

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## May 2024

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### *#SENDSpotlight*

On Thursday 9 May the DfE announced that Solihull has been successful in its bid for a new 150 place free school for children with complex learning difficulties. This is fantastic news and will create much needed provision so more children can access specialist education within the local area.

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### Promoting Inclusion for Neurodiversity (PINs)

NHS England are providing local areas with financial support to help improve the inclusion of neurodiverse children within their primary schools. The offer will be made available for 15 primary schools in Solihull. A number of schools have been contacted with an invitation to participate based upon the criteria set by NHSE, but if you are a primary school who would be interested please do make contact with Paula Thompson, Head of SISS.

This project will offer 37.5 hours of tailor-made support to schools to reflect their context and needs. This will include support for parent carers through Solihull Parent Carer Voice. The work will begin in September 2024.

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### Right Support, right place, right time

The SEND engagement hub ([Your Voice Solihull](#)) contains information parent carers and professionals may find useful in relation to opportunities for engagement and feedback on areas related to SEND. A new project has been added ([Right support, right place, right time](#)) to outline how we are using the funding we have received from the DfE to improve outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. Please do take a look regularly as updates will be posted.

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### Preparing for Adulthood

A new leaflet has been produced to help young people understand what happens when they move from Children's Services to Adult Social Care. Please promote this in your work with

relevant young people as it complements the revised information and video on the local offer [Preparing for adulthood \(solihull.gov.uk\)](http://solihull.gov.uk)

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## EHCP Service Update

The date of the next EHCP parent drop-in is June 26<sup>th</sup> 9:30 – 12:00 at The Loft.

We are also planning a co-production workshop for parents and children who are currently EHE children with EHCPs on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June from 12:20 – 2:30 . Families will receive an invitation to this event.

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## Placement opportunities for Supported Internship

Designed for young people with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP), Supported Internships are 1-year structured study programmes for gaining essential skills for work through workplace experience and training. On site job coaching will be offered to the intern. Placement opportunities are now available in Solihull Council and employers from the healthcare and industrial sectors.

Find out more from [this webpage](#)

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## Tuition Services

The new flexible contracting arrangements for tuition services are now in place to provide education to children who might not currently be in school and are awaiting a school place. The new contract provides access to a wider number of providers and different learning delivery models, with a view to meeting the needs of learners on a temporary basis.

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## Solihull Family Hubs

Four family hubs are opening soon in Solihull - [find out all about the services they offer here](#).

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## University Hospitals Birmingham – Children’s Community Therapies

Speech and Language Therapy are introducing telephone appointments for first contact following acceptance of referrals. This will commence slowly over the rest of May, while processes are implemented.

- Families on the waiting list have received a letter outlining this change; however, those who are not currently open to our service will not have received it. The change is to help with mitigation of risk while waiting by providing advice and resources directly to parents/carers & setting. Parents and carers may also access targeted level group training for speech sounds, early language, and stammering following the telephone appointment.
- Parents and education staff of children with more complex needs will still be provided with advice and resources while waiting and added to the appropriate review list for full assessment. This will enable support to be put in place around the child and any progress measured as part of their face to face assessment.
- This has been introduced in response to parent/carer feedback that many do not feel a full assessment is warranted. Telephone appointments will potentially enable us to support three times as many children in the same amount of time.

Occupational Therapy is continuing as is for the foreseeable future.

Physiotherapy have a member of staff returning from mat leave, part time and are recruiting another full time Band 6 on a newly developed rotational post.

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## SPCV

Thank you to all who attend our coffee and chat sessions, our next is on the 6th June, 9.30-11.30am at the Sharmans Cross Pub.

We are also looking at arranging meetings with professionals from a range of services, so that you can meet and chat with them about what is happening in Solihull. If you have any suggestions as to which professionals you would like to see, please do get in touch with us at [enquiries@spcv.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spcv.org.uk)

We now have a chart showing the structure of LA teams across SEND services, as well as contact details for the EHC service on our website. This can be found here: <https://spcv.org.uk/resources/>

As you may be aware, we are working in schools across Solihull, helping to build engagement between schools and families. We are currently working in 28 schools and looking to build this. If we are in your school, please do join us at the sessions.

We are looking for volunteers to work with us, helping to make positive changes across Solihull. If you are interested in volunteering with us, or you would like to know more, please do contact us at [enquiries@spcv.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spcv.org.uk)

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## School Place Planning

**New Special Free School for Solihull** – On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May it was announced that we had been successful with our bid to create a new special free school in Solihull. The proposed school will cater for up to 150 pupils aged 11 to 19 with severe learning difficulties and complex co-occurring needs and will be located in South Solihull. Over the coming months work will be undertaken to appoint an Academy Trust and carry out initial feasibility and design work for the building. The Department for Education will determine the opening date for the school once the process is underway, but we envisage this could be September 2027. We will share more information about this exciting new development as we move forward.

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## Educational Psychology Service

### Jane Sowter, PEP

The Summer term has seen Sidra, Craig, Wendy, Janet and I continuing to develop our SENCo FCG meetings, offering traded casework to schools, running supervision for our ELSAs and training for new ones, strategic work, EHCs, workshops for our HK community and delivering borough wide CPD on Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice. We are looking forward to starting the new academic year with a team three times the size of last year when our new staff join us – Monica Gehrke as our Specialist EP in Cognition and Learning and our two newly qualified EPs, Hannah Lees-Smith and Kathryn Brown. A wider traded offer will therefore be in place from September which I will send details of in June. Have a good half term break when it gets here everyone – the weather should be good!

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## Early Years Team

Between September 2022 and August 2023, we had 117 Early Years Team Around the Child (EYTAC) referrals. The numbers for the part year so far from September 2023 to April 2024 are similar to the same time period last year. Most of the referrals for early years support (Early Tears Team or SISS: Sensory and Physical Impairment) and Speech and Language Therapy are from Health Visitors. The Child Development check (ASQ- Ages and Stages Questionnaire) between 2 to 2 ½ years-old can initiate conversations about children's evolving needs.

Childminders, with consent, can also make referrals through this route.

The Local Offer signposts to a range of resources which can be useful for parents and settings.

<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/early-years-support>

There are a range of resources for SENCOs on our Solgrid site -

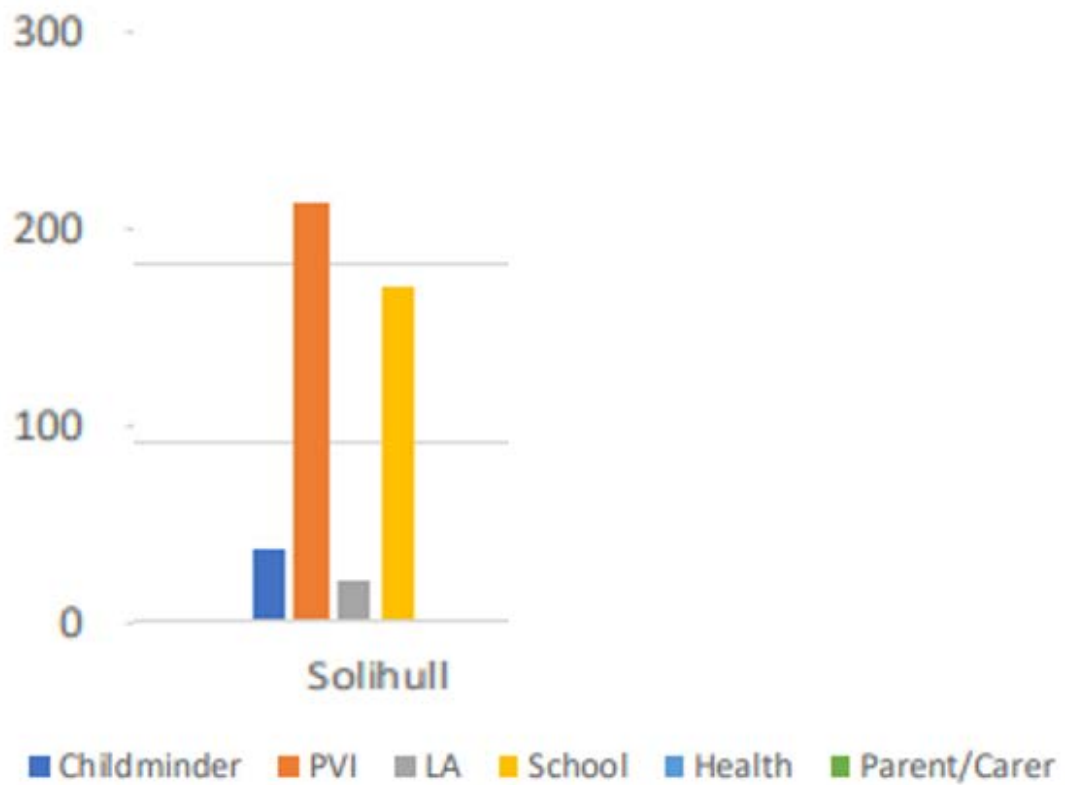
<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/examples-of-send-paperwork/>

There has been a slight reduction in requests for Area SENCO support and SEN Inclusion Fund during the year so far, after the peaks of the last two years. We expect numbers of children in an early years setting to increase with the expansion of the early years funding entitlement from April 2024. Eligible working parents of 2-year-olds can now access 15 hours funded education. This expands to eligible one-year-olds from September 2024. Group settings can refer to the [Area SENCO](#) for advice and guidance. Childminders can use the [Early Years Team around a Child](#) referral route.

We are proud to share that our support for early years and childcare settings continues for all Ofsted registered providers. All 113 childminders in Solihull had Ofsted grading recognising quality was good or better. 97 percent of our daycare providers also had a quality grade of good or outstanding. We are hosted a 'Sharing Success' event this term to share and celebrate some of the learning within nurseries.

Many of our providers continue to seek on-going professional development to ensure they support children in the best way they can. We have 24 SENCOs who signed up to level 3 SENCO training. 18 of those have passed their level 3 and 6 practitioners are currently working towards that pass. This is in addition to the 42 practitioners who have finished, or are completing, their Professional Development Programme training funded by DfE.

Here are the latest Dingley's Promise training figures for April 2024..



If you think other people you know would be interested in this newsletter please encourage them to [sign up on the Council website here.](#)

If you have any feedback on the newsletter, or suggestions for future items please email and let us know: [jand@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:jand@solihull.gov.uk)

**Charlotte Jones**  
**Head of Strategy - SEND & Additional Needs**

