

# **SOUTHAMPTON PARENT CARER FORUM**



## **LOCAL OFFER ANNUAL REPORT 2025 TO 2026**

# INTRODUCTION

This report highlights how we have worked alongside young people, parent carers and professionals to review Southampton's Local Offer, understand families' experiences, and identify the improvements they would like to see. It also outlines the actions taken in response to the feedback received. The Local Offer is co-produced in partnership with Southampton Parent Carer Forum and local families.

Southampton Parent Carer Forum has continued to work closely and collaboratively with the Local Offer Development Officer to support the ongoing development and improvement of Southampton's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Local Offer. This has included gathering and sharing lived experiences from families, identifying common themes and barriers, supporting engagement activities, reviewing accessibility, and helping ensure that family voice remains central to future planning. The Local Offer report reflects a shared commitment to co-production and recognises both the progress made and the areas where further development is needed. Through regular discussions, feedback gathering, and collaborative working, the forum has helped ensure the report reflects the real experiences of families across the city and supports meaningful improvements that make information, support, and services easier to access and understand.

The Local Offer can be found at <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/>

# HEADLINE FIGURES

This section provides an overview of the headline figures relating to engagement with Southampton's SEND Local Offer and associated communication channels over the reporting period. The data includes activity across the Local Offer website, Facebook page engagement, email enquiries received, and the most frequently visited webpages. These figures help provide a snapshot of how families and professionals are accessing information, the topics they are most frequently seeking support with, and the areas generating the greatest levels of interest or demand. Monitoring this information helps identify trends, improve accessibility, and support ongoing development of the Local Offer to better meet the needs of families across Southampton.

**Make it much more user friendly, Less jargon, More contacts for support in all areas.**

# Southampton SEND Local Offer



**PARENTS**

Find information, advice and support for you and your family.



**YOUNG PEOPLE**

Explore support, services and opportunities that are right for you.



**PROFESSIONALS**

Access resources, guidance and tools to support children, young people and families.

*All in one place. Easy to find.*

## STAY CONNECTED



**870**

Facebook Followers

facebook.com/southamptonseendlocaloffer



**954**

Email recipients of the SEND Local Offer Bulletin

The bulletin is published 3 times a year – just before Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

## LOCAL OFFER WEBSITE ACTIVITY



**3,472**

Average sessions per month on the Local Offer website



**5,058**

Average page views per month



## MOST VISITED PAGES ON THE LOCAL OFFER WEBSITE

- 1 Global Developmental Delay  
8,281 views
- 2 What are SEMH difficulties  
6,539 views
- 3 Education, Health and Care Plans  
4,624 views

## MOST SEARCHED WORDS OR PHRASES ON THE LOCAL OFFER

- 1 EHCP
- 2 SEND
- 3 EYSS



## TOP 25 SEARCHES ON THE MAIN SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL WEBSITE

- 1 Special School
- 2 Parent and Toddler
- 3 Southampton Educational Psychology Service



## MAKING INFORMATION EASY TO FIND

These figures show the pages, topics and services that families and professionals look for most. We use this information to improve the Local Offer, making sure it is clear, up-to-date and meets the needs of our community.



Visit the Southampton SEND Local Offer information, support and opportunities for parents, young people and professionals – all in one place.

[www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/](http://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/)

Thank you to everyone who engages with the Local Offer and helps us improve information and support for families in Southampton. *Together, we can make a difference.*

# LOCAL OFFER ACTIVITY

Our Local Offer activities are based on the six core priorities for the SEND Strategy 2022-2027 - [Appendix 1 - Southampton SEND Strategy 2022-2027.pdf](#)

Based on previous feedback and priorities from the SEND Strategy 2022-2027, our activity has been focused on the below.

More awareness of the website so more people know about it.

A different layout. It's not easy to use. Feels like outdated information is on there. It's a little confusing, would like a page for each section of support and what is available. Unsure of how it's relevant.

## Priority One - Early Years

Activity	Outcome	Next Steps
Visits to Time 4 Play	Increased awareness of Early Years SEND support and gathered parent feedback on gaps in provision.	Continue outreach to Early Years settings and improve awareness of SEND pathways.
Visits to Dingley's Promise	Strengthened relationships with specialist Early Years providers and improved understanding of family needs.	Continue outreach to Early Years settings and improve awareness of SEND pathways.
Early Years - Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP)	Improved shared understanding of inclusive practice in Early Years settings.	Monitor implementation and gather feedback from settings and families. Update as necessary.

## Priority Two - Right Support at the Right Time

Activity	Outcome	Next Steps
Coffee mornings (SEND get togethers)	Families accessed peer support and shared common challenges, helping identify system themes.	Continue regular sessions and use feedback to shape service development.
SEND Fun Day	Reached a large number of families (over 1500 individuals in 2026) and increased awareness of support services available.	Build on engagement and improve signposting after events.
Sensory support page on Local Offer	Families have easier access to practical sensory strategies and support information.	Review usage and expand content based on feedback.
Neurodiversity webpage	Improved central access to neurodiversity information and pathways.	Keep content updated and ensure accessibility.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Neurodiversity toileting training for professionals	Increased professional knowledge and confidence in supporting toileting needs.	Evaluate impact and consider further training offers.
SEND portal	Improved digital access for school to submit Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).	Continue working on the parent portal and launch it in due course, followed by annual review.
Quality Assurance (QA) of EHCPs	Identified strengths and inconsistencies in EHCP quality.	Continue quality assurance and improve consistency.

### Priority Three - Inclusion

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
Increase in inclusion bases / resourced provision	More local specialist placements available within mainstream settings.	Monitor impact on inclusion and placement sufficiency.
Neurodiversity Multi Disciplinary Team (ND MDT) and support	Improved access to advice and support for neurodivergent children.	Review waiting times, capacity and support in the city.
Communication passport work	Increased awareness of personalised communication support.	Promote wider adoption across services.
Cluster model	Stronger collaboration between schools and services to support needs earlier.	Continue to develop in line with the Expert at hand model.
EBSA (Emotional School Based Avoidance)	37 families engaged in workshops and shared their views.	Create parent carer guidance to support families.

## Priority Four - A local offer that meets the wide range of needs within the city

Activity	Outcome	Next Steps
School visits to promote Local Offer	Increased awareness of the Local Offer among families and professionals.	Continue outreach, especially in underserved communities.
Unity 101 (Radio station) promotion Volunteering young person	Improved reach into diverse communities and increased visibility.	Build further culturally inclusive engagement. Increase engagement within these communities.
SEND Fun Day	Improved awareness of local services and support networks.	Continue ensuring diverse and inclusive representation.

## Priority Five - Mental Health and Wellbeing

Activity	Outcome	Next Steps
Neuro Diversity Profiling Tool V2 neuro-affirming approach	Tool updated to be more strengths-based and family-friendly.	Support rollout and gather family feedback.
Early Years health checks	Opportunity to identify needs earlier and improve referrals.	Increase uptake and improve awareness.
Young carers online referral	Easier access to support for young carers.	Promote referrals and monitor accessibility.

I think it's very good but could be clearer.

It needs more things and groups for older children 11 and up. To be with like-minded children, more tourettes groups.

## Priority Six - Preparation for adulthood

Activity	Outcome	Next Steps
Supported internships	Increased opportunities for young people to develop employment skills.	Expand pathways and improve employer engagement.
Transition to Adulthood work	Families have better information about post-16 pathways and Care Act 2014 processes.	Improve early planning from Year 9 onwards.
Care Act 2014 transition awareness	Increased understanding of transition assessments.	Improve professional confidence and family communication.

We are 'co-producing' the Local Offer with children, young people, families and professionals. Co-production happens when all team members together co-produce recommendations, plans, actions and materials as a collective. This process develops over time, blends a range of expertise and perspectives, is driven by a solution focussed approach from all participants and requires strong leadership. Communication that is transparent and open, relationships that are equitable and respectful, help the team overcome complex challenges and continue the process of learning together.

This report shows how we worked with young people, parent carers and professionals in reviewing the Local Offer of services in Southampton, what users have said and what we've done in response to their comments. The Local Offer is primarily co-produced with Southampton Parent Carer Forum.

## FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

**More information needed on exactly what is available for disabled children with high care needs.**

**I happened upon the site and wasn't necessarily looking for things, but was easy to use but this is after I've got my child's EHCP.**

Southampton Parent Carer Forum's Annual Survey 2026 and reflects the experiences, views, and priorities of parent carers, young people, and professionals across Southampton. The survey explored a range of themes linked to education, health, social care, transitions, inclusion, wellbeing, communication, and access to support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The purpose of this report is to ensure lived experience remains central to ongoing service development and strategic planning across the local area partnership. The findings highlight both positive experiences and areas where families continue to face significant challenges. Alongside identifying concerns, the report also captures examples of good practice, improvements families have noticed, and opportunities for future development.

The feedback gathered through this survey will help inform ongoing co-production work, local priorities, and future planning across Southampton's SEND system. Southampton Parent Carer Forum would like to thank every parent carer, young person, and professional who took the time to share their experiences openly and honestly. Their voices are essential in helping shape more inclusive, accessible, and responsive services across the city.

The Local Offer website emerged as a significant theme throughout the survey findings. Whilst some families reported improvements in recent years and found parts of the website useful, many respondents continued to describe difficulties accessing information quickly and easily. A recurring issue was that some families either did not know the Local Offer website existed or only discovered it much later in their SEND journey, often after periods of stress, crisis, or escalation. This mirrors wider local feedback already identified within Southampton's Local Offer annual review work, which recognised that awareness and meaningful use of the Local Offer still requires improvement.

Families consistently described wanting the Local Offer website to feel more practical, accessible, and easier to navigate. Many respondents spoke about struggling with lengthy written information, PDF-heavy content, unclear pathways, and difficulty understanding where to start. Families wanted clearer step-by-step guidance around areas such as EHCP processes, SEND Support, complaints, transport, short breaks, post-16 options, and accessing help while waiting for support. There was also a strong request for more accessible communication formats, including short videos, visual guides, searchable categories, and simpler language that feels less overwhelming during already stressful periods.

Respondents also highlighted the importance of the Local Offer reflecting real day-to-day family needs rather than simply acting as a directory of services. Families wanted more information about local activities, support groups, emotional wellbeing support, EBSA, neurodiversity, Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), transitions, respite opportunities, and support available beyond autism-focused pathways. Many families described wanting a Local Offer website that feels like a genuinely trusted "one-stop shop" which reduces stress, improves confidence, and helps families feel less isolated when navigating the SEND system.

There was strong support for continued co-production with families and young people to shape future development of the Local Offer. Respondents recognised positive improvements already made, including greater visibility at events, coffee mornings, and increased engagement activity, but also felt there remains considerable opportunity to make the Local Offer website more interactive, family-friendly, and responsive to lived experience.

## Southampton SEND Local Offer

### What Families Told Us

As part of our 2026 Annual Survey, parent carers and young people shared their experiences of using the Southampton SEND Local Offer.

#### WHAT FAMILIES SAID IS WORKING WELL

- Information about local services and activities
- Support around EHCPs and SEN support
- Details about short breaks and local offers
- Some pages were described as clear and helpful
- Ongoing improvements to the website

#### HEADLINE FEEDBACK

- 42%** of respondents were unaware of the Local Offer or only discovered it later in their SEND journey.
- 55%** found some information useful but said it can be difficult to navigate and overwhelming.
- 78%** said the Local Offer could be better if information was simpler, clearer and easier to find.

#### WHAT FAMILIES WANT TO SEE

- Clearer, simpler information**  
Less jargon, more step-by-step guides and short videos.
- Easier to find what they need**  
Better search, categories and signposting.
- Up-to-date and detailed information**  
About local services, activities, support groups and opportunities.
- Information for a wider range of needs**  
Including mental health, EBSA, ARFID, neurodiversity, girls, high care needs, respite and preparing for adulthood.
- A trusted 'one stop shop'**  
That reduces stress and helps families feel less isolated.

#### COMMON BARRIERS

- Many families didn't know the Local Offer existed.
- Difficult to navigate and find the right information.
- Too much written text and PDF documents.
- Hard to access when feeling stressed or in crisis.

#### WHAT FAMILIES SAID...

"I only found the Local Offer after two years of struggling to find information."

"It has lots of useful information, but it takes a long time to find what you need."

"I want it to be the first place I go - somewhere I can trust and easily understand."

#### MOST REQUESTED INFORMATION

EHCP processes and guidance	Short breaks and respite
Support while waiting for help	Post-16 and preparing for adulthood
Mental health and wellbeing	Activities and local opportunities
EBSA and anxiety support	Support beyond autism pathways

#### CO-PRODUCING THE LOCAL OFFER

Families and young people want to continue working with us to shape the Local Offer, making sure it reflects real lived experiences and meets the changing needs of our SEND community.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our survey. Your feedback helps us make the Local Offer better for all families in Southampton.

**View Southampton's SEND Local Offer here:**  
[www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/](https://www.southampton.gov.uk/schools-learning/send-local-offer/)

Click here to access the full report and findings - <https://sotonpcf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Annual-Survey-2026.pdf>

# SUMMARY

We've received lots of feedback on our local offer website of services in Southampton and are continually responding to this through our service planning and delivery. Feedback from users is at the centre of our SEND Strategy and action plan and is supporting us to prioritise areas for development and to identify and address gaps in commissioning.

We continue to ask services and colleagues to support parents to access the site if they do not have access to the facilities needed to do this themselves.

To date most of our feedback is coming from parents and the website is currently aimed at parents/carers/professionals, so this is an area that needs to be addressed in order to provide information for and seek feedback from children and young people.

## NEXT STEPS

Over the next year we aim to enhance the Local Offer based on the below SEND strategy priorities. However, we will align steps to agreed Local Area SEND Reform plan which is expected to be in place by end of Autumn 2026.

### Priority One - Early Years - Best start in life

Action	Intended Outcome
Increase training for nursery and preschool staff on neurodiversity, communication needs, Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and masking.	Early Years practitioners feel more confident supporting a wider range of needs.
Improve support available while families are waiting for diagnosis or assessment.	Families receive earlier help and children's needs do not escalate while waiting.
Improve promotion of Early Years services within the Local Offer.	More families access support earlier.
Create clearer parent guidance around Early Years SEND support and pathways.	Families understand what support is available and how to access it.

### Priority Two - Right Support at the Right Time

Action	Intended Outcome
Create clearer step-by-step EHCP guidance and timelines for families.	Families better understand the statutory process and expectations.
Develop online tracking systems for EHCP processes and casework.	Families have greater transparency and reduced anxiety around processes.

### Priority Three - Inclusion

Action	Intended Outcome
Develop stronger support pathways for EBSA and anxiety-related attendance difficulties.	Attendance improves and children remain connected to education.
Raise awareness and expand SEND-friendly clubs, holiday activities and community provision.	Children and young people feel more included socially and within their community.
Improve support for children during key transition periods.	Reduced emotional distress and improved educational stability.

### Priority Four - Mental and Physical Wellbeing

Action	Intended Outcome
Develop multi-agency EBSA pathways.	Families receive coordinated support around school attendance difficulties.
Improve access to Mental Health information through the Local Offer.	Families can more easily access the right support and services.
Expand respite and preventative support before crisis point.	Reduced family exhaustion and improved family resilience.

### Priority Five - Preparing for Adulthood

Action	Intended Outcome
Create clearer Local Offer guidance on adulthood pathways and post-16 support.	Families better understand available options and support.
Strengthen preparation for independence and employment.	Young people develop greater confidence and life skills.
Improve SEND transport communication and planning.	Reduced stress and uncertainty around transport arrangements.

## Priority Six - Improving the Local Offer

Action	Intended Outcome
Improve search functions, layout and step-by-step guidance within the Local Offer.	Families feel less overwhelmed and more confident accessing support.
Increase promotion of the Local Offer across schools, health services and community settings.	More families are aware of and use the Local Offer website.
Improve clarity around short breaks eligibility and access routes.	Families better understand what support is available.
Strengthen “You Said, We Did” feedback approaches.	Families can clearly see how feedback leads to change.
Improve engagement with under-represented communities and diverse needs.	Services become more equitable and accessible across the city.
Hold another SEND Fun day to support raising awareness of the Local Offer.	Families are aware of a range of services who can support them.