

## Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Local Offer

### Annual Feedback Report August 2015

---

The Stockton-on-Tees Local Offer provides clear, comprehensive information and support to parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities up to the age of 25. The Local Offer will help their understanding of the services and support they and their families can expect from a range of local agencies within the local authority and neighbouring area.

All the information is available electronically to enable families and professionals to have access to the same information.

Those who cannot access on-line information can contact the Families Information Service (FIS) on 01642 527225. FIS are able to signpost to services and send out printed information from the Local Offer. There is also a booklet available; *What you need to know about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reforms* (available through schools, children centres and colleges, Customer Service Centres, libraries or contact FIS on 01642 527225 ).

Stockton Borough Council's dedicated Local Offer can be found at: <a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/localoffer">www.stockton.gov.uk/localoffer</a>
---

We will report each year on what we have done, what feedback we have received and how we have responded to this information.

### What Information is included in the Stockton-on-Tees Local Offer?

- Information, advice and support documents  
Including:
  - SEN Support in schools, including SEN identification and the 'assess, plan, do, review' process of support
  - Education Health and Care Assessments and Plans
  - Personal Budgets
  - How decisions are made
  - Key links to Government documents and current strategies
- Directory of services  
Including
  - Education, Health and Care provision
  - How to access services and eligibility
- Comments, contact and feedback area  
Including
  - How to contact us
  - Survey monkey feedback form
  - Annual reports

- What to do if you disagree  
Including
  - Information on complaints, disagreement resolution, mediation and appeals

Information regarding what the Local Offer should include is available from the [SEND Code of Practice](#) and [SEN \(Local Offer\) Regulations 2014](#)

## What have we achieved here in Stockton-on-Tees?

All the progress we have made with the Local Offer has been in partnership with our stakeholders. This has included:

- Working closely with parents and carers to ensure their views and ideas are shared
- Coproduction of support material, including 2 newsletters, an information card and a booklet for carers, parents and professionals
- Establishing the Local Offer Focus Group to explore, discuss and propose action
- Converting the Local Offer into a 'mobile friendly' website
- Promotion of the Local Offer, including an official launch event, local media coverage and information sessions with parents/carers in schools
- Leading events, including conferences and training, which have included sessions about the Local Offer
- Attending events, including information sharing events and Stockton United for Change conferences
- Sharing good practice across stakeholders and other Local Authorities
- Gathering feedback through a variety of methods (see below)

We are planning to develop our engagement with young people about the Local Offer. So far we have engaged with Headliners who have created a film with the young people. We also have a project led by Youth Focus North East.

## Feedback

The Local Offer will continue to develop and improve over time. It is being developed in consultation with young people, parents and carers, the voluntary and community sector and professionals. This will make sure it is designed in the most helpful way to find information about the services and support available.

We gather feedback on the Local Offer through various means, including:

- Stockton United for Change (SUfC) parent carer forum
- Local Offer Focus Group
- Local Offer survey monkey feedback form on the website
- Meetings and conferences, involving parents, carers, voluntary and community organisations and professionals
- Feedback and ideas from young people

These are some examples of how we have responded to suggestions for improvements to the Local Offer:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The words ‘Special Needs and Disabilities 0 - 25’ should be added to the logo banner</li> <li>○ We need clear tab to direct to Adults directory?</li> <li>○ Heading ‘Social Care’ could put some parents off. Could this be reworded to ‘Social Support’? Making it more friendly sounding for families</li> <li>○ Abbreviations shouldn’t be used for headings e.g. EHC, SEN. They need to be written in full</li> <li>○ Not clear how to ‘go back’</li> <li>○ A jargon buster may be a useful tool for key words and terms</li> <li>○ We should take the information on the Local Offer into schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This is now done</li> <li>● This tab is now there</li> <li>● We have extended title to ‘Social Care and Social Support’</li> <li>● We have improved on this. Further improvement is an on-going task and we would like parents and all users of the website to help with this by sending us feedback</li> <li>● We now have a ‘back to previous page’ button</li> <li>● We have developed a Jargon buster in consultation with parents, carers and professionals. We will continue to review this according to feedback</li> <li>● We have started this process - with short informal sessions organised through school SENCOs</li> </ul>
--	--

**This is a summary of the results from the website’s survey monkey (July 2015)**

Over half of the respondents searched for information on either *Education or Information Advice and Support* or both.

Nearly 60% said that the website was OK to use, with nearly 30% saying it was easy. The remainder said it was very hard, so we are aware that there are a small number of people who find it difficult to access the information and will continue to work with stakeholders to improve this.

Two thirds found what they were looking for. Those who did not usually let us know, through the survey, what they searching for, and we are working to improve the content and search function accordingly.

Over 80% who used the website were parents or carers. We are aware that professionals will have other sources to find out information, but would like to see it better used by those working in the field. We will continue to raise awareness among professionals through our partnership working.

This information has been gathered across a period of time when we have also been improving the website. However the results are similar to the feedback we have received through other sources; that the website is generally useful and well constructed, but that there is more to do in terms of content and search functions.

### **These are some views we have received from people through our activities over the year**

From the launch of the Local Offer, parents and carers have told us that the look of the website is very important to them, so we have worked on aspects such as colours, categories, tabs and photos. They also told us that usability is crucial and have given us valuable guidance on search terms that parents and carers will use - for instance 'buggies' rather than 'wheelchairs'.

At our Focus Group in June 2015 we had representation from parents, schools and colleges, the Voluntary, Community Sector (VCS) agency Catalyst, and Social Care – and overwhelmingly the Local Offer was considered a well put together, easy to use and useful resource. For instance one Headteacher said that she uses it frequently and a representative from Stockton United for Change said that she gives parents links to information on the website, and thinks that a year from now we will find that many parents access it as a matter of course.

### **Next Steps**

These are some of the things we plan to do over the next year

- Continue to develop the Local Offer in consultation with our stakeholders
- Widen engagement with young people, developing the Local Offer according to their views
- Offer information sessions to parents and carers in schools, early years settings and colleges
- Raise awareness of professionals of the value of the Local Offer, and the opportunities it creates
- Continue to improve the quality of information
- Improve the 'search' function
- Continue to expand the range of information
- Develop a glossary of terms to complement the jargon buster

### **Giving your feedback**

We would really like to hear from you about our "Local Offer" pages. Please tell us if you can't find something, how your experience was, or how we can improve the directory. Please [click here to access our local offer feedback page](#) and tell us what you think.