

Local Offer Comments 2015

Following the recent Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms, each Local Authority is required have a 'Local Offer'.

Bolton Council has developed the Local Offer as part of the existing Local Directory to bring together:

- information and advice
- service providers
- activities / events

Information that is specifically relevant under the Local Offer can be searched directly through the filters and is also shown through a 'SEND' marker on the search summary page.

To help you see feedback about Bolton's Local Offer we have grouped comments in to the following categories:

- Content
- Accessibility
- Positive comments / compliments

Comments will be published each year. Individual queries will be responded to in line with the Bolton Council Customer Care Policy.

1. Content

Look and Feel

You told us:

- Needs more pictures and photographs
- Need pictures of the activity so that you don't always have to read the writing
- Pictures – writing is an afterthought
- Some information on websites is old fashioned and confusing
- Disorganised – boxes in random order, should be grouped better

What we did:

Following a usability session that was done with members of different communities, it was apparent that people want to access information quickly. The Local Offer sits on the Bolton Council Local Directory which has recently been revamped, taking into account comments received about the look and design.

We understand that the different people like information presented in different ways. The design of the Local Offer has been developed as a result of feedback from customers and guidance that the local authority receives to make information accessible.

You told us:

- Waffles on a bit, repetitive, says more about why rather than how and when
- Full explanation of activity needed with times and dates
- All need to have the info in the same order such as contact details etc. with the most important at the top
- Information about who can attend and if referral is needed
- Services need to consider who the information is for when they are writing it
- Some services have activities on them but some don't – they should all provide the same type of information and it needs to be up to date

What we did:

Training sessions were provided for services already registered on the Local Directory, to look at their details and make improvements on the content/detail. Additional sessions were provided for new registrations and they were also advised about what details to include to improve the experience for users.

As new users register with the local directory, we check the content that they are proposing and provide feedback to services. The registration template is designed to encourage service providers to include details of all aspects of their service.

Search

You told us:

- Things come up under the wrong headings
- Search doesn't always display results e.g. if you type 'disability football clubs' football doesn't come up but does if you search for 'football'
- Football search includes wheels for all
- Random things come up when searching using keywords

- You have to spell things right for them to come up
- Haven't got lots of time – 3 click rule (should be able to find something within 3 clicks)
- Parent partnership (missing info)
- Information is either missing or difficult to find – even a spelling mistake stops info (no good for people with dyslexia)

What we did:

We have developed the search functions on the local offer to help families get to the information that they are looking for quickly. This includes the auto suggest/auto complete functions. There is also a filter available for users to select what it is that they are looking for, similar to what you would find on Amazon or other online shopping services.

Work has been done to ensure that service providers are listed under the correct categories so that a search will find relevant results.

We are going to be using the management information in the Directory to help us understand where there are problems to help us make this better.

Missing information

You told us:

- Often don't have full information such as times/dates/full explanation of activity
- Not much information on post-16 e.g. trainee, apprenticeships – need this to be both online and face to face
- Information about universities and Disabled Students Allowance etc.
- More information about transition from children to adults and what the changes will be with services/ finances etc.
- Volunteering opportunities

What we did:

This feedback was really useful and we have now updated the local offer to include more detailed information about post 16 services.

All providers of services are contacted on a regular basis and asked to update their information, ensuring that accurate and relevant details are displayed. The search function has also been improved to make finding information much easier.

You told us:

- 'Childcare' should be a box under SEND – don't know where to look for it

What we did:

The childcare box has now been added to the SEND information and is clearly accessible.

You told us:

- Transport - information about free bus passes isn't listed, link to TFGM, info about college transport

- Transport and travel, bust/train timetables, ring and ride, travel passes, driving lessons etc.

What we did:

There is now a 'Travel and transport' tab that lists details and contact information of the relevant services.

You told us:

- Housing, council and housing associations, how to get help with this?

What we did:

Following the consultation, relevant service providers were contacted and encouraged to register their service on the Local Directory who were then 'tagged' to be included in the Local Offer.

What you said:

- More information about SEND reforms and personal budget payments such as how much it is and what it can be used for
- Information about what Local Offer actually is

What we did:

Web pages have been amended on the Bolton Council website as well as additional pages created with information about the SEND reforms.

Education

You told us:

- Schools are linked into the local offer – should have SEN link on school website
- Even though all the children go to school or college – this [school/college] isn't a good source of information. SENCO's don't pass on information. Ordinary schools don't have info about SEND and if go to a special school go via transport so don't have contact with school.

What we did:

All schools have been contacted and asked to complete a form detailing their 'School Offer'/SEN support. A link to this information is now available on their website. The local authority maintains a schools directory on the www.bolton.gov.uk website which lists all schools in the local area.

Contact

You told us:

- Somewhere to contact if you know of a provider that should be on but isn't

What we did:

There is a 'contact us' page for users to provide feedback/comments or inform us of missing service providers.

2. Accessibility

Accessibility of website

What you said:

- Can it be read easily on tablet/phone etc
- Can't be read by blind person using a screen reader. Screen readers can't cope with text boxes and graphics.

What we did:

Following the revamp of the Local Directory, the information is user friendly when accessed via a hand held device. It is also compatible when used with a screen reader. The local directory has the facilities of 'read aloud', language and font resizing.

Accessibility of information

You told us:

- Not everyone has access to web, so need printed information available at UCANs and children's centres

What we did:

Each of the UCAN centres has public access computers with support from staff when members of the public would like to use them. Children Centre staff will search for information and print off information when requested.

3. Positive comments or compliments?

- Like colours
- Colours good for people who are colour blind
- Like pictures on boxes but boxes should be different colours rather than all the same
- Like filter options
- Contact numbers for services
- Headings are comprehensive
- Back button works
- Info, links, contacts, activities
- Google translate
- Subjects are fairly comprehensive
- Calendar
- Having categories to click on
- Like the ribbon – send provider
- Being able to access information easily
- Structure for provider is okay

Thank you for your comments. This feedback is extremely important and helps to inform future planning.