**Tower Hamlets Local Offer Annual Report**

The Children and Families Act (2014) section 30 requires Local Authorities to publish a Local Offer and has two key purposes:

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

In Tower Hamlets the Family Information Service (FIS) manages and maintains the Local Offer [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/localoffer)

The site was developed in coproduction with over 400 parents, children and young people and a programme of ongoing review and consultation has been established in partnership with SEND Parent and YP Ambassadors.

In response to the consultations parents and young people who find it difficult to access the internet are able to get information through a telephone and email service (Monday – Friday; 09:00 – 17:00) provided by Family Information Service, 020 7364 6495 and fis@towerhamlets.gov.uk

**Managing the Local Offer Website**

Roles and Responsibilities

* The FIS has overall responsibility for managing the content and the presentation of the Local Offer website and the content of the Family Services Directory database.
* The Family Information, Advice and Support Service Manager (FIAS Manager) has final approval of all changes to the website.
* The Local Offer Information Officer and Family Information Officers are authorised to approve urgent changes in the absence of the FIAS Manager.

**Processes**

Process for updating information

1. The theme areas are reviewed annually.
2. All providers on the database are contacted bi annually and details checked and updated.
3. Factsheets, One Minute Guides and videos are checked by the FIAS Manager.
4. Senior managers are contacted annually to review and update key information within themes.
5. Feedback
* All users can complete online feedback form on Local Offer
* Feedback survey results collated and published annually
* Feedback report includes ‘you said, we did’

 **Governance**

**Purpose of the Governance Group**

* Bring together key stakeholders to monitor and review the Local Offer through themed reviews and Quality Assurance exercises
* Monitor consultation and feedback processes ensuring relevant stakeholders and partners are engaged in on-going review and improvement
* Interface with relevant strategic and service developments to ensure the Local Offer maintains accurate information and current news and events
* Support further development of the Local Offer to ensure it continues to be considered nationally as a model of good practice

**Membership (under review)**

Representatives from:

* Local Authority Services
* Health
* Voluntary Sector
* Schools and Colleges
* Parents and Carers
* Young People

Meetings held termly

**Measuring Effectiveness**

**Statistics**

In the last 12 months there were **56,854** Individual User Sessions compared to **48,420** in 2019. Monthly comparisons show that in October 2019 there were **6,983** Individual User Sessions which has increased this year to **8,394**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Offer** | **April** | **May** | **June** | **July** | **August** | **September** | **October** |
| LO Separate Page Views | 9,356 | 9,370 | 10,501 | 13,307 | 12,676 | 17,985 | 19 |
| LO Users | 3,882 | 3,718 | 4,316 | 4,992 | 4,360 | 7,330 | 45 |
| LO Searches | 840 | 850 | 859 | 968 | 1,005 | 1,505 | 17,349 |
| CSF Emails |  |  |  |  |  | 757 | 8,394 |
| COVID Related Calls | 0 | 140 | 161 | 303 | 129 | 7 | 939 |

**Outreach**

In 2019 in partnership with Parent and Young People Ambassadors we attended **40** events to promote and consult on the Local Offer including the Tower Hamlets Annual Parent Conference, Health & Wellbeing Fair, SENCO Conference, Integrated Early Years event and Community Safety Event. Total attendance at these events was **2445** including parents, young people and professionals.

In 2020 over 50 outreach events were planned but due to the Covid-19 pandemic from March most of these were cancelled. Despite the challenges of information and consultation sessions in a virtual world we have run **15** events with a total attendance of **403** parents and young people.

**Covid 19**

Since beginning of Covid pandemic the website has been updated daily in response to national and local information and advice. We have ensured that all information in relation to Free School Meals and Food Banks, Shielding, Home Schooling (including useful resources), Support Services and Advice Services has been available and reviewed daily.

This has been an enormous piece of work but has helped develop positive relationships with Health and ensured that Local Offer is a current, vibrant resource for families in Tower Hamlets.

**Feedback**

We continue to seek feedback to ensure constant review and improvement.

All outreach events include opportunities for people to highlight areas for improvement and ideas for development.

**87%** of feedback gathered at these events has been very positive and highlights the improvement in the Local Offer over the last 12 months.

On the Local Offer website there is an opportunity to comment on the usefulness of the information provided by clicking on a Smiley Face icon.

This year we have seen an increase in levels of satisfaction with the information provided - **96% being positive**.

The two areas that were rated highest were information on the October Half Term Food Help and the Virtual Training Sessions (this reflects impact of Covid)

An example of feedback is:

*“The Homepage is nice and clear, and it is good that from here it is easy to access the ‘you said, we did’”*

**You Said, We Did**

You said you “Wanted information for all the family and not just those with SEND”

**We ensured a wide range of information for all families including childcare, leisure and events was available not just SEND specific**

You said you “Didn’t know about the Local Offer”

**We are continuing to raise awareness through outreach, updated promotional material, the Families Matter Bitesize e Bulletin, our Twitter and Facebook accounts.**

You said “Make it clearer on the SEND Landing Page about EHCP and Needs Assessment”

**Information has been amended**

You said you ‘Wanted more videos’ (number of young people have requested this)

**More videos have been sourced and uploaded – work is ongoing**

**Developments 2020**

**Social Media**

During 2020 we have developed our Social Media presence. We have Twitter and Facebook accounts where we regularly post relevant information. Followers on Facebook pages and visits to our page have doubled this year.

One form of communication which has increased dramatically in 2020 is WhatsApp. There are currently **264** parents and young people actively communicating with us as well as each other compared to **93** in 2019.

WhatsApp has provided an accessible platform for informing parents of relevant information as well as upcoming events that may be of interest to them.

Increased engagement and feedback from parents / carers states this is their preferred method of communication.

We will continue to review this in 2021.

**New Public Sector Accessibility Regulations**

This has been a large piece of work to ensure that the site was accessible to all and meets new legal requirements. We will continue to review this in 2021.

**Carousel**

The new carousel on the Home Page aims to provide the latest news, information and local events and is reviewed daily. It has been an effective means of promoting consultations and access to services. Feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive “it’s really eye-catching”, “great images and relevant information.”

**Development Plan 2021**

**Young Peoples Zone and New Front Page of Local Offer**

The front page of Local Offer is being redesigned to create a fresher look and improve search functions and will go live soon.

Throughout 2020 we have been developing the Young Peoples Zone working with the All Ability Youth Form and SEND Young Ambassadors to consult widely with young people in schools and other settings. This will go live in 2021 and will continue to be improved through regular feedback and consultation sessions

*“I work as a Young People SEND Ambassador and I am also a volunteer at the Parents and Young Peoples Advice Centre. I have been working closely with other Young People SEND Ambassadors to come up with ideas for the Young People’s Zone on the Local Offer Website. I have also visited schools with the other Ambassadors to talk with students who have SEND to find out about issues they may have faced and what they would like to see on the Young Peoples Zone of the Local Offer”*

***SH – YP Ambassador***

**Recruitment for the Young People and Parent SEND Ambassadors**

Due to the growing number of requests for both of these groups to attend meetings and speak to other Young People and parents about their work and the Local Offer we are planning a recruitment drive. We will be putting information about this on the Local Offer Website and the Young Peoples Zone, our Social Media Channels but more importantly we will be discussing this at our planned outreach sessions.

**Parent SEND Ambassadors**

The Parent SEND Ambassadors are a group of Parents who have children with SEND. They provide a strong voice for within the Borough, gathering information, providing support, promoting the Local Offer and raising awareness of SEND to all groups of parents and families. They undertake outreach sessions in many different settings (virtually at present) to speak with other parents and families about SEND conditions, what services and support groups are available as well as offering support and raising awareness around SEND.

**New Steering Group**

One of our main priorities of 2021 will be to review membership and Terms of Reference for the Steering Group looking at what the aims and priorities are and agreeing the focus of work for 2021.