

SEND Information

for parent carers, young
people and their families



Somerset's
SEND
Local Offer



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Introduction to the offer of services locally

Navigating the world of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can feel overwhelming, especially when you're trying to find the right support for your child. This booklet is for parent carers and young people to guide you through the key areas of support available in Somerset, helping you understand what services exist, how to access them, and where to go for more detailed information.

Each section of this booklet corresponds with a topic on Somerset's SEND Local Offer - an online hub full of up-to-date information, advice, and guidance for families of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND. Whether you're looking for help with education, activities, emotional wellbeing, or financial support, the Local Offer is your go-to resource. QR codes throughout this booklet will take you directly to the relevant pages, where you can explore further details and related topics. You can also follow us on Facebook for local updates and events **@LocalOfferSomerset**.

As well as the Local Offer, partners are working together so Somerset families and residents get the help they need and get it early. We've listed some of the services and support that may be useful for you to know about at **www.connectsomerset.org.uk/help4all**.

We hope this booklet helps you feel more confident and informed as you support your child or young person's journey. If you need help using Somerset's SEND Local Offer or accessing it offline, support is available through the Customer Service Team and Somerset Libraries.



www.somerset.gov.uk/local-offer

Aspirations

It's completely natural for the thought of your child's adult life to feel a bit overwhelming and distant right now. But it's never too early to start dreaming big and setting high expectations for their future. Early action will make a massive difference, helping your child lead their absolute best adult life.

Every one of us wants the freedom to choose who we live with and where we call home. For individuals with SEND, we want them to have genuine connections within their community, extending beyond family members or paid carers.

Meaningful employment can be a powerful catalyst for this. Being part of a team supports social interaction, collaboration, and the development of teamwork skills. The workplace is a fantastic environment to build relationships, make friendships, and create professional networks, all of which are vital for a rich and independent adult life.

There's a range of support available to help your child successfully transition into the world of work and independent living. Use the guide *Imagine the Possibilities* to find information and resources you need to confidently pave the path for your child's bright future.



www.somerset-ebp.co.uk/imagine-the-possibilities

Graduated response

In Somerset, most children and young people get the help they need through good quality teaching (this is called Universal Support). Some may need extra help, called SEN Support, as well as Universal Support. The ‘graduated response’ explains what support is usually available in early years, schools and colleges at both levels. This includes explaining the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle. This cycle helps ensure your child’s needs are regularly reviewed and supported in a structured, responsive way.



www.somerset.gov.uk/graduated-response



Getting help and having your voice heard

If you need help on your SEND journey, there are independent services that can support you.

Somerset SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support) is there for impartial advice for children and young people (up to the age of 25) and their parent carers.



www.somerset.gov.uk/advice-and-advocacy

Somerset Parent Carer Forum supports parent carers in Somerset. They offer helpful information, SEND Navigators, workshops, coffee mornings, and events where you can share your views and get support.

Somerset gives families a chance to share their views on services in a safe space. They help parent carers get involved and make sure families' voices are heard through events, surveys, and feedback sessions.



www.somerset.gov.uk/parent-carer-voice

We also work with parent carers, young people, services and volunteer groups to create the Local Offer. We review Somerset's SEND Local Offer regularly to keep it helpful and current. We welcome all kinds of feedback, good and bad, to improve the website and the services.



www.somerset.gov.uk/local-offer-feedback



Things to do and places to go

It's important for young people to get out and explore their local community. For young people with additional needs, a little extra planning can help make outings enjoyable and accessible. The Leisure section of Somerset's SEND Local Offer describes accessible places to go, inclusive things to do, and help getting around. This includes an events calendar, as well as discount and activity passes so you can find local affordable activities.



www.somerset.gov.uk/leisure

Some families may need more support, but that shouldn't mean you miss out on opportunities. The Community Inclusion and Activity Team (CIA Team) help children and young people with a disability or additional need, and their families, to try out new things, have fun and access their local community. This includes a calendar of activities during both termtime and school holidays. Following a social care early support assessment, further assistance may be offered to access social opportunities.



<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-with-disabilities-service>

Young persons voice

Every child and young person in Somerset has the opportunity to have a voice about their life experiences and aspirations, and the services that care for them. We respectfully listen and act upon those voices to ensure children and young people are happy, healthy, and prepared for adulthood.

Whether you are a young person or working with young people, there are many ways you can engage throughout Somerset and beyond.

As a local authority, we are committed to listening to the voice of children and young people, and working with them to secure good outcomes for Somerset's children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

Through forum meetings, social media, consultations and engagement activities we seek feedback on local services to help us improve, and ensure they meet the needs of our local families.



www.somerset.gov.uk/children-and-young-peoples-voice

Children and young people's development advice

Every child develops at their own pace. Advice Sheets from the Children and Young People's Therapy Service help you spot developmental milestones and understand common variations in typical development. They also describe difficulties you may see and practical advice on what to do. This includes topics such as:

- physical and motor skills
- play and sensory
- feeding and self-care
- communication and speech

As you put the suggested strategies into practice, journalling your experiences becomes incredibly valuable. Keeping a record of the specific strategies you've tried, how consistently you've applied them, and the impact they've had (both progress and challenges) creates robust evidence. This can be important when supporting any requests for assessment or applications for benefits.



[www.somerset.gov.uk/
children-and-young-peoples-development](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-and-young-peoples-development)

If things are not working

Navigating the world of SEND can be very complex. If you feel your child's needs aren't being fully met, there are steps you can take and people who can help. You can find on our Local Offer webpages, tips to prepare for meetings and model letters to help you raise your concerns with the service.

If your concerns have not been met through talking to the service, you can make a formal complaint. Some people find it helpful to talk to someone who understands the complaints process first and get some guidance and support. There are several services that can help you, including SENDIAS, PALS, Healthwatch and Citizens Advice.

If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint there are also organisations that investigate complaints or regulate services.



<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/talking-to-the-service/>



Working and financial support

If your child has SEND, you may need more time off work than others. This could be for taking your child to appointments or review meetings, for example.

Any employee can ask to work flexibly. This is called a statutory flexible working request. Some reasons, like childcare, caring for a disabled person, or having a disability yourself, are protected by law.

Employees can also take leave to care for someone or help in an emergency for a dependent. This kind of leave is usually unpaid.



www.somerset.gov.uk/flexible-working-parents-right

Having a child with additional needs can have an impact on a family's finances. It can cost more to raise a disabled child than a non-disabled child. You can find out information about benefits, grants and other help with costs on the Local Offer webpages.



www.somerset.gov.uk/money-benefits-and-housing

Emotional wellbeing and health

Wellbeing is about how we feel and how we handle everyday challenges. You don't have to feel happy all the time to be doing okay. But if things start to feel too much, it's important to find ways to look after your mental health.

The Somerset Emotional and Mental Health Route Map provides a brief overview of some of the key services and support avenues to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in Somerset.



www.somerset.gov.uk/young-peoples-mental-health

It can be hard to prioritise your own mental health and wellbeing when you are caring for children with additional needs. Parents may feel isolated and misunderstood, and it can be hard to find other families in a similar situation. You're not alone - there are groups and services that understand what you're going through and are here to help.



www.somerset.gov.uk/looking-after-yourself

Accessing information offline

If you don't have internet access, don't worry - you can still explore the full range of support available. You can do this by calling Somerset Council's Customer Service Team. Our friendly customer service staff are there to help and guide you through information available relating to children's education or care. Call 0300 123 2224.

Plus there's our Somerset Libraries Service, which has computers for public use, plus headphones and microphones for video calls, there's iPads for loan, and free WiFi. Library staff have been trained to help if needed, so please ask for assistance at the venue.

For children and young people there's My Important Stuff. This is a paper document designed by young people with SEND for young people with SEND. It's a place to write down important information about yourself and keep it all in one place. This includes people, groups and organisations that are there to support you. My Important Stuff can be download from Somerset's SEND Local Offer website. Alternatively, print one off at any library, or call the Customer Service Team on 0300 123 2224 who will print one off for you and send it to your home address.



www.somerset.gov.uk/my-important-stuff

THE UNSTOPPABLES



WE CAN'T BE STOPPED...

**We want to hear your views
on things that matter to you,
so come and join us!**



The Unstoppables is a group for young people 13 to 25 years with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) that helps the voices and opinions of young people with SEND in Somerset be heard and to help make changes to and improve the services that they use.



We meet in person on the first Saturday of every month in Yeovil, to discuss the things that are important to us, as well as the issues affecting them and other young people with SEND in Somerset.



For more information and to join, scan the QR code above or visit
www.somerset-unstoppables.org.uk



Somerset SENDIAS

**Special Educational Needs and Disability
Information, Advice & Support**

A free impartial service for children and young people
with SEND (aged 0-25), and their parent carers

For more information, scan the QR code or visit


www.somersetsendias.org.uk






Somerset Parent Carer Forum C.I.C

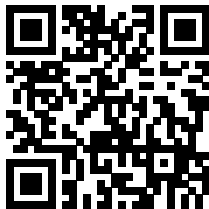
The independent voice for families with children birth to 25 with additional needs or disabilities.



Somerset Parent Carer Forum is a parent led organisation, with all the people leading our working having a child or young person between birth to 25 years with additional needs and/or disabilities.



We believe we are stronger together and we want to involve as many parent carers as possible. We invite all parent carers in Somerset, to join us.



For more information and to join, scan the QR code above or visit
www.somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk

Somerset's **SEND** Local Offer

www.somerset.gov.uk/local-offer

