

5. Local Authority and PCT responsibilities

Local authorities have a number of responsibilities to provide information about council services and details about other organisations providing information, advice and support available to their local communities.

In February 2007, [The Office for Disability Issues](#) produced their guidance [Better Information for Disabled People](#). Meeting the needs of disabled people is an essential part of effective information and service provision. In addition, good information and service delivery for disabled people often delivers effective services and information for everyone. This report highlights five core principals for local authorities to adopt:

- Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start
- Provide information through a range of channels and formats
- Ensure information meets users' needs
- Clearly signpost other services
- Always define responsibility for information provision

Effective signposting of other information or services is essential to making information accessible to disabled people. Developing close links with organisations run by disabled people and the voluntary sector can be crucial in effectively signposting information as they are often key suppliers of information to disabled people and their families or carers.

They are therefore already able to bring together a range of local information about a particular topic or service, including signposts to service providers, voluntary groups and health professionals. Improved partnership working in this area will not only improve the experience of service users but also improve value for money by avoiding duplication of information provision across multiple sources.

[The Department for Children, Schools and Families](#) has been responsible for the developing [Every Child Matters](#) Programme. Local councils now have a duty to provide comprehensive support, advice and signposting to all local services that have been developed for or are of interest to children, young people and their parents.

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) are responsible for producing and ensuring every household in their area receives an annual copy of Your Guide. The DH published their latest [best practice guidance for your guide to local health services](#) in November 2008. The NHS Plan, published in 2000, set out a requirement for every PCT to produce their own guide to local health services and this guidance provides additional advice and support. The guidance specifies what should be included within every publication.

Your Guide should provide information about the range and quality of local services to assist people in making the right choices for them and use services more appropriately. Also signposting to more detailed information on services and care where people want it, for example people with Long Term Conditions to support self-care, and access to emergency and urgent care services.