

ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

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Award category Shaping Places for People

Project Title SEND Next Choices - Getting Ready for

Local authority entrant Leeds

Partner/s if applicable Leeds Schools and Colleges

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

SEND Next Choices – Getting Ready for Adult Life took place at Leeds first direct arena in June 2022 and was the first event of its type in the city,

Video - please paste links to any video evidence here. (Leave blank if not relevant.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODen3bMVWZk> Publicity video for SEND Next Choices 2023. This shows clips from the inaugural event in 2022 to give visitors an idea on what it looks like. This is one item in a suite of materials which will be used to help prepare visitors for the event to help ensure they get the most out of it

Shaping places for people: How was this project an innovative response to a significant concern? (150 words max.)

Feedback from parents and young people with SEND indicated that they struggled to find information on the options open to them as they approached traditional school leaving ages. Various parent and young people forums were held across the city to find out more, including focus groups in schools with students and staff. This pointed to the need for more information to be made easily accessible and covering all the options available so that informed choices could be made about next step decisions and preparing for adult life. A specialist next steps fair was therefore planned which would supply information on Work, Training Education and Support Agencies who could help. To raise the profile of the event and to assign it the importance it deserved the Leeds first direct arena was chosen as the venue and working with Children's Services an individual invitation was mailed to 10,000 targeted residents

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the quality of outcomes obtained from the project (for example improved/more efficient services, increased inclusivity for residents, futureproofing the service). (150 words max.)

62 organisations booked stands to exhibit and 1,800 people visited the event on the day. Overwhelming feedback has been received from all who attended that they want this event to be repeated as it made such a big difference in helping them to prepare for their next step towards adult life. Comments included:

Such a great morning for our SEND students! They're all buzzing about their future careers!!
Felt quite reassured that there is support out there for the future
Excellent event with lots of options. It was great to have so much info in one space.

So glad the event is on in a high-profile place. Hope it continues to grow in the future
Brilliant to see an event just for SEN kids as can often get overlooked/feel ignored or as if haven't got a chance; this was great, made me feel special and gives me hope

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of collaboration between place and people services (both within the council and with external partners/providers). (150 words max.)

The event was organised by the Employment & Skills Service, who recognised the value of bringing in partners with expertise and knowledge who could help organise the event and make sure it was fit for purpose and accessible to all. A steering group was formed comprising a special school, a college, Children's Services, Employment & Skills, DWP, Leeds Local Offer, a rep from the parent & carers forum, SENSAP Team, SEND Partnership Board and Lighthouse Futures Trust. A rep from the Leeds first direct arena was also involved to ensure the venue and floor plan was arranged appropriately. Several leisure activity organisations were also involved, and they were invited to bring fun and engaging activities on the day helping to bring the event to life, making it enjoyable and memorable.

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the level of buy-in to the project or its goals from members of the local community, health and social care and external organisations. (150 words max.)

Schools across the city, and from neighbouring authorities, have commented that this was an excellent event, with 100% of our evaluation returns rating it as either Good or Excellent. Many visitors stated that this event needs to be an annual occurrence to ensure the same level of information is made available to all year groups as they progress through their education. Support agencies have also stated the same thing

- Was a faultless event, fantastic chance for networking, amazing to meet so many young SEND learners and to see them being valued and made to feel important. Thanks for including us in the event.
- Thank you for the opportunity to attend, we had some great conversations and it was truly inspiring and humbling to meet some of the young people in attendance along with their parents, carers and teacher
- This event is essential and must be repeated

Shaping places for people: Please give evidence of the use or consideration of new sources of investment to fund projects. (150 words max.)

For the inaugural event in 2022 exhibitors were not charged to attend the event, allowing us to attract a wide range of organisations, support agencies and charities with something valuable to offer on the day on the day. The event was therefore financed via excess sponsorship funds which had been secured from other events in the city.

This approach will continue to be used for 2023, although a charging mechanism for stands may be considered in future years where additional funds may be needed and only once the event has become an established and integral part of the calendar. In addition, exhibitors will be asked whether they may like to sponsor the event directly and whether they may like to take out paid advertisements in the official visitor guide.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

- Opening times for the event were scheduled to allow schools to bring students during the day but also to allow parents to visit after work hours
- Schools were offered help towards coach costs to help mitigate obstacles to attendance
- Advice was taken on the design of materials to ensure they could be accessed by everyone
- BSL signers were made available on the day
- Hearing loops were available
- Quiet spaces and rest areas were made available
- A networking session was organised for exhibitors during the break period to bring organisations together and to facilitate greater information sharing and collaborative working. This feature was welcomed by 100% of exhibitors
- A range of materials was developed to be used by schools in advance of the event to help prepare

students to make sure they knew what to expect and to get the most out of the day. Several of these sessions were delivered by Steering Group members

- Several focus groups were run in schools after the event to seek ideas for improvement and development
- A visitor guide was produced in advance of the day which listed all the exhibitors, together with a floor plan layout and a 50 word write up on what each organisation offers. Contact details were also included should visitors wish to get in touch with exhibitors before or after the event. This guide was emailed to everyone who booked a ticket to attend and additional copies were distributed on the day itself.

The event contributed directly to the Council's ambition for Leeds to have a strong economy and to be a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities by supporting people into work, apprenticeships and into further training and better jobs. The proposal also contributed to building a Child Friendly City by helping families to improve the progression and achievement of children at school, with a particular emphasis on students who have SEND.