

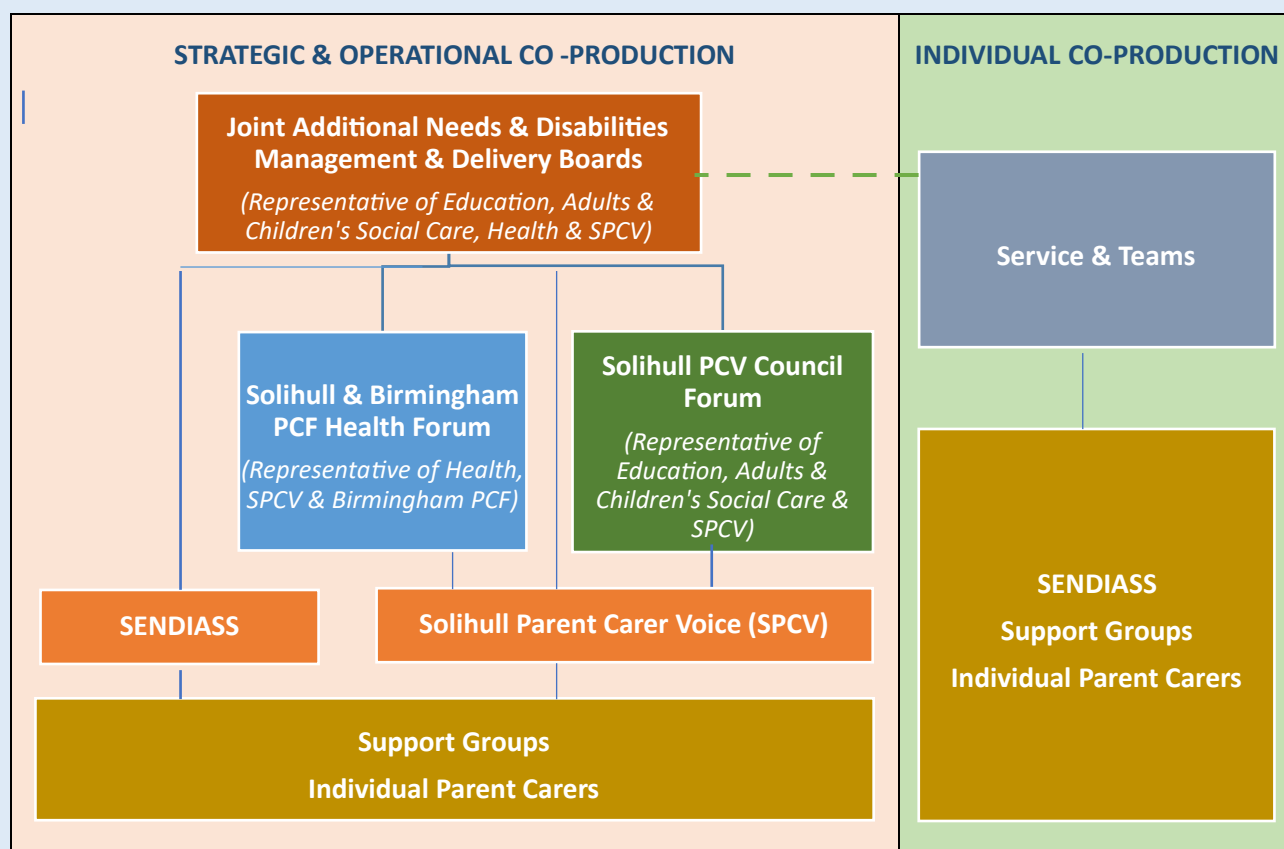
**SOLIHULL SEND CO-PRODUCTION
 UPDATE (July 2021)**

In Solihull we celebrated national Co-production week between 5th – 9th July. Following a number of social media messages, videos and survey launches, the week finished with an open virtual co-production event – hosted by Solihull Council, Birmingham & Solihull CCG and Solihull Parent Carer Voice as the three statutory co-production partners.

The event was designed to inform parent carers of co-production arrangements and plans within the borough. Following the event, we wanted to share some of the key points and answers which we did not have time to fully explore.

How does co-production with parent carers work?

There are various levels of participation running from individual (affecting your own situation) and operational (affecting processes and ways of working) through to strategic (affecting service delivery and provision) and parent carers will have different ways to engage:



How will parent carers be represented?

It is important **all** parent carers who have children with SEND or additional needs have access to participate. We are keen that all parent carers can access information, share their views and experiences and help evaluate services and provision. Online information and social media is much easier to get quick messages out, but we know this doesn't suit everyone – and some parent carers will find it harder to engage than others; for many reasons. We are therefore keen to hear from parent carers about the ways which work best for them and how we ensure views are representative of the whole community – feeding into all aspects of co-production through the available channels as shown above.

What is the Partnership Agreement?

This is a commitment between Solihull Council, the CCG & SPCV to strategic joint working - setting out how co-production activity will take place in the borough and the priorities for action this year (led by feedback from parent carers into the SPCV). This allows all partners to hold each other to account and is aimed at building confidence from parent carers on the work taking place. If you haven't seen the document yet it is available here [Partnership Agreement](#).

In undertaking this strategic work it is important the SPCV hears the true voice of parent carers across the borough and can help statutory partners understand the impact of any activity on children and young people.

How are you communicating this work?

This event was the first one held by the partnership and was open for any parent carer across the borough to attend – which is why it was advertised on all platforms at the same time. The intention for this event was to focus on the statutory co-production work in Solihull and therefore other organisations still involved in coproduction (such as SENDIASS) were not part of this initial presentation.

Going forward we want to pull things together in a more joined up way and will be looking at how best to do this. We will be issuing a survey to those who attended to see how helpful it was and take account of that feedback in deciding how we communicate more in the future. In the meantime, parent carers can also sign up individually to receive the Council's termly SEND newsletter email: [Solihull Council \(govdelivery.com\)](mailto:Solihull Council (govdelivery.com)) (*SEND section is under Education*). We already have nearly 400 people signed up to receive this newsletter but it would be great to increase that.

What is the 5-year plan for SEND improvement?

The new SEND leadership in the Council have spent time hearing the views of parent carers, schools and staff across the partnership and have worked with the CCG to undertake a self-evaluation of SEND systems. These pieces of work have highlighted a number of areas where improvements are needed to better meet the needs of children and young people and their families.

Whilst some of these areas have already been addressed it is expected that it may take up to 5 years for the evidence of improved impact on children and young people to be readily available; to provide assurance that the system is working as it should be. Many aspects of this improvement activity are under way, or being planned, but given we are waiting for the outcome of the SEND review some pieces of work will take time. An action plan is being drawn up to help all stakeholders understand what the improvement journey will look like.

What is SPCV and what are their priorities?

Solihull Parent Carer Voice receives a grant from the Department for Education to provide the recognised SEND parent carer forum in Solihull. The Steering Group took a management decision to convert to a Community Interest Company (C.I.C). The conversion means that we are able to apply for additional funding to enable us to do more work to raise the voices of parents and carers in Solihull and also has allowed us to be awarded funding to set up a Children and Young People's Voice so that their voices will be heard too. Being a C.I.C. does mean that we are a private business - however this does not change the essence of the work we do. We are not currently looking for additional steering group members however if you are interested, please do get in contact with us and we will keep your interest on file. Steering Group members must of course declare any conflicts of interests to SPCV.

SPCV is currently working on several priorities, as set out in the partnership agreement. These are: Mental health and school trauma, Education, Health and Care Plan quality, School refusal/school avoidance, Social care and Inclusion and were chosen based on the feedback from the survey we carried out in September 2020. Our priorities will be reviewed annually based on what parents and carers are telling us. This is not to say they we don't work on other areas - we are currently working on a large number of projects with health as well as with the local authority. More information about what we are involved in can be found in our newsletter: [Newsletters - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](#)

How can people get involved with the SPCV or find out about what they are doing?

You can find out what we are doing by looking at our Twitter @solihullpcv our facebook page or our website [Solihull Parent Carer Voice SPCV | Inspiring Positive Change](#) or by emailing us at solihullpcv@outlook.com.

We have asked if support groups and community organisations can provide us with a representative or a direct contact so that we have a direct line to hear views and provide information. Groups or individual parents are always welcome to contact us at solihullpcv@outlook.com or by sending us a direct message through facebook or twitter. We are hoping to add a telephone line to these methods of contact shortly. We are also looking for parent reps to work directly with us, the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and other services. We will be sharing further information regarding how to apply to be a parent rep shortly so please do keep an eye out on our facebook, twitter and website for further information regarding this.

Who do I contact in Education?

The StART Team aims for a standard response time of 5 days - although there can be occasions where this is not possible. If there is not an active new plan or annual review in place, with an allocated plan co-ordinator, parent carers are encouraged to use the general email address (edsen@solihull.gov.uk) or phone number (0121 704 6690) so their query can be directed to the right person. We have a number of new staff joining the team over the summer and will then publicise updated individual contact details on the Local Offer.

Children and young people with an EHCP are supported by the LA they live within, even if they attend a school elsewhere – however if parents have concerns about the school their child attends we would always encourage discussion with the Head Teacher and/or Chair of Governors first. Where Solihull children and young people with an EHCP are placed in out of borough schools, it is Solihull Council's duty to maintain the plan and work

with parent carers. We are creating a new post within the StART Team to oversee children placed in independent settings to increase our monitoring role and will provide an update once we have recruited.

How are you tackling issues between Birmingham and Solihull within health?

Both families and health professionals have previously highlighted the challenges with regard to children and young people that live close to the Birmingham/Solihull border - often causing difficulty or confusion in families accessing services. In response to this a community therapy services 'cross border working principles' document was coproduced with the CCG, provider organisations and the parent carer forums (Birmingham and Solihull). The document was signed off by parent carers across Birmingham and Solihull and is included in the Local Offer for each area. The principles outline how services are commissioned, delivered, how the borders are set out and how Birmingham and Solihull partners will work together effectively and efficiently. We are working to continually monitor how this has been implemented.

Both Birmingham and Solihull have Designated Clinical Officers (DCO's) and Designated Medical Officers (DMO's) who support the work around SEND and Education Health Care Plans (EHCP's). The designate teams strengthen collaborative working across Birmingham and Solihull with health and the wider system but also work to streamline approaches across both areas.

Have therapy services gotten back to normal?

Solihull community therapy services (including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Neurodevelopment) have, and continue to adhere to national and organisational Covid guidelines making adjustments to service delivery to ensure patients continue to receive a service offer where possible. This has included offering a mix of telephone, video, and face to face appointments as appropriate (excluding physiotherapy where face to face appointments are required to perform the activity). It is anticipated that future appointments will remain a mix of face to face, virtual and telephone where appropriate, as parents have provided positive feedback and highlighted the flexibility that this mix of options brings.

Several community therapy services deliver support to or within schools, with regular communication held between children's community therapy services and schools, regarding access and service provision updates. Schools within Solihull have the contact details of all community therapy services to liaise with leads as and when required to ensure support is continued to children and young people in their settings.

We acknowledge that wait times are high and have increased following Covid impacts; predominantly because of service suspension, staff redeployment and a recent high staff turnover, but this is in-line with national increases in requests for assessments.

The Specialist Assessment Service (SAS) provides assessment and diagnosis for children (0-18 years) presenting with potential difficulties associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). During the lockdown period the SAS was suspended in line with NHSE guidance and trust policy between the April 2020 and October 2020. This has unfortunately resulted in more children waiting for their assessment, and the average waiting time for assessment increasing from 26 weeks pre-Covid to 73 weeks currently. Each assessment has been taking a little longer due to the extra Covid measures needed to keep everyone safe. The attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) service is seeing children for an initial appointment within 6-8 weeks and diagnosis (where

appropriate) within an average of 4-6 months. Plans are in development to mitigate these impacts and reduce the waiting times in forthcoming months through a recruitment plan to vacancies, return to usual service delivery levels and clinical prioritisation reviews.

Is there a new pathway for Selective mutism?

Various queries regarding the existence of a Selective Mutism pathway of assessment and intervention have been raised by Solihull parent-carers at the BSOL Health SEND Parent Carer Forum (PCF). The CCG has established a small subgroup of the Health-SEND PCF to investigate and scope out the current position and services available to support Selective Mutism. The subgroup agreed to co-produce a parent-carer leaflet explaining Selective Mutism and what's available in Solihull.

The Specialist Teacher (SISS) team delivered training in identifying and managing selective mutism to all SENCOs in Solihull schools in June 2021.

What work is happening around co-morbid conditions?

The Autism services are aware of the overlaps with co-morbid mental health conditions and Forward-Thinking Birmingham work closely with BCHC in terms of the diagnosis process where mental health issues are present. The CCG also commission Autism West Midlands (AWM) who provide support to people with Autism which includes supporting and helping to minimise those anxieties. However, the CCG acknowledge parental concerns around this area and that further work is required to seek children, young people and families' views around co-morbid conditions that will be included in future service development, along with greater training in comorbid conditions with our partners.

How are the CCG helping with the mental health issues in Solihull?

During the Covid pandemic our local position reflected the national challenge. This did impact on waiting times for services however, it was greatly helped by the fast pace that high quality digital mental health services were developed and put in place to ensure that many children and families were still able to receive appropriate care and support.

We have worked closely with system partners to create opportunities for joint working, this included the development of a BSOL wide communication plan. The plan was developed to ensure all available support from mental health providers and the voluntary, community sector (VCS) was promoted in a variety of places using a variety of mediums such as local radio, local shops, community locations. Furthermore, there has been system wide development of digital solutions such as webinars for children, young people, parents/carers, GPs, and the wider workforce. This supports the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources to ensure quality and best use of resources including time and money.

The BSOL parent-carers voice and parent-carer forum is central to how we are strengthening our understanding on how services are accessed and experienced by both children, young people, and families, and have been central to the design and implementation of the mental health key workers support model.

The key workers support model is a pilot funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) for CYP and their families/ carers experiencing mental health concerns, which is being co-produced locally, to be delivered

by Barnardo's. Event workshops will be taking place to co-produce the pilot outcomes and define young people's priorities with regard to choice and control.

The role of the keyworker will be to:

- support CYP with learning disabilities and/or autism who are known to specialist services, at risk of crisis and or admission;
- provide independent challenge to the system on behalf of families;
- enhance inter-service communication;
- support young people to reach their potential by navigating the system from their point of view, enhance inter-service communication, connect to education, health, care, youth justice and advocacy

Solar is the mental health provider for children and young people mental health service and focuses on preventative work and early access to care. Solar has a nurse led crisis team that works 8am - 8pm seven days a week with access to medic cover Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. This team provides assessment, support, and crisis intervention to children and young people who reside within the Solihull area. They work closely with Heartlands Hospital to see any children and young people first thing in the morning who may have presented there overnight with concerns about their mental health / emotional wellbeing. The crisis team is nurse led and can access medics if needed.

There is partnership working between Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT), Barnardo's and Autism West Midlands to provide emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people in Solihull. This includes provision of multi-disciplinary assessment and treatment of children and young people with mental health or severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The mental health service (delivered by BSMHFT) works closely with community occupational therapy (OT) and the speech and language therapy (SLT) services where issues are linked to social and communication difficulties, to ensure children and young people are supported to reach their potential. Referrals for children and young people are accepted until their 19th birthday, or have a Solihull GP.

We have online the Solihull #Wearethinkingofyou schools' approach to mental wellbeing. This sets out the broad range of approaches that were made available to CYP and families/carers

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/Solihull-WeAreThinkingOfYou-for-parents-andcarers.pdf>

How can we access Mental Health Support?

Access to Solar - If urgent mental health help is needed you can ring 0121 262 3555 for advice and support. The line is available 24 hours, 7 days a week and can be used whether you are known to our services or not. For routine support please complete our [referral form](#), if you wish to discuss this referral please call us during office hours on 0121 301 2750

Out of hours: CYP and parents / carers can contact the 24/7 Mind Crisis helpline either directly or via the switchboard. The 16+ CYP can receive support from Solihull home treatment teams.

Children and young people who have been bereaved have easy access to a bespoke bereavement service through the single point of access. Marie Curie provided specialised one to one bereavement support for children in Solihull as well as group support. Marie Curie also has close working links within Solihull schools through their Hummingbird network. The bereavement service can be contacted on 0121 687 010 or email: birmingham@cruse.org.uk

An IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service is provided for Solihull as part of the common mental disorder pathway through our VCS provider partnership, with Coventry and Warwickshire partnership Trust are commissioned to provide the IAPT service. Tel: 024 7667 1090 and online: <https://www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/service-detail/health-service/improving-access-to-psychological-therapyiapt-93/>

General information and referrals to the mental health service delivered by BSMHFT can be accessed by the link: [Solar - Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust \(bsmhft.nhs.uk\)](http://www.bsmhft.nhs.uk)