



# How to engage young people in the Local Offer

This leaflet was written in partnership with EPIC and is based on young people's experiences of accessing the Local Offer. It highlights what EPIC want local areas to do to make the Local Offer work better for disabled children and young people, and children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

**“The Local Offer should be a one stop shop - everything you need in one place.”**

**EPIC recommends that local areas engage with a large number of young people in different locations and with a range of interests and abilities.**

**Help young people get involved in shaping your Local Offer.**

- Show young people the importance and benefits of having a Local Offer
- Celebrate positive stories about disability and SEN
- Give local examples of young people's experiences and their whole pathway to adulthood.

## Accessibility

**Local Offers need to be easy to navigate, and the information available must be accessible.**

- The information in Local Offers should be accessible and inviting for both adults and young people
- Have one jargon-free accessible site that caters to a large audience
- Keep language simple and brief. This removes the need for separate sites and makes sure information is relevant and up to date
- Local Offer websites should use a range of features such as symbols, bullet points, logos, pictures and colour coding
- Use young people friendly features such as age-related filters, videos, social media links and topic specific leaflets
- Provide an interactive map showing where each service is and clear information about what it offers
- Each local area should personalise the name of their Local Offer.

**“Communicate with everybody in a concise and clear way. Be aware of people’s access needs.”**

## Setting priorities

**Work in partnership with young people to understand the key issues affecting them and set local priorities.**

- Find existing young people’s groups and get them involved in shaping your Local Offer. Decide with young people what information is needed
- Survey widely to see what issues are affecting young people
- Talk to young people in places that they feel comfortable and have information and feedback boxes where young people go e.g. schools/ job centres/ GP surgeries.

## What is the Local Offer?

Young people need to know what their Local Offer is for, and what it can do for them.

Young people want their Local Offer to...

- Give details of local services; what they are, where they are and how and when they can be contacted
- Offer accessible downloadable documents for young people on specific topics or areas of interest
- Provide unbiased and balanced opinions about schools and colleges.
- Give examples of young people's experiences of accessing services via the Local Offer
- Include information on what support is available post-16 including how decision making powers change
- Give clear information for young people on how to get an assessment, review and Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) including timelines
- Give clear information about complaints procedures including tribunal and what support is available e.g. advocacy
- Give clear information about what support young people are entitled to
- Have some continuity of information e.g. certain information that has to be included plus optional extras to reflect local need.

**“Local areas need to make sure that young people know their Local Offer**



## Feedback

### Show young people that their views will be acted on.

- Publish regular feedback on young people's experiences of services and on being involved in developing the Local Offer. This should include data on how many young people are using the site
- Use a range of methods to monitor young people's experiences of accessing services, such as review forms and local young inspectors groups
- Give clear and honest next steps on how you are going to respond to young people's feedback. Local areas could consider offering awards for the best local examples of using young people's feedback
- Make sure young people feel confident to leave feedback by keeping feedback anonymised and highlighting which comments are from young people.

EPIC are very keen on the idea of an Amazon style rating for services. This should be impartial, clear and allow young people to comment on their experience of services as well as advice on how to

**“My Local Offer needs to support me and give me a voice.”**



## How to engage young people

Help young people to understand how important their involvement is.

- Be proactive in approaching young people, don't wait for them to come to you
- Be clear with young people that you want their views and what difference their views make
- Make sure you offer a range of different ways and formats to gather young people's views for example make engagement informal for those who are not involved in groups
- Use their networks and engage with young people doing things that they like. Work with young people's forums and local advisory groups, other young people, youth workers and young adults to share ideas about how to get others involved
- Recognise their contribution. Show young people that their time is appreciated and what they say is going to be acted on.

**“Grab my attention. To do something different.”**



EPIC are the Department for Education's young people's advisory group on the SEND reforms. EPIC stands for Equality, Participation, Influence and Change. EPIC formed in October 2012 and are supported by the Council for Disabled Children to ensure that young people's voices and experiences influence the reform agenda.

For more information on EPIC visit [www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/epic](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/epic) or follow us on @EPIC\_Tweets