

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

FREE

Supporting children and families

This special edition explores
our strengths and areas for
development in Leicestershire.

Includes a pull-out poster
on page 4.



Produced by

A warm welcome to the second edition of SEND News

Words by:

Paula Sumner

Assistant Director,
Early Help and Education,
Leicestershire County Council



I'm delighted to bring you the second edition of the new-look SEND news. As we go into a new decade, it's a great time to reflect on our strengths and areas for development.

This is something that we have been working on regularly over the last few months as part of our improvement across the council, NHS, schools and with the Parent Carer Forum.

Just like every local area in the country, we're facing demand to support children with SEND and this is putting considerable pressure on finances. But we have made bold decisions to invest significantly. We're spending £30 million on new school places for children and young people with SEND – and we're making great progress across the county.

We've also invested in the services which our parents, carers, children

and young people rely on. Over the past few months we've developed the inclusion service and the special educational needs assesment (SENA) team to ensure SEND pupils are supported in schools that are close to home with strong links in the community.

I'm proud that we have strong relationships across the council, health, schools, parents and carers. It's our collective efforts which come together.

We know we have to improve. For example, our areas for development include information sharing, consistency of practice and quality of health and social care information in education, health and care plans (EHCPs).

Inside you'll read more about the upcoming inspection of SEND services and the work we're doing to reflect on our work and get better. ■

DON'T MISS

You can take a look at our new webpage about new school places.

Plus watch videos from staff and parents at Dorothy Goodman School and Maplewell Hall.

<https://youtu.be/6fmRx50IPqw>

<https://youtu.be/poHkjHqHKKU>



Improving the local offer

Words by:

Sue Rigby

on behalf of

Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum

▶ We have come back refreshed after a lovely Christmas and New Year with our families and we are eager to continue our work attending meetings with service providers, representing your voice.

We are continuing to work with the SENA team around improvements to the EHCP process, we continue to discuss communication with the transport team and we are regularly reviewing and inputting into the local offer.

We have just started working with the county council and Barnardos on a new service design around short breaks and although this work is in very early stages, we are looking forward to developing this service to suit the needs of our children better.



LEICESTERSHIRE PARENT CARER FORUM
INFORMING INVOLVING IMPROVING

One of our main achievements this year already has been arranging hub groups for all areas of the county. We look forward to coming and meeting you in Melton, Market Harborough and Oadby & Wigston. We have new venues in Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth and we continue our North West Leics, Charnwood and 360 play hubs. Please see our website www.leicestershirepcf.org.uk for confirmed dates and venues.

While visiting our website, make sure you sign up to our membership database to ensure you receive our termly email and never miss another important date. All our parent carer database members also get access to our private closed facebook group which is really useful for help, advice and discussions with other parent carers in a safe non judgemental environment.

In the next few months the forum is putting on an evening of service updates for parent carers. This evening will include service updates, voice collection and we are currently working with the county council to include specific service surgeries where parent carers can have 5-10 mins with a service manager to discuss their own case. We will publish the date and venue as soon as it is confirmed.

Take care and stay healthy. ■

Karen Hall, SEND Family Information Worker, explains how she's been working with the Parent Carer Forum to improve the local offer.



Over the last few months we've been working hard to improve the local offer on the website. Nearly 40,000 visits have been made to the local offer in the last year. And whilst many will find what they need – we know from feedback, and our own analysis, that it can be improved.

We've been working closely with the Parent Carer Forum to identify quick fixes – which have now been completed.

We've also held interactive workshops with practitioners and parents and looked at the journeys that people make on the website. There's much more work to do – and we're aiming for the planned improvements to be completed this spring.

We encourage all users of the local offer to share their thoughts and suggestions for improvement.

You can fill in an online form leicestershire.gov.uk/give-feedback-on-the-local-offer or email - Leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk

leicestershire.gov.uk/local-offer

Strengths and

Inspections are a good time to really reflect on your strengths and areas for development.

We're expecting a call to say that our SEND services will be inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

▶ This inspection covers the county council, NHS, schools, early years settings and independent providers. The inspectors will be looking at how we all work together.

Inspectors come for five days over two weeks and host a series of focus groups and visits. Inspectors speak to parents, carers, children and young people over the five days. ■

We're proud of our strengths

Strong leadership and commitment

We want to work together to improve how we identify and assess need, provide timely support and prevent escalation. We have a three-year plan with clear aims and milestones.

A supportive Lead Member for Children and Family Services

Cllr Ivan Ould is committed to achieving the best outcomes for children and young people in Leicestershire.

Strong relationships

Over the last six months, we've built relationships across the council, NHS and Parent Carer Forum.

The Parent Carer Forum is really engaged with the SEND Partnership Board and we're working together on further improving EHCPs, the Neurodevelopment Pathway, SEN Transport policy and a significant overhaul of the local offer.

Children, young people, parents and carers have also been involved in the development of new school places across the county.

Investment in inclusion

Providing a graduated response to schools for children and young people with medical needs, missing education and home educating. Links with the Secondary Education Inclusion Partnership (SEIP) which has reduced permanent exclusions.

Excellent schools and attainment

- 100% of area special schools rated outstanding or good by Ofsted
- 88% of primary schools rated outstanding or good
- 78% of secondaries rated outstanding or good
- Children with an EHCP are in the top quartile for attainment

Investment in training and development

- 18% of schools have a trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant supported by the Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service
- 3,000 attended autism training last year
- 85% of schools have received input from autism services

developments

How can parents and carers get involved?

The views of parents and carers are really important.

- You can participate in an online webinar - which captures your comments. More details to follow.

Investment in school places

We're investing £30 million in school places that support children and young people with SEND.

Support in the Early Years

Within the Early Years, local authority and health services work well together to provide essential and targeted support to pre-schools and childminders. Many young children are identified early and can be referred for assessment and support from a wide range of professionals.

Support for disabled children and their families

Families can access short breaks, family support and occupational therapy. Rated good by Ofsted.

Preparing for adulthood

Work to prepare young people for adulthood has improved significantly. Information sharing between the Disabled Children's Service, SENA and Adult Social Care is more timely and earlier transition planning is in place.

We want to improve

- focusing on important areas of development

Joint working

There are some great examples, but we are looking to improve the pathways that families experience when working across education, health and care services. For example, we're working on improving and consistently using our neurodevelopmental pathway.

Local offer

Whilst the Local Offer is generally compliant, we know from feedback and analysis that it's not always easy to find what you need.

We've been working hard together with the Parent Carer Forum to thoroughly review the website. We've done some quick fixes and hope to relaunch in the spring.

Schools that are far from home

We know that too many children are sent to school outside of Leicestershire. We've invested £30 million to create more than 600 specialist places so that children can get the support they need in their communities and as close to home as possible.

SEND support in schools

The quality of support can be varied, and this can lead to escalating need for support and a need for an Education Health and Care Plan. We are going to improve the guidance that we provide to schools and how we use data to target improvements.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

ECHPs are compliant and plans highlight the strengths of children and young people. But quality information from health, social care or early help is variable and often not specific. Smart outcomes aren't always used - so we need to improve this and look at how we work with schools, social care and health providers. We'll implement improvements by summer 2020.

Attending annual reviews

It's really important that a young person's annual review of support is attended by professionals. This isn't consistent and sometimes leads to delays - and we need to improve this.

Oversight of education

We want to ensure the oversight of education for those at independent schools is robust. We've identified resource to monitor outcomes and take action to ensure children can achieve their outcomes.

Growing number of EHCPs

There are more requests and more plans - which is putting pressure on all partners.

This is a national issue and has prompted a national review by government.

We will ensure that we are fully engaged in this review and share the views and thoughts of children and young people and their parents and carers.

**Birch Wood School,
Melton Mowbray**



National accolade for school's autism work

▶ A Melton special school is celebrating after successfully gaining accreditation for its autism provision from the National Autistic Society (NAS).

Birch Wood School in Grange Drive has gained its accreditation in record time.

The school started the process back in October 2016, and have now completed the accreditation, receiving their final report in December 2019.

For the past two years, Leicestershire County Council has worked alongside the school to help it grow to four classes - one for each key stage - and with 25 pupils. By April 2020, it is planned Birch Wood's capacity will increase to 38 pupils, and six classes in total.

This growth relates closely to the investment in Birch Wood through the council's commitment to spend £30m on improving SEND provision in the county and creating almost 700 extra places. ■



The result really does reflect the hard work and energy that Birch Wood staff have put into reaching this high standard for our pupils. At the heart of these improvements has been the school's specialist autism provision. The excellent work within the provision has been a driver for improvement across the whole school.

Cllr Ivan Ould
Cabinet member for children and families, Leicestershire County Council



We are delighted to announce the award. Over the past three years, we have used the NAS-recognised standards as the basis for a school-wide transformation.

It is with great pride that we reflect on the changes and improvements that have already been made here at Birch Wood School and we look forward to the future with great excitement, enthusiasm and commitment.

Ann Dunstan
Assistant head and autism lead at Birch Wood



New scheme in Hinckley for young adults with disabilities

▶ A new housing scheme enabling young adults with disabilities to gain valuable life skills and live as independently as possible is being launched in Leicestershire.

We are working with a registered provider to provide a six-bed bungalow, in Hinckley, for people with autism or learning disabilities moving from children's services to adult social care.

The first in Leicestershire, the scheme will see people aged between 18 to 25, who are not used to living on their own, get the support needed to help develop daily living skills to manage their own home in the future. Support staff will be on site and provide night time support.

Councillor Richard Blunt, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "We recognise that there is a demand for housing for younger people who have learning disabilities transitioning into adulthood.

"That's why we are beginning to develop adult social care housing as a priority. If we didn't then these young adults would end up in residential care.

"This housing will be used as a stepping stone for people who aren't used to living on their own, increasing their independence in a safe environment, while still ensuring their specific support needs are met.

"We know that living in suitable accommodation is an important part of a person's wellbeing

and this scheme underlines our commitment to providing the best care that we can across the county."

We will continuously review the support that the young adults in the scheme have and when appropriate to do so, steps will be taken to support a move into alternative accommodation. ■

It is estimated that around six young people per year for the next four years would need similar accommodation to the one in Hinckley and the council is looking at developing options for the future.



Forest Way School, Coalville

A Leicestershire school is celebrating after opening two new classrooms as part of county council plans to improve SEND provision across the county.

Forest Way School, in Coalville, has built a new extension, Forest Lodge, to provide extra space for pupils to learn as well as now having the capacity to take an extra 12 pupils.

The new facility was funded with a significant contribution from the county council along with fund-raising and support from patrons of the school.

Cllr Ivan Ould, county council cabinet member for children and families, said: “We’re delighted to see the new extension at Forest Way School now open. Providing extra space for 12 pupils, the work is part of our ongoing commitment to improve SEND provision across the county.”

Gail Seaton, head teacher at Forest Way School, added: “We have the highest aspirations for our young people and the quality of the new modular build classrooms perfectly reflects this.

“We are proud that we can continue to adapt our facilities effectively to meet the needs of our growing community of students.”

The county council has committed to investing more than £30m in SEND provision and creating almost 700 extra places.

Overall, the SEND programme comprises of 31 schemes, 11 of which started to admit pupils in September, and a further five are expected to do so by Easter 2020. ■

The new SEND provision also includes:

- Expansion of the remaining five county council special schools, including the creation of a new block for post-16 Maplewell Hall pupils on the Charnwood College campus in Loughborough
- A 15-place centre, ‘The Shine Centre’, for students with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) at Winstanley Secondary School, Braunstone Town
- The development of a new 80 place communication and interaction school in Barwell, and a new 50 place SEMH school in Blaby both expected to open in September 2020.

Come along to our next local offer roadshow!

Thanks to everyone who has come along to one of our nine local offer roadshows over the last couple of years. We’ve spoken to more than 300 families and welcomed more than 200 exhibitors at these popular events. ■



I wasn’t sure what to expect, as I didn’t know from the poster which people would be here and what help they could offer. Pleasantly surprised to receive so much help and information. Thank you – very beneficial!!

– parent



You don’t know what you don’t know, very helpful, supportive and friendly – so important when you are feeling swamped and don’t know where to turn.

– parent

The next event will be held:

10.00am til 12:30pm,
Wednesday 11 March 2020

St John’s Church, 351
Coventry Road, Hinckley,
LE10 0NF

There’s a café on site and free parking available.

f/Leicslocaloffer