What is the Local Offer?
From September 2014 every Local Authority will be required to publish information about services they expect to be available in their area for children and young people from birth to 25 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and also services outside of the area which they expect children and young people from their area will use. This will be known as the ‘Local Offer’.

The Local Offer will put all the information about education, health and care services, leisure activities and support groups in one place.

It has two main purposes:
• to provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available; and
• to make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations.

The Government says that the Local Offer must be developed and reviewed in partnership with children and young people, parent carers, and local services, including early years settings, schools, colleges, health and social care agencies – ‘co-production’.

People and services commissioned by the Local Authority to support children and young people with special educational needs should complete a Local Offer based on a set of questions which have been developed through co-production; within the framework and guidance produced by the South East Seven (SE7) Local Authorities Government Pathfinder: http://www.se7pathfinder.co.uk/.

The following pages are Hampshire County Council’s Services for Young Children, Childcare and Family Information Team Local Offer.
Local Offer for Hampshire Families

1. **What does your service do?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team key purpose is to provide free, impartial information and guidance to families regarding the types and availability of Ofsted registered early years education and childcare services that are inclusive in their delivery to children and young people. We also provide details of how families can access support in paying for these services.

Through finding services for families the Childcare and Family Information Team enables parent carers to be able to work, study, attend appointments, care for other family members or have respite.

The Childcare and Family Information Team provide information and guidance via:

- the Hampshire County Council contact centre Children’s Services helpline (telephone and email)
- the Services for Young Children website
- the Childcare and Family Information Team outreach workers (one to one support, ‘Brokerage’; and attendance at family targeted groups and activities).

You can contact us as many times as you need with regards to telephone and email support. Where families are being supported through brokerage, assistance will stop when options have been identified and actions have been taken. Where no options have been presented we will try to signpost families to other services for support.

2. **Where is the service located, and what areas does it cover?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team supports families who reside or who are moving into the Hampshire Local Authority area. Hampshire’s Local Authority area excludes Southampton and Portsmouth cities, which will have their own Local Offers. You can check Hampshire County Council’s area here [www.hants.gov.uk/redirect-district?lgsl-116](http://www.hants.gov.uk/redirect-district?lgsl-116).

Telephone, email and website support can be accessed across the Hampshire Local Authority area. For families requiring ‘brokerage’ services this is delivered by five Childcare and Family Information Team outreach workers who are based in Services for Young Children local offices, and supervised centrally from Hampshire County Council’s headquarters.

The following are the contact details for these offices and Services for Young Children headquarters:

- **Basingstoke and Deane** – Vertex, Chineham Court, Lutyen's Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG24 8AG, Tel: 01256 359002 Email: sfyc.bd@hants.gov.uk
- **Hart and Rushmoor** – 2nd Floor Rushmoor Borough Council Offices, Farnborough Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7JU, Tel: 01252 814770 Email: sfyc.hr@hants.gov.uk
- **New Forest and South Test Valley** – Calmore Infant School, Calmore Drive, Totton, Southampton, SO40 2ZZ, Tel: 02380 667360 Email: sfyc.nt@hants.gov.uk
3. **Who does your service provide for?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team supports Hampshire Local Authority area families that have children aged 0 – 5 years requiring early years education, or children and young people aged 0 – 16 years needing childcare or care services. Information and guidance is also available to professionals, organisations and agencies from the public, private and voluntary sectors who are working with families in the Hampshire Local Authority area. The information and guidance includes services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. You will be able to discuss with service providers regarding the specific needs for your child or young person.

Through the brokerage service the Childcare and Family Information Team outreach workers will be able to meet with families for one to one help if there are barriers to accessing support through the main channels: telephone helpline, email or website.

4. **How can I start using the service?**

Parent carers (and professionals, organisations and agencies from the public, private and voluntary sectors who are working with families in the Hampshire Local Authority area) can start using our service now. For telephone and email enquiries contact Hampshire County Council on 0845 603 5620 or childrens.services@hants.gov.uk, between the hours of 8.30am until 5.00pm, Monday to Thursday, or 8.30am until 4.30pm on Fridays. Or further details regarding call costs: [http://www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/contact-cs.htm](http://www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/contact-cs.htm).

For parent carers and professionals needing to access the Childcare and Family Information Team brokerage service please contact Hampshire County Council via telephone or email as detailed above. A referral will be made to the brokerage service which is available from Monday to Friday. Times differ depending on the availability of the outreach worker however they will acknowledge receipt of initial requests within three working days.

All information and guidance is free and impartial. You will only be responsible for paying costs attached to the services that you wish to access. Some families may be able to have support from Government schemes to pay towards the cost of some services depending on eligibility criteria. Parent carers and professionals can access free information and guidance from the Services for Young Children website: [www.hants.gov.uk/childcare](http://www.hants.gov.uk/childcare) and the Family Information Directory [www.fid.hants.gov.uk](http://www.fid.hants.gov.uk).
5. **How are decisions made about who can use your service?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team is Hampshire County Council’s ‘Family Information Service’ which was developed in response to The Childcare Act 2006, section 12. The service provides information, advice and assistance to all parents or prospective parents, and with regards to the needs of the parents of disabled children or young persons. ([http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents))

The Childcare Act clearly states who can use the service. Services for Young Children personnel are responsible for maintaining the service on behalf of Hampshire County Council, and operational decisions are made by senior management.

6. **How do you communicate with service users and how are they involved in decision making/planning?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team communicates with service users via telephone, email, internet, and face to face through home visits or attendance at events or meetings.

Service publications are available from our website, and hard copies can also be requested, free of charge ([http://www.hants.gov.uk/cis/cfit-publications.htm](http://www.hants.gov.uk/cis/cfit-publications.htm)).

We have our own parent blog bulletin [http://sfyccfit.wordpress.com](http://sfyccfit.wordpress.com) and termly e-newsletter for stakeholders’ [http://www.hants.gov.uk/parents/cis.htm](http://www.hants.gov.uk/parents/cis.htm).

We can arrange for resources to support service access such as translators for those whose first language is not English. For sensory impaired service users hearing loops, Braille and large print documents can be arranged. Makaton communicators (language programme using speech, sign and symbols) can be made available on request.

Our website ([http://www.hants.gov.uk/parents/cis.htm](http://www.hants.gov.uk/parents/cis.htm)) has ‘accessibility options’ at the bottom of each web page in order to help service users. (For further details regarding how to access Hampshire County Council website information: [http://www.hants.gov.uk/help](http://www.hants.gov.uk/help)).

It is important that we continue to develop our service in partnership with you so we ask for feedback by telephone, email, intranet, online surveys, post and face to face. The service officer is responsible for examining and responding to feedback, which may result in further service development. Where significant changes are made to service delivery this will be communicated to you through the range of channels available.

We have a Customer Forum for service users who have volunteered to provide feedback regarding specific themes which relate to the work of Services for Young Children for Hampshire families. All potential and current service users are welcome to take part.

7. **Is your service fully accessible?**

The Childcare and Family Information Team does not have a ‘shop front’ for service users to access. However, arrangements can be made for visitors to have ‘appointments’ with members of the Childcare and Family Information Team at a children’s centre or at one of the local Services for Young Children offices. Enquiries can be made by contacting the Children’s Services helpline, one of the Services for Young Children local offices or a children’s centre.
Please feel free to contact us in advance to discuss your specific needs and we will work with you to resolve any access issues as far as possible. Otherwise the service can be accessed using the Children’s Services helpline, email or website.

8. **What training are the staff supporting children with SEND had or are having?**

Children’s Services helpline advisors are either qualified, or working towards, NVQ Level 2 in Customer Services or Information and Advice.

The Childcare and Family Information Team’s Childcare Officer and outreach workers are qualified to NVQ Level 4, Information, Advice and Guidance, specific to their roles. One of the mandatory units relates to Equality and Diversity and requires personnel to review and adapt where necessary their service and individual approach and practices to gathering, processing and delivering information and guidance. Personnel also are required to work with due regard to the legislation that is in place.

Hampshire County Council require that all staff are actively engaged with continuous professional development and that they undertake training, work shadowing and project work to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. The Childcare and Family Information Team have all undertaken mandatory training including Child Protection and Safeguarding and are required to update their knowledge inline with legislation changes and Hampshire County Council procedures. Further details of the types of activities can be obtained from the Services for Young Children Childcare Information Officer.

9. **How will I know my child will be safe using this service?**

If your child (or young person) does make contact with our service through using one of the communication channels available we will respond by working with other Hampshire County Council staff to ensure that your child is safeguarded, by following established protocols and procedures that are in place.

The information and guidance that is provided by the Childcare and Family Information Team is subject to legislation (e.g. Data Protection Act 1998, Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and statutory requirements from Government bodies (e.g. Office for Standards in Education, Department for Work and Pensions).

You will be supported by the Childcare and Family Information Team as to what to consider when looking for a suitable early years education or childcare service; including meeting the welfare needs of your child.

Respecting and understanding that it is the parent carer who knows their child best; it will be their decision as to what service they will use for their child.

As we are a Hampshire County Council information service we are impartial and therefore we do not recommend or endorse any particular service or provider.

10. **Who can I contact for further information?**

In most cases your first point of contact for an enquiry about early years education and childcare services, or to discuss something about your child would be the Hampshire County Council contact centre Children’s Services helpline on 0845 603 5620 or email childrens.services@hants.gov.uk.

The same applies if you have worries about your child, or another child or young person who lives in Hampshire.
If you have concerns about your child who is attending an early years education or childcare service then you should contact the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) using their helpline 0300 123 4666. (Further details regarding contacting Ofsted are found on their website: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/information-for-parents-about-ofsteds-role-regulating-childcare).

Alternatively you may prefer to contact Services for Young Children headquarters on 01962 847070 or email: childcare@hants.gov.uk. Details are also available on our website about how to raise concerns or make comments: http://www.hants.gov.uk/childcare/parents.htm.