of a local offer for young people was limited with many restrictions in place. There was also less opportunity to for face to face promotion and marketing at events for parent carers or at team meetings with practitioners. As we entered a second year of the pandemic it was clear that 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?

Introduction to the Local Offer video

The Local Offer regional group were able to secure funding to produce a Local Offer introduction video. The aim of the video is to share the full scope of the Local Offer and to show that it is open to people with a full range of needs. It was also important to share the message that children/young people and parent carers should be involved in producing the Local Offer.

Whilst the video is aimed at parent carers it could also be used with young people and to



inform practitioners of the Local Offer for them to then support children, young people and parent carers.

Each video has been branded with each Local Authority and Local Offer logos and includes the specific Local Offer web link for that Local Offer.

There are two versions of the video, which can both be viewed on the Local Offer YouTube channel.

[What is the SEND Local Offer? \(signed version\)](#)

[What is the SEND Local Offer?](#)

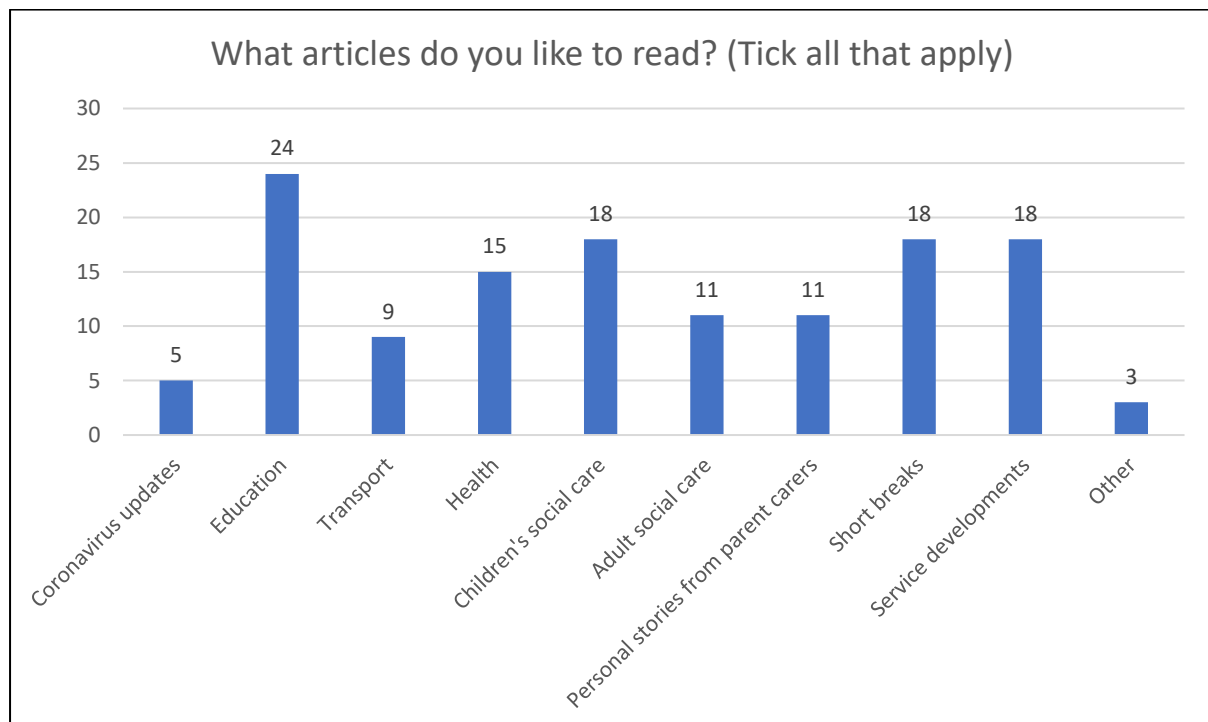
Co-produced newsletter

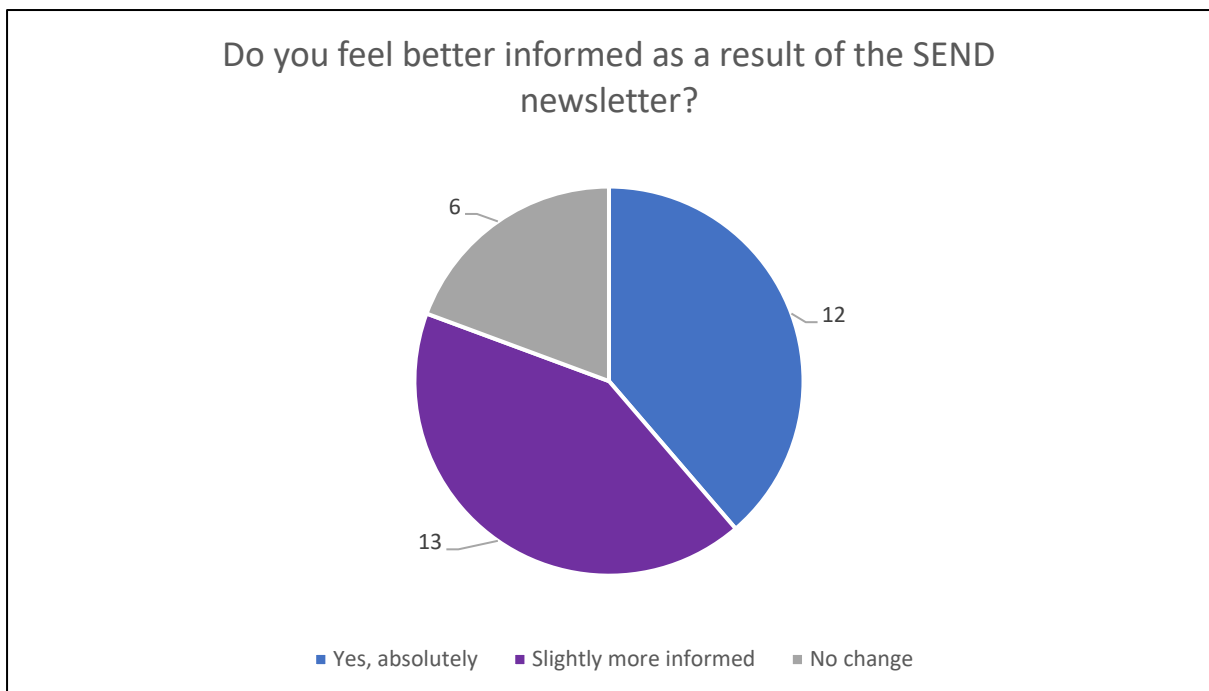
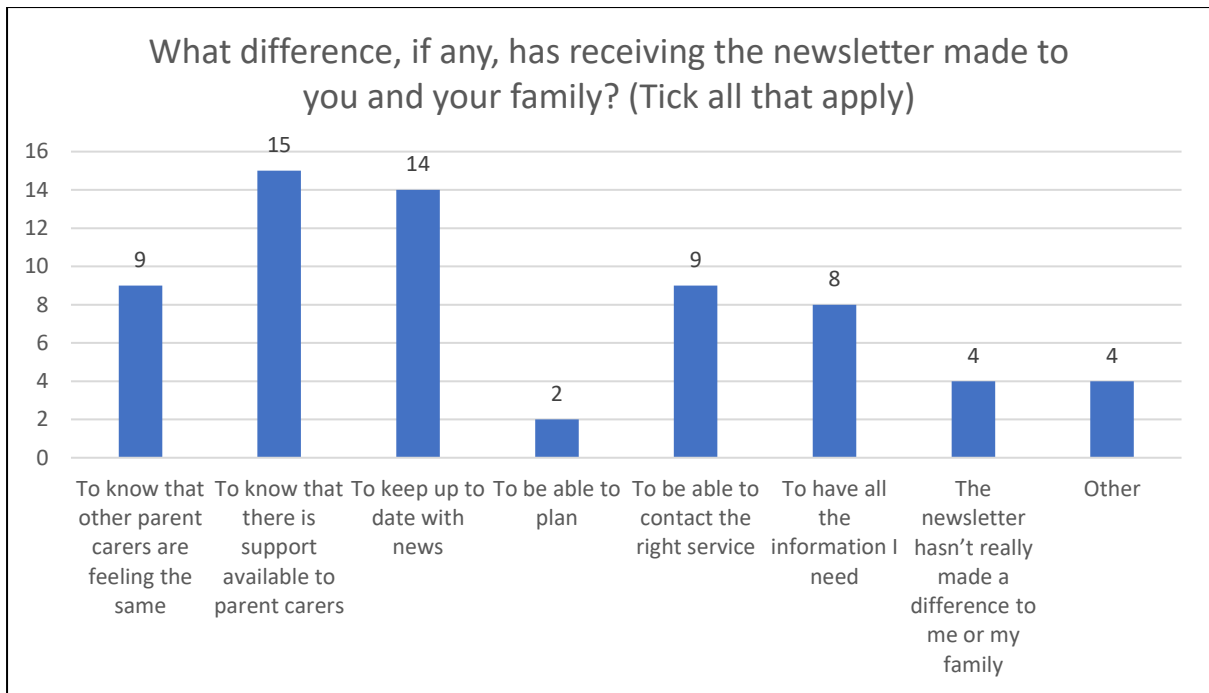
At the start of the first national lockdown in 2020, parent carers told us that they wanted information relating to the coronavirus specifically for them as a parent carer of a child with SEND. It was agreed for Shropshire Council, PACC and the CCG to co-produce an electronic newsletter.



This newsletter 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](#).

A survey was produced to gather feedback on the newsletter to help inform future editions and to understand the impact and usefulness of the newsletter. These graphs show what parent carers told us about the newsletter.





Easy Read Leaflet

We have also produced an [easy ready leaflet](#) which introduces the Local Offer. The leaflet explains what the Local Offer is, what information is available and who can use the Local Offer. A copy of this can be found under the [promotional materials section](#) of the Local Offer so that those working with and supporting children and young people with SEND can print this off and share it with them.

Research and development – working with young people

We continued our work with young people to help co-produce a Local Offer specifically for them. We held virtual and face to face workshops with them.

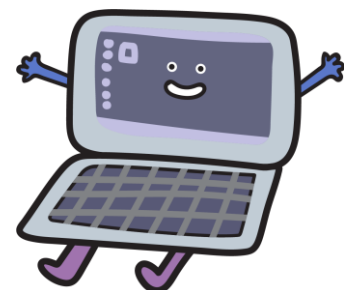


Website Content and Structure Workshops April 2022

We continued to work with young people to understand the information they wanted access to. Based on our previous research with them, the top-level categories were discussed at a follow up workshop to find out what information they would expect to see under each top level category. A summary of the comments made can be found in Appendix One.

Website Designs Workshop

In April 2021 we held two virtual workshops with young people from Shrewsbury Sixth Form College Group to understand more about how they access the internet and also what they thought of the design of some of the more popular websites.



The following highlight findings and comments from the two days.

1. Internet access was mainly through mobile phones followed by laptop.
2. Although the majority thought the BBC website was Good there were a couple of comments about it needing a section specifically for young people.
 - **needs some youth section for the younger viewers**
 - **some readers and viewers might not totally understand the story so if there was a youth section then the same stories could make it easier for the viewer to understand**
3. By far the website that they all thought was Good was YouTube with most young people accessing YouTube for video content.
4. It is important for young people to access reliable information, especially when it comes to important subjects such as their health. A comment about the NHS site from one young person was
 - **you can trust them too**
5. When asked what their favourite website or app was, the majority said YouTube or Instagram

Naming and designing Shropshire's young people's Local Offer

In November 2021 we held two face to face workshops with young people to consider what the Shropshire Local Offer for young people should be called and what it should look like in terms of branding and designing a logo.

The activities we undertook included:-

- Names – discuss suggested name and choose which they like/don't like, then discuss the liked options with whole class
- Branding and logo – look at some examples of famous logos
- Logo templates – ask them to use the ideas provided or come up with their own shape and sketch them
- Colour – discuss colour options and palettes, vote for most popular
- Imagery – look at the mood boards for each category and discuss types of imagery (photo, icon, illustration etc) vote on preference
- Wireframes – explain what might go on a wireframe and show examples, ask them to sketch either full website or mobile wireframe

Get creative – name the Local Offer

We wanted to give more young people the opportunity of naming their local offer and designing a logo. In March 2022 we set a challenge for young people to come up with a name and design a logo. This challenge was sent to all schools, colleges and sixth forms, and also to Education Access for it to be shared with young people who are elective home educated. We also shared this with key partners for them to share with parent carers whose children might also want to join in.

Shropshire Council

GET CREATIVE...

Name a new information website for Young People which is all about your future!
We need your help: Can you come up with a name? Or can you design a logo?

Here are some great name ideas you could use:
Info Ninja, Shropshire Youth Hub, Youth Map, Leap Into Life, My Way
Or if you don't like these you can come up with your very own name.

Please send your name suggestions and logo designs to: local.offer@shropshire.gov.uk by the 7th April 2022 and we could offer you the chance to work with our team of designers to turn your ideas into reality.

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 platform 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, libraries 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.

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.

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. We have made a significant amount of amendments over the last 12 months, including:

- We have worked with the Post 16 PFA SEND Commissioning Manager to review and rewrite the Preparing for Adulthood top level category.
- The SEN Team pages has been restructured and now include more information for parents.
- The annual health checks information has been developed and young people from a local specialist setting have created a video on this subject.

- A Diabetes Service section was added.
- Under our family support section we have added accessibility guides and a newsletter section.
- Coronavirus top level category – this has been updated as the situation develops

We have many developments currently in process, including:

- We are working with the Preparing for Adulthood Team Lead to develop an adult social care section concentrating on transition to adulthood.
- We are in communication with the Eating Disorders Service to approve some information to add to the health section, as this is a missing area.
- We are working with Early Years to update the funding information and transfer some data from an old council based platform to the local offer website.

The next areas we want to review and develop further with the help of partners are:

- Education pages
- Mental health section
- Children's social care

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.

SEN Portal Development Update

A new SEN Portal has been developed as a quick and easy method for settings in Shropshire and the SEN Team to securely share files.

The SEN Portal is a Microsoft SharePoint Site which has a secure documents library with a folder for each setting in Shropshire. As well as using the portal for a document transfer system we are also using it as a valuable communication tool. As SENCoS are required to open the SEN Portal to transfer documents to the SEN Team we realised this was also a great opportunity to have all the information SENCoS are looking for in one central place:

As well as the document library to send and receive files, the SEN Portal also contains:

- SEND news
- SENCo specific news (Updates, training, resources etc)
- SEND Strategy
- Shropshire SEND Local Offer
- SEN Team
- SEN Support
- Graduated Support Plan
- Education, Health and Care Plan
- Annual Reviews

All of these link the SENCO to the correct area of the Shropshire SEND Local Offer increasing traffic to the website. It also displays the SEND Local Offer social media feed so they can see the last x6 items posts e.g. news, local events, training etc

In November 2021 we rolled out the SEN portal to our two specialist schools in Shropshire, Severndale and Woodlands. We have received over 250 annual reviews from these schools and the feedback is very positive.

Severndale Academy said...

“The SEN Portal is very easy to use and much quicker. The email reports that we automatically receive on a Monday with a list of reviews that you have received from us is very helpful. We are happy to continue to use the portal.”

Feedback from users

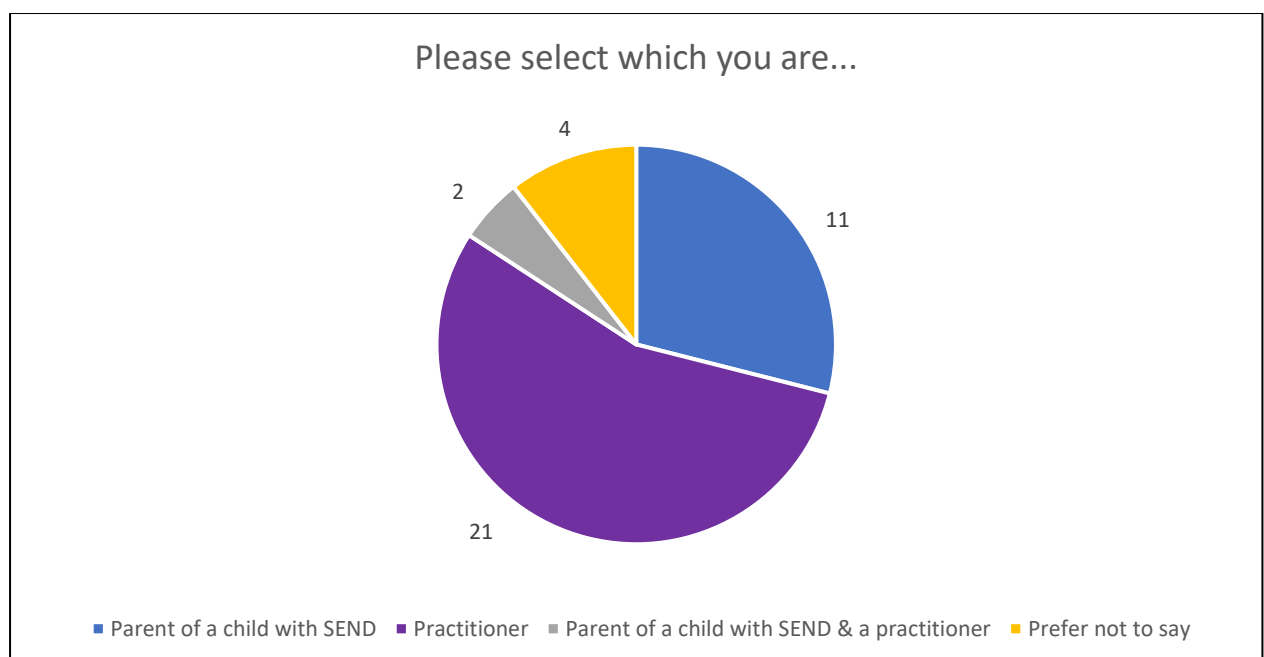
A key area of development for the Local Offer this year was to ensure we continually captured feedback from users about the Local Offer. The feedback we receive helps to fix urgent issues, but also helps us to plan future developments.

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.

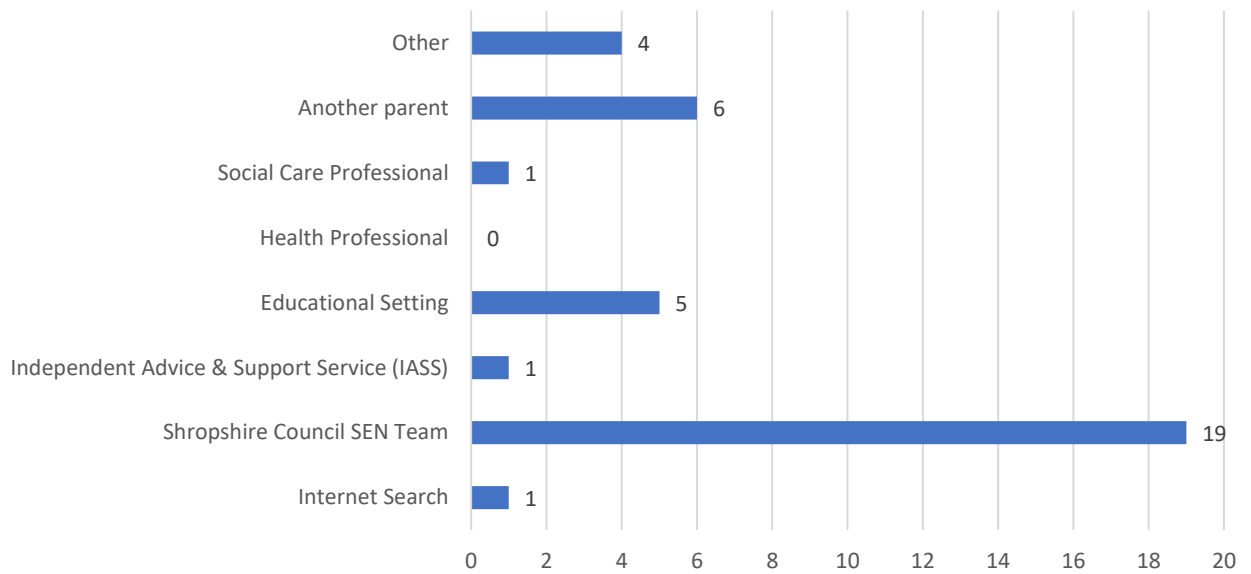
Local Offer Survey

We have developed a short survey to gather feedback on the Local Offer, which is regularly promoted through our social media channels and shared by partners who are supporting families.

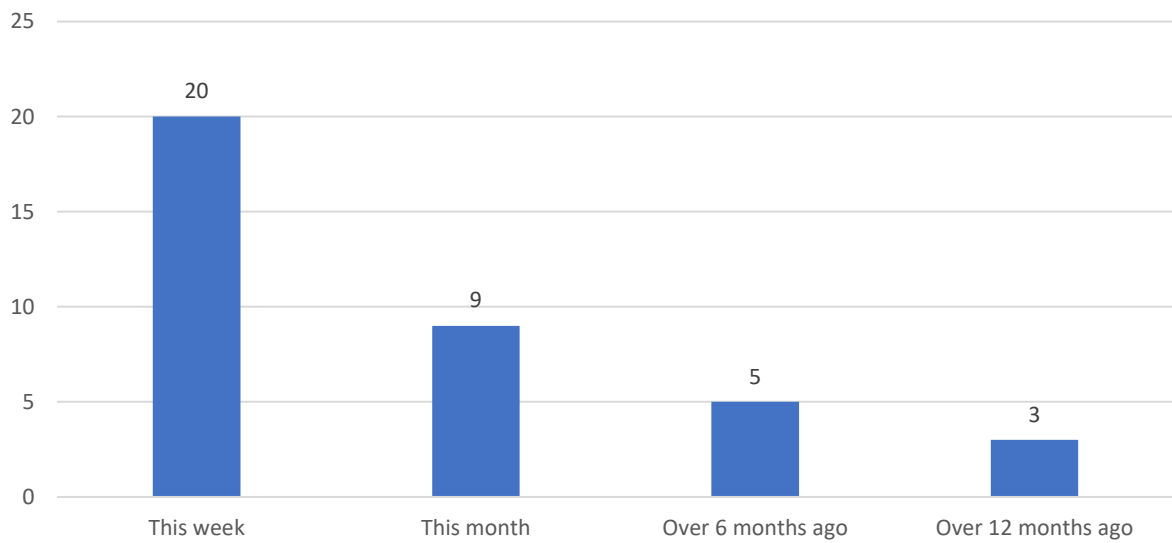
At the beginning of March 2022, there were 38 responses



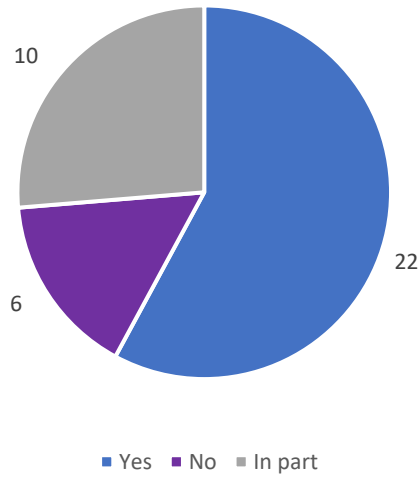
How did you hear about Shropshire SEND Local Offer website?



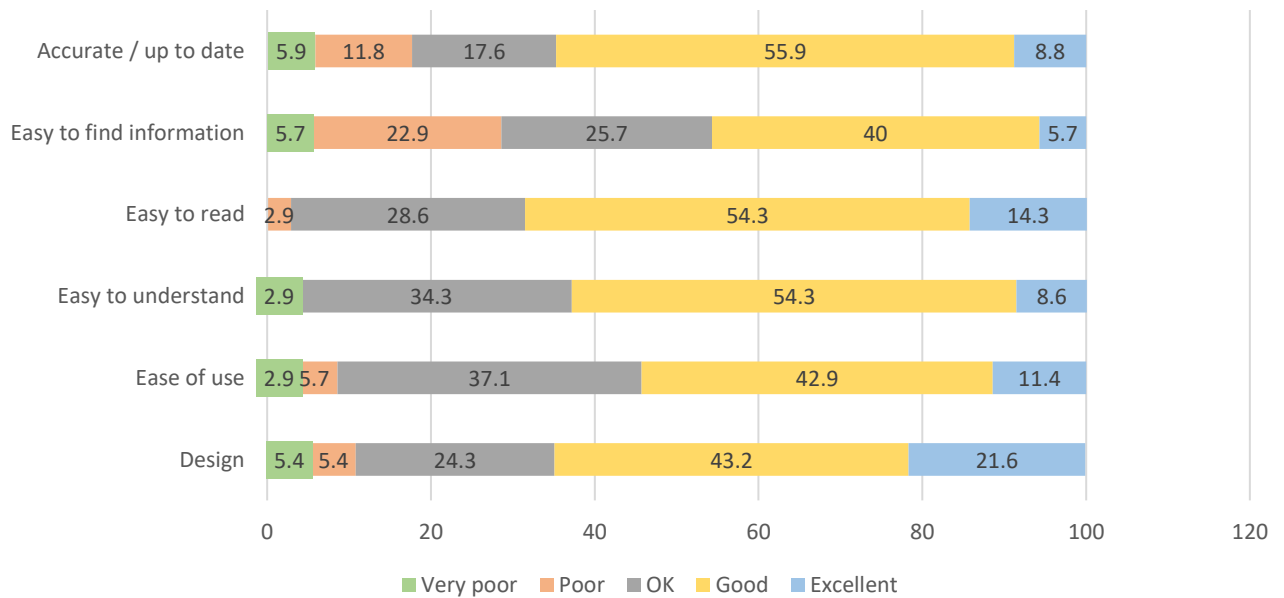
When did you last visit the Local Offer website?



Did you find what you were looking for the last time you used the Local Offer website?



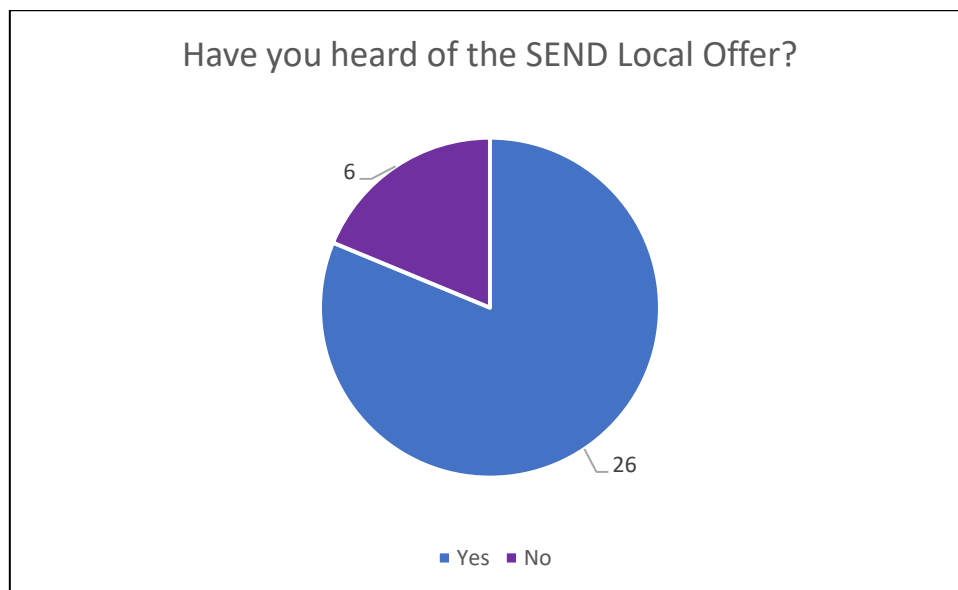
Please rate the Local Offer website pages on...



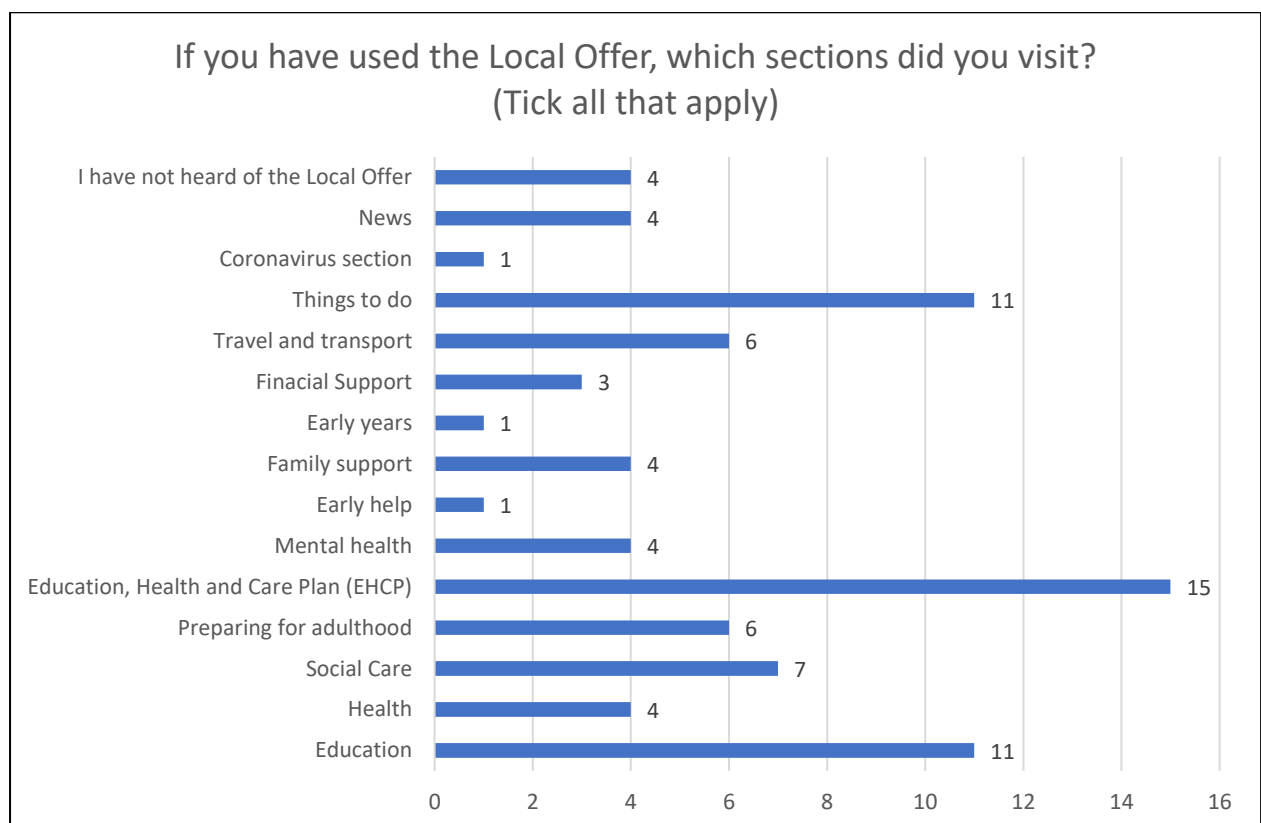
The data and comments received from these surveys are regularly reviewed and improvements made. One of the main areas of focus based on the ratings above, is ensuring that information is easy to find. We will be undertaking usability testing and also enhancing metadata and tagging to ensure that searching returns expected results.

SEND Newsletter for Parent Carers

We asked recipients of the SEND newsletter if they have heard of the Local Offer



We also asked which sections of the Local Offer website they have visited. This is really helpful insight and helps with our future planning.



Feedback from Partners

Shropshire's Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

IASS has been represented on Local Offer development group since its inception in 2014, because we value what the Local Offer provides and its potential.

From 2014 Shropshire IASS asked clients, on initial contact, whether they had heard of the Shropshire Local Offer, giving us the opportunity to inform them about it and direct them to it. If they had used the Local Offer we asked their opinion of it. In Autumn term 2016 of the 90 clients we asked about the Local Offer, none of them had heard of it. From around 2019 there was a change. Increasingly people had heard, and indeed used the Local Offer.

Awareness has recently been increased by the introduction of Local Offer social media. Like many organisations, we can share Local Offer posts and the Local Offer share IASS posts.

Last year we took the decision to cease producing a specific IASS newsletter, preferring instead, to contribute regularly to the Local Offer SEND Newsletter. This collaborative work enables us to reach over 2,500 people, something we are unable to do alone.

Members of the public do not always know the correct terminology for what they are searching for. The search engine can therefore be limiting at times. Terminology such as truancy and suspension are still sometimes used by the public, but the search engine is not intelligent to this. The results from a search using correct terminology can also provide surprising, unhelpful results.

Local Offer News is a fantastic resource that IASS believes deserves more prominence.

Lesley Perks
IASS Manager
Information Advice and Support Service

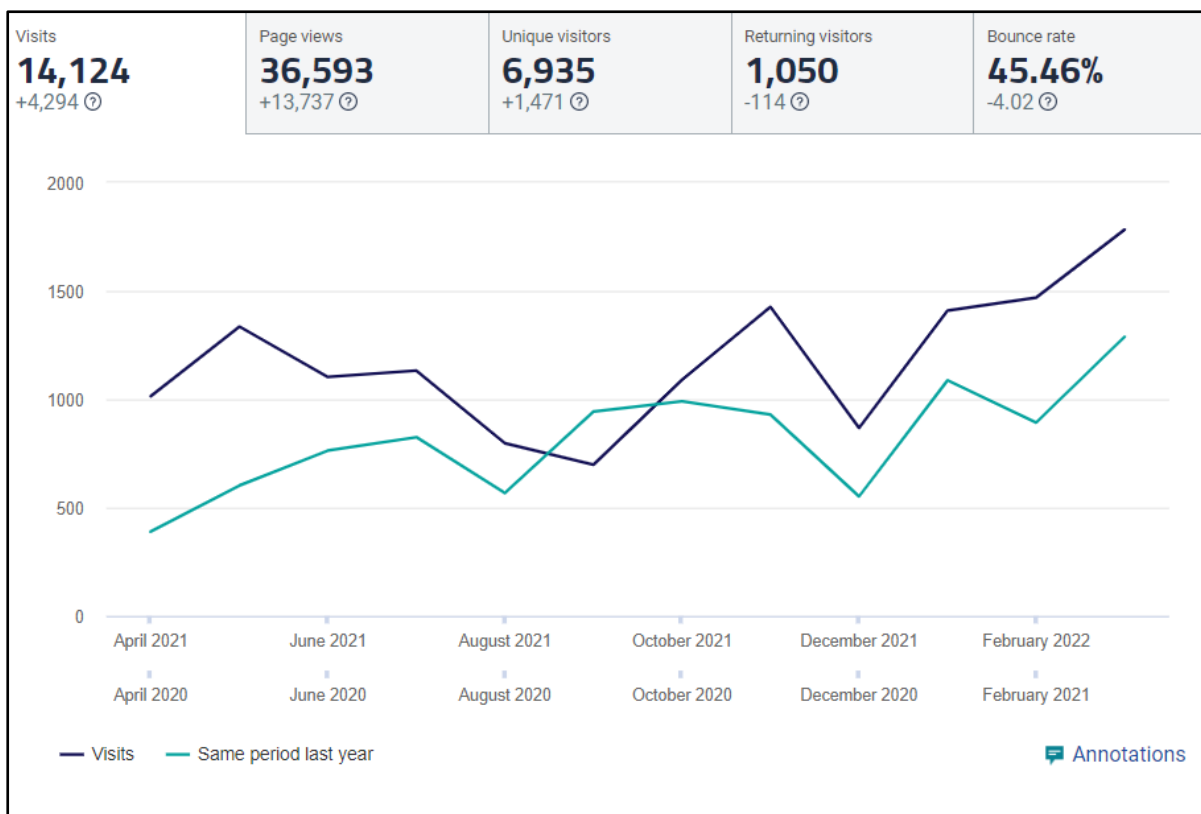
Website Statistics

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.

Number of visits and page views

This graph shows the number of visits to the Local Offer, how many pages were viewed, how many unique visitors and how many returning visitors. Compared to the previous year,

- The number of visits to the Local Offer increased by 4,294
- The number of pages viewed increased by 13,737
- The number of unique visitors increased by 1,471



Most popular pages 2022

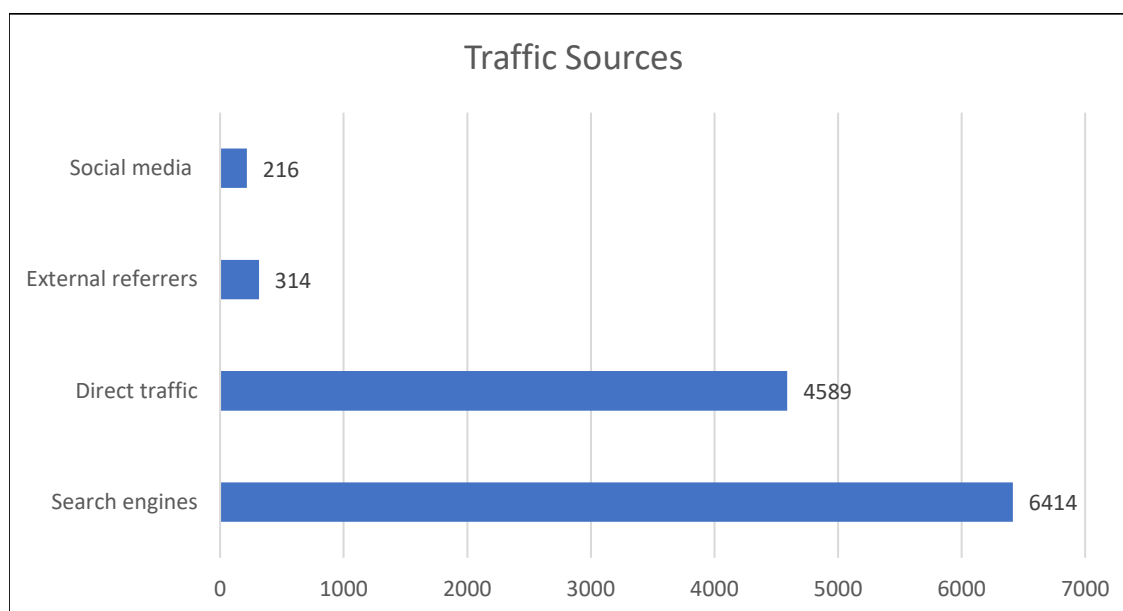
The table below shows the most popular pages viewed and visited during 2022. The table shows the path travelled to get to the page viewed, which is in bold. This information gives us a useful insight into how parent carers and practitioners are using the Local Offer and the information they are interested in.

	Page	Page Views	Page Visits
1	SEND Local Offer Homepage	4,257	2,709
2	Education	1,171	840
3	Travel and Transport	881	545
4	BEAM	818	637
5	SEN Team	738	622
6	All In Short Breaks Programme	700	592
7	Education, Health and Care Plan	663	489
8	Specialist schools and provision	631	531

9	How do I apply for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment	541	386
10	Education Services	491	348
11	Contact the SEN Team	460	367
12	Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)	457	401
13	Special Educational Needs SEN Support	453	335
14	Graduated Support Pathway	405	370
15	How do I apply for an Education, Health and Care needs assessment - Parent Carers	400	252
16	Family Support	397	292

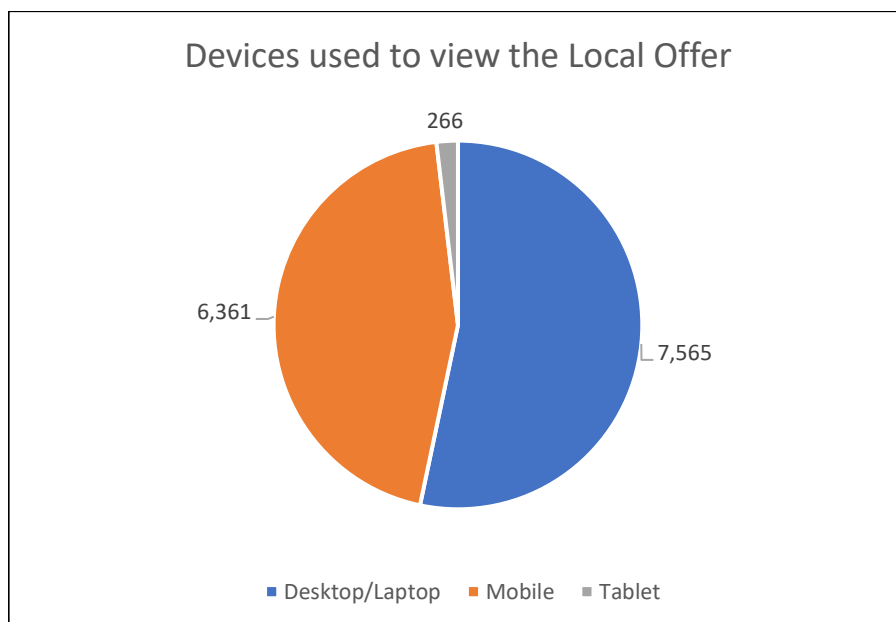
Traffic Sources 2021-22

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.



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.

Expanding social media

Our research has told us that parent carers and children and young people use Instagram as a channel through which to receive information, we will set up and launch an Instagram account for the parent carer Local Offer and the Local Offer for young people.



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.

Shared experiences

We have already implemented processes to capture views on the Local Offer, but we also want to introduce processes which can capture the shared experiences of families. Parent carers welcome the opportunity of hearing from other parent carers and we want to be able to capture these and share them through the Local Offer.

Ensuring information is easy to find

An area we want to improve on for 2022-2023 is ensuring that information is easy to find. We will be undertaking usability testing and also enhancing metadata and tagging to ensure that searching returns expected results.

The SEN Portal

Now we have successfully piloted the SEN Portal with our two specialist schools and this is going well we also plan to:

- Launch SEN Portal to all settings in Shropshire
- Further develop the site to see if there is any other information we can provide
- Add the SEN Portal to the Local Offer home page as a button underneath the top level categories, this would replace the current practitioner section.

Prepared July 2022

Kate Bentham

FIS and SEND Local Offer Operational Lead

Appendix One

Young People's Local Offer

Website Content Workshops April 2021

We continued to work with young people to understand the information they wanted access to. Based on our previous research with them, the top level categories were discussed at a follow up workshop to find out what information they would expect to see under each top level category. This is a summary of the comments made.

Travel and Transport

- Paying for transport
- Special considerations and rules i.e. masks, capacity, seating plans
- How we can catch a bus
- Locations
- Where to get timetables
- Travel training
- Bikes – how to get a bike license
- Safety walking to college and on public transport
- Discounts
- Carers on transport – sister or parent
- List of local transport companies

Having Fun

- Make new friends
- Where to go
- What's available, what's going on,
- Local events
- Where to go
- Courses and classes
- Clubs
- Sports
- See friends
- Youth clubs
- What's available
- Split the clubs into sections and categories, outdoor, indoor, sports, life skills,
- Need to include information on who they are aimed at i.e. mainstream, learning disabilities, filter the information to show which are more accessible

Money

- How to budget and how not to overspend, organise your money

- Online banking
- How to budget
- Student accounts
- Saving money – best way
- Paying taxes and NI
- Advice on loans
- Meals on a budget
- Discounts for the Hub – college café
- Debt advice and how not to get into debt
- Can I go to the bank for money
- Benefits for students and how to get them
- DLA
- Warnings about loans and loan sharks
- Gambling advice
- Paying for things online
- Household bills
- Child fund
- Hive – app for heating
- Different types of bills – car tax, TV license, council tax

School, College and University

- Information about the college before applying
- Colleges that are available
- What support is available at different college
- What the college is like
- Social preparation
- Funding
- What jobs are available
- What grants are available
- Suitability of college courses
- Apprenticeships
- Companies that offer work experience
- What support is available to students in college
- College rules
- Help with applications
- Safe living accommodation
- What courses are available
- Expectations – what can you expect

Keeping Safe

- At college
- At home

- With friends
- Online
- out and about in the community
- Social media
- While travelling around
- Internet
- How to report anything suspicious
- Links to local charity
- Social distancing
- Wearing masks
- Lockdown and what the restrictions are – what the rules are
- Staying safe in relationships
- Resources – telephone number of those who can help
- Homelessness, falling out with parents, who to contact in a crisis
- Alcohol and drug awareness
- Where to go at school or college and don't feel safe
- Don't talk to strangers

Keeping healthy

- Eating the right foods, healthy diets, how to lose weight safely – who to contact
- Exercises, clubs, outdoor gyms in parks
- Gyms that give discounted membership to students
- Go to the gym
- Don't drink any alcohol
- Offers at gyms
- Any local clubs
- Health centres
- 5 a day
- Website for Mental health, relaxation, mindfulness. Dealing with anxiety
- Advice services and support groups
- Mental and sexual health details and where to go for information

Work and volunteering top level category

- Local jobs list
- Directory of companies who are taking volunteers or work experience – to find a placement
- Internships and enable – organisations. Link in with Enable
- Info for parents to find out what the options are for students
- What are the options when you leave school – supported internships, apprenticeships
- CV
- Where can I go to get a job
- Interview training
- Work experience

- helping out at shops
- Interview tips
- Application forms
- Writing cover letter
- List of local companies who offer work ex or volunteer roles
- Sponsorships
- Where to go to get help
- Online advice
- Relationships at work – trust people who you work with
- What to expect at work
- How to get help at work if I have a problem

Housing options top level category

- What's available – categorisation, ie mainstream, contact info
- Renting
- What options there are for post 16
- How much is the rent and the bills
- Companies who offer houses for rent
- Financial help if they have an EHCP
- Supported living options
- Benefits
- Insurance
- What charities help with homelessness
- Living at home
- Skills for managing a house – cooking and cleaning
- Life skills and where to go to learn them
- Staying safe when living alone
- Mock up of how much it costs to live in your own home so people can see the costs
- Care homes
- Supported living

Relationships top level category

- Making friends
- Difficulties with relationships with parents
- How to make friends
- Places to contact for advice with abuse
- Parenting advice
- Safe relationships
- Who to go to for help
- Talking about things with your partner
- How to make friends, where to go to make friends.
- Online dating and keeping safe

- Online apps and how to stay safe on them
- Knowing the signs
- Organisations who can help
- Advice on dealing with break ups or parents separating
- How to approach relationships
- Maintaining relationships during covid
- Keeping in contact with people you trust