

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

Spring
2022

FREE

Xtra Potential CIC
is delighted to be
working with
De Montfort
University and
Pathways

see page 6



Produced by

A warm welcome to the new edition of SEND News

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▶ I am pleased to introduce the spring 22 edition of the SEND Local Offer newsletter. It's been a busy few months in the world of SEND, with the government recently announcing their green paper on findings of the SEND review. The paper had a clear focus on inclusion, early identification and intervention as well as supporting needs through a more targeted approach.

Proposals within the paper are currently open for consultation on a national scale and would engage you to have your say.

As a service we are working to determine the next steps and what this means for us – with an emphasis on strengthening the approach to Inclusion, earlier identification and intervention, achieving independence and improving educational outcomes for all children and young people, supporting families in the process and improving the SEND system across Leicestershire as a whole. This will involve all partners working together to achieve a common goal. Parents will be a key part of this process.

In the edition of the newsletter, you will also be able to read about some of the work we have been up to within the service over the last few months. There is an update around the way you can contact SENA, the work that has taken place on the back of parent feedback and you can give your views on upcoming Local Offer roadshows across the county.

Sadly, this will be my last edition of SEND News as I am leaving the council in my role as Assistant Director of Education and SEND to take up a role much closer to home. I am delighted to hand over the reins to my colleague Alison Bradley who previously was our Head of Service for Education and Inclusion. Alison has been with the authority for 10 years and has recently taken on a lead role within our SEND programme. I'm sure Alison will get to know some of you over the coming months and provide timely updates on all the work currently going on within the department. ■

Local Offer Roadshows

We were excited to have been able to get the Local Offer Roadshow back out to families during January 2022.

▶ The families and stand holders that attended gave some brilliant feedback and were delighted to be able to attend an in-person event. Following feedback about the timing of the event we have been working with families to put together a two-year plan of various locations, times and formats to endeavour to be as accessible to families as possible. There is still time to have your say to help shape the future of the roadshows by filling out the **online survey** here.

You can check the Local Offer Website and Facebook page for any roadshow updates. ■

What is the Local Offer?

Partners across Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland have created a short animation to help raise awareness of the SEND Local Offer and how it can support those that care for and work with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

▶ The Local Offer brings together the services, advice and help that's available for children and young people ages 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities and their families. You can view the video here: <https://bit.ly/3uVXKyf> ■



Updates to SENA

Contacting SENA

We have listened to feedback around our SENA phone surgeries and are changing the way you can contact us.

▶ Our Tuesday and Thursday phone surgeries will no longer be available and instead you will have the details of your case manager to be able to contact.

Each school has a dedicated case manager, and you will receive their contact details on all correspondence. The case manager directory is also available to be **viewed online**.

Case Managers will be available to contact, however if they are in meetings or on another call then please leave a message – do not try to call multiple times. If someone is out of office for more than one day, their phone will be transferred to another member of staff who will try their best to assist you.

General enquiries can also be sent to the following locality inboxes, alternatively if you don't know which is the most appropriate for your case, please email SENAService@leics.gov.uk

A - Melton Mowbray, Market Harborough, Oadby, Wigston, and Blaby

Email: SENALocalityA@leics.gov.uk

B - Loughborough, North-West, and Charnwood

Email: SENALocalityB@leics.gov.uk

C - Hinckley, Bosworth, Groby, and Glenfield

Email: SENALocalityC@leics.gov.uk

Recruitment

▶ You may be aware that we recently went out for recruitment to increase the number of staff working within the service. Last month, we onboarded eight new members of staff to work within our three locality teams and across tribunals. We've had really positive feedback from new staff about the in-depth induction they have received and are looking forward to them getting stuck in. ■

Make Your Voice Count – extended deadline for the survey to 21 August 2022

The Make Your Voice Count survey was first published by the previous Parent Carer Forum during the SEND inspection in 2020. A revised version was co-produced with the Local Authority and asks some high-level questions on the different themes within the SEND and Inclusion Strategy. The results from the survey are collated and taken to the SEND and Inclusion Board. The Board is made up of Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group Managers, schools and senior members of the SEND Hub. The survey results also form part of the performance framework for the Board.

▶ The survey has recently been published again and was due to close on the 15 May. However, there has been an extension and it is now open to the 21 August 2022. The survey can be found [here](#).

There are also a number of surveys available on the EHC plan process. The links to these will be on the accompanying letters. Please look out for these to complete the survey.

The results from the survey have provided the SEND and Inclusion Board with the lived experience for families of children and young people with SEND. Information has been used to develop the action plan for the SEND and Inclusion Board and continues to be used in the development of the SEND system.

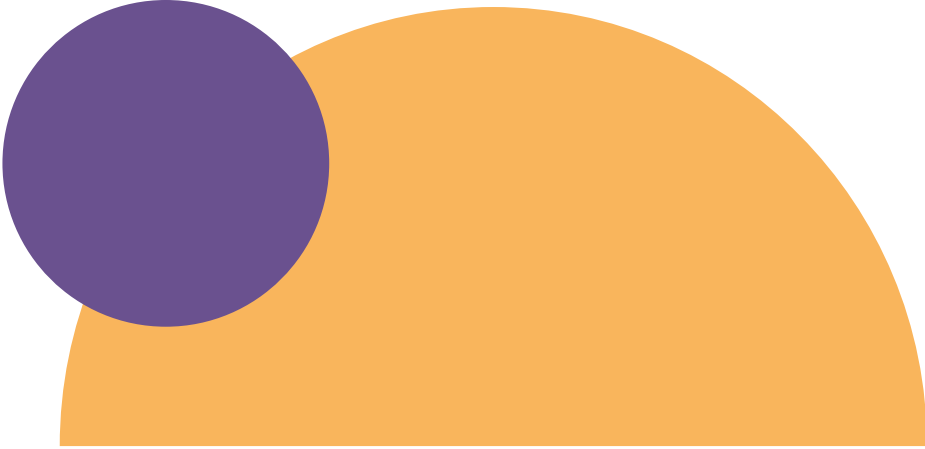
Here are some examples of what you have said and what we have done to make changes:

Local Offer – the Local Offer is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority and sets out what is on offer for families of children with SEND. 48% of parent/carers said that they are not aware of the Local Offer. To help families that have not used the Local Offer before, **a video has been developed** across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

There is an **on-going survey** where you can tell us what you would like to see on the Local Offer

The most up-to-date information on a wide range of activities and events taking place across Leicestershire can be found on the Local Offer Facebook page.

For more information on how comments from parent/carers and children and young people have been used to improve the Local Offer, please refer to the **Local Offer Annual Report** which will be available shortly.



An area within the SEND inspection deemed as a significant weakness was the lack of a Joint Commissioning Strategy. As part of work on the Written Statement of Action a SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy has been developed across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. Information on this can be found [here](#).

To gather feedback on families' experiences of joint commissioning, questions were asked on working with professionals. Comments received from the survey concerned styles of appointment. It should be noted that at the time of the survey there had been prolonged periods of Covid 19 restrictions and therefore telephone appointments were the approach taken to continue to offer a service. There were mixed comments as for some children and young people this was more appropriate and for other parent/carers, they felt that their child could not be assessed fully if not seen by the professional. There is now a mix of styles of appointment being offered following restrictions being removed.

Support for education professionals was a key theme within the survey. As a result, the Local Authority has developed a **SEN Support Handbook**. This provides an overview of the SEND legal framework and key responsibilities, for example, best endeavours and reasonable adjustments, and support available.

Alongside the SEN Support handbook, the Local Authority re-considered the criteria for some services. For example, the Autism Team will now support schools when needs first arise, the Learning Support Team consultation slots available to work with schools and the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service has been working with the Education Effectiveness Team to offer a series of webinars on behaviour strategies, wellbeing and neurodiversity. **SENDIASS** offer free information, advice and support, advising on matters relating to education, health and social care.

The **SEND Hub** are the strategic partner of the SEND partnership and have a private Facebook group offering support and guidance to families of children and young people with SEND.

The second theme within the Written Statement of Action is the quality of EHC plans. When asked about how clear are outcomes within the EHC plan, 70% responded that they were clear. The Local Authority and health have been working together to develop outcomes training for staff providing advice. This was available in the form of webinars and is now available as on-line learning. A further improvement tool has been the development of a Learning Platform. This hosts a range of on-line training and resources related to SEND, including Outcome training, Dyscalculia and Dyslexia, Autism.

You have told us that planning for adulthood is still not happening and you are not aware of what decisions a young person can make when they become 16. Further information on preparation for adulthood was collated during a range of sessions held at the Area Special Schools. The analysis from these sessions informed work within the Defining Children's Services for the Future programme. As a result, the Transition's Team in Adults was re-branded the Young Adults Disability Team. An information pack has been developed called My journey to adulthood which covers concerns raised by parent/carers and young people. If you would like more information, **this page** is a good starting point.

If you would like support from parent/carers that have or are going through the process of preparing for adulthood, then please contact the **Leicestershire SN Transitions Parent Carer Support Group**.

These are just a flavour of how your comments and participation in surveys has contributed to the developments across the SEND system. There is still much more work to do and your continued comments on your lived experience is very much valued.. ■



Families enjoyed the hospitality suite at Donnington Park to meet and watch "Team Brit" * race.

Xtra Potential CIC is delighted to be working with De Montfort University and Pathways

Xtra Potential CIC is delighted to be working with De Montfort University and Pathways (www.pathwaystohe.ac.uk) on the "Inspire the Possible" project. The aim of the project is to encourage young people and parent carers to explore the avenues of higher education.

▶ The immense support available via the universities is little known at present and we want to demystify this avenue. The idea is to develop information fact sheets as well as video footage to educate young people and parent carers of what support is available, how and when to declare a disability or chronic health condition as well as encouraging the potential students to make contact with the universities. This can be done any time or at the many University Open Days throughout the year.

The team at Xtra Potential and Pathways have started collating all the information and filming of young people with additional needs took place in December as part of the case studies element.

However, we would like this project to be pan disability and we are currently looking to engage with students in HE with a physical or sensory impairment such as hearing and sight loss. If you can help - we would love to hear from you!

This work is only a small part of what we do at Xtra Potential. We also offer Disability Awareness Training which can be delivered Face to Face in the East Midlands or virtually as well as Disability Access Audits and we can be consulted on other disability matters.

All directors at Xtra Potential are parent carers of disabled children and/or living with a disability. Funds raised through the commercial arm of the business is reinvested in community activities for families affected by disability.

Since our formation in 2020 we held a number of community events including virtual kitchen dancing sessions with Jo Porter, race days at Donnington Park to support Team Brit and Open Water Swimming sessions with Pete Lewin's Newfoundlands. (Facebook page: Pete Lewin Newfoundlands)

Please visit www.xtrapotential.org.uk and fill out our contact form - we would love to hear from you. You can also register for our webinar / newsletter to be the first to know about our initiatives and upcoming events - join the XP community as together we are stronger in our mission to make the world a more inclusive place!

* Team Brit is the only racing team of drivers with disabilities who compete with able bodied drivers on a level playing field. For more info visit www.teambrit.co.uk ■



Water fun at Stanton Lakes with Pete Lewin Newfoundlands*



Holidays Together - Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) is a free and exciting holiday programme for children aged 4 to 16, living in Leicestershire and in receipt of benefits-related free school meals. It is funded by the Department for Education.

▶ Leicestershire County Council is working with Active Together to co-ordinate the Summer 2022 programme, which will be delivered at venues across the county by schools, voluntary and community organisations, childcare providers and sports clubs.

Eligible children and young people can access up to four holiday club sessions each, free of charge.

The sessions will offer a variety of fun activities, including sports, music, arts, and other opportunities to learn and develop new skills, alongside a nutritious meal each day.

Some holiday clubs will also offer fee-paying places for children and young people not eligible for free school meals, and families who are eligible for Universal Credit may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs.

Find out more about Holidays Together for Summer 2022 and how to book your free place on our **“Enrolling children and young people in free holiday clubs” webpage**, and keep an eye on our social media for details of how to sign up as one of our HAF providers, as well as how to find holiday clubs near you. ■