

LOCAL OFFER FOR SEND (SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES) ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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1. Summary

The Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) Local Offer for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) has been coproduced with the H&F parent and carers forum Parentsactive, youth advocates, Young H&F Foundation, and the Youth Voice. Coproduction members also include Health and community partners, The Carers Network, H&F SEND Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) and Action on Disability, Schools, and SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators), among others.

This report highlights the Local Offer coproduced work from March 2023 to March 2024, including the valuable input of the H&F Web Team, a commissioned web content designer and external consultants who have organised the LO (Local Offer) for SEND content within the new website: www.lbhf.gov.uk/familyhubs. This is a central hub for information including SEND services that has been fully redesigned in response to resident's feedback. The analysis of the Local Offer in this report includes parents' and carers' insights from SEND surveys, research gathered through the *Family Hub End Users* report, responses from coproduction workshops with Parentsactive, young people from Action on Disability and Let Me Play Group (the youth local activities provider), website statistics, content testing activities and an analysis of the LO inbox inquiries.

The 2022-2023 data highlighted low resident awareness of the LO and accessibility to support available. In response, the LO launched the Family Hub website in March 2024 and ensured an extensive outreach promotion programme and marketing plan.

With the aim of promoting the Local Offer as a **whole service offer**, the Family Hub website has a pivotal role in not just increasing website visits but also in offering a coproduction hub for residents, H&F Local Authority (LA) services, partners, community organisations and professionals supporting families. The Local Offer's ambitions extend beyond the platform; the LO has focused on understanding what residents need and how to improve the information. Within H&F the coproduction culture is strong and opportunities to increase operational engagement with partners such as the NHS and internal services are continually sought. Residents are also key partners through coproduction opportunities and the LO continues to explore more opportunities for coproduction with disabled young people. Plans are in place to include new partners for Summer 2024.

Key Metrics

The main LO performance metrics by March 2024 analysed in this report are:

AWARENESS OF THE LOCAL OFFER

- **Initial value:** 29.9% (January 2023)
- **Current value:** 43.6% (March 2024)

CONTENT DESIGN FEEDBACK RATIO

- **Initial value:** 50 pages to be redesigned based on resident's feedback
- **Current value:** 25 pages have been redesigned (March 2024)

FASTER INFORMATION ACCESS

- **Overall Improvement:** Users can access information 39.9% faster on the Family Hub new website. (March 2024)

Relevant Guidance and documentation

The **Children and Families Act 2014** places a duty on every local authority to publish a SEND Local Offer setting out in one place information about services and support available for children and young people (CYP) in their area who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

In addition, the **SEND Code of Practice 2015** states that the purpose of the LO is:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible, and up-to-date information about the provision available and how to access it
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children, those with SEN, their parents, disabled young people, and service providers in its development and review.

The Local Offer also follows these locally developed strategies:

The Early Intervention Strategy 2022-27

- To respond to needs early and accurately
- to develop the information based on the needs and perspectives of residents
- to clearly communicate the right information at the right time.

The H&F SEND Strategy 2023-2028

- To provide clarity on key issues, circumstances, opportunities, and what residents can expect from their local services and educational settings
- to work together and promote SEND as everyone's responsibility through coproduction, inclusion into mainstream services and working closely with Adult Social Care (ASC) to support successful transitions.

2. Introduction

The Local Offer includes information about services and support available for children and young people from birth to 25 who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families. This includes:

- Education, health, and care provision
- what's on, leisure activities and clubs
- employment and how to prepare for adult life (transitions to adulthood)
- financial support and travel care.

In line with statutory guidance, the Council's values, and the *SEND Strategy 2023-2028*, the Local Offer supports disabled children and young people (CYP) to live happy lives and achieve their goals. To these aims the LO will continue to coproduce the information with families, service providers, and professionals.

The Family Information Service (FIS) and the LO include provision for ALL children and young people as well as targeted and focused interventions for those with additional needs and specialist provision for those with higher levels of needs.

Accessing the information

- The information is available online by visiting the Family Hub website:
www.lbhf.gov.uk/familyhubs



- Residents can request the information in alternative formats if needed using the Web feedback form.
- to read the Family Hub pages in another language users can click on the Google Translate button at the foot of each page
- to adapt the device (making the text larger, changing the colour contrast or magnifying the screen), users can access www.lbhf.gov.uk/AbilityNet
- users can use free voice control tools to interact with the site for example Windows Speech Recognition or Mac Voice Control.

3. Local Offer context

Since June 2023, the Family Hub Service has brought together the Family Information Service (FIS) and the Local Offer for SEND. This has supported the migration of the LO content to the Family Hub website in March 2024 to provide a cohesive, centralised information hub.

The previous LO annual report established the need to increase the awareness of the Local Offer and during the last year, the LO has continued shaping the 'whole service offer' through coproduction. The plan for a comprehensive Local Offer includes ensuring accessibility: the information is inclusive and focused on children and young people's needs and their families and not just services.

The LO has also developed outreach promotion via digital channels, user testing activities and attending local events and. These efforts have had a significant impact in increasing the residents' awareness of the Local Offer; awareness measures have increased by 14.6%, rising from 29% in January 2023 to 43.6% in March 2024.

Building on this positive trend, the LO will launch a marketing campaign for Summer 2024 combining the promotion of Family Hubs and Family Information Service.

4. Coproduction work on the Local Offer

Coproduction means that young people, children, families, and decision-makers are working together in an active way to plan, design and review the Local Offer webpages to make sure it is useful to everybody who needs to use it and the information is accessible to everybody. All these sessions and resources help to understand what improvements the LO needs to make to increase the accessibility to information and suggest what other services can do to improve their offer.

a. Parents and carers' local forum

The LO is coproduced with Parentsactive through monthly coproduction hub meetings, this includes:

- Initiatives to offer services that support needs
- discussing presentation and language to ensure residents access the offer
- ensuring all available resources are verified
- collaborating on content guides: e.g. *Autism guide for parents and carers* to bring all the information into one place including the support available for children in the early years, the autism assessment process, post assessment and key transition points linking with adult social care (ASC).

b. Internal and external services

Collaborators include the local area NHS health partner and H&F education and care services such as Short Breaks, Children's Social Care, Occupational Therapy and the Inclusion and Specialist Intervention Outreach Service (INSPIRE). It also includes Transitions and Independent Living services as well as local community services and providers.

c. Content design and user testing activities

There is a continuing process to update and redesign the 25 remaining advice and guidance pages as indicated by residents:

- Reducing the amount of text
- using a needs focus versus services focus and plain English
- 'What happens after you apply' or 'what happens next' sections to enhance user experience
- highlighting the connection with Adult Social Care (ASC) by adding text and links that lead users to the Independent Living web pages.

By March 2024, 25 out of 50 LO content pages indicated as a priority by residents redesigned on the Family Hub website. These include:

1. *Short breaks for Disabled children and young people*
2. *Family Hub Stephen Wiltshire Centre*
3. *Autism guide for parents and carers*
4. *I think my child needs help*

The first round of in-person user testing for the new website and Local Offer content took place at the borough's Family Hubs launch events on March - April 2024.

Residents who take part in these activities are incentivised.

d. Coproduction work with young people

Previous coproduction work indicated young people want to find all the information in one place. Young residents have organised their priorities within five broad themes:

- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Work Readiness
- ✓ Life Skills
- ✓ Staying Safe
- ✓ Inclusion

The Local Offer will work with the Hammersmith and Fulham Youth Voice and the Action on Disability Youth board to further develop the content.

e. Other coproduction routes

In addition to the Family Hub website feedback, the LO links with the main council *H&F Have You Say* channel for residents to participate in public consultations and get involved.

5. Response to feedback

This section shows how the Local Offer worked, processed, and actioned feedback.

a. Website planning

A 'users' consultation confirmed residents required a hub of information where all the information comes in one place. Below are some of the comments extracted from the

research when asking about priorities and challenges in accessing the Family Information Service and Local Offer.

Parents & Young people

- *‘Knowledge centre to get quick answers for questions’*
- *‘Feels like bitty information, need a hub of information’*
- *‘Hub where everything is under one umbrella, children, young people for training and education for families in the holidays, work experience, the Local Offer service all need help with the children with differing needs.’*

Professionals & partners

- *‘There needs to be a central place for activities. Young people don’t know where to go and find out what is happening in H&F’*
- *‘Should make the activities feel universally available: People will think maybe if you don’t have a child with SEND then maybe this isn’t for them’*
- *‘Talk less about the service and more about people’s needs.’*

Users also requested an accessible format for the information that clearly details services and activities for all users.

The Family Hub website was created in March 2024 with improved functionality and design bringing all the information for CYP in one place. Within the new website, 75% of LO directory entries have now been updated, and presented in line with users' requests. The FH website is a live site, and the Local Offer adapts while maintaining progress.

b. Parentsactive sessions

Coproduction partners asked for Local Offer focus groups to assess the pages where parents/professionals are provided with a persona and asked to search for pages that relate to that persona. *Helen Sanderson’s personalised care and support planning tools* were used, and the scenarios were adapted for use with the LO. An

action plan was designed to test real user journeys on the website, with two rounds of user testing conducted at the Tudor Rose and Old Oak Family Hubs launch events. *I Think My Child Needs Help* and the *Occupational therapy services for children and young people* pages were tested based on the proposed journeys below and feedback was incorporated into the pages :

User Journey 1

As a parent or carer, you are worried about your 4-year-old daughter who is very fussy about food. You want to find some advice or support with this.

Find information to help you.

User Journey 2

As a parent or carer looking after a 14-year-old with complex needs, you want to find ways to help them become more independent, for example with washing and toothbrushing. Some changes to your home so that your 14-year-old can access the bathroom by herself might help with this.

Find some advice or support with this.

This user testing was and will be crucial for raising awareness, providing face-to-face interaction with residents and professionals, and offering insights into how users access and move around the Family Hub website and Local Offer content.

The LO plans to test the new Autism guide for parents and carers within a focus group during the Summer.

Another feedback suggestion was to print business cards with LO QR codes for parents. The business cards will be available in the Summer.

c. Liaison with Children's Services Teams

The LO is collaborating with all service teams to ensure that any correspondence with parents includes specific links related to their needs or concerns rather than general landing pages.

The Local Offer marketing plan integrates the education, health, and care provision across H&F. As part of this plan:

- The Family Hub website is included in all Education & SEND email signatures
- The LO has begun to participate in other teams' projects: The new *Autism guide for parents and carers* included a consultation link to promote a survey to help develop the *H&F Autism Strategy* by September 2024
- The LO is working with the Family Hub Stephen Wiltshire Centre (SWC) to include and promote the *H&F Children's Disability Register*. This has successfully led to a significant increase in register applications.
- The Short Breaks Service requested a similar consultation for SWC families and shared the LO-specific link and QR code for the consultation with families.

d. SEND surveys

The 2024 SEND Self Evaluation showed 1,511 (CYP) with an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan, with primary needs being:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder: 44.6%
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs: 22.0%
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health: 13.6%

The Self Evaluation also highlighted 2,220 (CYP) receiving SEN support, whose primary needs were:

- Speech, Language and Communication Needs: 34.6%
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health: 17.5%
- Specific Learning Difficulty: 16.4%

Based on survey insights and website statistics, the Local Offer developed the Autism guide and launched a new *Emotional wellbeing and mental health* page. The Speech, Language, and Communication Needs page will follow.

The **Parents and Carers Service survey** (March 24) showed that LO awareness had increased by 14.6%, rising from 29% in January 2023 to 43.6%. Additionally,

there was a 12.6% increase in usage, achieving 20.6% from a starting point of 8%. This is a starting point and there is scope for improvements:

The following comments were collected when parents were asked: **'Is there anything you want to tell us about how the LO can improve the Local Offer?'**

- *'More information regarding the local offer and what that involves.'*
- *'To educate us parent what is local offer and how the children will benefit from this local offer.'*
- *'More promotional information, you only know about this if you are told.'*
- *'I am not sure how to use the local offer. I have been sent the link before, but I don't know how my daughter can benefit from it.'*

Based on the survey feedback and to increase the awareness of the LO there is collaborative work to ensure the Local Offer information is included on the model letters and forms that go individually to parents and, also into the EHCP needs post-assessment survey. Further communications will be organised as part of the LO marketing plan to approach families with the School Zone newsletter to go out to educational settings and teaching staff, especially SENCOs, among other services.

Parents were also asked: **'What could help your child enjoy life in the borough and feel included in the community?'** Some of the following comments highlight a need for more activities aimed at children with SEND and more inclusive activities provided:

- *'More inclusion... sports/club ... half term clubs for them to get involved in. Majority of activities for SEN children are normally booked up and are priced fairly high and not everyone has the chance to enjoy them.'*
- *'To be able to do clubs outside of school, that understand his needs.'*
- *'More social clubs for children with SEN'*
- *'More interaction with peers his age'*
- *'More funding into services such as Sepia that has been amazingly supportive of my child Sands End Arts & Community Centre.'*

The LO now liaise with LMP Group, the local activities provider, to improve the accessibility of the offer during the summer through the *Holiday Activities and Food Programme*. The current application requires improvements to develop the accessibility to the offer, for example, the site filters should be reviewed to reflect the range of needs. In addition, the Local Offer now work with the web team to increase the offer and options under the *Youth projects, activities and services* section based on a list of local Youth Clubs shared by youth services.

6. Comprehensive data sources

a. Website statistics

The Google Analytics tool used to extract data was downgraded in August 2023, which will impact usual data tracking for subsequent reporting quarters. From July to October 2023 the commissioned website developers, Invuse, collected data during a development period as the Local Offer prepared for the Family Hub website launch on March 2024. As part of their research, key users accessed the pages for Education & SEND, Health, and Care (EHC) plans, and Early Years and Childcare.

Since the launch of the new website, redesign of the pages and reordering of the site information, users report they can access the information 39.9% faster.

b. Local Offer email inbox enquiries

65% of enquiries related to EHC plans and related subjects. Half of these enquiries came from parents asking about the application process or activities for their children with an EHC plan and professionals seeking advice regarding applications. The other half were from providers requesting inclusion within the directory. Other enquiries related to:

- Support and activities for neurodiverse children
- Professionals seeking information to help SENCOs provide support
- SEND provision in schools.

Also, the following comments were received:

- *'I am struggling to navigate the process of finding a primary school for my daughter with an EHCP. She will most likely need either a resource base in mainstream or a specialist school'*
- *'Hi there. Is anyone in H&F that may have the Parents Request form for EHCP assessment? I wonder if you can help me to apply for an EHCP assessment myself to my child'.*

Following this feedback:

- There is joint work with the EHC Planning Team to develop an improved *Education, health and care (EHC) plans and assessments* page
- the *Guidance for FIS and LO service providers* now provides an updated form to support the application process
- improvements have been made to the page for SEND provision, which presents updated information on *SEN resource base units and specialist schools*
- the coproduced *Autism guide for parents and carers* includes a section with activities inclusive for neurodiverse children and young people.

Also, there has been positive feedback from users including the following comments:

- *'I just wanted to say thank you so much for this thorough information. I really appreciate it and will be sharing with clinicians at H&F CAMHS. It will be useful for the young people and parents!'*
- *'Thank you very much for all the information provided. This is very useful for us indeed. I will call them and arrange a visit soon'.*
- *'Thank you very much for the help! I will contact the people you have suggested.'*

7. Communications to support the Local Offer

a. Newsletter & subscriptions

The Family Information Service (FIS) & Local Offer were included in the August edition of the Early Years newsletter: www.lbhf.gov.uk/EY-August-newsletter with the aim to communicate the FIS and Local Offer websites. These websites were

migrated to the main council website in August 2023 to increase visibility alongside childcare providers and professionals. This move was in preparation for merging sites and Local Offer content under the new Family Hub website by March 2024.

In addition, the FIS & LO are now members of NAFIS (National Association for FIS) to receive updates about resources available and discuss best practices with members. There is ongoing work to find out more about what parents, carers and young people want and need including research into popular sources of information about SEND. There is regular communication with neighbouring boroughs to discuss best practices.

b. Events attended

- The transitions fair at Jack Tizard School in November 2023 was a good opportunity to talk directly with young people and families and to refresh the school's directory record.
- Similarly, the internship fair at West London College helped both to promote the Local Offer and to meet directly with users.
- Action on Disability hosted an event to celebrate disabled people and independent living in Dec 2023 and during the event, there were discussions with Youth Council representatives about the LO content and plans made for further coproduction.
- Family Hubs launch events on March and April and information about the Local Offer shared and promoted.

8. Next steps and recommendations

- **To enhance coproduction:** The Local Offer has committed to work with the Hammersmith & Fulham Youth Voice and the community partner Action on Disability to work on the *Youth hub* to coproduce the LO for young people. The LO and partners will undertake resident surveys and gain insights about how young people access local support and about what kind of content disabled residents indicate as important on the Family Hub website. Events will take place throughout the year.

- **To increase the awareness of the service:** Initiate the marketing plan in collaboration with Family Hubs and Family Information Service. This includes printed promotional material and digital and direct promotion via events, sessions and detailed communications channels. An action plan is in place with targets to better integrate the LO across internal services, schools, partners, and community services.
- **To improve the accessibility to the offer:** To work with Children's Services teams and NHS as the health partner in the website structure to improve residents' journeys. Sections and content need to reflect an inclusive approach and show appropriate/meaningful keywords for parents and young people. The LO will collaborate with partners to ensure content continues to be relevant and up to date with national and local best practices.
- Further review **content** on the website, including:
 - ✓ To test the new autism and EHC plans pages.
 - ✓ To improve the Emotional, Mental Health and Well-being page considering coproduction work with parents
 - ✓ To work on a new Speech, Language and Communications needs section starting with a confirmed workshop with the NHS, the Join Communication Team (Inspire) and parents by July 2024
 - ✓ To continue working on the 25 remaining pages: Focus on transport, (EHC) plans, mental health and wellbeing and employment.
 - ✓ To start discussions with H&F services to improve the activities offer and with the activities provider to improve the accessibility to them on the website.
- Present a new data collection format supported by the web team on SEND information pages and user engagement rates to assess content appeal and accessibility. By July 2024 there should be consistent data related to the first three months.