

## **“EVERY CHILD & YOUNG PERSON MATTERS, AND MATTERS EQUALLY”**

### **SOLIHULL’S ADDITIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY**

#### ***for children and young people with special educational needs or additional needs aged 0-25 years***

It takes a community to raise a child.

We are proud of all our children and young people in Solihull. Most children and young people do well but we know that some need more support than others or may need help to get ready for their future life. For these children and young people, services in Solihull are committed to working in a way which helps them have the best life possible - so we have been talking to them about how we can help.

When we use the word ‘we’ in this strategy it means:

- Solihull Council (for education, social care and communities)
- Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] (for health) – this will be replaced by the Integrated Care System in April 2022
- Solihull Parent Carer Voice (parent carers)
- Our Voice’s Heard (children and young people’s forum)

and we will ask everyone else working with children and young people to support this work.

We have listened to the views of children, young people, parent carers and those who work with these families. They have also worked with us to decide what we need to change and how to do this so we could write this strategy together. Young people and their parent carers have helped us write something that is easier for everyone to read and understand – written with them and for them.

#### **What are special educational needs or additional needs?**

We know things can happen in a child’s or young person’s life which makes it harder for them to be happy, healthy, stay safe or learn.

Children or young people who have a special education need or a disability may need support throughout their life. Others may need support at any time in their life, and for any length of time, for lots of other reasons. This could be because of their family, what is happening at home, health concerns, being a young carer, or a death of friend or family member.

The most important thing is that we quickly see when a child or young person might need extra support and that the right help is provided. This means that people working with children and young people see them first, and not the needs they have.

## Who is this for?

This strategy is for any child or young person, up to the age of 25 years' old who lives in Solihull and has a special educational need (SEND) or additional need.

It will tell you how people should work with you and what you should see happen. We want you to know what we are doing in Solihull – and for you to be able to question us if you don't see this happening.

If this is you, please carry on reading....

## What do we want? (our Vision)

You have told us that you want to **enjoy life** in Solihull. For us all to know that everyone is **different**. For you to **feel welcome** and have **the same chances** of living your best life.

So we want children and young people to have the best life they can by holding them **at the heart** of everything we do.

## How we will work together:

You have told us that you want to be able to **trust** people around you. To be **asked** what you want and then **listened to**. To know that people will **change** what they do or how they act by **understanding** how things make you feel. You want to know you can get **help when you need it**, and how to get it. Have a **choice** about what happens to you and be able to do the **same things as other children** - even if you need more support so this can happen.

Your parent carers told us they want **better communication**. To know **who to contact, what is happening and why** and **how** changes will make things better for you all. They want to be **listened to** and **trust** that services care about what is happening in your life and will **do what they say they will**.

Putting you at the heart of everything we do means that everyone needs to work better together. We can only do this if we have more trust.

So we will make these promises to you and your parent carers:

- a) When we tell you we will do something, we will do it. If we can't do something, we will explain why and let you know what we are going to do about it;
- b) We will be honest with you, listen to what you have said and show you what we are changing;
- c) We will communicate so you can understand us. We will let you know what changes we are making, how it will make things better and when you should see that;
- d) We will help you enjoy living in Solihull. To feel welcome wherever you go and whatever you do. We will find out what you are good at and what you want to do - now and in the future

Changing how we work in Solihull means everyone who supports you must think about what they do and how they do it. We want them to use these promises in their work and to check that you can see this happening.

### **Our plans:**

We will keep working towards a future where you can say:

#### **1) I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better...**

What we have done so far:

- People from education, care and health services meet every month in our Joint Additional Needs Management and Delivery Boards. We include parent carers, voluntary groups and other people in these meetings so we can all work together to make your life better;
- We have talked to people to find out what we are doing well and what we need to change so we can offer you the best support

What else you want us to do:

- Make sure **everyone** in Solihull thinks about how their work can help make things better for you. This includes sharing information and finding ways to check we are making things better;
- Help people know what support is available for you in Solihull. We will make sure this is easy to find and get support. That you can move easily between services and get advice on what is possible as you get older;
- Look for ways that staff supporting you work better together. So they include other people who can help and learn from each other. We will set out how we want those staff to behave and what they need to know. For example, staff will work together to improve what is written in your Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) if you have one.

#### **2) I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need...**

What we have done so far:

- You and your parent carers have worked with the Council and the CCG to design the children's and young people mental health service in Solihull. You named this Solar. The CCG and Council both pay for Solar so we can work together to keep improving support;
- Built on our work with schools and families to include how we work with independent schools so you can have a good experience of learning, wherever you do that;
- Developed our [Local Offer](#) for support and services available to you. Looked at who plans and pays for this between the Council and the CCG so we can find better ways of joining up and seeing gaps. For example, supporting young people with learning difficulties and autism through our Key Worker Pilot;
- Worked with your parent carers and therapy services to write our [Cross Border Principles](#) so a you can get support more easily and quickly. With less confusion whether you live, or go to school, in Solihull or Birmingham. We will be asking you, and your parent carers, if this has made a difference so we can look at other changes we could make

What else you want us to do:

- Agree what we want to do with families and how we will work together in the future (with the new Integrated Care System) to change things for you across Solihull and the area you live in. We will help other people supporting you to know how to get the help you need;
- Look at how we can do more joined up work between the Council and CCG to give you better support. Learning from what has worked well in the past or where we have seen problems;
- Look at how we can better plan and pay for support for you if you need help from education, social care and health at the same time

### **3) My voice is heard, and it makes a difference...**

What we have done so far:

- Solihull Council, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Solihull Parent Carer Voice have agreed to work together as equals. Helping us make a difference to your life and to your family [to read it click here](#);
- Started a children and young people's group called *Our Voice's Heard* (through Solihull Parent Carer Voice) so your views can help us make changes - and see what is, and isn't, working [to find out more click here](#);
- Produced a co-production newsletter to share what we are doing and to help families understand how they can get involved [to read it click here](#)

What else you want us to do:

- We will make sure that all the work we do, the plans we make and the services we review includes you and your parent carers from the start;
- We will write an Engagement Plan so that everyone knows what we will be doing and when. This is so you, and your parent carers, can be involved as much, or as little, as you want to. Helping us plan what we need to do and seeing if this has made a difference. We will find different ways to listen to the voices of all children and young people so we can hear what you have to say;
- We will make sure there are chances for you to be involved in the way you want to be. About the things that matter to you and at a time and place that works for you

### **4) I feel welcome, understood, valued, appreciated and included wherever I go...**

What we have done so far:

- Heard what you, your parent carers, community services and groups have to say by making chances to ask for views, ideas and feedback. This includes a group focusing on parks and public open spaces;
- Improved how services across the Council work together, and with the voluntary sector, to encourage people to think about how they can make more chances for you to do things where you live. This includes more options for "Children In Need";
- Changed how the Solihull Holiday Activity & Food programme is paid for and planned so if you have special educational needs and disabilities you can be included in activities over summer;

- Provided specialist support to schools to help staff improve how they work with you – so you feel understood, welcomed and supported

What else you want us to do:

- Understand how inclusive Solihull is - the places you go and the help you get. This includes community buildings, spaces, services, groups and organisations. We will increase trust and confidence in what they offer by setting a local inclusion standard. We will agree the Accessibility Strategy and Inclusion Strategy for schools and have a dedicated inclusion youth champion within the Solihull Youth Opportunities Board (YOBS);
- Have more training, learning and development options for all people working with you (staff or volunteers). This will include voluntary, community, social enterprise, public sector and schools. This is so they can provide better support and always value what you, and your parent carers can do, and are interested in;
- Develop a Solihull promise for help, support and activities to always be available for you. This includes better support for the Short Breaks offer and Holiday Activity & Food programme so more children and young people can be included.

**5) In planning for my future, I know what will happen, when it will happen and who I can communicate with about this...**

What we have done so far:

- Improved how we work with schools and colleges and introduced a yearly Transitions Event for you and your family;
- Improved how staff across the Council work together to support you as you get older, and put better systems in place to make sure this works;
- Reviewed our Adults project plan which looks at what we want to improve over the next year if you are between 14-25 years old. This included focus groups and workshops with young people and parent carers to understand your views and experience. The action plan will help us work together better.

What else you want us to do:

- Join up more of our processes and communication across education, health, care and the community so we work better to support you in being the best you can be. For example, we will look at our Youth Offer;
- Provide information so people supporting you (including in schools and colleges and your family) can start to talk to you about your future and what could be possible. We will do this in different ways;
- Understand Solihull's Post 16 offer and improve this. For it to be more welcoming to all young people, provide different options and help them into employment. For example, our Supported Employment Programme will help you get into a supported internship, unpaid work experience and paid work

## 6) I can get the right support I need at the right time for me...

What we have done so far:

- Made it easier for families to find support through our Family Information Service and the [Local Offer](#). This includes working with everyone who supports you to see how we can work better together – starting with how Health Visitors can work with families and early years' settings from when children are 2 years old;
- Put things in place so we can write better Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs), complete them more quickly and within the timescales we have to meet;
- Provided more special school and Additional Resource Provision (ARPs) places through our [Specialist Commissioning Strategy](#) and Alternative Provision Strategy. Put extra specialist support in place for you if you have struggled in school through COVID or found it hard to go to school because of your additional needs;
- We have worked with our therapy services to understand how long you have to wait for support and are looking for ways to speed this up;
- We have put a clear process in place in children's social care for screening and assessment as part of the an EHCP request. This helps with writing the plan and makes sure that any possible safeguarding concerns can be referred into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further consideration

What else you want us to do:

- Review our way of supporting you as soon as it is needed through our Early Years Strategy and Graduated Approach. Develop how we work across services in the Council (with Reshaping Education giving us a new Inclusion Team) so schools better understand how to support you and can get extra help as soon as they need it;
- Improve the information in our Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) so people working with a you clearly know what you can do well, what you need help with and how best to support you;
- We will work with our therapy services to find ways to speed up the waiting time. We will give you more information and advice whilst you are waiting and make sure you, and your parent carers, know where to find this;
- We will improve the information within our social care assessments for EHCPs to ensure services which can support you and your family are clearly identified and signposted to;
- If we have agreed that you need social care support, we will review this every year. This information will support the annual review of your EHCP if you have one.

We know it will take us a long time to finish all of this work. But we hope that 3 years' time you, and your family, will say we are doing better in all of these areas.

### **How will we know if this is making a difference:**

It is important we know if the changes we are making are working. You should see things getting better for you, and your family, so we will need to keep talking to you to check this is happening. We should also be able to see things changing by looking at what is happening in our services across Solihull.

We will be looking for....

- A strategy which everyone can understand; where you, and your parent carers, can see how your voice has been used and can see that the changes are making difference to you. We will hear this when we talk to you and your parent carers;
- People working together to help you. Helping you move between services and finding the best support that you say you want. We will hear this when services talk to you and your parent carers;
- You, and your parent carers, saying you feel more supported, involved and starting to have a better life. We will hear this when services talk to you and your parent carers;
- Less time for you to wait for assessments and services. We will look at the waiting times for health and social care assessments and completing or updating Education, Health & Care plans (EHCPs);
- More decisions made at the right time so you can get ready for your next steps. We will look at how transitions are made at the right time, how successful those transitions are and the number of complaints we get;
- More children and young people feeling able to take part in learning in Solihull or work. We will look at how many of you go to school regularly and who go on to work afterwards. We will hear your views when services talk to you;
- More places, groups, organisations and settings having, or working towards, a local standard of inclusion. We will look at the number of people involved in this and if they have supported more children and young people because of the work they have done. They will share the views they have received from you and your parent carers in their work;
- More volunteers and staff being able to recognise, and meet, any additional needs you may have. We will look at the number of volunteers and staff being trained. Groups, organisations and settings will share the views they have received from you and your parent carers in their work;
- More children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) feeling included in your community. We will look at the number of you who use the Short Break community activities. We will also look at the number of you who go to clubs and activities as part of Solihull's Holiday Activity & Food programme to make sure that if you can take up this offer, you do (30% of those attending). We will hear your, and your parent carers views, when we talk to you.

At the start of 2022 we will look through the information we have and talk to you, and your parent carers, to understand where we are now in all of these areas. We will share this once completed.

We will look at this information and share it every year. We will report to the Joint Additional Needs Management Board, which includes Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Our Voice's Heard, so they can help us check that this strategy is making a difference.