

# FINDING THE RIGHT SUPPORT - INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

---

**Date: March 2016 v3**

## **How to make best use of your local offer and find the information you need**

If you have a vision, hearing or multi-sensory impairment, how do you know what support and services you should have?

This short guide has been produced to help you find out what should be available in your local area.

### **1. What is the local offer?**

Local offers were introduced in England in September 2014 and many are still developing. There should be information about the sorts of services you can access, but the actual service and provision will depend on your individual needs and what is available locally.

Every local authority must set out in one place all the education, health and care services that they expect to be available in the local area to children and young people with special educational needs or disability (SEND) up to 25 years of age. This is called the local offer. The local offer also needs to include information about services provided outside your local area that local young people are likely to use.

Your local authority also needs local schools, colleges, health services and other service providers to contribute to the local offer.

### **2. How do you know what services you should have?**

Local services should reflect what local people need. The details of what the local offer should include and who should be consulted are set out in law. It is very important that young people with SEND are asked about the services that are available in their local area. Your local authority must ask children, young people and parents what they think the local offer should include, and how they think people should be able to access it. This means that local authorities must involve young people in planning decisions about what services for young people with SEND are needed. Local authorities are free to decide the best way to involve young people, but you should ask what support local authorities will give to young people to give their views. Local authorities will have to ask young people things like:

- Are there enough services in the local area to give you the support you need?
- Are there any particular services you need which are not currently available in the local area?
- How do you want to be told about the services that are available locally?

They must also publish what children, young people and parents tell them about their local offer and say clearly what they will do about the comments they receive.

As a young person with SEND, you have rights. These include the right to involve a qualified teacher of sensory impairment (hearing or vision or both) in your assessment so that someone who understands your needs can support you. You should also be able to find out what is available to you in preparing for adulthood, such as

- preparing for further and higher education and/or employment, including supported internships, apprenticeships and traineeships
- preparing for independent living, including local housing options and social care support

- being as healthy as possible in adult life, and
- participating in society, including understanding mobility and transport support, and how to find out about social and community activities, and getting involved in local decision-making and making friends .

### 3. How do you go about finding out about this information?

All local authorities must publish their local offer to explain what services are available for children and young people with sensory impairments and how to access them. The local offer is available online, but sometimes may be hard to find.

- a. The most helpful search terms we have found include

Name of area (county, borough or unitary authority)

+

Local offer

This should take you to your local offer page.

- b. Local offers should have a filter. It can be helpful to further filter the results using combinations of the following search terms

Sensory impairment

Vision or visual impairment

Hearing impairment or deaf

Multi or dual sensory impairment or deafblind

+

Young people or transition

- c. There is a website that has a list of local offers

<http://bringingustogether.org.uk/but-projects/true-consultation/local-offer-in-your-area/>

(please note this is an independent site and NatSIP is not responsible for the content).

If you do not know your local authority, you can check on <https://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council>.

If you do not have easy access to the internet, you could try your local library, school, college or local citizens' advice bureau.

### 4. How can you get involved?

You have a right to comment on the content of your local offer and get a reply from the local authority. For example, if you do not find a service that you think you need, you should be able to post a comment about the services available on the local offer site. Authorities have a responsibility to respond to these comments and say what they are going to do about it.

This is a useful strategy if you (and perhaps other young people) make a comment about what is missing. This opens a discussion between the services and local people.

Look for a 'contact us', 'feedback' or 'let us know' button or tab to post your comment.

You might also ask if there are local offer development meetings.

If you want to know about what sorts of services you could be accessing, NatSIP has produced two guides to the local offer:

a) Including sensory services in the local offer (June 2014)<sup>1</sup>

This is aimed at local authority officials who are developing the local offer. The purpose is to ensure that local authority/Clinical Commissioning Group officers understand the importance of maintaining specialist services for children and young people (CYP) with SI. It sets out the key information on services for CYP with SI and their parent carers.

b) Creating confidence in local services: NatSIP guidance to support the development of the local offer for children and young people with sensory impairment (May 2014)<sup>2</sup>

This sets out what practitioners in the sector have agreed good service provision should look like. It should inform an ongoing review of the services available for children and young people with sensory impairment in the local offer. This review should be carried out annually in line with SEND guidance. NatSIP's expectation is that the local offer is developed within a framework of core principles and adopts the regulatory framework and broader guidance of the local offer. 'Creating confidence' has a list of indicators which you might want to use to ask questions about the sorts of services on offer.

## 5. Other useful guidance

The following organisations can provide information on the sort of services you might access

- If you have a hearing impairment, NDCS has a video on local offers for young people and written information on the local offer that is specific to deaf young people  
<http://youngpeople.ndcsbuzz.org.uk/infoadvice/ref:I5513DBE503746/>
- If you have a vision impairment, RNIB has a directory of local authority vision impairment services available through local offer web sites  
<http://www.rnib.org.uk/insight-online/finding-local-support-families-children-vi>
- If you have a multi-sensory impairment, Sense  
<http://www.sense.org.uk>

If you want another way to find out about the services that may be available to help, you can also contact your local SEND information, advice and guidance service which should be able to inform you about the support available in your area through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information and Advice Service (SENDIASS) <http://www.iasnetwork.org.uk/>.

The Council for Disabled Children also has information on how to make the local offer work better for young people

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/how-to-engage-young-people-in-the-local-offer>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/doc-library-login/doc\\_details/778-02-including-sensory-services-in-the-local-offer](https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/doc-library-login/doc_details/778-02-including-sensory-services-in-the-local-offer)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/doc-library-login/doc\\_details/752-01-local-offer-creating-confidence-in-services](https://www.natsip.org.uk/index.php/doc-library-login/doc_details/752-01-local-offer-creating-confidence-in-services)