

# Information Advice and Guidance

## People Scrutiny Committee

Mark Harvey Exec Director Adults and Communities

# Adults and Communities - External

Commissioned Services	Provider	IAG Offer
Information, Advice and Guidance	Citizens Advice Southend	Finance, Housing, Benefits and Generic Advice
Adult Advocacy Services	South Essex Advocacy Services (SEAS)	Statutory and Care Act Advocacy, IMCA / IMHA, LPS, Non statutory, Independent Health Complaints Advocacy
Carers Support Service	Carers First	Carers Assessments, Benefits, Carers Respite
Direct Payment Support	Vibrance	Management of Direct Payments and individual advice and support
Healthwatch Southend	The Advocacy people	Health and Social Care

# Adults and Communities - External

## Accessibility

- The commissioned Information Advice and Guidance offer can be accessed by telephone, online, face to face and in certain cases via home visit if requested. Currently service providers are compliant with their contracts and there are no accessibility concerns.

## Areas for Improvement

- A review is planned for 2024 to quantify current impact and quality of IAG offer and assess need for any changes improvement, as services have seen a rise in demand.
- The Advocacy and Direct Payments services are currently under review.

# Adults and Communities – In-house

## **In-house IAG Services**

- Access Team - Telephone and Face-to-Face

Telephone: 01702 215008. Landing page: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/social-care>

## **Accessibility**

- Information Advice and Guidance can be accessed by telephone, online, face to face and via home visit. All information meets accessibility requirements including NHS accessibility requirement

## **Areas for Improvement**

- A review of the Access Team is underway to realise the vision of Connected Southend. The portal will be an online self-assessment tool providing people with care and support information based on their living situation, physical, mental and emotional needs and basic finances.

# Customer Service

The customer service centre provides a first contact response to the residents, businesses, visitors and customers of the City through a variety of communication channels. This service is provided by Council staff and there are no commissioning elements to service delivery.

There are currently a variety of channels to access the Council; website; online forms (MySouthend); email; phones; in-person; post.

Whilst the primary channel of choice is online and self-serve, there are alternative routes for accessing support for council services outlined above.

The customer service centre aim to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact, whether that be advice and information, raising a request for a service, or reporting an issue. There will also be occasions where a call could be transferred to a 'back-office' service area for resolution for more complex enquiries.

The focus over the coming year will be extending the digital offer across the service for customer improvements and promotion of self-serve whilst considering the customer experience.

The cross-council initiative of reviewing the Council's 'Front-Door' is currently being worked on which will also encompass future improvements and alternative service delivery options.

# Benefit Team–Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Local Welfare Provision & Discretionary Housing Payment

- How we Provide Information and advice  
SSCC website ◊ Annual Council Tax Booklet ◊ Present at community & Networking events ◊ Outreach 'attending one love' ◊ social media campaigns ◊ sharing with charities and 3<sup>rd</sup> party sectors ◊ training on offer to support groups ◊ Resident e-newsletter
- Accessibility  
Website meets standards  
Benefits – residents are encouraged to self serve and all applications are made online  
Citizens Advice provide advice and guidance (corporate contract)  
LWP - claims can be taken over the phone for those who do not self serve.
- Future Plans  
Working with the front door theme to look at changes

## Online digital offer

The main place for information, advice and guidance online is the main council website, supported by the Livewell Southend health and wellbeing website. For adults it is predominantly the main council site which is used, supported with summary information and links on Livewell Southend.

As a .gov website, the main council website gets priority in google algorithm search returns. We also use a specialist piece of search software on both the main site and Livewell Southend called Cludo, which makes relevant pages easy to find through a variety of keywords. Both websites adhere to WCAG2.2 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines which defines how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities).

## Examples

### Housing advice

- <https://www.southend.gov.uk/housing>
- <https://www.livewellsouthend.com/housing>
- <https://www.livewellsouthend.com/directory/26/housing-services>

### Benefits advice

- <https://www.southend.gov.uk/benefits>
- <https://www.livewellsouthend.com/money-matters/benefits-advice>

### Adult and children social care

- <https://www.southend.gov.uk/social-care>
- <https://www.southend.gov.uk/childrens-social-care>
- <https://www.livewellsouthend.com/social-care>

### School transport

- <https://www.southend.gov.uk/help-costs/school-college-transport-assistance>
- <https://www.livewellsouthend.com/home-school-transport/home-school-transport-children-young-people-send>

IAG webpages are regularly signposted to through information campaigns. Digital channels used in these include social media platforms, newsletters through the GovDelivery platform and our staff intranet.

It is the responsibility of the respective departments to ensure information is correct and up to date – if any changes or additions are needed to information or presentation, departments email the web team at **webmaster@southend.gov.uk** to request these., or **livewell@southend.gov.uk** for the Livewell Southend website. Recently, the benefits advice pages were overhauled at the request of the team for example.

# Public Health

Commissioned Services	Provider	IAG Offer
Sexual Health Service – Education and Promotion	Brook	Education, advice and guidance on Sexual Health
Wellbeing Service (Healthy Lifestyles Service)	Everyone Health	Wellbeing interventions and services, healthy lifestyles and behaviour change

Note: Public Health manages the LiveWell Southend website which is a core part of the IAG offer (see digital slide)

## Accessibility

- Services can be accessed by Telephone, Online, Face to Face. There are no current accessibility concerns. The Brook Service operates over weekends. The Wellbeing Service is available Mon-Fri 08.30 to 19.00 and Saturdays 10.00 to 14.00 six days a week.

## Areas for Improvement

- We are out to tender for a new Healthy Lifestyles service, due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024. This new service will continue deliver IAG where needed to residents (based on key lifestyle factors and wider social determinants of health), as well as new requirements based on a review of the existing service.



# Stop Smoking Service and NHS Checks

Commissioned services	Provider	IAG Offer
Stop Smoking Service	General Practice (x 29 ) Community Pharmacy (x 10) Vape Shops (x 4)	Behavioural support, information, and medication or vape kit
Accessibility	The Stop Smoking Service has various access options via the different Providers and self-referral on the Council website . IAG can also be accessed via Livewell  No issue with access has been brought to our attention	
Areas for improvement	The Stop Smoking Service will be an embedded and integral addition to the Healthy Lifestyles service providing residents with an improved IAG offer. The Healthy Lifestyle service is out to tender for a new Healthy Lifestyles service, due to start on 1st September 2024.	

Commissioned Services	Provider	IAG offer
NHS Health Checks	GPs  Everyone Health – offer support to GPs as part of their wellbeing service and undertake outreach to ‘ hard to reach’ and vulnerable residents.	Identifying the eligible population group and offering a complete NHS Health Check in person , virtually .  Ensuring a complete NHS Health Check and follow-up for those who accept the offer
Accessibility	The national letter template is used to invite eligible people for a NHS check Opportunistic offer of the NHS Health Check in form of outreach to workplaces , local faith centres, wellbeing festivals etc. Promotion on social media Due to digital poverty the Cost-of-Living booklet has information on NHS Health Checks	
Areas for improvement	Seek to maximise uptake and accessibility in the areas of high deprivation and as guided by Office of Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID)	

# Health Protection Services and Live well

## Health Protection

There is currently no Health Protection specific IAG service, funded/commissioned by PH that is public facing. All got stepped down post COVID

For Health Protection messaging on flu, immunisation etc, depending on the age group or setting, we use:

- Livewell site
- Communications team for Social Media a
- School Learning Network
- Early Years Networks
- ASC Team via the Provider Hub and news letters.

## Livewell

Overall, Livewell Southend is the 'go to IAG' digital portal for all Public Health commissioned or funded services, that are public facing.

It has information and advice on and links on:

- how to stay well, as well as links and contact details for people who can help.
- services that can provide support for children and adults
- information, advice and guidance on local services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- There are relevant links on Livewell Southend, including links to prevention and early intervention services such as Cancer screening, NHS Health checks, Stop smoking
- As a .gov website, the main council website gets priority in google algorithm search returns. We also use a specialist piece of search software on both the main site and Livewell Southend called Cludo, which makes relevant pages easy to find through a variety of keywords.
- Both websites adhere to WCAG2.2 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines which defines how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities).