



SEND Local Offer Annual Report 2025

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The SEND Local Offer

The West Northants SEND Local Offer brings together information about all the services available in the local area that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their families. It includes services such as:

- **Education settings**
- **Healthcare services**
- **Social care services**
- **Early intervention services**
- **SEN support services**
- **Universal services**

The SEND Local Offer website is the central platform for sharing and updating information about these services. It is continually evolving to meet the needs of children, young people, parents and carers, and 2025 has been no exception.

The Local Offer is shaped and governed by key legislation, including:

- **Children & Families Act 2014:** Sections 27, 28, 30, 32, 41, 49, and 51–57
- **The Equality Act 2010**
- **The SEND Regulations 2014:** Part 4
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015:** Chapter 4

This report outlines progress over the past eight months. It sets out key development priorities for the next 12 months. There will be a continued focus on accessibility, co-production, and meaningful engagement with children, young people, and families.

The SEND Local Offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive, accessible, and up-to-date information about the available provision and how to access it.

- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving disabled children and those with SEN and their parents, and disabled young people and those with SEN, and service providers in its development and review.

The Local Offer should not simply be a directory of existing services. Its success depends as much upon full engagement with children, young people and their parents as on the information it contains. The process of developing the Local Offer will help local authorities and their health partners to improve provision.

Each local authority has a statutory obligation to publish a SEND Local Offer.

The SEND Local Offer Platforms

The SEND Local Offer platforms include:

- **Listings Directory**
- **Document Directory**
- **Local Offer Webpages**
- **Instagram Account**
- **Facebook Page**
- **West SEND News Magazine** (print version and email version)

SEND Local Offer Integration into the SEND Improvement Team Structure

Following the departure of both the SEND Support Service Manager and the SEND Local Offer Manager, the SEND Local Offer team, now comprising a single Information Officer, was formally integrated into the SEND Improvement Team in April.

This transition prompted a structured audit of the SEND Local Offer to ensure full compliance with statutory requirements and to verify that the platform accurately reflects the provision available across the West Northants SEND Local Area Partnership. The review focused on mapping existing content and identifying gaps or inconsistencies in relation to statutory expectations.

Historically, multi-agency engagement was facilitated through a steering group. In agreement with the Chair, the group was suspended to allow for internal reorganisation and in-depth service review. It is anticipated that the steering group will be re-established in 2026.

Strengths Identified

- Ranked third nationally for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance, ensuring content is accessible to people with disabilities.
- West Northants Voices in Partnership (WNVP) – the statutory parent carer forum is part of all workstreams in the LA’s SEND partnership governance structure.
- Translation tool available.
- Searchable directory by age, need, and locality.
- Eligibility criteria taxonomy built into the directory and provider registration.
- Range of filters supports personalised searches.
- Annual audit ensures accuracy and improves quality.
- Comprehensive data sources include Melisearch, Google Analytics, social media reports, Disabled Children’s Register, and audit documents.
- Content when provided by services is updated. Social care, housing, and early years education via the Family Information Service (FIS) are current.
- Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) information is available as PDFs and webpages. Straightforward advice for those eligible for social care/health support, including Personal Budgets and recruiting Personal Assistants.
- The directory includes a range of filters to support personalised searches.
- Eligibility criteria are embedded in the standard provider registration process.
- Clear links to Family Hubs, the SEND Information, Advice, and Support Service (SENDIASS), WNVP, and national websites are provided to ensure easy access to support and information.

Key Themes and Opportunities Identified

Annual Auditing and System Improvement: The SEND Local Offer directories and listings are audited annually to ensure they remain accurate, relevant, and reflective of the evolving provision across the West Northants SEND Local Area Partnership. Although the SEND Local Offer platform provides a valuable source of information, its current structure looks more like a static directory than a fully interactive database. Updates are made manually via webpage editing, an approach that, while effective as workarounds developed, can be time-consuming and increasingly difficult to manage at scale.

This approach highlights both the strengths of the current system and opportunities for future improvement:

- **Efficiency:** Manual updates are made one field at a time, which can slow down the process.
- **Accuracy:** The reliance on manual editing increases the potential for human error.
- **Quality Assurance:** There is currently no built-in functionality to view or audit all entries within a specific field (e.g., "Cost") collectively.

To conduct audits or identify inconsistencies, data must be exported and manually cross-referenced using external spreadsheets. This process is thorough but labour-intensive. Looking ahead, enhancing the backend functionality to include a searchable, filterable database would significantly improve efficiency, accuracy, and the overall user experience for both administrators and stakeholders. This forms part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and ensuring the SEND Local Offer remains a trusted, accessible, and user-friendly resource for families and professionals.

Strategic Communication Alignment: There is a clear opportunity to strengthen strategic communication across services within the West Northants SEND Partnership by embedding the SEND Local Offer as a central mechanism. Doing so will:

- Promote collective responsibility across services
- Ensure consistent and aligned messaging
- Reflect the needs and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND, and their families

Embedding the SEND Local Offer more deeply into service planning and delivery will support a more coherent and inclusive approach, ensuring that information is not only accessible but also meaningfully connected to the realities of those it serves

Next steps: Work with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and strategic partner websites to ensure coherence across directories.

Embedding Commissioning in the SEND Local Offer: In line with statutory requirements, the SEND Local Offer's platforms must clearly reflect the commissioned services. Embedding these services will not only reflect the full range of available support, promote transparency and visibility and improve accessibility for families, but also support more informed strategic planning and resource allocation across the partnership.

Accessibility for Children and Young People (CYP): Improvements are needed in the appeal, relevance, and language used to ensure the SEND Local Offer is engaging and understandable for its intended audience.

Continuous Engagement and strategic influence with CYP: Ongoing dialogue with children, young people, and their families is essential to ensuring the SEND Local Offer is responsive, inclusive, and genuinely co-produced. There is a clear opportunity to address the current gap in the SEND Local Offer for visible, accessible pathways for CYP to participate in strategic decision-making.

By embedding systemic engagement with participation groups and co-production forums, we can strengthen meaningful involvement and ensure that CYP voices actively shape the services, policies, and practices that affect them. This approach not only meets statutory expectations but also builds trust, relevance, and long-term impact.

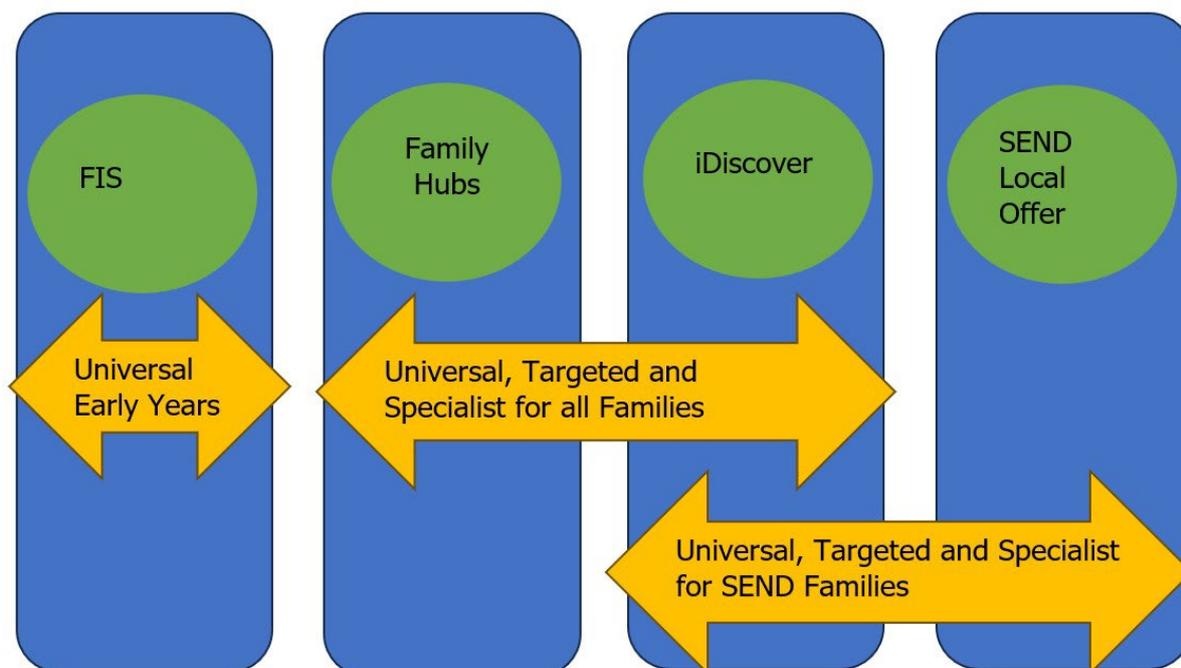
Next Steps:

- Embed systemic engagement with participation groups and co-production forums
- Review the terms of reference and membership of the steering group
- Work with WNC and strategic partner websites to ensure coherence across directories

Key Achievements 2025

Strategic Communication Alignment

Internal discussions within WNC and with wider partners took place to establish a shared understanding of current digital offers and the specialism of the SEND Local Offer as the partnership's central hub for SEND within the system.



The SEND Partnership has enhanced its approach to capturing and responding to feedback from children and young people with SEND and their families. Feedback is now gathered through a range of channels, including WNVP Padlets, emails, consultations, and lived experience learning. Going forward, this feedback will be reviewed at monthly SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership Improvement Board (SAPPiB) meetings and used to inform "You Said, We Did" communications. These updates will be shared not only through the SEND Local Offer platforms but also across wider communication channels, ensuring transparency, accountability, and meaningful co-production. This strengthened feedback loop reinforces the SEND Local Offer's role as a central mechanism for listening, responding, and improving services in partnership with children and young people with SEND, and their families and supports a partnership approach to "You Said, We Did".



Recent collaboration between WNC Communications and the SEND Local Offer Platforms Team has demonstrated the powerful impact of a more joined-up approach. A notable example is a significant spike in Facebook engagement, driven by the WNC Communications Team allowing SEND news stories to appear first on the SEND Local Offer's feed, before amplifying them through their own channels. This reciprocal method has proven highly effective. For instance, promoting the transition from the SEND Support Service (SSS) to the Inclusion and Intervention Support Team (IIST) increased engagement from 32,000 to 57,000, with the average engagement rate rising from 3.5% to 7.07%. There were also 100 new followers gained in just one month. This joined-up approach presents a clear opportunity to embed a consistent process for sharing SEND stories.

Next Step

Confirm the workflow with WNC Communications and operationalise it within the wider communications strategy to ensure sustained impact and visibility.

Email Signature

A new email signature has been designed to advertise the SEND Local Offer platforms.

Are you a parent carer of a person with SEND?

✉ localoffer@westnorthants.gov.uk
www.westnorthants.gov.uk/local-offer

📘 [LocalOfferWN](#) 📷 [localofferwestnorthants](#)

Sign up for our [newsletter](#)

Embedding Commissioning with the SEND Local Offer Platforms

A clear and transparent procedure remains in place to document the rationale and accountability for including or excluding organisations from the SEND Local Offer directory. Requests relating to Alternative Provision (AP) are consistently referred to Education Commissioning, where they are reviewed through the AP Quality Assurance Framework. This approach ensures alignment between commissioning decisions and the content hosted on the SEND Local Offer platforms.

This model exemplifies the integrated working that the partnership aims to embed across all commissioning functions. There is now a clear opportunity to strengthen accountability and responsiveness within other areas of commissioning, ensuring consistent standards, improved transparency, and more joined-up practice across the system.

Engagement

Engagement has taken place with children and young people with SEND from a range of participation groups, as well as with families at community events. These have included the WNVP Annual General Meeting, a wellbeing event for the travelling community, a SEND Local Offer workshop with the 48U participation groups, the Spring Lane Transition Event, and the Sports for Fitness CIC Disability Fun Day, among others.

As part of the two-day 48U engagement workshops, the SEND Local Offer website was explored in depth, with a focus on the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) section. Participants identified which areas were most important to them. They reviewed the related content, layout, and support available through the SEND Local Offer. The newly introduced feedback loop has enabled officers to effectively record comments via Padlet, which are then visible at SAPPiB meetings. This model of continuous engagement with CYP will be systematically planned throughout next year, once capacity increases. This will support more consistent and transparent sharing of feedback, reinforcing the commitment to co-production and improvement directly with children and young people.

Accessibility for Children and Young People

To support the implementation of co-production in its most valid form, the local authority's Digital, Technology & Innovation (DTI) team has developed detailed guidance that clearly defines which elements of the SEND Local Offer template are customisable and which are fixed (see below). This guidance ensures transparency

within the co-production process by clarifying the scope of permissible adaptations and identifying the elements that must remain consistent.

Accordions: Use accordions to display additional information that is not central to completing the main task on the page.

Calls to Action: Use calls to action to link to online forms and transactions.

Cards: Cards are used to signpost to external services that may be relevant to content.

Highlights: Highlights are used to make key information that might be slightly separate from the natural flow of the page stand out. This is helpful for people who need to carry out a different customer journey to the one listed on the page - With a lot of text-heavy content, it would be worth looking at any small amounts of information that should stand out in this way.

Images: Images can be used on content pages where they add value to the information.

Images and Text: Use the Image and Text slice to display snippets of information providing visual representation of text content

Videos: Can embed YouTube videos within the site both on landing pages and content pages.

Service Detail Pages: Used to break up long pages and help people to navigate more quickly and easily.

Landing Pages: Customizable elements on landing pages include:

- link to parent page above the page title (Children with SEND link on SEND Local Offer page)
- page title
- description underneath page title
- optional search box and button text
- banner image

It is not currently possible within the template to:

- change the WNC logo
- change the header colour scheme
- remove the search box
- change the main navigation links

Slices and text content can only be used either above or below the main navigation.

The SEND Local Offer landing page uses content below the navigation to signpost to social media and contact forms/email.

In addition, process maps can be created to be WCAG compliant using Canva and by adhering to key principles.

One-Minute Guides and Quick Guides

The SEND Local Offer has an extensive collection of “Quick Guides” (in addition to the 1-Minute Guides). They are in the process of being updated, duplications removed, and assimilated into the style of the new accessible One-Minute Guides with a view to converting them all to British Sign Language (BSL) / video.

New One-Minute Guides continue to be published using a consistent WCAG-compliant template that reflects the SEND Strategy's branding. Each guide is being produced in multiple formats to ensure accessibility and relevance, including:

- A version for professionals and parents
- A version tailored for children and young people
- A video version with British Sign Language (BSL) accompanying

Additional formats will be developed over time in collaboration with children and young people, based on their preferences and how they wish information to be presented. Children and young people will also be actively involved in reviewing and shaping the written guides intended for them, ensuring the content is meaningful, accessible, and relevant.

- **“Alternative Provision”** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *Complete*.

- **"Apprenticeships"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Child Trust Funds"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Children Missing Education"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Educational Psychologists"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Mental Capacity Act"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Publication on the SEND Local Offer"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Hearing Tests"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Inclusion & Intervention Support Team"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"SEND Local Offer"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Personal Assistants"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Safeguarding in Education"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"School Admissions"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: **In Progress**.
- **"SENDIASS"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.
- **"Virtual School"** - Professional / Parent Version: *Complete*. Children and Young People Version: *Complete*. BSL Version: *In Progress*.

Next Steps:

- Begin Easy Read versions of CYP 1-minute guides for WNC
- Liaise with Health and Social Care for 1-minute guides for key services
- Continue BSL videos
- Co-produce alternative formats of 1-minute guides with Children and Young People

Chat Bot

Testing was conducted on the AI chatbot using a set of 150 questions. The evaluation identified several key issues:

- Repetitive and overly wordy responses
- Unclear handling of memory-related queries, e.g. unclear if the chatbot uses previous responses to inform new responses
- Selective listing of services and directories (“cherry-picking”)
- Difficulty in ranking the importance and relevance of services
- Inconsistent responses to similar questions phrased differently
- Instances of AI hallucinations (fabricated or inaccurate information)
- Inability to appropriately manage vexatious or challenging questions
- Referral to services outside the scope of the SEND Local Offer

It was agreed that the DTI team would undertake further development work. This will involve testing the chatbot using less complex information from another area to refine and improve its performance. Once further developed, the chatbot can be reconsidered for use within the SEND Local Offer platforms.

Strengthening Resource

To ensure long-term sustainability and continuous improvement, the local authority is strengthening resource. A new full-time **SEND Local Offer Improvement Coordinator** post is being established.

This role will work alongside the full-time **SEND Local Offer Information Officer**. Together, they will create a stronger and more reliable setup. This will help keep the SEND Local Offer running well. It will also support its growth as a shared and easy-to-use resource for children and young people with SEND and their families.

An expression of interest for a Local Government Associate (LGA) Impact Graduate has been submitted. It is hoped they will support the development and transformation of the SEND Local Offer into a more engaging, youth-led resource..

Next Steps:

- Strengthen the capacity within the SEND Local Offer team
- Re-establish the steering group (feeding into Partnership and Leadership Workstream). Include digital leads, other directory leads, WNVP, SENDIASS, children / young people, and strategic partners.
- Review the terms of reference and membership of the steering group

Magazine and E-Newsletter Development

Magazine – posted to 621 households

Email Newsletter Subscribers - 1,460 (slightly more than doubled since last annual report)

Significant progress has been made in both the scope and delivery of published materials. The average number of articles per edition has increased to approximately 40 from 15. A broader range of topics and contributors is now represented. To ensure relevance and inclusivity, newly added services within the SEND Local Offer are invited to submit articles. Publishing workflows have been streamlined to reflect professional standards. Contributors receive proofs for approval and timely reminders to ensure consistent, high-quality engagement.

Feedback from a young person with dyslexia have informed a series of accessibility enhancements. This represents significant progress since last year. In collaboration with the publisher, the following improvements have been implemented:

Design Enhancements

- Coloured backgrounds and high-contrast layouts

- Larger, heavier fonts to support readability
- Clearer layouts with larger headings and accessible font choices
- Increased use of images with reduced reliance on text
- Emojis used at the beginning of lines to introduce and break up content
- Short URLs and QR codes that are easy to type or scan
- All written content is reviewed using the Hemingway App to ensure readability at a Grade 9 reading level or below

In the digital newsletter, similar principles have been applied:

- All magazine content is now included
- Text has been significantly reduced
- Greater emphasis on clickable links and visual elements
- In social media posts, similar principles have been applied
- Full alt-text attached

Example of feedback from the new more accessible magazine:

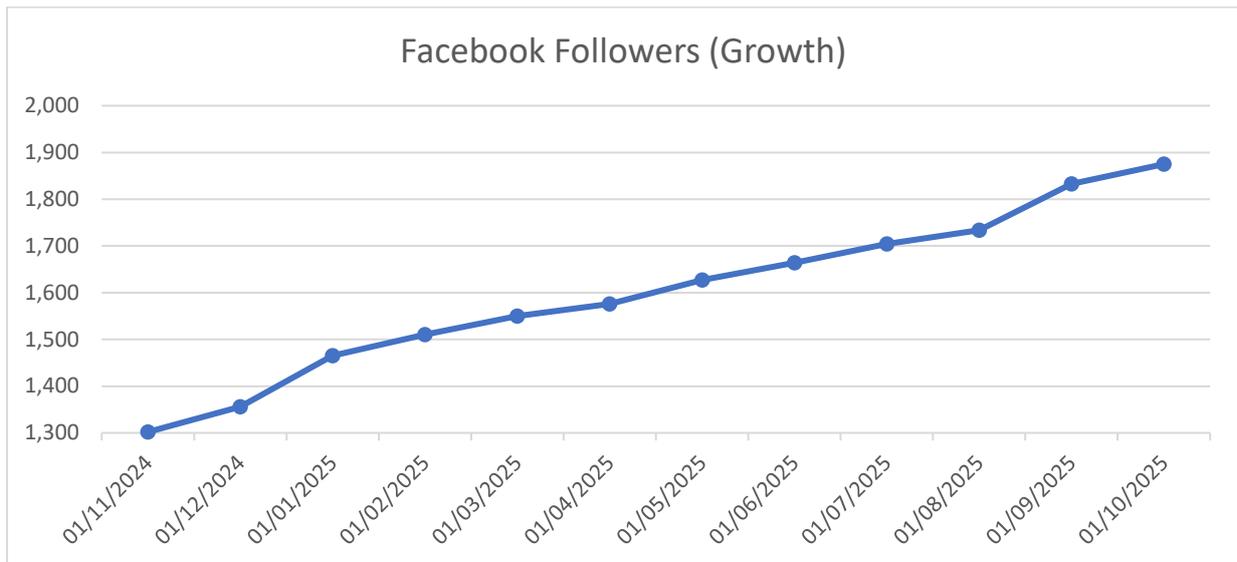
"Thanks so much for sharing this, and for including Russell's sessions in your newsletter. Thanks also for the accessibility update and the feedback that's shaped it - that's really useful insight for our own graphics and marcomms!"

Northamptonshire FA

Data for SEND Local Offer website, directory and social media platforms

Facebook Growth

We gained **574** new followers in the last year. This represents a **44%** increase.



Meta reports that 93.2% of our Facebook audience are women. 69.9% are aged 35-54. The majority live in West Northants.

- Northampton: 46.4%
- Daventry: 6.2%
- Towcester: 4.8%
- Brackley: 3.6%
- Long Buckby: 1.4%

Facebook Total Posts

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 487
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 433
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+12.5%**

Facebook Total Post Impressions

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 441,850
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 270,096
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+63.6%**

Facebook Total Post Clicks

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 19,603
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 10,113
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+93.9%**

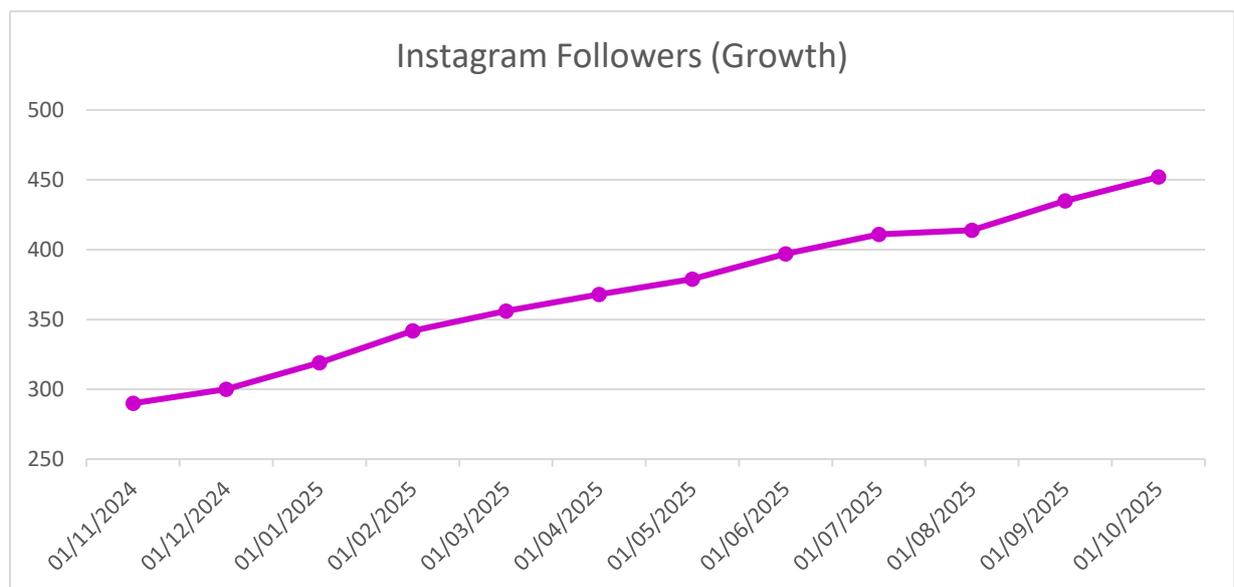
Facebook Average Engagement Rate

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 4.4%
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 3.7%
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+18.9%**

Over the past year, in addition to an increase in followers, the relevance of Facebook content has shown notable improvement. Posting frequency increased, resulting in a broader audience reach and a marked rise in engagement. These trends reflect growing interest in the information being shared. They also reflect a stronger connection with the target audience.

Instagram Growth

Over the past year, 162 new followers were gained on Instagram, representing a 56% increase. The total number of Instagram followers remains lower than on Facebook, but the growth rate on Instagram is notably higher. This indicates stronger momentum and increasing interest in the platform's content.



The demographics of the Instagram audience are more evenly distributed than those of Facebook. Meta reports that women make up 82.7% of followers, with 53.9% aged 35-54. The majority of the audience resides in West Northamptonshire, with the following breakdown:

- Northampton: 44.2%
- Daventry: 4.2%
- Towcester: 3.3%
- Brackley: 1.5%

Instagram Total Posts

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 438
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 213
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+105.6%**

Instagram Total Post Impressions

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 60,059
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 14,629
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+310.6%**

Instagram Total Post Clicks

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 1,202
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 539
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+122.9%**

Instagram Average Engagement Rate

- Current Year (1 Nov 2024 – 31 Oct 2025): 2%
- Previous Year (1 Nov 2023 – 31 Oct 2024): 3.7%
- Year-on-Year Growth: **+85%**

The quality and relevance of Instagram content have demonstrated marked improvement. It surpasses the progress observed on Facebook. The frequency of posts more than doubled, resulting in a significant expansion of audience reach. An even more pronounced increase was observed in audience interactions with the content (up **310.6%** from last year). This indicates stronger engagement and greater relevance.

Web Traffic

Unique Page Views (Nov 1 2024 - Oct 31 2025): **81,991**

Use of the Local Offer directories was approximately 4 times higher than that of the website's directories. It would be expected that universal services would have a higher traffic rate. The Local Offer should have fewer, since it's specialist subset of the universal offer for families. It highlights a need for the Local Offer to be clearer about its remit and function.

Next Step:

Develop communications and a marketing campaign about the remit and resources available.

Google Analytics

Google Analytics tracks how visitors used Google to find pages and listings on the SEND Local Offer. Most users discover SEND Local Offer content via Google searches.

Nov 1 2024 – Oct 31 2025

1. **SEND Local Offer Homepage** (*Webpage*) - 5,426 Referrals from Google
2. **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Child Protection Team - NCT** (*Directory Listing*) - 4,063 Referrals from Google
3. **SEND Local Offer Directory Start Page** - 2,680 Referrals from Google
4. **West Northamptonshire Employment Agencies** (*Directory Listing*) - 1,685 Referrals from Google
5. **Inclusion and Intervention Support Team (IIST) - WNC** (*Directory Listing*) - 1,639 Referrals from Google

6. **SEND Local Offer Directory** (*Special Schools filter*) - 1,490 Referrals from Google
7. **The SEND Ranges – WNC** (*Directory Listing*) - 1,118 Referrals from Google
8. **CFSS Strengthening Families (Disabled Children's Support) - NCT** (*Directory Listing*) - 1,080 Referrals from Google
9. **DWP - Jobcentre Plus, Northampton** (*Directory Listing*) - 1,017 Referrals from Google
10. **School Attendance Support Service (SASS) - WNC** (*Directory Listing*) - 946 Referrals from Google

Meilisearch

Meilisearch is the website's own search engine. It looks at how many people used the built-in search-bar, which keywords they used, and whether they found something.

Average number of directory searches (per week): **2639**, showing active exploration and use of the directory.

Average number of unique users (who searched the directory rather than using Google) per week: **223**. This indicates consistent engagement with the directory. It suggests the directory is a valued resource for information.

Average number of unsuccessful directory searches (per week): **4.79%**. This equates to around 126. This is a marked improvement from the previous rate of approximately 12% (noted before the postcode search was removed a year ago). It may warrant a review of search terms, indexing or content gaps. Many of these unsuccessful searches relate to universal services such as childminders. It likely reflects a misunderstanding about the directory's purpose. However, it does highlight the need for the Local Offer to be more explicit about its remit, so that users can navigate it more effectively.

Nov 1 2024 – Oct 31 2025

1. "nursery" (799)
2. "school" (614)
3. "swimming" (603)

4. "short breaks" (581)
5. "food bank" (581)
6. "high needs funding" (519)
7. "dance" (443)
8. "parent forum" (404)
9. "childminder" (397)
10. "alternative provision" (369)

Actions for the Next 12 Months

- Review and co-produce all SEND Local Offer webpages. Check them against statutory requirements and accessibility requirements. Work closely with the partnership's web team.
- Review eligibility criteria for Local Offer Listings.
- Complete Directory Audits and Fixes
- Confirm the workflow with WNC Communications. Integrate it into the broader communications strategy to ensure sustained impact and visibility.
- Support all Heads of Services and Managers across the partnership to share accurate information. Introduce a clear timetable of requirements.