Northamptonshire Local Offer: A Guide to using the Local Offer

Last reviewed: December 2017
This guide aims to explain how you can search for information from the Local Offer, whether that may be information about services, groups or activities for children, parent support, or training opportunities.

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What's on the main page?

On the main page the local offer search and filter buttons can be found, as well as information pages that sit in the black bar.

The search tool bar

There are a number of ways to search on the Local Offer website. You can search by category; keyword; postcode; local town or picture tiles. There is more detail about each search function later in this guide.

Pages

What is the Local Offer?

This page provides information about the Local Offer, the legislation relating to it, and what you can expect to find on the Local Offer. On this page you can watch a video about our Local Offer, find our easy read guide to what the Local Offer is as well as our annual report.

Get Involved

The Get Involved page details ways you can get involved now and shows the outcomes of previous consultation events. Current consultations and information surveys are advertised, policy changes and the opportunity to comment on them. It provides information about the ways in which parents, professionals and young people can get involved. We also have a ‘You Said, We Did’ section where we are showing that changes and suggestions are being made, and how we are addressing them.

What’s On

This page provides information about activities that are happening in the county that we think you would like to know about or have been asked to advertise. Our social media links are here as well as local training courses for parents, professionals and young people and events.

Glossary

The glossary is our jargon buster, and will continue to grow with the words, phrases and acronyms that we come across and that young people, parents and professionals tell us about. The glossary is in alphabetical order and by selecting the letter at the top of the page you can jump to the section you require quickly.

Reading and Games

This page contains information about useful books and magazines that we have been recommended by parents and professionals. There are also links to apps and games which are suitable for people with special educational needs and disabilities.
Education, Health and Care (EHC)

This is a link to the EHC web pages, providing details about the statutory assessment; requests and processes of the timetable for the transfer of statements to EHC plans; contact details for the team and other supporting organisations.

Feedback

This section gives you the opportunity to feedback to us about the Local Offer using our online form. It also gives information and links about how to make a complaint about Social Care, Local Authority or education services as well as providers who are listed on the Local Offer searcher.

20:20 Vision

This page is about a series of events that were held by the EHC team in 2017 called “20:20 Vision for SEND in Northamptonshire”, which gathered information to the priorities for improving outcomes for the future.

Help

The help page gives an overview of how to use the search functions of the website and how to get help accessing information from Browsealoud, the accessibility widget.

Scrollable Features Bar

The bar at the bottom of the page provides links to other pages such as: School Inclusion Network; Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS); Specialist Support Services; Educational Psychology; Hospital and Outreach Education; Northants Parent Forum Group, Family Information Service; Schools Directory and Adult Social Care. The bar shows 3 links at a time and you can use the arrows or dots to navigate to find the page you would like to visit.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter

We have links to our Facebook and Twitter accounts, you can see our latest posts without having to login to social media.

YouTube

The Local Offer’s YouTube channel is linked to the homepage, with a range of videos providing information, BSL supported videos and Local Offer activities. You can view our YouTube channel at (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCM7I64ycJzOn1xWwcd_98TA), you can also find a user guide for our channel in our Information and Articles section.
Get in touch

Feedback is a really important part of The Local Offer. We want users to tell us whether they think the Local Offer is useful, relevant, missing areas or if it has incorrect information; please use our online form to let us know.

You can contact us to request alternative formats for documents or search results. If you can’t find what you are looking for you can ring us or complete our online form. You can also register your service with us, or update the details we already hold by completing the online form.

Accessibility Widget

The county council provides a “Browsealoud” widget on its website. It is usually found by the social media bar

The widget allows you to tailor the pages to support you, it will read the text aloud, magnify the text, translate into another language and have it read out loud in that language. You can create an MP3 recording of a page to listen to later, there is a screen mask that focuses on one link of text at a time and you can ‘simplify’ the page which removes formatting and leaves just plain text. You can apply these settings to PDF’s in the Information and Articles tab. We have a guide to using the Browsealoud widget on our help page.

The Local Offer also manages and produces the SNIX newsletter and register. The Special Needs Index (SNIX) is the Local Authority’s disabled children’s register. All information about disabled children is supplied voluntarily by parents/carers and no child is included on the database without parental consent.

In addition to the database, a SNIX newsletter is produced three times a year. This newsletter contains information on groups, clubs and activities, grants available as well as updates on key legislation/news.
Using the search tool bar

There are a number of ways to search on the Local Offer website. You can search by category; keyword; postcode; local town or picture tiles. After searching you can also refine your results to make them more specific. There will be two types of results displayed; search results (where you will find service listings) and information articles where you will find documents that relate to your search criteria.

Search Criteria
Selecting filters will reduce the number of results your search presents

Category

Selecting a category will give you results that relate to the service area. For example Social Care – you will get results about statutory Social Care services (i.e. Disabled Children’s Team), targeted services (i.e. Early Help) or results about services that have been commissioned such as holiday clubs or parenting programmes.
Alternatively you could search by keyword. This can be anything you want, and can be a phrase or a word. For example, if you know a child or young person who is anxious but you aren’t sure what services would be appropriate you could search ‘anxiety’ and get a range of results that you could then refine by using the filters on the right hand side of the results.

Postcode

You might just want to see what is available near you. By entering your postcode here you automatically filter the results by what is nearest to you. It will show you results in order of radial distance from the postcode entered. It can be quite limited.

Local Town

Local Town is similar to using the postcode search except it gives you a broader search area. This way you aren’t limited to just your postcode you can look in neighbouring areas.
On the homepage of the Local Offer site there are eight large picture tiles. These will search for services in that service area. Therefore if you aren’t sure what you are looking for but you know the service area it relates to you can select one of these and automatically see all the services in Northamptonshire that fit into that category. If you can’t find what you expect, try a different search method.

For example selecting Education will bring up*:

- Schools – including mainstream, special, maintained, academy and independent settings.
- Further education providers – such as colleges
- Funding opportunities – grants to support access to education
- Policies and guidance – including DfE guidance
- Training – for professionals
- National organisations – for guidance and information
- Local government departments – who provide support to/via education settings such as Educational Psychologists

* This is not an exhaustive list, a range of examples have been used

Rectangular Tiles

There are also two rectangular tiles that filter all the easy read documents and the ‘my adult life’ tile takes you to all of our preparing for adulthood services.
Refiners

On all result pages you will be able to filter by Age, Local Town, Categories, Facilities, Provider Type, Languages and who the service can support. Please note only ‘Age’ is automatically applied, for all other filters you will need to press apply.

- **Age** - filters from the two drop down options, and ranges from 0 – 99 years.

- **For people with/who are** - indicates which services have declared experience of supporting people with specific needs, or advised their service/organisation only supports people with certain needs. For example some early years settings may have supported a child with a hearing impairment before and as such have specialist resources to offer, or there may be a sports club exclusively for young people with Down’s syndrome.

- **Local Town** - matches the list from the search bar on the homepage, so if you search via Local Town to begin with this will automatically be filtered.

- **Categories** - will filter by the level of support provided by services. There are three options; Specialist, Targeted or Universal *

- **Facilities** - details the facilities available at the different services. For example if a school has specialist equipment this will be listed here. Or if you are looking for a sports centre to go swimming and want to make sure there are adequate changing facilities you can filter by these here as well.

- **Provider Type** - Filters by what the organisations offer, for example ‘Advice and Information’, ‘Groups, Clubs and Activities’ or ‘Health Services’. This can be used to make the search results more specific to what you are looking for.

- **Languages** - Details the languages spoken by staff at the service.

Shortlists

You can add any result to your shortlist. It will record it to the equipment you are using (your phone, your tablet or PC) and you are also able to print it. You can to share your shortlist with other users, by giving it a name and sharing the hyperlink by e-mail.
Helpful hints for getting better search results

These tips will help you make the most out of the filter options without losing useful search results.

**Do**

Use single words, rather than a whole sentence. E.g. “autism” instead of “my child has autism”.

Use quotation marks around your search term if you would like them to appear together in your result. E.g. “wheelchair basketball”

Press Ctrl + F5 if you experience a problem with the search engine to refresh the page. E.g. if you receive the message "Something went wrong"

**Don’t**

Use too many search options. Try to use no more than two. E.g. keyword and location.

Use too specific, technical or medical words. E.g. “hearing impairment” instead of “Bilateral Sensorineural Deafness”

Don't forget to tell us if you can't find what you're looking for!

Contact us

The Local Offer Team can be contacted by:
Telephone: 0300 126 1000 (option 5)
Email: localoffer@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/lonorthants
Twitter: @LONorthants

*Terms used*

**Universal** – Children, young people and their families core needs are being met effectively by universal services without any additional support: These are services such as Libraries, GP’s, schools and health visitors

**Targeted / Early Help/Intervention** – Children, young people and families are experiencing emerging problems or are experiencing significant additional needs, which may be numerous or more serious/ complex in nature. Services may provide a fixed time intervention. An example could be speech therapy to enable a child to catch up.

**Specialist** – Children, young people and families who are experiencing very serious or complex needs that are having a major impact on their achievement of expected outcomes. It is likely that these services will be needed long term.