

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

FREE

Vista's Active
Early Years
eye health
project
will
return

see page 5



Produced by

A warm welcome to the ninth edition of SEND News

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▶ I am pleased to introduce another edition of the Local Offer newsletter. In this issue you will find important updates from across the different SEND services, including the launch of the LLR Joint SEND commissioning strategy, progress the department is making on the different priority areas within SEND and a look back over the year for our Local Offer.

As we head into the new year, we will be busy preparing for an Ofsted/CQC reinspection of Local Area Arrangements for SEND – you can read all about the progress we are making on page 8. We also have a new service manager in post within SENA, Cath Allison.

A SEND Youth Forum has been set up in collaboration with our Youth and Youth Justice Service, giving our children and young people a voice on what they feel is important and what they would like to see through our SEND services. There will be more about the forum in the next edition of the newsletter.

Finally I would like to thank all of our children and young people, it's been another difficult year but we look forward to 2022 and the opportunities it may bring. ■

Sign up for free holiday clubs this winter

Families are encouraged to sign up now for free holiday clubs running in Leicestershire over the Christmas holiday period.

▶ Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) is a free holiday programme for primary and secondary children aged five to 16, in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, funded by the government.

Leicestershire County Council is working with Active Together to co-ordinate the winter HAF programme which will be delivered at venues across the county by schools, voluntary and community organisations, childcare providers and sports clubs.

Children and young people can access up to four holiday club sessions (16 hours) over the Christmas holidays - free of charge.

The sessions will offer a variety of fun activities, including sports, music, arts and exciting opportunities to learn and develop new skills, alongside a nutritious meal each day.

Some holiday clubs will also offer fee paying places for children and young people not eligible for free school meals, and families who are eligible for Universal Credit may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs.

Find out more about the Winter HAF at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/HAF. ■



Leicestershire SEND Hub

Leicestershire SEND Hub is the Parent Carer Forum for children and young people age 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities.

▶ We are still in the process of setting up the SEND Hub to inform and support as many families and carers throughout Leicestershire. We are asking people to keep spreading the word of our Facebook private group, to enable us to have open and quick communication with parents and carers.

So, what have we been up to?

- We attended the Autism Event hosted by Leicestershire Police and you can find more detailed information in the Facebook group.
- We are currently running an EHCP questionnaire commissioned by the Local Authority to monitor services.
- We participated in the peer challenge review/mock inspection for the Local Authority and strategic partners.
- We are currently planning to join other future events such as Local Offer Roadshows.
- In the spring we will be hosting a large-scale SEND conference. This exciting project will be for parent carers plus professionals with keynote speakers and workshops
- We have begun producing our own marketing materials including A5 Postcards! If you know anywhere these may be distributed to reach more people please contact **admin@leicestershiresendhub.org.uk**

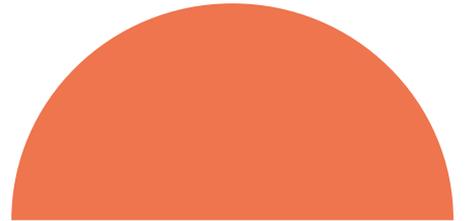
We hope you have a lovely break in December and look forward to sharing more SEND Hub news in the new year! ■

Join us on Twitter -
@LeicsSENDHub

Join us on FB -
Leicestershire SEND Hub

www.leicestershiresendhub.org.uk

Email -
team@leicestershiresendhub.org.uk



Share your views on health and wellbeing support across Leicestershire

Have your say on how Leicestershire County Council, the NHS and partners can help to improve health and wellbeing.

▶ An 8-week public consultation, which runs until 23 January 2022, is seeking feedback on the outcomes and priorities of the next health and wellbeing strategy.

The Health and Wellbeing Board brings together organisations responsible for making decisions about health, wellbeing and care services in Leicestershire. This includes Leicestershire County

Council, the NHS, Healthwatch, the Officer of Police and Crime Commissioner, Police, District Councils and other agencies with a responsibility for health and wellbeing.

The Board plans how best to meet the needs of the local population and tackle health inequalities through a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This is an opportunity for Leicestershire residents, professionals and organisations to share their views on the draft strategy and the priorities outlined for the next ten years. You can do this by visiting **www.leicestershire.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-strategy**.

You can also read the draft strategy in full **online**. ■

The Carers Centre Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland



▶ **The Carers Centre is a well-known local charity supporting unpaid carers across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.**

Our services include:

- Helpline Service for advice and support in all areas of caring
- Advocacy and Support Project
- Health and Well-Being Activities
- Social and Fun Sessions
- Crafty Carers and Book Club
- Training and Information Sessions

Advocacy and Support Project

Parents/carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can access our self-advocacy and support groups, known as the Together We Care Groups. These are relaxed, welcoming sessions which at present are meeting over Zoom - face-to-face sessions in the New Year. One group is on a Tuesday mornings with one monthly evening session.

At our Together We Care Groups you can:

- Meet other parents/carers to share experiences
- Gain skills, develop confidence to deal with challenges you may face
- Find out about services for you and your child
- Learn how to get your point across in meetings with professionals

The Group has information sessions on topics including:

- Accessing support from Children's Social Care
- Obtaining a Carer's Assessment
- Dealing with difficult behaviours
- Dealing with issues around food
- Supporting young people through puberty
- Transition from children's to adult services
- Well-being

We regularly have guest speakers and recently we have had speakers from:

- The Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Local Offer Leicester
- The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

We also offer opportunities to have your say about services you may receive.

What our parents/carers say

 "It's amazing we have such a group so we can share things openly without people judging us"

 "Have found the group very useful. When I started, I didn't know what to do, where to go. Now I have hope as I've been pointed in the right direction".

 "This group has really helped me dealing with parent blame and not making me feel alone"

Comments from a carer who had been successful in securing support from the LA for her child in school

 "It's all the support I've been getting from The Carers Centre. When I started coming, I had no idea where to go, who to call, so thank you so much".

For further information about The Carers Centre:

T: **0116 251 0999**

E: **enquiries@thecarerscentre.org.uk**

W: **www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk**

https://www.facebook.com/TheCarersCentreLLR

https://twitter.com/CLASPCarers

https://www.instagram.com/the_carers_centre/ ■

Vista's Active Early Years eye health project will return

Vista, local sight loss charity is pleased to announce that their Active Early Years eye health project will resume providing free training and resource packs to Early Years Practitioners based in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

▶ The pack, known previously as 'Let's Get Moving', is currently being renamed and redesigned as 'Active Eyes'. Active Eyes is a practical resource which helps Early Years Practitioners understand the need for observing children's developing eyesight and guiding parents/carers to take children for regular eye tests. It also comes with a training session that helps to give early years settings and practitioners a chance to understand the need for early intervention.

Since 2018, before Covid, over 100 packs and training sessions were delivered through the Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland area, and now that we are coming back out of the pandemic, we would love to double that number by summer 2022.

A child minder who took part in the training in January 2020 said:



"Coming on the course gave me the confidence to know what I was observing and the knowledge on where to direct the family. Initially the health visitor had advised to wait until they start school, which I knew in my heart was not the right thing to do."

For more details about the Active Early Years eye health project, please contact Oksana Tyminska, Vista's Early Years Project Manager at oksana@vistablind.org.uk or visit www.vistablind.org.uk. ■



The Local Offer – a look back over the year

Although we weren't able to get the Local Offer out and about in the community, we have made quite a few exciting developments with the Local Offer during 2021. We have added new content throughout the year such as the Early Years Home Learning Packs and the My Journey to Adulthood Information Pack. We have also revised our SEN Support Handbook which is not only for school staff but also really useful for parent carers to enable them be as informed as possible.

▶ We have also continued to grow our Facebook Community and appreciate every like, share and comment we receive as this helps the information we share reach many more families and professionals.

Although we have not been able to get our Roadshows "Back on the Road" we have been busy working in the background and are excited for them to begin again for 2022 (We have everything crossed for a smooth return!)

During 2021 we have had 42,035 web visits to the Local Offer and 128,142 views of Local Offer web pages and although we know we have very high numbers of people viewing our information we know we still need to do more in increasing peoples awareness of the Local Offer and how it can help. That's why we have developed a short animation with our Local Offer Colleagues in Leicester City and Rutland which we will be sharing very soon! We have also used Facebook to

target communities who may not be aware of the Local Offer and created our E-Flyer earlier in the year. We have also visited lots of internal departments within Leicestershire County Council to help raise practitioner's awareness of the Local Offer so they too know where to signpost families to. If you would like to get involved to help develop the Local Offer in Leicestershire you can email leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk ■

New Communication and Interaction Surgeries

The Specialist Teaching Service's Autism Outreach Team is offering all Leicestershire schools access to a 'C&I Surgery' via Microsoft Teams to explore the needs of pupils with Communication and Interaction needs (who may or may not have a diagnosis of Autism) and to identify strategies to support these pupils.

▶ These 45-minute surgeries are open for schools to discuss pupils who may have a diagnosis of Autism (and are not already open to AOT), be on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway or where school may have concerns about the pupil's C&I needs, which may include difficulties with

social understanding and communication, flexibility, information processing and sensory processing.

C&I surgeries will provide an opportunity for discussion around pupil needs, to explore strategies, interventions and to access advice

and signposting without making a referral to Autism Outreach. This is to promote early intervention and support schools in implementing a graduated response.

For more information please contact the **Specialist Teaching Service.** ■

The return of the Local Offer Roadshows

We are so pleased to be able to announce the return of our Local Offer Roadshows. Although we have been sharing lots of information digitally, we know there's nothing quite like getting out and about and meeting people face to face! We have been patiently waiting in-line with government guidance and we have everything crossed for a smooth start to 2022!

Our Blaby, Oadby & Wigston and Melton events were unfortunately cancelled during 2020 so we are starting off our Roadshows by visiting these areas first. We often receive feedback that our day time Roadshows are not inclusive to families that have work commitments so we have chosen to hold a longer event that hopefully caters for those can that attend earlier or later in the day. Of course, we know these times won't be suitable for each individual circumstance and we always ensure we rotate the times as the Roadshows move around the County.

**The next Roadshow is being held on:
Wednesday Jan 26th 2022**

At The Salvation Army, Wigston, LE18 4UZ

Session 1: 1:30-3:30

Session 2: 3:30-5:30

Understandably, they will be ran slightly differently to previous years and booking is essential – you can do this by emailing karen.hall@leics.gov.uk stating which session you would like to attend.

You can find up to date information on all the upcoming Roadshows either on our [Facebook page](#) or [Website](#) ■

LLR Learning Disability and Autism Dynamic Support Pathway is now live

The Dynamic Support Pathway (DSP) is a pathway developed to provide support for individuals (all age) who are deteriorating in their health and well-being whilst living in the community.

▶ The LLR LDA Dynamic Support Pathway (DSP) is now live.

All documentation has been uploaded to the public DSP webpage, please see the following link:

<https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/services/dynamic-support-pathway/>

Please download referral forms from the website only when required, to ensure you are using the latest versions.

All referral forms and consent forms must be password protected, with passwords emailed in a separate email to the forms. Completed forms and passwords need to be emailed to the following email addresses:

For Children and Young People email:
lpt.childrens-lda-dsp@nhs.net

For Adults email:
lpt.adult-lda-dsp@nhs.net

The service is unable to accept referrals without a consent form or evidence of a diagnosed Learning Disability and/or Autism. ■



Written Statement of Action

Following on from the SEND inspection in February 2020 and the local area receiving a Written Statement of Action, partners across Leicestershire have contributed to developments outlined in the Written Statement of Action. Progress is rated as Blue, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG), and after each formal monitoring meeting, shared on the Local Offer:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/where-to-start-with-send/send-strategic-developments>

▶ **Feedback from the Department for Education regional Adviser and NHS England / Improvement regional Adviser has been that the local area continues to progress at a good rate against the two areas identified within the Written Statement of Action:**

- Lack of a joint commissioning strategy
- Quality of EHC plans

Developments to date include:

- An LLR SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy
<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/social-care-and-education/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-joint-commissioning-strategy-2021-2024/>
- A co-designed Neurodevelopmental Pathway model ready for the implementation phase
- Introduction of a Keyworker programme that will support children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both that are at risk of being admitted to hospital
- The publication of a SEN Support Handbook, providing guidance and resources in supporting SEN pupils in schools

- Launch of a Learning Platform for school, containing video's and resource son SEND themes
- The restructure of the SENA service to operate a case management model
- Implementation of a Decision to Assess Panel to complement the SEN Panel
- Introduction of a multi-agency EHC plan audit on a bi-monthly basis to inform learning

The focus for the next formal meeting will be reporting on the lived experience by parents/carers and children and young people and considering our partners perspective on the developments in the Written Statement of Action. The SEND and Inclusion Board will continue to monitor the Written Statement of Action at a local level. ■



SEND and Inclusion Board development session

The SEND and Inclusion Board are the strategic partnership body that provides the steer on SEND developments across Leicestershire. Partners include representatives from education, social care (children and adult) and SEN transport from the local authority, senior managers from the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Leicestershire Partnership Trust, the Designated Clinical Officer, schools and colleges, Prevent team and the Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum (Leicestershire SEND Hub).

▶ The SEND and Inclusion Strategy prioritises improvement across SEND services and is monitored by the SEND and Inclusion Board. The strategy comprises five priority areas:

Priority 1

To identify and meet children's special educational needs as early as possible

Priority 2

Responsive, inclusive and effective provision for all children and young people with Special Educational needs and/or Disability (SEND)

Priority 3

Understanding and preparation for change (Transitions)

Priority 4

Strategic partnerships, joint working, joint commissioning and consultation

Priority 5

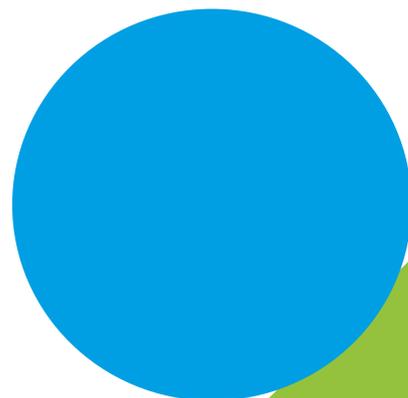
Develop the workforce

A development session was held on the 1st and 5th November to celebrate progress so far and refresh the action plan for year 2 of the strategy. Members heard feedback from parent/carers on Early Years pathways, how the Local Offer website should look, the new provision at Foxfields and outcomes within EHC plans. Video's were shown on the new Post-16 building at Maplewell Hall

and Tom's work placement at Geosynthetics (article within the summer SEND Newsletter). Other developments showcased included the launch of the Learning Platform for schools, holding a range of video's and resources on SEND themes; developments in the Young Adult Disability team; the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy; the new

model for a Neurodevelopmental Pathway; the work of the Leicestershire SEND Hub and the range of training and resources being developed and shared across the partnership.

Information from the sessions will inform the next phase of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy action plan in preparation for year 2. ■



Joint LLR SEND Commissioning Strategy launched

In September our Joint LLR SEND Commissioning Strategy, 2021-24, which has been developed by Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Councils and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) for the area, went live!

▶ The strategy contains a high-level vision for joint commissioning that 'we will work together across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND' and a set of priorities for the focus of joint work in the coming 3 years. These priorities focus on a range of areas including, transitions, quality, planning and health provisions.

The Joint LLR SEND Commissioning Strategy, 2021-24 is hosted on the Leicester City Council website, and you can view it by following this link:

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/social-care-and-education/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-joint-commissioning-strategy-2021-2024/>

To celebrate delivery of the strategy and to share with partners and children and families some of the work that has already been done against the priorities, a formal launch event was held on 29th November 2021. At this event our lead member for Children and Family Services in Leicestershire,

Mrs D Taylor, spoke about the strategy and what we hope it will mean for children and families in Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland. Cllr Taylor was joined by other representatives for Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council and representatives from health and there was discussion about what has been achieved so far and what our next steps will be to ensure that the priorities in the strategy are delivered in the next 3 years.

A recording of the launch event can be found at:

<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer/consultations-and-public-announcements/joint-llr-send-commissioning-strategy-engagement-response/>