

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

# SEND NEWS

FREE

## Virtual Roadshow

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Welcome to our  
Local Offer  
Q&A session

Produced by

# A warm welcome to the sixth edition of SEND News

Words by:

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▶ As we head towards the summer term, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all our children, young people and their families for their hard work and effort this year.

Like many other services across the council we have continued to support families throughout the pandemic and there has been lots of great work happening this term across our service, including the publishing of our Local Offer Strategy which can be found on the **Local Offer website**. We are making good progress with the new EHCP template and the new schools referral process, you can read more about this on page 4. We have also published an updated version of the **SEND Support Handbook** and run our first virtual local offer roadshow.

As I'm sure you are already aware, the Leicestershire PCF disbanded at the beginning of the year. We currently in the process of supporting the development of a new a strategic partner. ■

## Virtual Roadshow

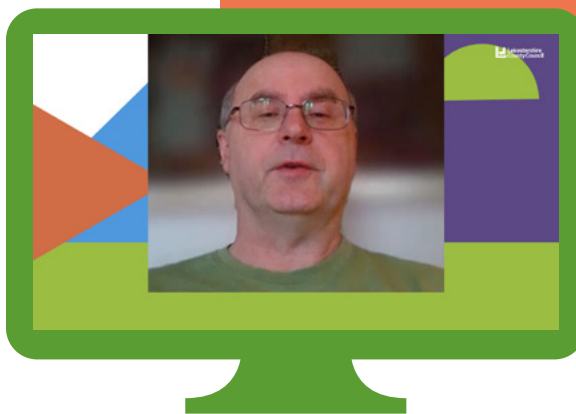
We are excited to be able to share our first session with you.

▶ Hear from Tom Common (Head of Service for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) and Marian Sutton (Service Manager, Special Educational Needs & Assessment Service) talking about all things funding, how to get support and moving between provisions. You can view the video here:

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/information-and-support/local-offer-roadshows](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/information-and-support/local-offer-roadshows)

The next topic we are focussing on is support in the Early Years where we will be joined by our colleagues from the Early Years SEND and Inclusion Service. If you have any questions you would like to hear answered, please get in touch by emailing [leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk](mailto:leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk) or by sending us a message on **Facebook**


Don't forget to look out for the following video in the next edition of SEND News. ■





# Direct Payment Card

Due to the developing Coronavirus pandemic during 2020, we worked with stakeholders to develop a new way to offer short breaks to families in Leicestershire. Parent carers who qualified for a summer playscheme during 2020 were issued with a direct payment card due to providers being unable to support families in their usual way. The direct payment card was an allowance of £250 which could be used flexibly and creatively in whichever way best met their child's needs.

▶ We had some great feedback from the initiative – we asked parent carers “What, if anything, did your child like about the things that the summer direct payment card enabled them to do?” here are a few of their responses:

 Allowed us to have a family break and spend quality time as a family. We had been shielding and are continuing to do so. This time was very valuable


 She liked the gazebo as it enabled us to spend much more time outside and she loves being outside. We were able to sit outside and do crafts and play with the interactive toys that we got for her


 Enabled our son to have a say in what resources he would like to have & therefore keep him entertained & involved with what he chose. Also factor in that we would take him to shops to purchase said resources enabled him to be part of wider society, use basic maths, and encouraged him to talk to shop staff, asking for assistance/help!! A great idea !


Some examples of how they were used includes:

- A paddling pool
- Portable DVD Player
- Audio stories
- To pay additional hours for child's personal assistant

#### What could we have done differently?

 Difficult under the circumstances but if it is intended to be used again perhaps issued a little earlier to allow parents/carers to plan a holiday. Many adapted holidays are booked in advance

 Making the balance easier to view and manage transactions better.

 Maybe give out more information of how and what resources are out there.

Plans for Summer 2021 are currently being finalised, you can find the most up to date information on the Local Offer Website [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/information-and-support/activities-and-groups](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/information-and-support/activities-and-groups) ■

## We need your voice!

▶ Can you spare 10 minutes to help us shape some of our Local Offer webpages and online information? We are offering a £10 gift voucher to say thank you to those who can help!

We do have a limited number of spaces – please email [karen.hall@leics.gov.uk](mailto:karen.hall@leics.gov.uk) for further information if you or a member of your family would like to take part. ■

# SENA service update

As part of the work we are doing in developing the quality of the SENA Service, we have reviewed all of the processes followed in SENA and any accompanying documentation. As you know, the Service has been restructured with the aim of developing a better service to ensure better outcomes for our children and young people with SEND.

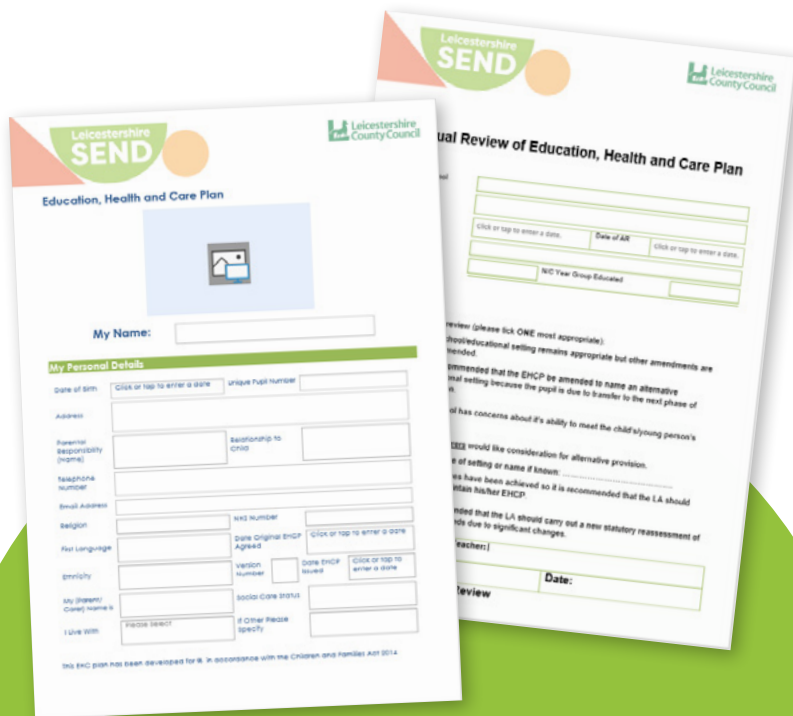
► Examples of some of the developments are:

- We are quality assuring the samples of plans and are working with a variety of services to ensure 'better' advice with SMART outcomes.
- We have developed new formats that will help us gain information and share information better.

- We have designed a new format of EHCP with much clearer links between need, provision and outcomes.
- We have designed a new referral for assessment template to ensure we collect more information about the c/yp
- We have designed a new Annual Review form that will inform any amendments required

- We have also designed a new Request for Information form for our advice givers

Part of our examination of the 'effective use of funding' we as a local authority are doing, has related to both EHCP's (Education, Health and Care Plan) and Top-Up funding. For some schools we recognise that navigating through the system can be difficult and that some may have faced a delay in response time.



**Our aim:**  
To develop a transparent, consistent and timely process that provides the most appropriate funding stream to support the child or young person.



We are looking at a variety of models long term to provide Top Up funding for schools. We will engage with schools and other stakeholders when appropriate to do so.

We recognise that funding can be used to support focused intervention which can narrow the gap between the c/yp and their peers which can in turn prevent a long term need which is likely to have impact adulthood.

To address confusion over terminology of what Top Up funding is, as nationally this covers all Element 3 funding we are changing this process of support to **SEND Intervention Funding**. As part of this process we doing the following:

- Develop clear guidance for schools
- Change process to ensure timely response
- Change request application to provide greater clarity in the intervention required and the expected outcomes
- Ensure schools fully cost out interventions and demonstrate how the funding will be spent. ■

| Please identify the child's/young person's primary area(s) of need(s) (highlight) |   |                                |                                   |   |
|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Communication and Interaction   | Moderate learning difficulties                      | Specific Learning Difficulties | Severe Learning Difficulties      | Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties |
| Social, Emotional and Mental Health   | Speech and language difficulties                    | Autistic Spectrum Disorder     | Social Communication Difficulties |   |
| Physical and Sensory Needs  | Social Difficulties (relationships and friendships) | Emotional Difficulties         | Other SEN                         | ADHD/ASD                                    |
|   | Physical difficulties                               | Visual Impairment              | Hearing Impairment                | Medical Difficulties                        |

# SENA changes

The Special Educational Needs Assessment and Commissioning Service (SENA) carry out statutory assessments and reviews of children and young people who have an EHCP from age 0 – 25.

▶ The service is responsible for writing Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) if a statutory assessment is agreed and will commission the relevant provision to meet needs of the child or young person. The service can provide advice and guidance to families as well as educational settings around statutory duties.

SENA oversee and maintain more than 5200 EHCP's (Nov 2020), considering around 80 new needs assessments per month.

At the beginning of May 2021, the service launched a new structure which has been split into localities.

- **Locality A** – Melton, Market Harborough, Oadby, Wigston and Blaby
- **Locality B** – Loughborough, Coalville, Birstall and Quorn
- **Locality C** – Anstey, Groby, Hinckley, Bosworth, Lutterworth and Enderby

Each locality will be made up of a Team Manager, Senior Practitioner and a number of caseworkers.

If you wish to contact the SENA service you can email them at [senaservice@leics.gov.uk](mailto:senaservice@leics.gov.uk) or call **0116 305 6600**. ■

## Surgeries available for SENA Service

In order to provide the best possible service, SENA are introducing regular 'surgery' times where there will be dedicated staff to respond to enquiries. Surgeries will take place twice a week on a Tuesday afternoon 1-5pm and Thursday morning 9am-1pm. During these times, there will be locality case managers and senior managers available to take calls and manage the mailbox.

Outside of these hours, phones may be connected to an automated response providing customer information and the opportunity to leave a recorded message. This will enable the majority of staff to focus on case work, writing plans and responding to annual reviews. We believe that introducing surgeries will help us to be as efficient as possible whilst keeping to our customer standards of responding to calls within 3 working days.

Contact number for the different localities are:

- Locality A (Melton, Market Harborough, Oadby, Wigston and Blaby) - **0116 305 0076**
- Locality B (Loughborough, Coalville, Birstall and Quorn) - **0116 305 0016**
- Locality C (Anstey, Groby, Hinckley, Bosworth, Lutterworth and Enderby) - **0116 305 7900**





# Soundabout

The Leicestershire Music Education Hub in partnership with the Soundabout Inclusive choirs have launched a new choir. The choir welcomes people of all abilities and ages to create a musical community without barriers.

▶ The choir is co-directed by Will Taggart, Emma Burns and Alison Mitchell who encourage all members to contribute ideas for repertoire, and if they wish to, build up their confidence to lead songs. As a result, the music performed is very varied. There are always lots of opportunities for performance, both recorded and live.

SoundAbout Choir Rehearsals are currently online, every other Saturday at 12 noon. You and your child/children can join from the comfort of your home and enjoy singing together and with others from across the city and county. In just a handful of rehearsals some members of the choir are already offering their own ideas for songs, signs and suggestions of activities for the sessions. Friendships are starting to form and despite having never met in person, they are supporting and including one another.

If your child loves music and you think that they would enjoy being a member of a Soundabout Choir, then all you have to do is go to [www.leicestershiremusicshub.org](http://www.leicestershiremusicshub.org) and follow the link to Soundabout Choir.

**Nicola Atkins – Singing Team Leader - Leicestershire Music Hub:**

 We are really excited to be working in partnership with Soundabout to offer a new singing opportunity for young people and their families across Leicester and Leicestershire. The inclusive aspect of this group will enable people from all backgrounds and abilities to discover the joy of being part of a singing community whilst learning new skills and having a lot of fun in a safe and caring environment.

**Clare Cook, CEO, Soundabout:**

 Our experience in Oxford has shown us the powerful impact that an inclusive choir has on all involved – creating a musical community around children and young people with disabilities builds confidence in their own musicality and ability to form relationships. Some of the members will be singers, others may use technology or traditional instruments to make their contribution – all are welcome. ■



# Supporting children through performing arts

I am the parent of a high functioning autistic, ADHD complex 15 year old daughter.

▶ Due to a number of issues we have faced including feeling unsupported and isolated, i was passionate about wanting to help other children, young people and families.

Through research and experience, i realised children with needs were drawn to creative and performing arts.

I wanted to provide a genuinely positive, safe, inclusive and experienced environment for all children to enjoy being creative. Through this i coul help with their personal development, social/emotional coaching, mentoring and CBT, and through role-play to further embed into their subconscious mind.

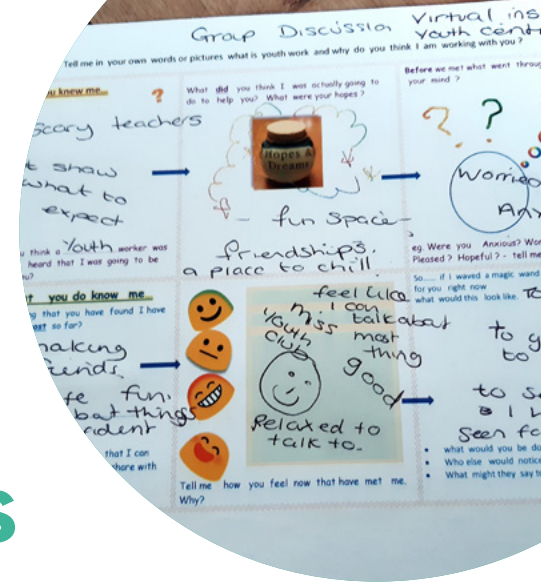
Positive outcomes by each child who attended the holiday programme has been amazing!

Book your FREE session/consultation now.

Email [enquires@smartperforming.org](mailto:enquires@smartperforming.org) or visit their Facebook page [www.facebook.com/SMARTPerforming](https://www.facebook.com/SMARTPerforming) ■

# Youth Work Week 2020 'Ambitious for Youth Work'

During Youth Work Week 2020 our Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) SEND youth groups met virtually to discuss their ambitions of Youth Work.



▶ These sessions ran during Lockdown 2 and we think some of the voice captured is relevant today as we find ourselves coming out of the 3rd Lockdown! Thank you to all those that took part and shared their feelings.

## What did you think a youth worker was when you first heard I was going to be meeting with you?

- “Scary teachers”
- “Not sure what to expect”

## What did you think I was going to do to help you? What were your hopes?

- “A fun space”
- “Friendships”
- “A place to chill”

## Before we met what went through your mind?

- “Wanted mum to stay”
- “Worried”
- “Anxious”

## Now that you know me... tell me one thing that you have found I have helped you with most so far?

- “Making friends”
- “Feeling safe”
- “Fun”
- “Learning about things”
- “Feeling confident”

## Tell me how you feel now that you have met me

- “Relaxed to talk to”
- “Feel like I can talk about most things”
- “I miss youth club”
- “Good”

## So if I waved a magic wand and everything was ok for you right now, what would this look like?

- “To get back to normality”
- “To go back to youth club”
- “To see friends I haven’t seen for a while”

For more information about the Children and Family Wellbeing Service (CFWS) and the support they offer, please visit [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/children-and-family-wellbeing-service-cfws](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/children-and-family-wellbeing-service-cfws) ■

# A new SEND unit opened at Thistly Meadow primary school in Blaby.

Thistly Meadow primary school has partnered with Birkett House special school to open a new unit for 12 children as part of the school's expansion.

▶ The purpose-built classroom, which was built by Leicestershire County Council, welcomed its first pupils last term. The unit will be run by Birkett House staff but will be part of the Thistly Meadow school community enabling SEND pupils to access learning in a mainstream setting.


**Deborah Taylor, cabinet member for Children and Family Services, said:**

 "This special unit is part of the council's commitment to invest £30 million in SEND and

create almost 700 extra places within Leicestershire.

"The programme aims to promote stronger inclusion in all schools, to ensure that pupils with SEND may be educated as close to home as possible and in the community where they live to help promote continuity and progression into adulthood."

**Colin Bowpitt, Head teacher of Thistly Meadow said,**

 "We were excited about this project from the very start; as an inclusive school, we

share the same ethos and ideals and see huge benefits to children from both schools being on the same site".

**Chris White, Head teacher of Birkett House said,**

 "We have a long tradition of working with mainstream partners to deliver genuinely inclusive links for our pupils. We are delighted at this opportunity to work in collaboration with Thistly Meadow to improve both educational and social outcomes for our pupils."



## Have your say on new school term date options

▶ We have launched a consultation to capture people's views on three options for future term dates for Leicestershire.

The proposals cover term dates running for five years from autumn 2022 to summer 2027 and include:

- Keeping the 'traditional' county term time pattern, which offers an earlier summer holiday but means a longer autumn term
- Aligning the autumn and spring breaks in line with most other authorities, including Leicester City, but again means a longer autumn term

- Introducing a two-week autumn half-term break. This would leave terms 'more balanced' across the whole year but would result in a shorter Easter break

More detailed information on these proposals and a chance to have your say via a short questionnaire can be accessed here [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/term-dates-consultation).

To request a paper copy, call **0116 305 6324** or email [admissions@leics.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@leics.gov.uk)

Leicester City Council is also running its own consultation on school term and holiday dates in the city at the same time.

<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sce/termdates>.

To request a paper copy, call **0116 454 1000**.

Both authorities' proposals reflect the same dates and we're both asking for views on whether the term patterns followed by the city and county should match. The closing date for both consultations is **midnight on Sunday, July 18, 2021.** ■





# Specialist Foster Carers

Every foster carer is special, but Specialist Foster Carers have the skills and experience to offer dedicated care to a child or young person in care with SEND or complex behavioural or emotional needs, in their own home.

▶ Specialist Foster Carer roles are full-time and well-paid. You'll have access to comprehensive training and 24/7 support, as well as the opportunity to go the extra mile and give a child or young person your full attention and the expert care they need.

Children in care may have additional or complex needs, including a physical disability, severe learning disability or sensory impairment, autism or other health need. For some, their emotional state means full-time intensive care is required. They may have struggled in education

or with building relationships. Could you be their advocate and foster carer?

Find out more about becoming a Specialist Foster Carer –  
**0116 305 05 05** –  
[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/specialist-foster-care-roles](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/specialist-foster-care-roles) ■

## How are we doing?

The SEND and Inclusion Board is made up of representatives from Leicestershire local authority, the Clinical Commissioning Groups, Leicestershire Partnership Trust, schools and colleges, the Parent Carer Forum and Lead Members for Children's Services.

▶ The Board's work is set out within the SEND and Inclusion Strategy that works to our vision that in Leicestershire for children with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – for them to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in

their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives

There are five priorities to support the vision which have been developed in consultation with the Parent Carer Forum, feedback from parent and carers and children and young people and also from what the local partnership believe is needed to help the local area work

towards the SEND and Inclusion vision.

To help us to gather views on how we are doing, a survey has been developed that considers some questions against each priority area.

To Make Your Voice Count, please look on the **Local Offer website** for the link to the survey. ■