

What is the Local Offer?

4.1 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. In setting out what they ‘expect to be available’, local authorities should include provision which they believe will actually be available.

4.2 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 those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review

4.3 The Local Offer should not simply be a directory of existing services. Its success depends as much upon full engagement with children, young people and their parents as on the information it contains. The process of developing the Local Offer will help local authorities and their health partners to improve provision.

4.4 The Local Offer **must** include provision in the local authority’s area. It **must** also include provision outside the local area that the local authority expects is likely to be used by children and young people with SEN for whom they are responsible and disabled children and young people. This could, for example, be provision in a further education college in a neighbouring area or support services for children and young people with particular types of SEN that are provided jointly by local authorities. It should include relevant regional and national specialist provision, such as provision for children and young people with low-incidence and more complex SEN.

4.5 Local authorities and those who are required to co-operate with them need to comply with the Equality Act 2010, including when preparing, developing and reviewing the Local Offer.

4.6 The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 provide a common framework for the Local Offer. They specify the requirements that all local authorities **must** meet in developing, publishing and reviewing their Local Offer, and cover:

- the information to be included
- how the Local Offer is to be published

- who is to be consulted about the Local Offer
- how children with SEN or disabilities and their parents and young people with SEN or disabilities will be involved in the preparation and review of the Local Offer, and
- the publication of comments on the Local Offer and the local authority's response, including any action it intends to take in relation to those comments

4.7 The Local Offer should be:

- **collaborative:** local authorities **must** involve parents, children and young people in developing and reviewing the Local Offer. They **must** also cooperate with those providing services
- **accessible:** the published Local Offer should be easy to understand, factual and jargon free. It should be structured in a way that relates to young people's and parents' needs (for example by broad age group or type of special educational provision). It should be well signposted and well publicised
- **comprehensive:** parents and young people should know what support is expected to be available across education, health and social care from age 0 to 25 and how to access it. The Local Offer **must** include eligibility criteria for services where relevant and make it clear where to go for information, advice and support, as well as how to make complaints about provision or appeal against decisions
- **up to date:** when parents and young people access the Local Offer it is important that the information is up to date
- **transparent:** the Local Offer should be clear about how decisions are made and who is accountable and responsible for them

What must be included in the Local Offer?

4.29 Local authorities **must** include information about all the areas specified in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014. They may wish to include wider information, taking account of their discussions with children with SEN or disabilities and their parents and young people with SEN or disabilities.

4.30 The Local Offer **must** include information about:

- special educational, health and social care provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities – this should include online and blended learning
- details of how parents and young people can request an assessment for an EHC plan

- arrangements for identifying and assessing children and young people's SEN
 - this should include arrangements for EHC needs assessments
- other educational provision, for example sports or arts provision, paired reading schemes
- post-16 education and training provision
- apprenticeships, traineeships and supported internships
- information about provision to assist in preparing children and young people for adulthood (see paragraphs 4.52 to 4.56)
- arrangements for travel to and from schools, post-16 institutions and early years providers
- support to help children and young people move between phases of education (for example from early years to school, from primary to secondary)
- sources of information, advice and support in the local authority's area relating to SEN and disabilities including information and advice provided under Section 32 of the Children and Families Act 2014, forums for parents and carers and support groups
- childcare, including suitable provision for disabled children and those with SEN
- leisure activities
- support available to young people in higher education, particularly the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and the process and timescales for making an application for DSA
- arrangements for resolving disagreements and for mediation, and details about making complaints
- parents' and young people's rights to appeal a decision of the local authority to the First-tier Tribunal (SEN and disability) in respect of SEN and provision
- the local authority's accessibility strategy (under paragraph 1 Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010)
- institutions approved under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014

4.31 The Local Offer should cover:

- support available to all children and young people with SEN or disabilities from universal services such as schools and GPs
- targeted services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require additional short-term support over and above that provided routinely as part of universal services

- specialist services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities who require specialised, longer term support

Educational, health and care provision

Educational and training provision

4.32 The local authority **must** set out in its Local Offer an authority-wide description of the special educational and training provision it expects to be available in its area and outside its area for children and young people in its area who have SEN or disabilities from providers of relevant early years education, maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units, independent institutions approved under section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014, and the full range of post-16 providers. This includes information about the arrangements the local authority has for funding children and young people with SEN, including any agreements about how providers will use any budget that has been delegated to them.

It includes the arrangements providers have in place for:

- identifying the particular SEN of children and young people
- consulting with parents of disabled children with SEN and disabled young people with SEN or disabilities
- securing the services, provision and equipment required by children and young people with SEN or disabilities
- supporting disabled children and young people and those with SEN in moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood and independent living and information about:
 - approaches to teaching, adaptations to the curriculum and the learning environment for children and young people with SEN or disabilities and additional learning support for those with SEN
 - enabling available facilities to be accessed by disabled children and young people and those with SEN (this should include ancillary aids and assistive technology, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC))
 - assessing and reviewing pupils' and students' progress towards outcomes, including how providers works with parents and young people in doing so
 - securing expertise among teachers, lecturers or other professionals to support children and young people with SEN or disabilities – this should include professional development to secure expertise at different levels:
 - **awareness** (to give a basic awareness of a particular type of SEN, appropriate for all staff who will come into contact with a child or young person with that type of SEN)
 - **enhanced** (how to adapt teaching and learning to meet a particular type of SEN, for early years practitioners, class and subject teachers/lecturers and teaching assistants working directly with the child or young person on a regular basis), and

- **specialist** (in-depth training about a particular type of SEN, for staff who will be advising and supporting those with enhanced-level skills and knowledge)

- assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the education and training provision the local authority makes for children and young people with SEN or disabilities
- activities that are available to disabled children and young people and those with SEN, including physical activities and extra-curricular activities, and
- supporting the emotional, mental and social development of disabled children and young people and those with SEN (this should include extra pastoral support arrangements for listening to the views of pupils and students with SEN and measures to prevent bullying)

4.33 The above will include arrangements for supporting children who are looked after by the local authority and have SEN.

Early years

4.37 When securing funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds local authorities must promote equality of opportunity for disabled children. This should include securing relevant expertise among early years providers and working with parents to ensure that appropriate provision is in place to enable each child to flourish. Local authorities must also secure sufficient childcare for working parents and must work with providers to plan and manage local provision to meet the needs of families and children in their area.

4.38 Local authorities must publish in their Local Offer information about childcare options available to parents including the range of expertise to support children with SEN or disabilities and should publish information about

- free early education places and eligibility criteria
- relevant services from other agencies such as Portage, Health Visitors and Early Support
- arrangements for identifying and assessing children's needs in the early years
- support available to parents to aid their child's development at home, and

arrangements for reviewing children's progress, including progress checks and health and development reviews between the ages of 2 and 3