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**Meeting Notes: Coffee Afternoon Newham Parent Carer Forum, Tuesday 25 February 2025, 06.30 PM to 07.30 PM**

Agenda and Topics:

* Welcome & Housekeeping
* Local Offer Update and Refresh – Feedback Session

**Total Attendance:** 26 parents and carers (online)

**Chair:** Yamou

**Co-Chair (Housekeeping):** Adeola
**Minutes Takers:** Rosie and Madhuri

**Speakers:**

* Nana Poku – Early Years Strategic Systems and Data Lead
* Sheila Begum – SEND Local Offer Commissioner for Children and Young People

**Topic:** Local Offer Refresh and Update

**Overview**
The Newham Local Offer website is dedicated to families with SEND children. Although a website is already in place, it requires a refresh to enhance user-friendliness and ensure ongoing maintenance. Thus we need feedback from parents and carers . The main website is <https://families.newham.gov.uk/kb5/newham/directory/home.page> when you go to the homepage there will be two secions Family Informations Services (information that is more general for all families ) and Newham Local Offer section ( that is goes into details to sercices support for families with send children) . LA also mentioned if the parents could review Local Offer website on other council and see if there is something we could take for Newham e.g got landmark on Liverpool Locla website.

**Feedback Themes**

* **Website Content and Accessibility**
**Parents:**
* A parent noted that while the Liverpool local offer site appears brighter and more interesting, Newham’s version feels dull and boring.
* One parent asked whether they could still access the website, as their child lives in Tower Hamlets while attending school in Newham, and if it meets their child's needs. LA: "Yes, you can access the website."
* A parent said it needs to be more inviting, with many different areas to explore.
* There is a lack of information on activities available for families, children, and those who require one-to-one trained support. The information is also outdated.
* Limited information is available on personal and family funding accessible for children.
* There are recurring concerns about outdated content, such as materials like the 2023 leaflet.
* Suggestions included clearer sections on personal or provisional budgets, the appeals process, and information regarding short breaks for children. There was also a call for enhanced training support details for families requiring one-to-one assistance.
* The website contains overwhelming information at times, which can cause users to lose interest and leave the page.
* One parent asked how often the website is checked and updated.

**LA :**

* There is a vast amount of information on the website. We wanted to know how we can simplify the information and how best to present it to you.
* Sheila mentioned that there is a "Contact Us" option at the top of the website for reporting outdated information.
* Current efforts include the "100 Days Challenge," where the LA commits to reviewing pages, updating broken links, and making other improvements, with the goal of completing these updates by May.
* Sheila mentioned that : Please do have a look at other LA sites and email us with any thoughts on what we can implement for Newham: sheila.begum@newham.gov.uk or local.offer@newham.gov.uk
* **Presentation and Navigation:**

**Parents:**

* A parent mentioned that the website previously featured more icons, images, and even sign language options.
* Currently, finding the desired section is time-consuming and overwhelming due to the volume of outdated information.
* One user mentioned that feedback button was not easily visible.
* Parents wanted to see the website to be more inclusive.
* one parent facing dificulty into find and download documents which is not easily accessible.
* one parent asked about access of family hub / parenting courses which easily accessavle like before
* **Promotion**
* **Parents:**
Parents have suggested that the website is not well-promoted. They only heard it from a meeting like this. Social workers don’t also talk about this website. It need for better outreach or promotion e.g at schools.

**Other comments:**

* A parent mentioned a less chance to get the short break activities (her child is 11 and 5 years old)
* A parent mentioned day centre staff are not trained for handling SEND children so that the parent couldn’t leave his son.
* RfA have different working models for Barnet, Southwark, Lewisham, Waltham Forest. They have done studies on this. This can be shared with Newham.