

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

FREE

New 'eco-classroom'
opens as part of
£30m SEND
investment
programme

see page 4



Produced by

A warm welcome to the eighth edition of SEND News

Words by:

Paula Sumner

Assistant Director,
Education and SEND,
Leicestershire County Council



▶ As we come to the end of the first term of the new academic year, I wanted to share with you some of the amazing work going on within our SEND Service.

Colleagues are always working to improve our Local Offer and make it as informative as possible for parents and professionals to find the information they need. On page 8 you'll find information on our Local Offer and all the elements that make up this service.

This term we have launched our Leicestershire SEND training platform. The platform is intended for schools and the aim is to provide schools and setting with a consistent understanding to provide parents and families with the best support.

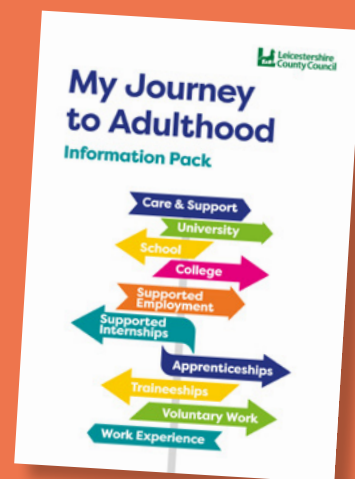
We have also recently changed the way we make the decision to assess education health and care needs assessments (EHCNA). One of the reasons for making the change is to ensure better consistency in decision making both internally and across partnerships. You can read more about this change on page 5. ■

My journey to adulthood information pack

We have been working hard over the last few months to look at ways we can improve the Journey to Adulthood for young people and their families with SEND.

▶ We recognise that preparation for adulthood and the changes faced by young people during this period can raise lots of questions. In response to this we have put together **an information pack** that aims to provide useful information and to answer some of the questions you and your family may have about this important stage of your life and the role of Adult Social Care on your journey to becoming an adult.

Young people also told us they found the term Transitions confusing as it can mean different things to different people. In response to this our team name has now changed from the Transitions Team to the Young Adult Disabilities Team. ■





New SEND and Inclusion Virtual Training and Tutorial platform

On 23rd August Leicestershire SEND and Inclusion services launched their brand new virtual training and tutorial platform.

▶ After a preview session, 53 schools had pre-registered and have had access from the launch date.

The platform hosts training about Special Educational Needs at a universal level suitable for all staff working in schools and settings. It also has tutorials to help understand processes such as requesting intervention funding or what to

do if a family request to electively home educate their child. Other other tutorials include things such as guidance on using Boxall profiles effectively or the role of school governors.

Each course or tutorial also has a brief quiz at the end, and evaluation and a certificate available. They have been designed to be used by groups or individuals depending on

the setting need and should support a consistent understanding of these areas across staff groups and settings. They could be used in staff meetings, during INSET or as induction materials.

If you have any questions please email LearningPlatformSEND@leics.gov.uk ■

Leicestershire Care Navigation Service

The NHS Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) has a care navigation service that can help coordinate services to support a child or young person.

▶ Care Navigators are an administrative team working with 0-19 Practitioners, Therapy Services, and external partner

agencies to support children, young people and their families. The team work across different localities within Leicester,

Leicestershire and Rutland. You can find out how to contact your local Care Navigator here. ■

New 'eco-classroom' opens as part of £30m SEND investment programme


A new 'eco-classroom' has been opened at a Leicestershire School as part of a £30m scheme to improve provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the county.

▶ The Den is a new cedar-clad hub at Forest Way School in Coalville which can provide space for up to 12 pupils with communication and interaction needs.

The £341,000 scheme has been funded by Leicestershire County Council as part of its programme to provide additional specialist 'resource bases' at mainstream schools and area special schools.

One of the first pupils to attend The Den said 'I like coming to the Den because I like swimming and forest schools and I like being with my friends.'

A parent said

 "Since coming to Forest Way he has amazed me. He wants to come to school every day, his confidence has grown, he has learned more than I ever expected and he is a different child"

The building is the second SEND provision to be built at the school in recent years – the council supported with the funding of an extension in 2019 to take 12 extra pupils.

Overall, the SEND programme comprises of 35 schemes. These include:

- 19 new resource bases in mainstream schools for pupils having Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) and Communication and Interaction (C&I) needs
- 3 new schools – 80 place Fusion C&I Academy in Barwell, 60 place Foxfields SEMH Academy in Blaby, and 60 place Bowman SEMH Academy in Shepshed (to be built by DfE for opening September 2023)
- 2 new locations for Oakfield Short Stay School in Earl Shilton and Shepshed
- A new post 16 provision in Loughborough (Block K at Charnwood College)
- 7 expansion projects for all existing Leicestershire special schools
- 2 satellite classroom facilities run by existing special schools on nearby mainstream school sites.
- 1 new specialist pre-school in Melton and expansion of the Wigston Menphys Nursery. ■



Decision to Assess

A Decision to Access (D2A) panel is now in place to ensure consistency of decision making and compliance with both the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and underpinning legislation, with regards to requests for education health and care needs assessments (EHCNA).

▶ In Leicestershire, as is the case nationally, the majority of children have their special educational needs met within a mainstream school at the 'SEN Support' stage of the SEND Code of Practice, through the additional funding that all schools have to support special educational needs. However, for some children (currently around 3.8% of the total school population in Leicestershire), additional support may be required, or the child may benefit from a place in a special school or specialist resource provision. These children have their additional needs identified within an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The local authority has to follow strict guidelines about how to respond for a request for EHC Needs Assessment. The purpose of the D2A panel is to make sure that we make consistent decisions across the three geographical Teams within SENA so that those children who do require an EHC Needs Assessment can have their needs assessed as quickly as possible, whilst at the same time giving helpful feedback and advice to parents, schools or other settings where there is more that

could be done to support a child at the SEN Support stage of the Code of Practice.

There is a statutory duty to undertake EHC Needs Assessment within a 20 week period and one benefit of the new D2A Panel is that resources can now better be focussed upon completing the assessment for the right children – such as those who require a special school or very substantial levels of support within a mainstream school. Each EHCNA involves gathering advice from a number of professionals, including an educational psychologist. By properly managing the EHCNA process we can use our educational psychologists to assess the right children, whilst at the same time reserving capacity to support schools in offering effective whole school approaches to effective inclusion.

The D2A Panel allows the service to constructively follow up with both parents and professionals. Any decisions made by the D2A panel are signed off by a SENA manager. This process allows for better multi-agency decision making across partnerships including health and social care services.

The feedback that we give to all education providers will help to spread best practice and a shared understanding of how processes work. Parents and carers are able to request an EHCNA and we would always encourage them to discuss their concerns about their child with the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENDCO) before doing so.

We are monitoring the impact of the D2A Panel closely and will continue to work with the Leicestershire SEND Hub so that we can meet the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice for all children, with both a growing confidence in the quality of school based SEN Support and a timely response to assess those children who may require an EHC Plan. ■

Dyslexia Awareness Week

Dyslexia Awareness Week ran during
4th – 10th October 2021

▶ This year's theme for
Dyslexia Awareness Week was

'invisible'

Of course, it is easy to understand why this might be a good theme to explore. When you look at a person you can not tell if they might be a dyslexic learner.

Dyslexia is not very visible.

However, as friends and educators we need to know what to look out for.

To the trained eye, dyslexia can become much more

'visible'

So... ask yourself:

- can they keep up with conversations and lesson delivery?
- do they seem to just stay quiet or not have much of an opinion?
- do they take more time to respond to questions and information?
- are they forgetful of things they have heard such as instructions, or plans that have been made?
- do they struggle to remember what they have read and need longer to make sense of it?
- do they shy away from, or become anxious, when expected to take notes or read information?
- do they seem a little disorganised and 'a bit all over the place'?
- are they lacking in confidence, although still good at the things they can do?

Children, young people, and adults who experience difficulties with reading are likely to also experience some of the difficulties listed above.

Knowing this should help you to support those around you who may benefit from learning in a different way.

Links for further information:

Schools can access two hours of free consultation annually from the Leicestershire Specialist Teaching Service – Learning Support Team
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/learning-support-consultation-for-leicestershire-schools-tickets-160953723921

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/learning-support-consultation-for-leicestershire-schools-tickets-160947994785

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/support-us/awareness-events/dyslexia-awareness-week/dyslexia-week-2021

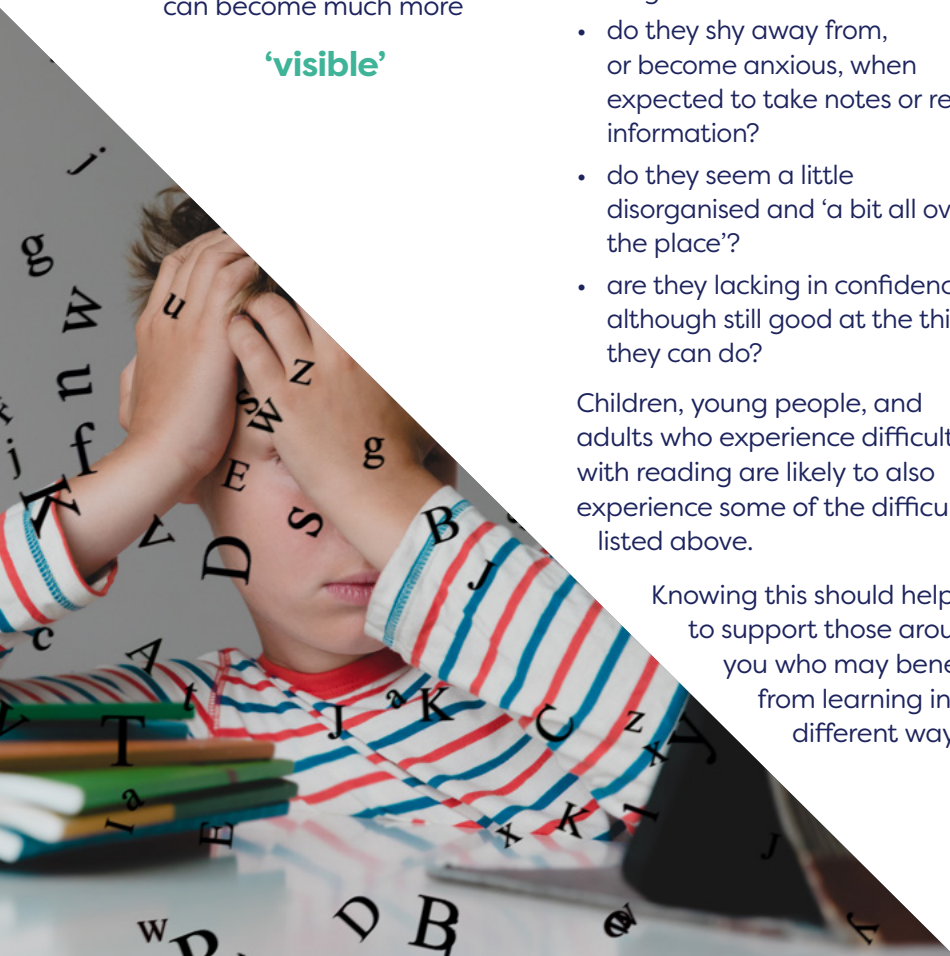
BDA
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/children/is-my-child-dyslexic

Helen Arkell main site
www.helenarkell.org.uk/events/dyslexia-awareness-week.php

Helen Arkell – aimed at parents
www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/free-webinar-supporting-children-with-dyslexia-tickets-169600456531

From the BBC aimed at CYP
www.bbc.co.uk/teach/dyslexia-awareness-week-teaching-resources/zkw7qfr

Parent support pdf from the Learning Support Team
resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2018/11/13/dyslexia-parent-support.pdf ■





We Need You!

The Leicestershire SEND Hub is aiming for all parents and carers of children with SEND 0-25 to know who we are. We can offer a listening ear, provide helpful information, and peer support for SEND families. We also work with the Local Authority on a number of important developments, making sure that the voice of parents and carers is heard. We have lots planned in the next year and we do not want anyone to miss out!

Getting the word out is important to us. Having peer support and access to information is imperative for the wellbeing of parents, carers and the young people you are supporting with special educational needs and disabilities. Here's how you can help: Please tell anyone you feel may benefit about our Facebook group. The 1500th member is going to receive a gift card for £20! Please help us reach that number as soon as possible. If you are on Facebook, search under groups for Leicestershire SEND Hub and join us. If you're already in the group, we would love you to invite anyone who may benefit.

Please be advised that there are questions that must be answered before you are given access to the group. Thank you for helping us spread the word.

Collectively, the SEND Hub can help to influence and develop services, working with Health and the Local Authority. Developments we are currently involved in include activity to address the written statement of action (quality of plans and joint commissioning), work on Short Breaks, SEN Transport, a whole life disability strategy and preparation for adulthood.

We are passionate about celebrating young people with SEND within the county because it is the reason the hub is here. We ran a photo competition last month and we wanted to share the amazing photographs of the 3 families who won a £25 gift card each. These will feature in our future publications and promotional material. For more information about us please visit our website at www.leicestshiresendhub.org.uk Or follow us on Facebook or Twitter by searching Leicestershire SEND Hub.





Do you have experience working with children or young people with special educational needs or disabilities, or complex behavioural or emotional needs?

Leicestershire County Council is looking for Specialist Foster Carers who have the skills and dedication needed to one-to-one support a child or young person in care with SEND or other complex behavioural or emotional needs.

▶ As part of Leicestershire's Fostering Family, Specialist Foster Carers will receive full support from the Dedicated Placement Support Team, who will work with both the foster carer and young person to make a genuine difference.

There is a range of Specialist Foster Care roles available, and all foster carers receive generous allowances, ongoing training and 24/7 support.

Could you be the right person to make a real difference to the lives of these young people?

To find out more about becoming a Specialist Foster Carer, call the team on **0116 305 05 05**, email **fostering@leics.gov.uk** or go to **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/specialist-foster-care-roles** ■

SEND Local Offer

Support for 0-25 years

Are you looking for support for children and young people with SEND?

Leicestershire Local Offer provides support and information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The SEND Local Offer in Leicestershire is made up of the following area's

▶ **Local Offer Web pages**

leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability

▶ **SEND News**

leicestershire.gov.uk/news/local-offer-newsletters

▶ **Facebook Page**

facebook.com/Leicslocaloffer

▶ **Local Offer Roadshows**

leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/information-and-support/local-offer-roadshows

▶ **Information and Support Directory**

leicestershire.gov.uk/popular-now/directories/information-and-support-directory

To find out more please visit any of the links above or alternatively email leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk



Leicestershire
SEND

Your voice

We are always working to improve the information and support in our Local Offer.

If you would like to suggest some changes, see additional information added or give feedback visit leicestershire.gov.uk/give-feedback-on-the-local-offer

Your
voice
your
feedback