

Independent Review of SEND Local Offer Website

Invitation to Quote – Ref CQNV 034

Submission deadline 26 February 2018 (13:00)

1. Introduction & context

In line with Section 30 of the Children and Families Act 2014, Local Authorities are required to publish and maintain a website describing the local offer of support provided to families with children and young people, aged 0-25, with special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities (D).

“The local offer is information that sets out the education, health and social care provision that the local authority expects to be available for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs. This specifically includes provision that will help them prepare for adulthood.

The local offer should be developed by local authorities and their health partners, together with children, their parents and young people.

As well as providing information about services, the local offer should be used as a tool to measure how well services are meeting local need and achieving the outcomes set out in the joint commissioning arrangements. Local authorities have a duty to publish comments from children, their parents, and young people on the local offer and any actions they intend to take in response. These views and comments should be used to inform future commissioning decisions.” (Source: CDC guide to The Children and Families Act 2014)

The SEND Code of Practice, January 2015, includes a specific section which goes into more detail about the requirements for a local offer and its publication.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

2. Our current position

In Shropshire, we established our LO website in 2014 with the support of a dedicated council officer and FutureGov. This was funded by the New Burden Grant from the Department for Education (DfE), linked to the SEND reforms.

A wide range of SEND partners were involved in the initial development. Parents, carers and young people were also involved to shape the development.

We have developed our LO website and significant progress has been made. We now consider that this phase of the development has ended.

The context in which future development can happen has changed:

- The LO website was transferred to form part of the main council website to provide better links to related council information. The website is connected to a LO directory. The website is built on UMBRACO. The directory is built in the OPENOBJECTS directory system.
- The council is undergoing a large scale *digital transformation* programme, which is modernising processes, software solutions and our IT infrastructure. This work will give the organisation the tools it needs to be sustainable now and for the foreseeable future.
- The council is planning to merge a number of local website directories. The LO directory is expected to join this merger at the appropriate time.
- The existing New Burden Grant ends in 2018. Future grant funding has yet to be confirmed and is expected to be time-limited.
- Other local authorities have developed their own LO websites since 2013/14. We are now in a position where we can make comparisons and where we can now learn from good practice
- SEND Ofsted / CQC inspections started in 2017, which also provide thematic feedback on good practice, including LO websites.

This means that we are now in a good position to review the effectiveness of our current LO website and start to make plans for future development and sustainability.

Our current offer can be seen via this link: www.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/

3. An effective Local Offer website in Shropshire

This section describes what we consider to be an effective LO website. When we refer to LO website, we mean the actual website and the LO directory.

- It enables Shropshire Council and its partners to meet the two requirements of the aforementioned act, namely
 - Provides information that sets out the education, health and social care provision that the local authority expects to be available for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN). This specifically includes provision that will help them prepare for adulthood.
 - Can be used easily by professionals, parents and young people as a tool to measure how well services are meeting local need and achieving the outcomes set out in the joint commissioning arrangements.
- It is considered to be an attractive and effective resource by parents, young people and professionals. By effective we mean informative and easy to navigate. By navigate we mean that users find it easy to find the information they are looking for. This also implies that information can be presented in different formats, so that it is accessible to a range of users.

- It links smoothly to other council web services that provide information and advice to families and young people about other SEND support in our area.
www.shropshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care
- It is aligned to the aims of the council's digital transformation programme, so that it
 - makes best use of existing and future resources
 - is presented in a format which abides by all statutory and internal codes and regulations, such as branding.
- It is a good website from a technical perspective: it optimises the use of technology to make it user-friendly and interactive. It promotes opportunities for customers to feed back on its effectiveness, which can lead to further improvements.
- It uses plain language and consistent terminology with our area's SEND related policies and strategies. For example, the definition of special educational needs and disability is consistent across strategies, policies and the website.
- Contributors find it easy to update the information on the website about the provision they offer.
- It promotes equality, inclusion, health, safety and safeguarding children and adults.
- It has appropriate strategic oversight and guidance from Shropshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabled Children and Young People 0-25 Strategic Board.

4. What we want to achieve with this project

The council continues to have a statutory duty to provide a LO website. For this phase of our development, we want to focus on three aspects:

1. An independent review of the effectiveness of the current LO website against the criteria set out in section 3 of this document. By independent we mean impartial and conducted by a provider, independent of the council or contributors to the website. When we say effective, we mean effective from the perspective of the service users and professionals, as well as effective in reaching potential service users and professionals.
2. An improvement plan for future content and technical development, that enables the LO website to be sustained through existing resources and in the context of our corporate approach to information and website management.

The plan should be based on the findings of the review and our requirements. It needs to distinguish between essential and desirable improvements. Each recommended improvement needs to identify the necessary actions, timelines, resources and outcomes.

3. Implementation of most essential developments

Following this work, there will be a corporate approach to managing the LO website.

4. Deliverables of this project

1 Apr		Project start
End April	1	Completed independent review of our SEND Local Offer website, including governance arrangements and stakeholder involvement.
Mid May	2	Completed review of good practice from other areas.
End May	3	<p>A draft review report for the council's initial consideration and discussion with the report writer.</p> <p>We are looking for more than just a reflection of what we collectively know about our LO website. We are looking for a well-structured, easy read report with findings and recommendations for improvements, supported by evidence. This version would include potential challenges, sensitivities and conflicts of interest, together with potential solutions for these.</p>
Mid Jun	4	<p>A final review report and improvement plan for the 0-25 Strategic Board with findings and recommendations for LO improvements.</p> <p>Recommendations should be in the form of an improvement plan, which clarifies timelines, resources required and outcomes.</p>
End Aug	5	Strategy for increasing the reach of LO website, accompanied by examples of promotional tools and materials.
End Sep	6	A local offer website that meets the essential criteria in section 3.
End Sep	7	A template for an annual review report for the LO website, which can be published on the website and meets the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice 2015.
Apr-Sep	8	Monthly progress updates to project commissioners
Apr-Sep	9	Progress demonstrations to 0-25 SEND Strategic Board

5. Requirements for providers

To achieve these deliverables, Shropshire Council is looking to commission a provider who is equally effective at technical website development, content development, collaboration with other professionals and engagement with service users.

1. Technical website management

- Experience and understanding of copy writing, search engine optimisation (SEO) and website development.
- Experience of developing and reviewing the effectiveness of local offer websites, ideally using web analytics and/or user groups.

2. LO Content development

- A thorough understanding of the legislation, regulations and statutory guidance, relating to SEND in general and in particular to the Local Offer.

- Expert knowledge, understanding and experience of working in the context of SEND provision and reforms. The successful applicant will need this understanding to relate to the various components of our local offer quickly.
3. Collaboration with other professionals
- The successful provider will work closely with our in-house Digital Services team to achieve the deliverables of this project. Therefore, it is essential that the provider has experience of working effectively with IT professionals.
 - The successful provider will also work closely with the council's SEND teams and a wide range of professionals, who support children with SEND related needs. These include healthcare and school staff. Therefore, it is essential that the provider has experience of working effectively with these professionals.
 - This implies an ability to understand and be understood equally by IT and SEND professionals: the provider needs to be able to discuss the complexities of the digital services being created, alongside the detail and core information of the SEND Local Offer.
 - Experience of linking effectively with representatives from other local authorities to share good practice on LO website development.
4. Engagement with service users to evaluate the effectiveness of LO website.
- Experience of facilitating effective consultation with stakeholders, including local authority staff, health care staff, schools, parent representatives, parents and young people.
5. Excellent project management skills
6. Excellent communication and report writing skills.

There are no requirements for staff or budget management.

Providers need to understand that this will be an intensive piece of work. We expect that a provider will work to their project plan over the six months period and be available for contact and meetings, during normal working hours, Monday to Fridays.

Your application needs to be specific: it should respond to our situation and our requirements. We reserve the right to reject generic applications. We also reserve the right not to appoint, if quotes do not meet our requirements.

6. Timeline & resources

We expect that this will be a time-limited piece of work, made up of the following stages:

Dates	Steps
18 January 2018	Publication of ITQ
26 February 2018 13:00	Deadline for submission of ITQs
28 February 2018	Evaluation of ITQs (JD, MV, FD, DS, KB)

2 March 2018 10:00 - 12:00 Shirehall, Shrewsbur, SY2 6ND	Optional: Clarification meeting with potential providers.
2-3 March 2018	Notify successful applicant Notify unsuccessful applicants
1 April 2018	Start project
Interim milestones	See deliverables in section 4
30 September 2018	End of project

The maximum total funding available for this work will be £15,000 over a six months period. We expect potential applicants to provide a competitive quote and to demonstrate value for money.

The contract with the successful provider will be based on the provider's final quote and a council purchase order. Invoices need to refer to the purchase order number.

Payment will be made bi-monthly in arrears, subject to receipt of satisfactory invoice by the authorising officer. In this case this is Julia Dean, SEN Manager. Invoices should be emailed to Julia.Dean@shropshire.gov.uk. The council settles invoices within 30 days.

7. Next step

If you wish to be considered, please complete the attached proposal form and email it to us by 13:00, February 26, 2017

Julia.Dean@shropshire.gov.uk

(SC, Service Manager SEND)

Marion.Versluijs@shropshire.gov.uk

(SC, Commissioning Development Officer)

For further information contact:

Julia Dean

01743 254563

Marion Versluijs

01743 253795



Independent Review & Further Development Of SEND Local Offer

Information required for invitation to quote

Provider Information (insert below heading)		
Name & type of your organisation (Including registration or charity number)		
Address (Including website)		
Name of contact person		
Telephone		
Email		
	Commissioner evaluation	
	Meets our needs? Y/N/Partial	Our comments & Justification for rating
About your organisation		
1 Provide evidence that your organisation has the experience & skills for each aspect of section 5 to complete this project successfully <i>(Refer to each requirement):</i>		
About your proposal		
2 Describe the practical steps your organisation would take to achieve the outcomes and deliverables of this project. Your response should demonstrate that you have taken into account the local context and are familiar with our current SEND Local Offer website. Please address each deliverable and add a project action plan with a timeline.		
3 Attach a one page document, which represents the front page of our improved LO website and includes a paragraph		

introducing the website.		
<p>4 In your view, what are the three most important methods to promote a LO website?</p> <p>Explain the reasons for your choice and attach any examples, where appropriate.</p>		
<p>5 In the appendix, you will find an extract from the SEND Code of Practice, 2015. Rephrase the information so that it becomes suitable for our LO website.</p>		
<p>6 Based on your experience, what difficulties would you expect to encounter with this project? How would you address these?</p>		
<p>7A What is the total amount of funding you are applying for?</p>		
<p>7B Describe how you would use the funding to resource and organise the project in terms of time, staff, other resources.</p> <p>Explain how your proposal represents value for money.</p>		
<p>8 Provide names, roles, email addresses and telephone numbers of two references, for whom you have done comparable work.</p>		
<p>9 Other information in support of your quote (including added value) (<i>maximum 500 words</i>):</p>		
<p>Please sign here to validate your quote and to confirm that you have understood and are in a position to meet all the requirements relating to your expression of interest:</p> <p>Signature</p> <p>Print name</p> <p>Date</p>		

Appendix

“Schools and post-16 settings as commissioners

3.66 Schools, including early years providers, and post-16 settings can also be commissioners in their own right. Schools have a notional SEN budget and many schools will commission services (such as speech and language therapy, pastoral care and counselling services) to support pupils. Schools must work with the local authority in developing the Local Offer, which could include school-commissioned services. The school must set out its SEN policy and information on its approach to supporting children and young people with SEN. The school’s governing body must ensure that arrangements are in place in schools to support pupils at school with medical conditions and should ensure that school leaders consult health and social care professionals, pupils and parents to make sure that the needs of children with medical conditions are effectively supported.

3.67 Joint commissioning arrangements should reflect this local commissioning and should ensure services being commissioned by schools are suitably supported to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people.”

www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Insert your LO text here: