

Somerset County Council's
Special Educational Needs and / or
Disabilities (SEND)
Local Offer
Accessibility Plan.

The **Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (2015): 0 to 25 years** outlines that local authorities need to provide a local offer that is 'accessible for all':

4.62—Local authorities must make their local offer widely accessible and on a website. They must publish arrangements for enabling those without access to the internet to get information. They must also enable access for different groups, including disabled people and those with different types of SEND.

Introduction

This action plan seeks to outline Somerset's approach in ensuring accessibility for all.



The local offer needs to be accessible to all families with a child with a special educational need and / or disabilities and to young people with a special educational need and /or disabilities.



Somerset's approach in ensuring accessibility for all.

In Somerset we have listened to what has been said. We have put in place ways for families to access the Local Offer website if they do not have a computer. We have made available courses to gain the skills needed to use a computer.

We have computers available in libraries for use by the general public. Library staff have been trained to offer assistance where appropriate or offer options for learning using the library computers.



Somerset County Council has a dedicated telephone number 0300 123 2224 for the SEND community to call for assistance with questions about their child's education or care.

The Somerset Direct staff have been trained to signpost and mentor callers with the use of the Local Offer.

The staff have been trained to identify vulnerable adults who may qualify for a volunteer to help them use the Local Offer website.



A dedicated email address for text relay
localoffer@somerset.gov.uk



Professional Support

In Somerset practitioners have been and will continue to be encouraged to support families in their awareness of and use of the Local Offer website.



Support Available

Support is available to SEND families and individuals who are in need when applying for or in the process of the Education Health and Care needs assessment or plan process.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS) is available and its use encouraged



Key workers are encouraged to signpost and mentor users to use the Local Offer website and to promote 'self service'. Users are encouraged to search for, find and know how to access services that meet their need.

Online resources are in development that can be used by Key Workers to build a personalised person centred printed version of the Local Offer.



The Local Offer website

Accessibility of the Local Offer website is very important and Somerset County Council would like to ensure differing needs are met.

The website currently has google translate for accessibility for individuals for whom English is an additional language.

The text size can be changed within the website to suit the user.



Readability is monitored with the aim of the reading age being 9 years old. Our Young People's champions from the Engagement and Participation Team help with this.

Plain English checks are made with the aim of between 20 and 25 words per sentence. A member of our Digital Team is trained in Plain English and trains others.



Technology



The Local Offer website is compatible with smart phones and tablets.

The Local Offer is compatible with popular assistive technology software packages. And with Social Media.



How can we be more accessible?

Somerset families that will use the Local Offer website are likely to have a wide range of differing needs including the following;

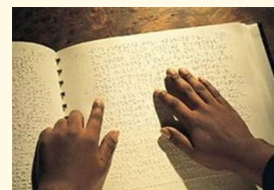
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mobility difficulties
- Learning difficulties
- Health conditions

Each of these will have different access needs.

**Suggested Improvements to comply with the,
Accessible Information Standards (AIS) July 2016
Section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.**

Suggested improvements to the Local Offer accessibility include;

- Customised online printable resources
- Braille
- British Sign Language
- Accessibility statement on the front page of our Local
- Offer to ensure families know how to obtain information in alternative formats.
- Offering call back or hold face to face discussions to help respond to queries/concerns to explain required information in the most appropriate and informative way.
- Telephone number included to request printed publications for those without access to the internet.
- Speak over talking pages
- Somerset Total Communication
- Sym writer—symbols and widgit
- Use of colour on website
- An App
- Video subtitle option
- Range of language available for video play.
- Text Relay



Author Jackie Markham Commissioning Research Officer
Local Offer