

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## February 2023

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As we move closer towards spring, the days are getting slightly lighter and bringing with them a sense of change coming this year.

The new local area SEND inspections have already begun to take place and over the coming months we should hear more about the DfE's delivery plans following on from the Green Paper last year – so it feels like a year of greater possibilities for our children and young people with additional needs and SEND.

On that note, it was wonderful to see and hear some of our young people address Full Council at their meeting on 7th February – talking about their lives in Solihull and what they would like to see change. A true reflection on how children and young people can affect change. You can watch a recording [here](#).

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## Strategic News

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### **Strategy for Inclusive Education**

We had a wonderful day with all Solihull Headteachers on Thursday 9 February focusing on education inclusion – hearing from a number of renowned speakers working in this field and from schools within Solihull who were celebrating the work they have done so far in making inclusion a priority within their development plans.

The passion and energy for change was infectious and this was definitely the best way to formally launch our Strategy for Inclusive Education and encourage all schools to sign up to auditing themselves and talking to their whole school communities to understand areas they could develop.

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### **Additional Needs Strategy**

Our Annual Report on the first year of the strategy has been drafted and will be published later this month. As mentioned in the last newsletter, and our special edition, we have been seeking the views of children and young people, and their families to what difference the strategy has made over the past year. Thank you to everyone who participated, and

those of you who helped parent carers and children and young people do so. We are currently analysing the feedback and will include it within the annual report.

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### **SEND Peer Review**

As mentioned in the last SEND newsletter, a group from the West Midlands Peer Review Programme undertook a SEND peer review of Solihull on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 January. The team met with over 100 professionals as well as many school staff, parent carers and young people over the two intense days. Once the formal report has been received and shared with the Council's Children's & Family's Scrutiny Board it will be published, with our local area response, on the Local Offer website. We are pleased that improvements in SEND were identified by the team and that the areas for development reflect our own evaluation. I would like to thank everyone who was involved in this process for their time, hard work and honesty and am grateful to the review team in providing an external view on SEND in Solihull.

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## **New School**

**The Heights** is a new autism special school opening in Solihull in September 2023. It will grow in pupils over a number of years but will eventually provide 116 places for children and young people from Year 3 to Year 11.

We are pleased to confirm that the building works for the new accommodation for The Heights is progressing well. However, it is likely that the building will not be ready to welcome new pupils as soon as term starts in September 2023. The Council is working with the DfE and Forward Trust to make contingency plans in response to this, whilst ensuring children will be able to receive the specialist support they need.

The Council has started naming The Heights in final EHCPs for children so is starting to build up an understanding of the new cohort and will therefore be able to share plans with new parents over the coming months – both around the readiness of the new building and the transition plans being put in place to support children with their transition.

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## **Including children and young people with a hearing impairment - using subtitles**

We would love to see subtitles being used across all of our Solihull settings. For children with Hearing Impairment following spoken dialogue on a video, particularly an animation, is extremely difficult. Most streaming services have an s, cc or other icon you can click to add subtitles in just seconds. Subtitles don't just benefit children with hearing Impairment. This link shares information for teachers and parents about how subtitles can improve reading skills for all children in your setting: <https://turnonthesubtitles.org/>

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## Community Education Psychology Service

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### **Jane Sowter – Principal Educational Psychologist**

The service now has a stable leadership team, following the promotion of Dr Sidra Aslam and Dr Craig Joyce; who are job-sharing the post previously held by Stella Lawlor. They are both skilled and experienced EPs with a strong background in therapeutic work, attachment and trauma. The service already feels revitalised as a result and we are slowly growing again, with two future appointments secured and new associate staff joining us. Although the service has continued to shrink in size with further resignations, we have been able to streamline our delivery and target the highest priorities. Although there will be slightly fewer hours delivered to schools and work streams overall next term, service will be maintained to all. Where possible, new link EPs will be in place for schools and I will be contacting heads directly to explain cover arrangements. I do hope the arrangements made during this time of change meet everyone's expectations, but do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries. The service is always at the end of the line whenever you need us and we wish you all the very best for the forthcoming spring.

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## The Early Years Team

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A range of early years advice and support is available for families, carers and early years practitioners. This covers advice and guidance around supporting specific areas of difficulties in young children.

Early years advice and support

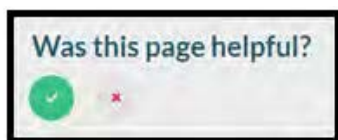
**Early  
Years**

### **Advice and Support page now live on the Local Offer**

We are delighted to share our support page for families with young children and settings.

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

We have built the guidance page by referring to the most asked for and perhaps most useful links. We hope to ask some of the families that we are working with whether the guidance is what they want. We would be very grateful if you could share your views.



Instant feedback is helpful as is more detailed feedback about content. It is hoped that the webpage will be updated and adjusted to meet the needs of parents and providers as we work alongside you.

Early Years settings can also access a range of information through the [Solgrid Early Years and Childcare](#) website. You will now find recently added resources that we hope will help setting leadership teams. We know that it is not always easy for leaders to get release during the day. We have been recording some of our on-line briefings so child-minders and setting leads can watch them at a time to suit. The last SENCo briefing focussed on



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## EHCP Service

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### ***Amanda Hana - Service Manager***

The EHCP Service have recently held two drop in sessions. 41 parent carers attended their session and the feedback was very positive. Unfortunately, no schools attended their drop in but we will try once more to see if this is needed, and hope this is because communications have improved over the last year.

The dates for the next drop-ins are:

**20th March 1– 4pm for any parent carer – The Loft, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5TN**

**22nd March 3–5pm for school staff – The Loft, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5TN**

**15th May 4:30pm–6:45pm for any parent carer - Civic Suit, SMBC Council, Manor Square**

At the moment we are working hard on transitions and from the start of February were already starting to name some placements for children for September 2023. To be able to meet our legal deadlines for Annual Reviews we need support from schools – because if schools do not meet their legal deadlines then we really struggle to catch up and get plans to parent carers on time. A reminder of those are:

- Ensure the review is booked in a timely fashion, and before the Annual deadline. Remember all Nursery 2s and Year 6s should be done **before October half term**, and all Year 11s, Year 13s and leavers should be done **before Christmas**
- Circulate all paperwork to be used in the review to all invitees **2 weeks prior** to the meeting
- Return the Annual Review paperwork, including any new reports, to the LA **within 10 days**

These are legal requirements so please help us with these. New Annual Review paperwork was introduced last year and has received positive feedback from parent carers, schools and other services so it would be helpful if all schools could use the current Annual Review paperwork; which should take you through the review process logically (and hopefully this will help everyone!).

Officers will attend reviews where this is absolutely crucial. However, no decisions can be made at Annual Reviews and an officer does not need to attend, even if a change of placement is being requested.

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## Education Inclusion Service

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***Michele Sadler, Head of Service***

### **Attendance training for schools**

The Education Inclusion Service is continuing with a programme of training for schools to support the DFE guidance Working together to improve school attendance. Next half term we will be running a workshop for schools (**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1.30pm to 3.30pm at Elmwood Place**) looking at attendance procedures, including legal processes. The workshop will focus on the expectations of schools and the day to day processes which ensure good attendance. There has been a lot of interest in the session and positive feedback from the training we have run this academic year.

The government is committed to addressing the issue of poor attendance, and this month announced an inquiry into the causes and possible solutions to the growing issue of children's absence from school. The cross-party Committee of MPs will examine links between pupil absence and factors such as economic disadvantage, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), ethnic background, and whether a child or a family member is clinically vulnerable to covid-19. Rates of attendance at alternative provision schools will also be considered.

The results of this inquiry, as well as the information gained from current EEF research into effective interventions to support good attendance at school, will inform future training. For further information regarding the training or to book a place please email

[agnieszka.polanski@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:agnieszka.polanski@solihull.gov.uk)

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## Children's Commissioning

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***Julie Hackett - Head of Service***

### **Review of SEND Mediation Contracts**

Work has commenced to review the current SEND mediation model and agree a new procurement compliant approach if appropriate. We believe this is a good opportunity to co-produce, getting feedback from parent carers as well as education colleagues in Solihull Council.

### **Short Breaks for Disabled Children**

Short breaks are leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respice from their caring responsibilities.

This year, Solihull Council is providing grant funding to a number of organisations to increase the number and ranges of short break activities (details are in the table below).

As a result of the grant funding the costs to families will be kept low, but for most activities parents will be expected to make a contribution. Providers have been asked to prioritise the allocation of places to those eligible children and young people who aren't attending a short break elsewhere. This in addition to the funding Solihull Council provides to SoLO to subsidise the delivery of a wide range of after school, evening, weekend and school holiday short breaks activities. More details of the activities provided by SoLO are available on their website [Social Life Opportunities Solihull | At SoLO We Help People with Learning Disabilities](#).

Name of Provider	Name of Project	Location	Age Range	Summary	Contact email address
Entrust Care Partnership	Unbound	The Core, Solihull town centre	14 - 19	Weekly theatre club run in partnership with Open Theatre. Aiming to develop young people's skills, independence and abilities to facilitate transition to adulthood. For 15 cyp. Project will focus primarily on ensuring Children/Young People are part of an active environment to improve physical activity levels, whilst simultaneously embedding skills and knowledge surrounding the cost-of-living crisis. 2 sessions a week, each for 25 children and young people.	<a href="mailto:lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.co.uk">lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.co.uk</a>
Inclusive Sports Academy CIC	Inclusive Sports Package	Hatchford Brook Youth centre and Chelmsley Wood venue	7-14		<a href="mailto:Claire@inclusivesportsacademy.co.uk">Claire@inclusivesportsacademy.co.uk</a>

North Solihull Additional Needs Parent Group	Opportunities for ALL	Connections Church in Fordbridge B37 North Solihull Sports Centre B37	7-19	Weekly evening activity to provide opportunities for up to 10 cyp to take part in social activities and develop skills, rolling programme of arts/crafts for 7+, sensory activities/games for 7+, cooking/independence skills for 12+, physical activity for 7+and gym for 12+. Weekly holiday club for 9 children focussing on confidence building, friendships, independence, parent respite and social opportunities. Range of after school/evening activities providing social opportunities and a chance to develop skills. Younger dance (3-7), Dance and singing (8-16), Younger youth (8-16), Gaming (8-11 and 12-16)	<a href="mailto:northsolihulladditionalneedsgroup@outlook.com">northsolihulladditionalneedsgroup@outlook.com</a>
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion Holiday Clubs	Renewal Family Centre or Hatchford Brook youth centre	8-16	Weekly holiday club for 9 children focussing on confidence building, friendships, independence, parent respite and social opportunities. Range of after school/evening activities providing social opportunities and a chance to develop skills. Younger dance (3-7), Dance and singing (8-16), Younger youth (8-16), Gaming (8-11 and 12-16)	<a href="mailto:info@signpostinclusion.org.uk">info@signpostinclusion.org.uk</a>
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion After School Clubs	Renewal Family Centre	3-16	Younger dance (3-7), Dance and singing (8-16), Younger youth (8-16), Gaming (8-11 and 12-16)	<a href="mailto:info@signpostinclusion.org.uk">info@signpostinclusion.org.uk</a>
Solihull Moors Foundation	Inclusive Youth Club	Solihull Moors Football Club	11-19	Inclusive Youth Club that will provide a weekly opportunity for 25 young people with	<a href="mailto:becci.fox@solihullmoorsfc.co.uk">becci.fox@solihullmoorsfc.co.uk</a>



additional needs to enjoy inclusive activities. Activities will include team sports, craft sessions, drama and music therapy sessions, mentoring and employability support.

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### **Who can access short breaks?**

Children and young people will be eligible to attend a targeted short breaks service:

- Up to their 19th birthday (or until the end of Year 13 if they attend a special school)
- If they are resident in the borough or are in care and are the responsibility of Solihull Council, wherever they are placed.
- If they have a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) that prevents them from accessing universal services without substantial ongoing additional support.

When applying to attend, families should provide confirmation of their child's eligibility. This could include any of the following:

- Evidence that the child or young person is in receipt of middle or higher rate disability living allowance (DLA) or any personal independence payment (PIP), or
- An Education, Health and Care Plan or Social Care Assessment showing a relevant assessed need, or
- A letter from a relevant professional (e.g. their GP, consultant, school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), community nurse or another relevant professional) confirming that the child or young person's needs mean that they require targeted services for children and young people with disabilities.

Eligibility for the targeted Short Breaks services provided by SoLO, and those activities funded through Short Breaks grants, can be accessed without having to undergo a social care assessment, providing the above criteria is met.

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## **Children's Community Therapies**

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The CATCH (Child & Adolescent Therapy Care & Help) soft launch on 26th January was well attended and the response to the changes was very positive.

We will soon be releasing our referral form and going live with our website.

We have taken on board suggestions around a glossary of terms, more guidance about age ranges and more links to universal services and we will be adding these to our website.

Other suggestions included holding approximate wait times on the website and this is something which we are planning to move forward with.

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## Solar

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2022 was a challenging year for Solar, which is being seen nationally amongst CAMHS services and the NHS overall. Mainly in terms of unprecedented referrals to the service since COVID 19 and staffing retention impacting on waiting lists.

However, as we move in to 2023 we are pleased to announce that Steve Harris has joined the service as the Clinical Services Manager. Some of you may remember Steve from when he was the Hub Manager for Solar previously.

With Steve's return he has a number of creative ideas, such as fishing groups and Assertive Outreach Work, which we will excitedly share with you all soon. We would like to thank Emma Brogan for all her support and guidance of the service over the last couple of years.

Other good news is that our Specialist Occupational Therapist Louise Baudet has returned to the service in January 2023 full time. We have welcomed Louise with open arms and she's already started working with our Assistant Practitioner, Cath Doughty, on groups that can be offered over February Half Term and all the other school holidays throughout the year.

Ideas such as a Robotics workshop, Lego activities amongst other ideas are currently being discussed. Louise has a wealth of knowledge and experience which will be of great benefit to our children and young people. Louise is keen to build a team of student Occupational Therapists and Support Workers to complement our Occupational Therapy offer.

Cath Doughty has been shortlisted in the Service User and Carer Choice Category, which forms part of the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust Values Awards, which again recognises the dedicated work she has done with a number of young people within the service. M Power, our Learning Disability/ Autism Specialist Service has also won Team of the Month for the dedicated efforts of Kelly Sheppard and her growing team. It is important to recognise the work of our staff as we continue to recruit more staff to the service also. This recruitment is going well and we continue to think about how we can work with our parents, carers, education and social care colleagues collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people moving forward.

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# Improving opportunities for people with learning disabilities, autistic people and their families and carers in Birmingham and Solihull

Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System have agreed the need to create a consistent vision across health and social care to help us focus collectively on the ways in which partners support people with learning disabilities, autistic people and their families and carers. This will help us as partners to prioritise our resources and to co-ordinate our approach to improve the support and outcomes for people with a learning disability and autistic people.

We have worked closely with people with lived experience and partners to develop draft visions for Learning Disabilities and Autism to ensure they reflect the lives and aspirations of our local people. We would now like to further engage with people, including professionals, providers, people with lived experience and parent/carers to help finalise our visions which will then help shape our respective and specific delivery plans in Birmingham and Solihull.

Further engagement on the draft visions and proposed priorities starts on Monday 16 January 2023 and

We would like to hear the views of your organisation and the people you support on the visions, proposed priorities and key actions you think we should be delivering. You can do this by responding to our surveys or coming along to an engagement event in Birmingham or Solihull. There are separate surveys for professionals and for members of the public. Easy read versions of the public surveys and strategies are available online and from Birmingham and Solihull libraries.

You can find the survey links and the following downloadable documents on the [Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board website](#) Engagement ends on Monday 6 March 2023.

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## Solihull Music

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Please find below link for a video made with our Inclusion partners MAC Make Music about our Inclusive Music group Creative Sounds. The video was filmed last year and since May we have significantly increased the numbers and diversity of our participants with additional needs. ( We now have 30 regular participants attending our sessions)

<https://youtu.be/bBlsyjewMvM>

Children and Young people with additional needs are able to join the sessions free of charge and can sign up using the link online: [Inclusive Music Making for Young People | Midlands Arts Centre \(macbirmingham.co.uk\)](https://www.macbirmingham.co.uk/inclusive-music-making-for-young-people/)

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## Solihull Parent Carer Voice

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### **As usual Solihull Parent Carer Voice have been really busy**

Our Autism Support Groups (Funded by the All Age Autism project) are now up and running with a group for parent carers of autistic individuals and a second group for autistic individuals aged 18+. If you want to find out more, please contact Emma at

[Autismsolihull.spcv@outlook.com](mailto:Autismsolihull.spcv@outlook.com)

We are also running some sessions about Long Covid- asking for your experiences of support for long covid and also offering advice and support about how to access support for Long Covid. The initial meeting is 31st January with further dates for February and March. If you would like to know more, please contact Kate at [Solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:Solihullpcv@outlook.com)

On **1st March** we are holding our 2nd Annual SEND Community Event at the Crowne Plaza in central Solihull, bringing together parent carers and professionals from SEND services. This meeting will be focusing where we are one year on from the launch of the Additional Needs Strategy, what has been achieved in the year and what needs to be done next. If you would like to attend, you can register for a place here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/x8tr2ck2Jb>

We try to make our events accessible for as many people as possible. If there are any barriers for anyone accessing our events, please do let us know and we will try to overcome these.

### **Resources**

We have developed a library of books that parent carers are able to borrow, further information about the books will be available on our website soon. We also have a number of iPads available for parent carers to use if they are struggling with access to online meetings/consultations/appointments.

### **Parent Engagement Groups**

We are continuing to build the number of schools across Solihull that we are working with to help facilitate and support parent engagement groups. We know that when schools and families have strong positive relationships the outcomes for children and young people are better, so this work aims to support that.

### **Workstreams**

We are involved with many different workstreams across education, health and social care, working to improve services for our children and young people and their families in Solihull. Information about these workstreams can be found in our quarterly newsletter that is on our website, or if you would like more information, please do contact us. Some of

these workstreams are: Joint Additional Needs Board, Education Inclusion Board, Autism in Schools, Children and Young Peoples Mental Health board, working with Birmingham and Solihull ICS to help develop the Autism Vision and the Learning Disabilities Vision, and many more.

### **Healthy Parent Carer Course**

As parent carers ourselves we know the challenges that we can all face and we know the impact it can have on our own emotional well-being and mental health. We also recognise that there is often little support available. As such we have trained to deliver a course to parent carers called Healthy Parent Carer Course, this course was written by Exeter University and Parent Carers and specifically focuses on well-being for parent carers. The course is run for 2 hours a week for 12 weeks and is online. Parents can self-refer, or we accept referrals from schools and services with consent.

### **Solihull SEND Community Roundtable**

The roundtable is bringing together community organisations and support groups that work with or support children and young people with SEND or their families in Solihull, enabling organisations to share knowledge and support each other. Currently the Roundtable has 24 member organisations which is fantastic. The last Community Roundtable event was the **8th February** and more dates will be coming.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice can be contacted at:

[solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:solihullpcv@outlook.com)

[www.spcv.org.uk](http://www.spcv.org.uk)

Facebook: Solihull Parent Carer Voice

Twitter: @solihullpcv

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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)

Thank you.

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25





# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## Health Update - March 2023

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### **Useful Information on the Local Offer health pages**

The information regarding health services is continually under review by health colleagues in collaboration with Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) based on feedback received from parent carers, young people, and professionals. Below are some examples of information shared and produced specifically for the local offer health pages for parent carers and professionals.

### **Situational Mutism (SM) Information Pack**

The creation of the SM information pack took place following feedback from Birmingham and Solihull Parent Carers that there was little information about how to get support for children, young people and young adults with SM in Birmingham and Solihull in the hopes of collating good quality advice and information for parent carers, professionals and young people. The pack can be found via the health the emotional wellbeing and mental health page on the local offer [Local Offer - Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://solihull.gov.uk).

### **SEND Health Designate Team**

Also available on the local offer is information regarding the SEND Health Designate Team. They work with their education, social care and expert by experience colleagues with a focus on improving the quality of experience of health support for children and young people who have SEND. The designate team represent health at EHCP panel, attend parent carer community events, will be presenting at the upcoming SENCo network as well as providing SEND training to Birmingham and Solihull GP practices. Links to further information about the team and who they are can be found here - [Solihull Local Offer - Health](#) and here [Meet the designate team](#).

### **Assessments for Sensory Needs for children in Solihull**

Following feedback from families that it was not clear what services were available for children with sensory needs the Birmingham and Solihull Designate Team worked together with Solihull Parent Carer Voices and local services to produce a summary of information for the local offer website which can be found via the health local offer pages or directly here [Assessments-for-children-with-sensory-needs-in-Solihull](#).

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# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## May 2023

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**Please accept our apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter, we've had a few gremlins in the system we use to distribute it which are now (hopefully) all sorted.**

**Spring may have finally arrived now the days are getting longer.**

Our Delivering Better Value implementation work began this term so we are busy planning how to use this funding to best support schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and how to join this up with the other development work which is happening across the borough – there is more on this below.

With lots of activity underway we are working hard to try to join these up for everyone so you can easily see what we are trying to achieve. Most important in this process is hearing from parent carers and children and young people so we are grateful to SPCV for their report following March's SEND Community Event and to OVH for their report summarising the views of children and young people – so we can clearly align our activity to the feedback we are receiving and what is important to them.

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## Strategic News

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### **Delivering Better Value**

The Delivering Better Value work is well underway. Currently the project is being scoped and recruitment has started to ensure we have additional capacity to deliver the required outcomes. After half term we will be sharing the project brief more widely and the specific detail of the workstreams.

There will be opportunities for schools to work collaboratively to support each other with the SEND priorities for their school and access to nurture training. A clear graduated approach for schools will be delivered and additional support and strategies to support our SEND children in



the right way in the right settings. More details and information on how to become involved will be coming next half term...

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## **Strategy for Inclusive Education**

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workshops took place in March and April. These were free to two senior leaders from every school in Solihull and were delivered by the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) who have been working closely with us on the strategy actions.

Here are some examples of the very positive feedback received from senior leaders in attendance:

'Stimulating session. Interesting and helpful to look more closely and consider where we are with equity etc.'

'Really useful to discuss with colleague and the resources are fantastic.'

'Clear understanding of the audit tool and how as senior leader I can lead this in school to develop inclusivity.'

'Great content, well-thought through and clear. Valued the Opportunity to reflect and consider our school strengths and development points. Audit will make a huge difference.'

53% of our 59 primary schools have now attended the training and are starting to use Solihull's EDI Audit Tool. 33% of our secondary schools and 57% of our specialist or alternative provision settings have also attended the training. A number of schools who were not able to attend have contacted us to find out when we will be running another session. The Council have agreed to commission this and will be in touch with all schools who have not yet had the opportunity to be part of this work to arrange a suitable timescale for this to happen.

Schools will be using the EDI audit tool and developing an EDI Action Plan for 2023-24, these will come into the LA at the end of the summer term so that we can plan support/ training and help coordinate similar pieces of work across our school community. The enthusiasm for this work from senior leaders has been fantastic to see.

At the Head Teachers' Partnership meeting on May 18, Nurture UK came in to explain the National Nurturing Schools Programme and the proposed cohort model. Speech and language and Nurture training were agreed as the initial priorities for work force development by the Inclusion Board following proposals put forward through the Strategy development work and the

Task and Finish group. This approach has been highly successful in other areas and feedback from the 3 pilot schools is really positive.

This term we will also be working with the Speech and Language Therapy service to agree the rollout of universal SLCN training in Solihull - free to schools from September 2023, and to put together a training programme with schools for developing speech and Language leads in schools, using a model similar to that with AET leads.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice and other Strategy Leads have been working on other actions within the Strategy to support Inclusive Practice, this will be fed back in future editions.

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### **Additional Needs Strategy – Feedback from Children and Young People**

As highlighted in the last newsletter, we have worked with partners to develop a short survey for children and young people to complete after meeting, or working with, professionals or services. People working with children and young people should ask them to complete the survey at the end of any session they are involved in (at a regularity appropriate for the child or young person). We are pleased to have received 76 responses so far and would like to thank everyone who has been promoting and supporting this.



The feedback will be collated on a quarterly basis and be used by the Joint Additional Needs Board to understand future areas of development. As well as the website link [Additional Needs Survey](#), we have also developed a QR code (right) to improve access for those using mobile devices.

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### **You Said, We Did**

In response to feedback from parent carers, we have developed a section on our [Your Voice Solihull SEND Hub](#) which all partners will use to provide updates on the work undertaken in response to feedback received from children and young people and parent carers. This will continue to be developed and updated to show the impact of their voice on services. This new page can be accessed [here](#).

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# SISS - Paula Thompson

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## Specialist Inclusion Support Service

This term we will be reviewing the service provided by the Specialist Inclusion Support Service.

This includes our four teams: Autism Team, sensory and physical impairment, Communication and Learning Difficulties (CLD) team and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) team. We will publicise the survey at half term and ask that as many services, schools and settings, parent carers and young people feed back to us so that we can review our service delivery for 2023-24 and make any changes necessary to develop and improve our service offer.

After May half term we will be working with parent carers and schools who have placed children at REFRESH to carefully plan and support their transition back to their home schools full time. This will also be an opportunity to review this provision and look at how to develop further when we take our next cohort in September 2023.

We have now received SLA returns for our traded services and would like to thank schools for their timely response in getting their SLAs back to us so that we can plan staffing for September. We have had an increase in the number of Solihull schools buying into the service for both teams next year. To clarify for parent carers, schools who don't buy into the Local Authority provided SISS CLD or SEMH teams, will buy in external specialist services from either a private provider or from another neighbouring LA. This information will be available on the school website and in the school information report.

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# Health - Clara Mcdonald

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## SEND GP training event

An information event for GP practices was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023. This was delivered by the [Health SEND Designate Team](#), Solihull Parent Carer Voice, and [Landau All Age Autism Service](#). The online event was held for GP practices across Birmingham and Solihull and the topics covered were:

- Understanding of SEND and EHCPs,
- GP role in supporting families of children and young people with SEND
- Referrals for Specialist Assessments
- The All Age Autism Support Service

- Support and contacts including signposting to the GP SEND handbook which can be found [here](#).

In the session it was identified that further events like this would be helpful to provide further information relating to support and services available for families.

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## Early Years - Lisa Morris

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### **Inclusion Fund**

As part of my role as Early Years Team Manager I work with Rosie Ratcliffe in the Family Information Service to write an annual Early Years Inclusion Fund report. I shared this with the School Forum Finance working-group and it is available to read [here](#).

The chair commented on the innovative ways that the fund was used and how it also allowed for practitioners to be released to take part in [Dingley's Promise inclusion training](#). There are a range of positive comments from both parents and settings which celebrate the impact of the support given to children in Solihull settings. We will be looking at those settings who did not return monitoring forms in 2021-2022, to identify settings to visit to monitor use of the funds. We will be using a similar Microsoft Teams form again this year to gather evidence.

### **Developing Practice and the Road to a Successful Early Years Ofsted**

Two members of the Early Years Team talked to [First Steps](#) Nursery in Solihull and you can read about their journey to an outstanding Ofsted graded inspection [here](#). As part of their inspection report and feedback, their inclusive practice was celebrated. Well done to the First Steps team and their Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

### **Supporting Transitions**

The Early Years Team work closely with health professionals such as Health Visitors to support children and families where there are emerging special educational needs. The Early Years Practitioners who give inclusion support in both homes and settings often work with children and families and their new setting to aid smooth transitions. Please read this [case study](#) of one 2 year old in Solihull who was supported to join a nursery for the first time. With everyone working together, and both the setting and family sharing information and strategies to support 'S', this was a positive experience.

We are hosting a North Solihull Early Years Transition event for Early Years Settings in June. Now is a good time to access the [Dingley's Promise Transitions module](#) and reflect upon your [arrangements](#) to support continuity and well-being.

Parents of children joining Reception in September may like to sign up to, or watch, the Preparing for School presentation [here](#).

At their recent **Solihull Parent Carer Voice** event parents asked about a 'pathway' for early years children with SEND. We have developed [a page](#) on our Solihull Local Offer as a starting point to support this.

### **Early Years SENCo training- Level 3**

The Level 3 Early Years SENCO qualification is for a Level 3 practitioner in a private, voluntary or independent setting. It is also appropriate for Ofsted-registered childminders. This is an important role to ensure the best possible educational outcomes are achieved for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education have funded places for Early Years SENCo training with Best Practice – apply using [the on-line form](#).

### **Graded Care Profile**

The [Graded Care Profile 2](#) (GCP2) is a tool designed to provide an objective measure of the care of children. It is primarily based on the qualitative measure of the commitment shown by parents or carers in meeting their children's developmental needs. Solihull Early Years Designated Safeguarding Practitioners are encouraged to attend one day of multi-agency training per year provided by Solihull Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP). By working together with families we can best support them and their young children. Further information about this training can be found on the [SSCP website](#).

Two of our [Solihull Early Years Leads](#) are core trainers and our Neglect Champions will be promoting the training at our network meetings. This is a priority area for Solihull and Early Years DSLs.

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## **EHCP Service – Amanda Hana**

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### **Transition 2022-2023**

The team with the support of schools and partners have had another successful transition year, improving again on last year's success. The outcome is a real testament to the hard work of the team and improvements that have been made across the service.

- February 15<sup>th</sup> Legal deadline: 99% of all Primary transitions were completed within timescales.
- March 31<sup>st</sup> Legal deadline: 93% of Year 11 transitions were completed within timescale and 97% of our post 16 plans.

### **Capturing Childrens voices in Annual Reviews**

We are always looking to improve the experience and participation of children and young people in the EHCP process. We are currently exploring and developing how we can support schools to capture the voice of children and young people in the annual review process. Their voice, regardless of age or ability, is a crucial part of a good EHCP. If you have any ideas on this you wish to share please email us at [jand@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:jand@solihull.gov.uk)

### **Team recruitment**

We have recently completed a round of recruitment for six new EHCP officers and a temporary maternity cover. Four of these posts have resulted in temporary staff being given permanent contracts. These posts will start during the summer.

### **Maternity**

Paige Roberts is expecting her first child in early July. Paige will be on maternity from the end of June.

### **School representation on panel**

We currently have good representation from Primary Schools on panels on Tuesdays. However, we are struggling to get representations from Secondary schools – we have therefore decided that we will co-ordinate a list of willing secondary staff and send out invites to panel rather than this being co-ordinated through the collaboratives. If you are a secondary member of staff and would like to sit on panel occasionally please email [edsen@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:edsen@solihull.gov.uk)

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## **Children's Social Care – Anna Stephens**

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### **Children's Disabilities Team**

Our Children with Disability Team has continued to grow to meet the demand for the service over the last 12 months. We had a new assistant team manager start this in May, who is settling into the team.

We currently have three assistant team managers, two of these focus on the management of the social work element, with the third managing the EHCP social care and Family Support Workers. We have continued the recruitment of permanent Social Workers to the team and this is improving. Whilst we do this we have interim social workers supporting the team.

Our Children with Disability Team continues to support children, young people and their families with all areas of social work practice to implement and support positive, impactful changes to the child's life experience. This may include an assessment and tailored support for children and young people with complex disability needs that require higher levels of support in which the

local offer cannot meet. We recognise that there remains significant difficulty with Personal Assistant recruitment across the region. Solihull Council is working with providers and local universities to help facilitate recruitment and we are hopeful this will reduce waiting times for children and families to get support.

### **Early Help**

As part of the improvements within Children's Social Care, a new Early Help Service is being developed which will support children and families much earlier. We have been working hard on developing and expanding our early help offer and this last week has seen adverts go out for family support worker and parenting worker roles. We are going live with our specialist team of Early Help Assessment workers within our Front Door, headed up by our permanent ATM Jade Price, to make sure that families receive the right help at the right time.

We are continuing to build on our partnerships with schools as we move our Early Help to a Team Around the School model, as well as working closely with the Family Hub development to make sure that we are able to provide a seamless and graduated service.

We will be putting more roles out to advert within the coming weeks including youth workers and a Head Teacher Coach.

Our teams have been working extremely hard as always and I am met with many case studies weekly with examples of positive feedback and great work. It is vital we get our Early Help offer right to ensure that we are best supporting children and their families and stopping their needs from escalating.

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## **Solihull Family Hub offer - Denise Milnes**

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Work is underway to develop a Family Hub offer for Solihull creating a network of 4 hub buildings, outreach support and a digital offer for families in Solihull, launching in March 2024. The hub offer will bring together existing family support services delivered by the Council, the NHS and local charities and is a fundamental part of the new Early Help model.

This exciting development will offer activities for families from pregnancy to 25 years with a strong focus on special educational needs and disabilities. Families can attend health appointments, social activities, parent support and peer group sessions. There will also be expert advice on debt, mental health issues, healthy lifestyle, adult education and more.

More information can be found at [Family Hubs \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://www.solihull.gov.uk/family-hubs) This webpage will be updated with latest developments on the hubs so please check back regularly to find out more.

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## Commissioning - Julie Hackett

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### Short Breaks for Disabled Children

Short breaks are leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respice from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks are intended to have positive benefits for both children and young people with a disability and their parents/carers.

Solihull Council has provided grant funding to a number of organisations to increase the number and ranges of short break activities available. This funding means that the costs to families will be kept low, but for most activities parents will be expected to make a small payment. Providers have been asked to prioritise the allocation of places to those eligible children and young people who aren't attending a short break elsewhere. More details about short breaks and other leisure opportunities available for children and young people with disabilities are available via the recently revised [Short Breaks Statement](#).

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## Solihull Parent Carer Voice

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The **SEND community event** on the 1st of March, 73 parent carers and 36 professionals attended. It was a great event for the whole SEND community to come together to talk about what's happening in Solihull, what changes need to be made, what is working and what the next priorities across Solihull should be. The report from the event can be [found on our website](#).

In April we also arranged for training for some community organisations in Solihull by Luke Clements who is a Social Care Law expert. Luke provided training regarding social care law and specifically how it applies to children and young people with disabilities. Slides from the training are also now available on our website: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](http://spcv.org.uk) We have set up monthly coffee mornings around the Solihull borough. Sendias attend and support our parent carers. The coffee mornings are a great opportunity for us to hear the voice of parent carers.

29th June: 10am-12pm Dickens Heath Community Room

14th September: 10am-12pm Three Trees Centre

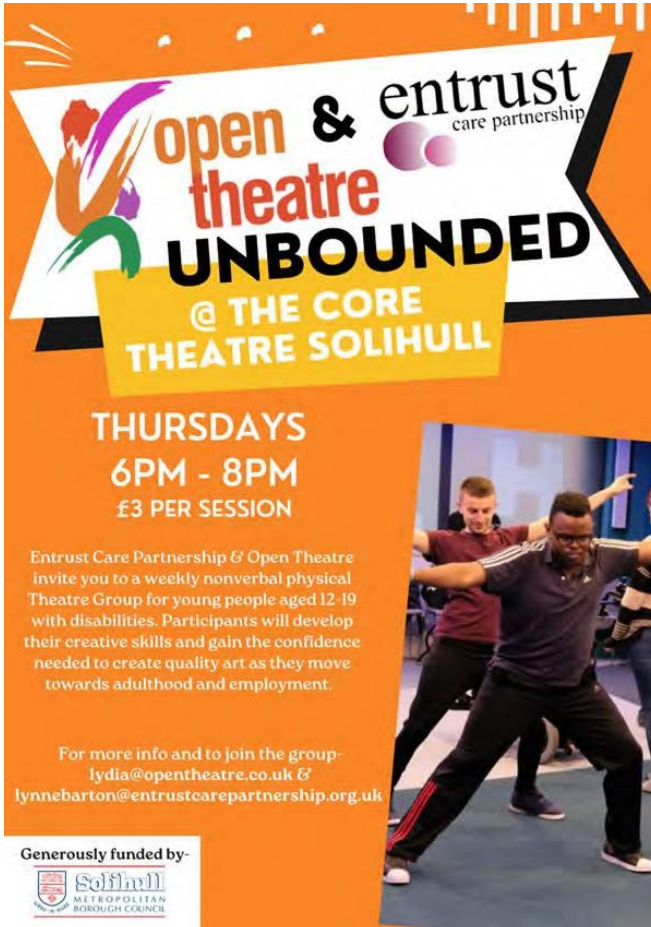


19th October: 10am-12pm The Hub Touchwood

23rd November: 9.30am-11.30am Ulverley School

As always, we are looking for the views of parents and carers with regards to their experiences of education, health and social care in Solihull, and the experiences of navigating these to support children and young people with SEND. If you would like to speak to us please do get in touch at [solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:solihullpcv@outlook.com)

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**open & theatre** UNBOUNDED  
@ THE CORE THEATRE SOLIHULL


**entrust** care partnership

**THURSDAYS**  
**6PM - 8PM**  
£3 PER SESSION

Entrust Care Partnership & Open Theatre invite you to a weekly nonverbal physical Theatre Group for young people aged 12-19 with disabilities. Participants will develop their creative skills and gain the confidence needed to create quality art as they move towards adulthood and employment.

For more info and to join the group -  
[lydia@opentheatre.co.uk](mailto:lydia@opentheatre.co.uk) &  
[lynnbarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk](mailto:lynnbarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk)

Generously funded by-



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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)

Thank you.

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25



# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## July 2023

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***Well, we have made it through another interesting year. Whilst it is tempting to move our minds to whatever the summer holds for us, it is also a good time to take stock of what we have achieved.***

The national SEND data was released last month and whilst we take time to look through in detail to see how Solihull compares to the rest of the country, I was extremely pleased to see our remarkable improvement in issuing new EHCPs within 20 weeks. Whilst the national average reduced by 9%, to 51%, we managed to increase last years 50% to 92%! So a huge thank you to the EHCP team, professionals, schools and parents for working together to make this happen and enabling us to support more children and young people and reducing the time taken to put that in place.

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## National News

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### Whole School SEND

Whole School SEND represents a number of schools and organisations which work together to better support children and young people with SEND. They provide a range of resources for settings and for parents. If you wish to keep up to date with their work and new resources you can sign up for their monthly newsletter by joining them: [Log in | Whole School SEND](#)

Settings: you can access a range of free resources ([Resources listing | Whole School SEND](#)) by joining the community. Nasen are also supporting the West Midlands Youth Suicide Awareness & Prevention Conference on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023 for senior leaders in schools. Tickets can be purchased here: [Youth Suicide Awareness & Prevention Conference TicketSource](#)

Parent carers: you can also see the resources they have available to schools, and find some helpful information for parents [Parents and Carers | Whole School SEND](#)

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## Local Area SEND Inspections

You will have seen that Ofsted & CQC have begun their new round of inspections following the publication of the new framework. At the heart of their evaluation will be the experience and outcomes of children and young people so their approach focuses heavily upon hearing from them, and their parent carers. Information about the inspection for parent carers and children and young people can be found here [Area SEND inspections \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

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## Strategic News

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### Joint Strategic Needs Analysis

As part of our work in understanding SEND in Solihull, we have produced a SEND focused deep dive into our needs analysis. This is an important document as it will help everyone across education, health and care to understand the current picture for our children and young people. It also identifies a number of key areas for further development work, or where we need to understand the data better to know what work needs to be done. This will help us ensure our further improvements, services, and commissioning work has the right impact for children and young people. The document will be made available on the local offer shortly.

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### The Local Offer

There has been a flurry of activity over the year to improve the information on the [Solihull Local Offer](#). We have heard from parent carers that the content is improving and we have seen a 54% increase in visitors to the website over the past 3 months. This is one of the priority areas children and young people have told us they want to work with us on improving so we will be working with Our Voices Heard to start that. In the meantime, if you have any feedback for us on the local offer, please do let us know using the online form [Feedback on the Local Offer | Your Voice Solihull](#)

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## Children and Young People's Feedback – Additional Needs Strategy

Thank you to everyone who has supported a child or young person in sharing their experience of Solihull services through the online survey. Their voice is vital in helping us understand what is working well and what we need to focus on. The first quarterly report will be shared with the Joint Additional Needs Board before the summer to relook at our priorities. Please do continue to encourage children and young people to give this feedback – using either the website link [Additional Needs survey | Your Voice Solihull](#) or the QR code to the right.



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## Specialist Inclusion Support service

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We are in the process of collating our annual feedback from school staff and parent carers who have worked with the different SISS teams this year. If you haven't yet completed our survey please click on the link below to have your say

<https://yourvoicesolihull.uk.engagementhq.com/siss-feedback-survey>

We want to hear about what we're doing well and what we could be doing better, so do appreciate feedback that provides suggestions for us to consider.

We've had some lovely feedback so far which in terms of what had been valued by schools and parent carers:

*'Practical help, prompt responses and a real understanding of the children's need. Thank you.'*

*'Their consistency They will support my staff as well as pupils They feel like part of our team'  
'An excellent service'*

*'The consistency of having the same person supporting my child. Also having the regular contact with that person. ... without her my child would not be either in school or able to go to school because of his mental health and ASD. The support given to him and school to meet his needs and understand him as been amazing.'*

We know it's difficult when in some teams we have vacancies and some change of teachers and Inclusion Support Practitioners, but we are fully staffed for September and will try to ensure that those schools affected this year have consistency next year.

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## REFRESH Primary Early Intervention Provision - spaces available for 23/24 cohort

We currently have places for the 23/24 cohort at REFRESH in KS1 and KS2. We will be offering another opportunity for schools to seek support for pupils from REFRESH and will be holding a further panel on September 14 2023. The deadline for referrals is 14 July. If you require any further information, please contact Claire Kennedy [clkenned@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:clkenned@solihull.gov.uk)

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### Little OWLLS

A small group run by Specialist Inclusion Support Service for under 5's, with the help of the John Lewis community room in Solihull for children who meet our caseload criteria of support for sensory impairments. The group has enabled children and their parents to come together in a social learning space to develop skills and attainment.



After successfully winning a proposal with the award winning *The Amber Trust*, we have been delighted to provide workshops to enable music sessions over the summer term.

Lots of fun and enjoyment has been had by all as they develop their fantastic musical talents!



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## Sensory and Physical Impairment Team Fire Station Visit

A cohort of 20 key stage 2 children, who experience hearing loss/deafness, along with their parents from across Solihull Borough attended Solihull Fire Station.

The session covered fire safety, including identifying fire hazards, and learning the technique Stop, Drop, and Roll. A range of alarms were shown, designed for people with a hearing impairment. Staff also covered how to contact 999 by phone, considering the difficulties and implications hearing impairment has.

The workshop also facilitated parents and children to identify with each other and share experiences. The workshop was very well received with some lovely comments being shared after as a reflection of the event:

*'We like whole idea; it is very important for kids to see and meet a real life hero in their local area. Have experience of something new'*

*'It was great for our daughter to meet other children who like her wear hearing aids.'*

*'Kids loved the Fire engine experience. Meeting up with other deaf parents and children.'*



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## Delivering Better Value

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Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The Department for Education (DfE) acknowledges the current challenges which local systems are experiencing in delivering SEND services. The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme (DBV in SEND) is aiming to support local authorities and their local area partners to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.

The DBV Programme recognises the current challenges faced and will provide valuable, short-term support to Local Authorities (LAs), and the local systems supporting children with SEND.

Solihull Council has been successful in its bid for an implementation grant offered by the DfE and is one of 55 LAs taking part in this 18 month programme. The programme puts children and young people at the heart of the approach and aims to provide sustainable changes that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We want to understand the experiences of the partners within the SEND system and have conducted a vast amount of diagnostic work including gathering opinions and views of parents and carers and will continue to share progress through a digital platform.

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## Health

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**University Hospitals Birmingham Community update – Claire Howell (Therapy Lead Paediatrics and Pelvic Health) and Rachel Yeates (Matron – Paediatrics)**

**Early Years Autism pathway** – this pathway has been in place since January 2023 for children who are below school age, referred with multiple professionals' input over time, with significant areas of need. They are being allocated for assessment with clinicians in the team with specific early years experience and the assessment process involves a more streamlined approach, utilising the information already gathered and often an play based observation of the child via virtual access or a placement observation.



**Autism Assessment update** – the second contract is due to start imminently. Healios are a private company who are funded by the NHS to provide additional autism assessments. This will offer 120 assessments to children on the waiting list.

**CATCH (Child and Adolescent Therapy Care and Help) Service** – The roll out of the new CATCH service is currently on hold due to staff changes. Before we can launch one point of referral we need to have one patient record, which we are unable to progress with until an admin team lead post is in place.

**Solihull Community Paediatrics:** The Community Paediatrics team have seen steadily increasing numbers of referrals for all of the specialities they support – Looked After Children, Child Protection, Children with medical needs in special schools medicals, ADHD assessment and General developmental paediatrics. They are working as quickly as they can to prioritise urgent cases and give appointments. The current waiting time for a new appointment is approximately 12 months. Please understand where a referral or follow up is deemed clinically urgent due the complex medical or social needs of the child/ young person these cases are prioritised. The team are supporting the ICB with a review of the services they provide, the staffing levels in the team and our computerised patient records systems with the aim to improve support, response times and accurate waiting lists in the future. At this time we are continuing to meet the statutory timeframe for Education Health and Care Plan medical advice.

**Solihull Nurse Led ADHD service:** Again this team has seen steadily increasing numbers of referrals. In fact referrals in the last 12 month period increased by over 100% on the previous year! This is reflective of all ADHD services for children and adults across the West Midlands and UHB are working with the ICB to look at how to better manage and co-ordinate referrals for diagnosis and support to be as timely as possible.

At the start of this year we had a change in our Clinical Nurse Specialist for this service and it has taken a while for us to get clinics back up and running following the vacancy period; now with some sickness in the team we are trying our best to run as many clinics and assessment appointments as we can each week but are very conscious that wait times will start to increase. This is a very specialist team and we are a small service of just 1 Nurse Specialist and 1 Clinical support worker. We are looking at 'agency' nurse and recruitment solutions to support this sickness period in our very small team.

The team continues to carry out school observations as part of the diagnostic process until the last few weeks before schools break up (we cannot make accurate observations during sports day's, leaving assemblies, class productions or parties as these are not reflective of a child or young person's concentration and behaviour). We have recently introduced QB testing which will hopefully help us to give definitive diagnosis quicker than arranging and performing school observations.

Please do bear with us while we embed this new test into our pathway; we are setting up numerous clinics for the school summer break period. There are currently 354 children and young people waiting to access our service and the 'average wait time' is 16.5 weeks. Realistically we know that this will increase if the sickness in the team continues.

**Co-Production Plans:** University Hospital's Birmingham is working very closely with its Vulnerabilities Team and Patient Experience Team to review its Emergency Department and Out Patient experience for children, young people and adults with SEND. We have made contact with leads in parent carer forums and young persons forums and are in the process of planning some 'expert by experience' visits to our areas.

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### **Children and Young People's Annual Health Check Uptake – ICB Learning Disabilities and Autism Team**

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- **81%** of eligible people in Solihull aged 14 and above received their Learning Disability Annual Health Check (LD AHC) in 2022 – 2023.
- However, only **67%** of eligible 14 – 17 year olds in Solihull received their LD AHC.
- ICB is working with our experts by experience to co-produce focused resources to ensure as many children and young people as possible receive their entitlement in 2023 - 2024. Focused resources to encourage uptake will include videos/animation and easy read leaflets/posters.
- If you have an eligible child or young person who hasn't yet had their LD AHC then please contact your GP surgery to request one.
- Helpful resources around LD AHCs for people with LD, their families and professionals can be found on the ICBs Learning Disability AHC resource page via <https://www.birminghamsolihull.icb.nhs.uk/health-information/learning-disabilities>

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## **Children with Disabilities Team**

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The Children with Disabilities Team continues to support children and young people and their families in all areas of social work practice to support positive changes to the child/young persons lived experiences. To support the team in delivering these changes there has been two networking events during the last quarter to support social care and partner agencies developing and improving partnership working.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 a Networking event was held between the Children with Disability Team and health colleagues from the Community Nursing Team, LD Nursing Team and specialist

school nursing team. This helped to support identifying the roles of each service and how collaboratively we can work together to improve services for our children and families.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> May the Childrens Disability Team held a network event with several local provider PA agencies and with SMBC contracted short break provider SOLO. This event supported in identifying services which were available to children and families with whom the team work with but also services that children and young people and their families can be signposted to.

In addition to the two Networking events held during April and May the Children with Disabilities Team also undertook a full days training on Mental Capacity Act. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) applies to everyone over 16 years old who lives in England and Wales and lacks the capacity to make some or all of their own decisions. The purpose of the MCA is to empower people to make their own decisions wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the MCA outlines how to allow others to make decisions on behalf of someone that lacks capacity whilst protecting their rights and interests. The training delivered will support the team moving forward in supporting young people and their families over 16 understanding the implications of the Act relating to their individual situations.

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## EHCP Service

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- Staffing Update – We recently had a successful round of recruitment for the service and have new EHCP officers and caseworkers joining the team over the summer holidays, as well as sadly losing some colleagues. A new staffing chart will be available from the end of August to reflect this.
- Drop in sessions – After our previous success with the drop in sessions for parents/carers and schools held at The Loft Chelmsley Wood, we are excited to offer these again in the next term. Details on dates and times will be advertised in due course.
- Transition season approaches – This year's transitions data reflects the hard work and progress in the service. We achieved 93% compliance on timescales for our year 11 transitions and 99% in primary age transitions. We hope to continue this as we begin our transition planning next term and encourage schools and parents to plan for these review meetings in the next term. The impact of this work will enable children and young people with an EHC Plan to positively transition to their next phase of education, supporting them to achieve their aspirations.
- SEN 2 Data – The service has continued to improve on last year's data and has achieved 92% of new assessments being finalised within the 20-week time scale. This is a significant achievement and we know that the positive impact of this work supports children, young people and families across the borough. We are thankful to all our stakeholders and partners for their support to achieve this fantastic outcome.

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## Community Educational Psychology Service – Jane Sowter

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It has been another eventful term with successful service delivery to schools, families and services - including the conclusion of our first training course for ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) and the last peer supervision meetings for SENCOs. Both these activities have been highly appreciated by the school staff involved so we will be doing more of the same next year.

Our associate team continue to work tirelessly to cover most of the EHC assessments and we have also started to plan training delivery 23-24, including round two of the Attachment/Trauma workstream. Following another recruitment drive due to the national EP shortage, we have secured one EP from Sept 24 but current frontline staffing levels have become severely low. This means that next year we will be offering a small and specific traded service – I will be writing to head teachers this week to explain how things will operate, so watch this space!

Many thanks to all our schools, families and colleagues for their superb support this year, we greatly appreciate it. Have a lovely Summer.

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### **Maternity and Early Years Strategy - update**

The attached [document](#) gives an update on the current position of the strategy. Work continues in the focus areas, and we will continue to be mindful of the special consideration needed for very young children in Solihull as we work within the complementary strategy groups.

### **EYFS consultation**

You may want to contribute to the Early Years Foundation Stage consultation which closes on Wednesday 26 July 2023. It could have some implications for settings and the care, learning and development arrangements for early years age children.

You can watch a vodcast about the consultation [here](#).

You can respond to the consultation [here](#).

## Who helps early years children in Solihull homes, schools and settings?

Find out more about some of the team members who might be coming into your home or setting to help you. This [document](#) introduces some of our team members.

## SchemaPlay in Solihull

Find out more about SchemaPlay, and the Solihull project, by reading this [summary](#) and watching the SchemaPlay video.

## Inclusion – a child's view

Ending on something to make you smile. The next Dingley's Promise training to be released to Solihull practitioners is the Child's Voice. If you haven't already seen it here is a CBBC video with children explaining why everyone's welcome from a child's perspective.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/everyones-welcome>

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# Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities

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Short breaks are leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respice from their caring responsibilities – usually lasting at least 2 hours.

Solihull Council provides funding to a number of organisations to provide Short Breaks. This funding means that the costs to families will be kept low, but for most activities parents will be expected to make a small payment.

Social Life Opportunities (SoLO) is our main partner and provides short breaks in the evenings, weekends and during the school holidays. If your child is not registered with SoLO and you'd like to enquire about becoming a registered service user please email [referral@sololifeopportunities.org](mailto:referral@sololifeopportunities.org).

You'll then be given details of any suitable activities that has availability for your child to take part in.

In January this year Solihull Council awarded grant funding to a number of organisations to increase the number and ranges of short break activities available (see below table). More

details about short breaks and other leisure opportunities available for children and young people with disabilities are available via the recently revised [Short Breaks Statement](#).

Name of Provider	Name of Project	Location	Age Range	Summary	Contact email address
Entrust Care Partnership	Unbound	The Core, Solihull town centre	12-19	Weekly theatre club run in partnership with Open Theatre. Aiming to develop young people's skills, independence and abilities to facilitate transition to adulthood.	<a href="mailto:lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk">lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk</a>
Inclusive Sports Academy CIC	Inclusive Sports Package	Hatchford Brook Youth centre and Chelmsley Wood venue	7-14	Project will focus primarily on ensuring Children/Young People are part of an active environment to improve physical activity levels, whilst simultaneously embedding skills and knowledge surrounding the cost-of-living crisis. 2 sessions a week	<a href="mailto:Claire@inclusivesportsacademy.org">Claire@inclusivesportsacademy.org</a>
North Solihull Additional Needs	Opportunities for ALL	Connections Church in	7-19	Weekly evening activity to provide opportunities for	<a href="mailto:northsolihulladditionalneedsgroup@outlook.com">northsolihulladditionalneedsgroup@outlook.com</a>

Parent Group		Fordbridge B37		up to 10 cyp to take part in social activities and develop skills, rolling programme of arts/crafts for 7+, sensory activities/games for 7+, cooking/independence skills for 12+, physical activity for 7+	
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion Holiday Clubs	Renewal Family Centre or Hatchford Brook youth centre	8-16	Weekly holiday club for 9 children focussing on confidence building, friendships, independence, parent respite and social opportunities.	<a href="mailto:info@signpostinclusion.org.uk">info@signpostinclusion.org.uk</a>
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion After School Clubs	Renewal Family Centre	3-16	Range of after school/evening activities providing social opportunities and a chance to develop skills. Younger dance (3- 7), Dance and singing (8-16), Younger youth (8- 16), Gaming (8-11 and 12-16)	<a href="mailto:info@signpostinclusion.org.uk">info@signpostinclusion.org.uk</a>

Solihull Moors Foundation	Inclusive Youth Club	Solihull Moors Football Club	11-19	Inclusive Youth Club that will provide a weekly opportunity for 25 young people with additional needs to enjoy inclusive activities. Activities will include team sports, craft sessions, drama and music therapy sessions, mentoring and employability support.	<a href="mailto:becci.fox@solihullmoorsfc.co.uk">becci.fox@solihullmoorsfc.co.uk</a>
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### Who can access short breaks?

Children and young people will be eligible to attend a targeted short breaks service:

- Up to their 19th birthday (or until the end of Year 13 if they attend a special school)
- If they are resident in the borough or are in care and are the responsibility of Solihull Council, wherever they are placed.
- If they have a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) that prevents them from accessing universal services without substantial ongoing additional support.

When applying to attend, families should provide confirmation of their child's eligibility. This could include any of the following:

- Evidence that the child or young person is in receipt of middle or higher rate disability living allowance (DLA) or any personal independence payment (PIP), or
- An Education, Health and Care Plan or Social Care Assessment showing a relevant assessed need, or
- A letter from a relevant professional (e.g. their GP, consultant, school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), community nurse or another relevant professional) confirming that the child or young person's needs mean that they require targeted services for children and young people with disabilities.



Eligibility for the targeted Short Breaks services provided by SoLO, and those activities funded through Short Breaks grants, can be accessed without having to undergo a social care assessment, providing the above criteria is met.

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## Employment and skills support

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### Enhanced information on employment support for Local Offer

As the academic year is coming to an end, some of our young people will be considering starting a career. There is a range of support on offer from the Council's Employment and Skills Team to help young people get ready for work from assessing career aspirations to developing CV and interviewing skills. There are also programmes connecting young people with supportive local employers. You can learn more from the enhanced webpage: [Local Offer - Apprenticeships and Employment](#)

### Supported Internship opportunities

To equip young people with EHCP with the skills needed for work through learning in the workplace, the Council is partnering with Solihull College & University Centre and Mencap for Supported Internship programmes. Primarily based with the employers, they are unpaid programmes with the aim of paid employment at the end of the one-year programme. If you are interested to learn more, please contact our Employment and Skills Team with 0121 704 6869 or [srtc@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:srtc@solihull.gov.uk).

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## Solihull Parent Carer Voice

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At the end of May we held a transitions event for families. This event enabled families to talk to services and gather information. We do have some copies of information leaflets that were available on the day. If you would like any of these, please do contact us at [Solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:Solihullpcv@outlook.com) We are also exploring ways to put some of this information on our website, however in the meantime there is some transitions information on our website including a guide for parents: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](#)

We also currently have our Summer SEND Survey open- it is really important for us to gather as many views as possible from parent carers to enable us to help make changes to improve experiences for our children and young people. The survey only takes a couple of minutes to

complete and can be filled in for each child/young person. This can be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Uibuy88KkN>

Our quarterly newsletter is currently being written and will be available soon on both our Facebook Page and our website. Please do look out for this as it will let you know what we have been up to over the last three months, what areas we are working on and what we are doing with your views and experiences.

We are also monthly coffee mornings around the Solihull borough. Sendias attend and support our parent carers and at some of the events professionals attend to talk directly to families. The coffee mornings are a great opportunity for us to hear the voice of parent carers, for you to find out about things in Solihull and to ask questions, as well as meeting other parent carers.

19<sup>th</sup> July- 10am-11.30am The Family Tree Social Club, Clopton Crescent, B37 6QT (Tim Browne, Assistant Director for Education will be attending)

11<sup>th</sup> September- 10am-12pm Evergreen Hub

14<sup>th</sup> September: 10am-12pm Three Trees Centre

19<sup>th</sup> October: 10am-12pm The Hub Touchwood

23<sup>rd</sup> November: 9.30am-11.30am Ulverley School

As always, we are looking for views of parents and carers with regards to their experiences of education, health and social care in Solihull, and the experiences of navigating these to support children and young people with SEND. If you would like to speak to us, please do get in touch at [solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:solihullpcv@outlook.com)

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## Solihull Music Service

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**In partnership with Mac Makes Music, there are a number of free inclusive ensembles available at Solihull Music for young people with additional needs and their families. Contact [solihullmusic@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:solihullmusic@solihull.gov.uk) for more information and to sign up for September 2023.**

**Creative Sounds: Wednesday Music Making** is an inclusive out of school music group for KS2/3 children and their families who are interested in composing new songs, trying new instruments and singing to come together in a safe and friendly environment.  
Wednesdays 5.00-5.45 or 6.00-6.45

**Creative Sounds: Wednesday: Drumming Club**

An opportunity for young people aged 16-25 to come together to play djembes, learn new songs and make new friends in a friendly, welcoming environment.

Wednesday 5-5.45pm

**Creative Sounds: Saturday Music Makers** is a bi weekly music group for children, young people and their families who are interested in learning to play new instruments, sing songs and make music with new friends. Sessions incorporate free play enabling young people to explore the instruments as well as short group activities where we sing and make music together.

Saturday 10.00-10.45am bi weekly

[Creative Sounds flyer](#)

#### **Solihull Inclusive Choir:**

A singing and signing choir open to all children, young people and their families. There is no need for any previous experience, just a desire to get creative and have fun!

Saturday 11.00-12.00 bi weekly

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## **All Age Autism Support Service**

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### **How is the *All Age Autism Support Service* supporting Solihull?**

The All Age Autism Support Service provides support to autistic people, their families/carers with the following three areas. Its aim - to bring new autistic support services onto the market to enhance support, to encourage innovation and creativity, to reflect local issues and the need of autistic people & their families/carers. These services include support in emotional support, sleep, education & learning, social support & sensory issues.

- **A self-help, searchable Service Directory listing all autism support** available in the area for all ages – this includes events, organisations providing autism support  
<https://www.aadirectory.co.uk/>
- **A website referral process allowing self-referrals** to organisations in the Birmingham & Solihull community providing **FREE autism support**  
<https://www.aadirectory.co.uk/signpost-to-services/aaa-grant-awardees--referral-options-here>
- **A Grant award process** for third sector community organisations providing autism support. Grants of £5,000 to £30,000 are available <https://allageautism.co.uk/>

Grants will support a range of activities aimed at helping individuals towards leading happier, healthier and independent lives.

To-date we have awarded grant funds to 22 organisations supporting 1300 autistic people/their families/carers with FREE support services

In Solihull we are working with 7 organisations offering support services to over 350 autistic people & their families.

For more information on the places available & to refer onto their services please follow the link to the Service Directory/Solihull [AAA Grant Awardees - Referral Options Here \(aaadirectory.co.uk\)](http://aaadirectory.co.uk)

- Family Care Trust
  - Inclusive Sport
  - Ordinary Magic
- SPCV – Solihull Parent Carer Voice

#### **Delivery combined with Birmingham**

- Resources for Autism
  - Hunrosa
- Expert by Experience

**Please click on the links to view the information available & access the FREE services that are being offered in Solihull.**

**For more information please contact us at: [aaa@landau.co.uk](mailto:aaa@landau.co.uk)**

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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)

Thank you.

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25





# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## October 2023

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***Welcome to the first newsletter of the new academic year. I am not sure when summer really started this year but it definitely feels like a distant memory now.*** The unknown of each day, waiting to see what the weather would bring, reminded me how it feels to be in the SEND world – where no day is the same and things can quickly change between going well and not so well and vice versa.

On that note, partners took the opportunity over the summer to reflect on outcomes and experiences of children and young people in the borough; looking at where things are going well and where more work needs to be done. This will form our self-evaluation ahead of a future Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Inspection and we will share that with you all once finalised.

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## #SENDSpotlight

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This is a new addition to our communication to help share some of the positive things that are happening in Solihull.

***#SENDSpotlight*** – *The Heights autism special school welcomed Year 7 pupils this September and formally opens for other pupils on after half-term. This means that over the next few years, 116 more children will be able receive their specialist education in Solihull.*

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## National News

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### **SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan**

At the end of the summer, the Department for Education released information about its [Change Programme](#) which will pave the way for delivery of actions within the national improvement plan. For the West Midlands, Telford & Wrekin are leading our regional Change Programme Partnership along with Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Now the programme has been launched, there will be regular updates and we will continue to share them as part of these newsletters.

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# Strategic News

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## Additional Needs Strategy

Over the summer we published the local areas response to the SEND [Peer Review](#) and [You said, we did](#) SEND Community Event and Our Voices Heard feedback. We are now revising our formal additional needs action plan (previous version available on the [Local Offer](#)) to ensure we are focused on the right priorities for the third year of our strategy.

The local partnership has also been reviewing its SEND governance arrangements to ensure there is enough visibility and drive behind the SEND improvement journey and that other work such as the Alternative Provision Strategy and Delivering Better Value is well aligned.

To help those not involved in these forums to understand what things are discussed we have agreed to share the key messages following each meeting. Here is the update from the September meeting:

1. All services reiterated the importance of everyone working together, recognising that children and young people have better experiences and outcomes when services work together well.
  2. There is a children and young people's feedback survey on Your Voice Solihull. Professionals working with children and young people need to talk to them about the survey at the end of appointments, asking them to complete this and providing support to children and young people where necessary to fill out the survey.
  3. There is a drive to create children and young people pages on the Local Offer, ensuring that there is information available written directly for children and young people, enabling them to find out information for themselves and supporting their independence skills. This work is starting now and will be ongoing.
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## **Children and Young People's Feedback – Additional Needs Strategy**

Thank you to everyone who has supported a child or young person in sharing their experience of Solihull services through the online survey. Their voice is vital in helping us understand what is working well and what we need to focus on. Please do continue to encourage children and young people to give this feedback – using either the website link [Additional Needs survey | Your Voice Solihull](#) or the QR code.



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## **The Right support in the Right place at the Right time. Funded by Delivering Better Value grant.**

All workstreams in the project are now underway. The webpage is being developed to outline each workstream and the outcomes we are working towards. All schools will soon be able to access the National Nurturing Schools Programme and Award, as well as speech, language and communication training for their whole staff. Work has started on enhanced outreach support for schools, supporting strategically with SEND. Solihull parent carer voice (PCV) have agreed to work with us, offering schools a package of support to help parents to engage with their child's school and support effective partnership working, building on the work started last year as part of their actions from the Strategy for Inclusive Education.

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## **Strategy for Inclusive Education**

The DBV funding is enabling accelerated progress with many of the actions that form part of our Strategy for Inclusive Education Action Plan. Many schools who attended the training on Equity Diversity and inclusion (EDI) for Senior Leaders returned their EDI Action Plans at the end of the summer term and we know the rest are working with their senior leadership teams on their EDI audits this term.

We will be looking at key themes within the audit returns to inform the development of further training opportunities for schools as well as coordinating wider school to school collaborative opportunities. For those schools who didn't manage to attend the EDI workshops we plan, through CSIE, to run a further session later this term.

We have now appointed a Lead teacher for EDI, Anna Bacho Flory, who will be leading on the next stage of this project, to train 20 EDI Champions across our schools. Head teachers have received information and application forms to share with their staff. We are looking to receive



applications from teachers passionate about moving forward the EDI agenda forwards in their schools, to take part in this exciting piece of work.

We are working closely with Mulberry Bush Consultancy to coproduce a visual Roadmap which details, in a visually accessible way, the support available for all children and young people around having good Social Emotional and Mental Health, through to our specialist support offer. The aim is to help clarify and simplify pathways of support, criteria and resources across the whole system. This work is to be carried out with Parent Carer Voice, Our Voices Heard, education, health, social care colleagues, schools and the voluntary sector during the autumn term. This Road Map will go onto the Local offer and link together several current pieces of work under development, as well as identifying overlaps and gaps in support.

In addition, Mulberry Bush consultants will work with SISS, a Senior Educational Psychologist, the EHCP Service and a group of SENCos/PCV to start to produce the Graduated Approach Toolkit of resources. The first piece of work will be to co-produce Solihull's paperwork for the Graduated Approach cycle, which supports children and young people at SEN Support. There's lots more work to come on line, including beginning to co-produce Solihull's Standard/ Kitemark for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, with support from the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education.

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## Local Offer

- The content of the [Preparing for Adulthood \(Transitions\) webpage](#) has been updated to reflect new content agreed with Solihull Parent Carer Voice and signed off by Adults Digital Board.
- Waiting Well documents provided by Health are available on the [Local Offer Health page](#). The documents are in the "Things to do at home to help manage health and wellbeing whilst waiting for an appointment" section.
- The updated Partnership Agreement is available on the [Local Offer - Co-production webpage](#).
- The information on the [Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance webpage](#) has been updated. This includes updated versions of the school's guidance document and parent / carer leaflet.
- The layout of the [Young People \(14 -25 years\) webpage](#) has been refreshed. The changes make the easier to use by introducing dropdown boxes for each of the key sections. A link to the "Routing for them" document is now included, along with a copy of a presentation covering post-16 options for young people with SEND. These items are in the "Guide to post-16 for parents of children and young people with SEND" section.
- The layout of the [Education \(5 - 16\) webpage](#) has been refreshed to make it clearer and easier to use with buttons replacing the text based hyperlinks.

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## **Education Information Management Services**

If any school has had a pupil join with an EHCP where Solihull Council is not the responsible authority, please send a copy of the plan and the agreed funding to [edplasc@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:edplasc@solihull.gov.uk).

This will enable us to ensure you are funded in a timely manner. Please be aware if we are unable to recover the amount from the other local authority, we will recover this from any amounts Solihull Council has have paid to you. Please also check this data is entered in your management information system along with the up-to-date primary need (and secondary need if appropriate).

## **SISS**

Firstly we would like to welcome Jodie Fotheringham who joins SISS as our new Deputy Service Manager and then three new teachers who have joined the SEMH team. Our SISS SEMH Early Intervention Provision, REFRESH welcomes Chris Ball to the post of Head of REFRESH and of course we are excited to meet our new cohort of children who begin their journey with us this half term. The children will have the benefit of a super new playground which will give them all lots of opportunities to run, jump, balance, swing, crawl, and always a favourite, scooter and bike round our new track.

The Hearing Impairment (HI) Team will be running two workshops for parents regarding technology, tubing hearing aids, National Deaf Children's Society and a clinician to complete ear mould will be in attendance. Flyers will be sent out direct to parents of children on the HI caseload.

## **Educational Psychology Service – Jane Sowter**

We are enjoying a busy term so far with Craig, Sidra and I starting on our training, ELSA supervision, strategic roles, tribunal work, EHCs and FCGs for SENCos. Work for the Virtual School is underway with great feedback from the Attachment and Trauma Informed training and exciting work planned with the SISS SEMH team to support families.

The EHCs continue to provide the bulk of work for the service and we continue to experience the same recruitment difficulties as the rest of the country for both employed and locum EPs. There will be some delays to EHC assessments over the coming months as a result, so please bear with us. Following our recent advertising strategy, we have recruited one new part-time EP who joins us in December and a full-time EP who will join us next year. This is in addition to the two previously recruited trainees who will qualify and join us in September 2024. The team is growing! Wishing you all a healthy and happy Autumn term.

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## **BRIDGET MORRIS – SEND Operations Manager 0-25 SMBC**

I wanted to write an article to introduce myself and explain a little about what my role encompasses. I also want to tell you about some of the work I've been doing and some of my ambitions for the future. I joined SMBC to work in SEND in May and quickly recognised the commitment held by my colleagues in education, health, and social care as well professionals in schools and our stakeholder organisations SPCV and OVH to improve the experiences and outcomes for our children and young people with SEN or a disability.

My role is primarily to bring our partnership together, working on engagement and participation as well as specifics such as personal budgets and how we can communicate better with our children and young people. My focus initially is on wider participation as well as a drive to understand and implement changes to ensure we gather the voice of those who communicate using methods other than the spoken word.

Developments so far have been the introduction of the Engagement Planner which you can find on our [Engagement Hub](#). All our services and other contributors such as SENDIAS, SPCV and OVH are featured on the Planner, it hopes to inform all of us about what is going on across the terms socially, operationally, and strategically.

Related to this, we are working on a new integrated approach to Personal budgets and have initially introduced a page where you can find links for all services to their pages holding the details of how to request and the processes behind this. Partners recognise that the approach at the moment is difficult for families and young people to navigate, and we hope that over the coming year we find a way together to make it easier.

Lastly, I have been privileged to visit some of our providers in the community who were delivering our HAF activities and work with Solihull Music and All Age Autism. It is wonderful to see how many people want to make things better for children and young People with SEND living in Solihull, working together we can do this more effectively by reaching more of the people who need our help. What an amazing challenge that is, but I think we are more than ready for it and I look forward to seeing our success.

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# Health

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## **The Vulnerabilities Team at University Hospitals Birmingham**

The team consists of Learning Disability, Mental Health and General Nurses and supports Children, young people and Adults with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism. They act as a point of contact through face to face or virtual support, when utilising services as either an inpatient or Outpatient at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Heartlands Hospital, Good Hope Hospital and Solihull Hospital.

They accept referrals from families, carers, person with parental responsibility and community teams for advice and support for planned admissions or emergency admissions with a focus on improving the quality of the experience at UHB. The Vulnerabilities Team encourage the use of the **Hospital Passport** which tells staff at the hospital about your healthcare, your disability, how you like to communicate and how to make things easier for you - such as reasonable adjustments. They will also ensure that you are Digitally Flagged so staff know about your Disability and it will also alert them to any future admissions so that we can provide support.

They can be contacted Monday to Friday via the advice line 07768926651 or via e-mail [vulnerabilities@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:vulnerabilities@uhb.nhs.uk).

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## **Birmingham Children's Hospital - Learning Disability Team**

If your child has a learning disability and you are concerned about their stay in hospital at Birmingham Children's Hospital, the Learning Disability Team can try will help and can be contacted on 0121 333 8048

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## **Children's Health Services Waiting Times**

Over the last year, much work has been done to ensure the quality and accuracy of waiting time data. [Please see this summary](#), which provides service level data, plans for patients waiting to access support and a future vision to re-design and/or transform services where required to support Children, Young People and families to have the best outcome.

## **Solar – Digital Transformation**

A scoping project is currently in progress within the Solar Children's Mental Health Service to pinpoint digital solutions that can enhance access to services and offer new interventions to children and parents, aiming at improving their emotional and mental well-being. Planning is

being undertaken to develop a more user friendly and accessible website to better cater to the needs of families across Solihull. A consultation process involving children, parents, carers, and the workforce is actively ongoing, with a commitment to share the findings. For additional information or enquiries, please reach out to [alex.church@nhs.net](mailto:alex.church@nhs.net).

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## Children's Services

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The Children with Disabilities Team continues to support children and young people and their families in all areas of social work practice to support positive changes to their lived experiences. Although supporting the specialist support needs of children and young people with SEND is the largest area of our work the Children with Disabilities Team, we also work with young people who have SEND that are looked after by the Local Authority or subject to Child Protection or Child in Need plans.

### Staffing

Recently we have had changes to staffing and management of the Children with Disabilities Team that we would like to share with you:

- Sonya Hayden is our Interim CDT Team Manager
- Pauline McGlynn and Tracey Wright are Interim Assistant Team Manager and focus on those children and families who we feel need higher levels of support that require a Social Worker
- Angela Clement is our Assistant Team Manager who manages our Family Support Workers that focus on our children who require a lower level of support.
- Anna Stephens is the Head of Service for the Children With Disabilities Team
- Rachael Ward is now the Assistant Director for corporate parenting and oversees the SEND social care
- We also have our Business Support Team that consists of Lisa Wadsworth and Janet who support the team and respond to all enquires sent via [childrensdisabilityteam@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:childrensdisabilityteam@solihull.gov.uk)

The team have had additional training over the summer regarding the EHCP process and we are currently focusing upon writing to children as part of our social care recording.

Our Business Support officers are currently reviewing all the Direct Payment accounts to support families that use a Personal PA and confirm that they have a current DBS check and Liability Insurance in place. Therefore please expect a telephone call from the team if this relates to your families circumstance. You are also able to contact Age UK if you require any additional support for this process.

The Children and Disability Finance team in partnership with People Plus and Age UK have introduced a weekly Direct Payments Information and Guidance Hub. These are based at

Solihull Community Hub and Solihull Connect at Chelmsley Wood. These drop in sessions support individuals receiving Direct Payments with queries and issues that they may have. Please refer to the engagement calendar for future dates.

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## EYFS Update

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The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance has been updated for September 2023. There are 3 updates but further updates are expected next year. The Autumn updates are the changes to the minimum staff:child ratio in nursery settings from 1:4 to 1:5, a clarification to childminder ratio rules, and confirmation that 'adequate supervision' at mealtimes means that children must be within sight and hearing of an adult.

### Solihull SEND Assessment Toolkit

Thank you to those of you who were involved in the development of Solihull's Early Years SEND Assessment Toolkit. This is non-statutory guidance which may be helpful to support the identification of, and targeted support for, young children's care, development and learning needs. It is available here –

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/graduated-approach-incl-ehcp-process/> along with the Graduated Approach Early Years Guidance.

Find out more about these tools during our Solihull Early Years Team training events and briefings- [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training)

The final news from the Early Years Team is that we have now launched our **on-line Area SENCo referral form**. This should make referrals easier for settings to use. Feedback so far is positive. Let us know what you think if you are a setting who has used the form.

## EHCP Service

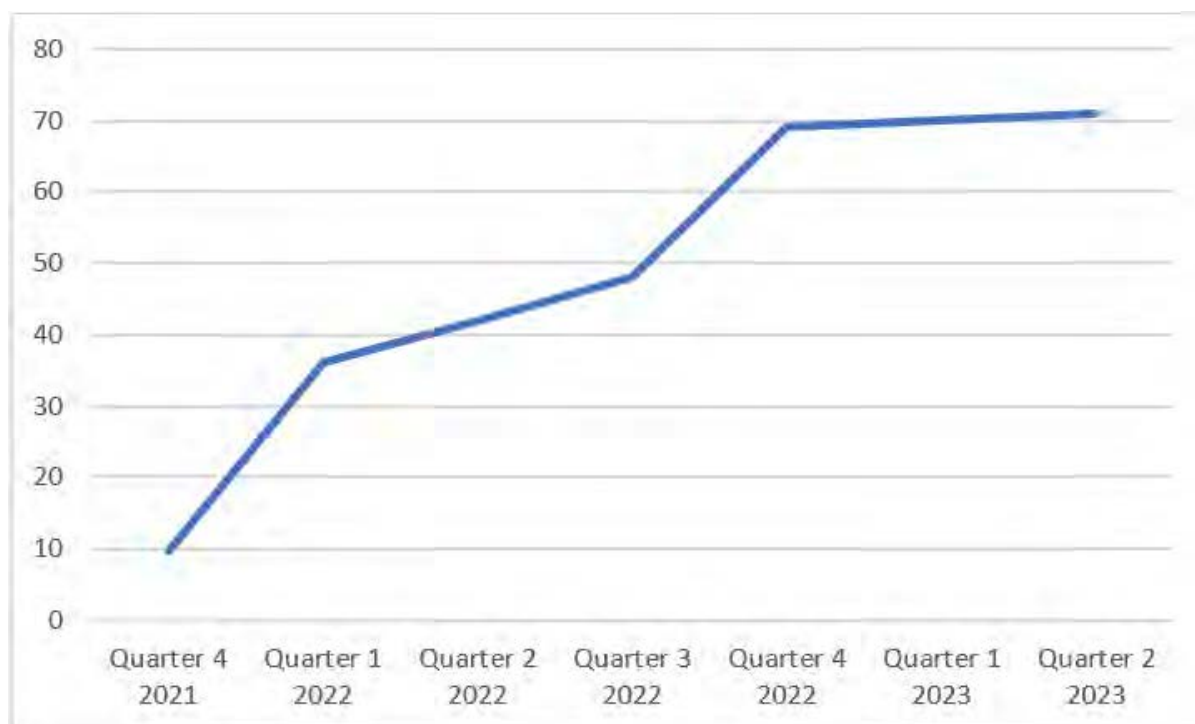
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We are currently heading back into transition season which is our busiest time of year. We again ask for the help of schools in ensuring that Nursery 2, and year 2 children infant schools and all year 6s have their Annual Reviews before October half term and are returned to us within the 2 week timeframe. For yrs 11, 13 and 14 we ask for the reviews to be help before Christmas.

Parents can help us by returning the response to the Notice of Amends within the two week time frame and remember to include their preference of school – remember that for young people aged 16 or over it is their preference that we need.

If a child/young person has an EHCP you do not go through the normal admissions process for a school placement for transitions. This will be done through the Annual Review process and those going into Reception, a Junior or a Secondary school you should know the placement allocated by 15<sup>th</sup> February. For those going into Post 16 you should know the placement by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

We hold monthly EHCP Quality Assurance meetings with professionals from different agencies. This data is then collected and any training needs identified. We have recently been identified as an LA with good practice around the quality of our EHCPs and our quality assurance results reflect the improvements that have been made, as shown in the graph below:



We have again planned some parent drop in sessions this year. You can come to these to ask any questions about EHCPs or processes. It does not matter if you want to come about applying for an EHCP or whether you want to ask specific questions about your case – just turn up. It was lovely to see some of you at the drop in on 17 October

The Future dates are:

The Loft - 24/02/2024 - 09:30-12:30

Location TC - 22/05/2024 - 09:30-12:30

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## Dingley's Promise



### All level Kite Mark

Fordbridge Community Primary School celebrated receiving their Dingley's Promise KiteMark over the summer. Solihull Early Years are part of a 5-year project to promote inclusion across the borough. Dingley's Promise is a charity who have been funded by Comic Relief for this Early Years Inclusion Programme of training. All early year's settings are encouraged to access the free training. Fordbridge School were the first

to have this recognised through a Kite Mark. The Early Years Lead Mandy has valued this training and also the SchemaPlay project the school has been involved in. It has enabled them to really think about the needs of the children and families attending the school in their early years.

Well done Fordbridge and our Solihull settings who have achieved, or are on the way to being awarded, their Kite Mark or the Schema Play accreditation. All Solihull Early Years Practitioners and parents can access the training here <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/> The Child's Voice training has recently been launched.

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## Foster carers for children with additional needs

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Could you or someone you know provide overnight short breaks for children with additional needs?

If so, we'd love to hear from you. [Find out more about short breaks](#) and we are running monthly online and face to face sessions, where we'll talk you through the fostering process, the support available and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions. Make a difference to the life of a Solihull child!

[Reserve your place now](#) - booking essential.

### Information evenings – online, 6:30pm to 7:30pm

- Monthly, next session is on 15 November

### Coffee drop-in's – face to face, 11:30am to 12:30pm

- Monthly, next session is on 23 November – Morrison's Café, Sheldon, Coventry Road, B26 3PD

Questions? Email [fosteringrecruitment@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringrecruitment@solihull.gov.uk) or call 0121 788 4474

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## SEND Commissioning

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Entrust Care Partnership working in partnership with The Open Theatre are running an amazing, weekly fun theatre group for 12 to 19 year olds with additional needs.

The group is fully staffed with experienced, caring individuals and is generously subsidised by Solihull Council through a Short Breaks grant.

We have some spaces left and would love it if your son or daughter could join us at the Core Theatre in Touchwood and experience the joy of drama.

[lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk](mailto:lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk)

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# Solihull Parent Carer Voice

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Solihull Parent Carer Voice have been busy as usual over the summer. We can't believe its October already!!

Over the summer we carried out a Summer SEND Survey, the results of this were collated and a report presented to Children's Services Education and Skills Scrutiny Board at the beginning of September. This report can be found on our website here: [Reports - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](https://www.spcv.org.uk)

Over the summer we also attended Dame Rachel de Souza's, the Children's Commissioner for England, Roundtable on Attendance. This very much focused on the understanding that school attendance has significantly reduced since Covid and the understanding that emotional wellbeing, mental health and SEND play a large role in attendance.

Dame de Souza was clear that working to improve attendance is important, but that it must be done in a holistic way taking into account health as well as education - and that the route to improving attendance needs to be focused on the individual child/young person not on threatening fines. Further to this we were pleased to hear about the work of the Inclusion Service in helping and supporting children from the Assistant Director in the Children's Services Education and Skills Scrutiny in September. We have just received funding to undertake some School Engagement work.

This is focused on schools, parents and carers and children and young people coming together to help the school work as a community; improving engagement and inclusion. We are delighted to have recruited two members of staff to undertake this work who will be starting with us in mid-October - with the aim to work in 20 schools in Solihull over the next year.

We have also received funding from the Fairer Futures Fund to run our Healthy Parent Carer Course. This course looks at helping parent carers to spend a little time working on their own emotional wellbeing. These courses will run 3hrs a week for 6 weeks. We are just finalising dates and venues so please do look out for these being advertised soon. Also, if you know of a location where you think we should run this course please do get in touch.

In September we attended the SEND and Improvement Plan, Change Programme Launch in London. This programme brings together local areas in each region of England to look at piloting and testing parts of the Improvement Plan. We will be sharing further information about this shortly on our website and Facebook page. We are expecting the national data dashboard to be

released by the end of this year which will enable everyone to look at more information on a local, regional and national level. We are also expecting the new EHCP Template to be tested by the Change Programme Partnership Areas (CPP's) this Autumn/Winter so this may be rolled out in the next few months.

We have a coffee morning coming up on 23 November 9.30-11.30 at Ulverley School. You do not need to book for our coffee mornings.

On 6 November at 10am we will be holding a meeting for parent carers with some representatives from social care, including 2 of the Assistant Directors. We are just organising a venue for this meeting so further details will be coming available soon. This will be a meeting where we ask parent carers to prebook.

We are currently looking to arrange an event focused on Post-16 and Post-18 with representatives from Careers Hub, Employment and Skills, Supported Internships and more. Again more information will be coming out soon about this.

If there is any particular information that you are looking for, or events that you would like to see please do get in touch with us at [Solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:Solihullpcv@outlook.com)

And finally..... we are always looking for volunteers to join our team. We have a variety of roles that volunteers could help with, from admin, supporting with coffee mornings, representing SPCV at workstreams to joining our Steering Group. Opportunities are very varied and can be from an hour or 2 a month to much more! If you would like to talk to us more about this, please do contact us at [Solihullpcv@outlook.com](mailto:Solihullpcv@outlook.com)

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## Our Voices Heard

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We are the NHS Midlands Young Reviewers! We have been tasked by NHS Midlands to investigate how youth-friendly transition services are between paediatrics and adult's care for young Epilepsy patients. We are a team of 8 Young Reviewers, half of us have Epilepsy, half of us don't. We would love to hear your thoughts and experiences of transition between services! We have been visiting clinics and speaking to professionals but we want to hear what you have to say! *All information is anonymous and all will inform the young reviewers findings*

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/P6PYVB5>

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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)

Thank you.

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25



# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## November 2023

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**Welcome to our new monthly newsletter.** We hope increasing the frequency of these will provide more regular updates on key items of interest and reduce the amount of information we share at one time.

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### *#SENDSpotlight*

Solihull Council has doubled the amount of funding available for Short Breaks Grants from January 2024. This means that more children and young people will be able to benefit from accessing services in their community.

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### **Strategic Update**

As we begin to evaluate the second year of our [Additional Needs Strategy](#) it is important we hear from children and young people, and their parent carers, on their experiences of SEND in Solihull. Please take the time to complete this survey; and encourage others to do so!



For Parent Carers:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Parent Carer Survey 2023](#)



For Children & Young People:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Children and Young People Survey 2023](#)

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## Council staffing update

Due to the national pressures and changes in relation to SEND, and the growth of our development work, I will take up a new post from January 2024. As Head of SEND Strategy & Development my focus will be on our local and national priorities aimed at ensuring the SEND system is sustainable and provides the right support for children and young people, in the right place and at the right time. There are many areas the local area partnership are working on to improve outcomes for children and young people and we hope this additional capacity will help us deliver those more quickly.

Donna Wright will take over the Head of SEND role and will have responsibility for SEND operations; including the EHCP Service, SISS and the Educational Psychology Service. Donna is moving from her School Improvement and Delivering Better Value roles so understands the pressures within the SEND system.

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## Solihull Educational Psychology Service

Great news on recruitment for our team with two new starters in January 2024. Wendy and Janet come to us from posts in other local authorities with lots of experience of work as educational psychologists (EPs) in the UK and Hong Kong. We look forward to welcoming them! Our Facilitated Consultation Groups for SENCOs are running well and training for schools in Attachment and Trauma continues to be rolled-out.

We are currently open for applications from schools for the next ELSA cohort. ELSA is a programme that trains and supports Emotional Literacy Support Assistants in schools. ELSAs are usually also teaching assistants and provide impactful support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, receiving regular supervision from EPs. Please contact us for more details on [edpsych@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:edpsych@solihull.gov.uk)

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## Children with Disabilities Team

The Children with Disabilities Team continues to support children and young people and their families in all areas of social work practice to support positive changes to their lived experiences. Although supporting the specialist support needs of children and young people with SEND is the largest area of our work, we also work with young people who have SEND that are looked after by the Local Authority or subject to Child Protection or Child in Need plans.

Should your child have new or ongoing social care needs or be at a transition point, please remember to complete the social care questions on the EHCP Annual review document that is completed with your school representative. This will ensure the social care team who are reviewing the document are aware that you want us to review your child's needs.

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## EHCP Team update

The EHCP Team are happy to share that Laura Stott has now been appointed to a senior role and will be managing the Annual Review Team that deals with reviews from 0 to Year 8.

A reminder for all schools that Annual Review paperwork needs to be sent back to the Council within 10 days of the review.

We are busy processing transition reviews with the help of schools. The legal deadline for first time admissions to school, infant to primary and primary to secondary children is 15 February 2024. All EHCPs should be updated with the next settings by this date. For those in year 11, year 13 or leaving a post 16 provision the deadline is 31 March.

The next drop in session for parents is 21 February 2024, 9:30 – 1:30 in The Loft, next to Chelmsley Wood Library above Asda. This is a chance for parents to come and talk to the EHCP Service, Educational Psychology, Social Care or Solihull Parent Carer Voice about their child or case. Your child does not need to have an EHCP to come to this and you do not need to book in – you can just turn up, have a cup of tea and a biscuit and talk to the team.

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## Listening to our Children and Young People

The Local SEND partnership is working on a DfE funded project with KIDS around the importance of pupil voice in the SEND community. We want to meet with children and young people and talk with them about why it's important we listen to them, the consequences when we don't and the positives when we do. We are also looking at the different ways that our young people communicate, so we will be having a discussion around that too and would like to include some art work, poetry, music, or other methods of communication they might use.

The end product will be a digital piece of work showcasing their thoughts and opinions which will be used in the community. If you would like your school/organisation to be involved, please contact Bridget Morris at [bridget.morris@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:bridget.morris@solihull.gov.uk)

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## Kooth

Kooth offers emotional and mental health support for children and young people aged between 11 and 24.

On Kooth, qualified counsellors are online seven days a week to provide young people using the

service with online counselling, through chat-based messaging via drop-in or booked session and is available for children and young people in Solihull and Birmingham.

## The Early Years Team

### Solihull Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Pathway

This half term saw the official launch of our simplified pathway. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the resources and videos shared in the SLCN sway.

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/super-starts-speech-language-and-communication-needs/>

## Dingley's Promise

On 14 November, Dingley's Promise's launched their Manifesto for Early Years Inclusion.

Solihull is part of the five-year inclusion training programme funded by the National Lottery and is well represented with our parent reps attending both local and national meetings. Thank you to everyone who contributed to their surveys. Further information is available

here: <https://dingley.org.uk/manifesto/>

## Child's voice training module

In Solihull, 47 practitioners have signed up to complete the new early years module on the child's voice from Dingley's Promise. This can be accessed by anyone working in early years in Solihull. This includes child minders, group settings, schools, health teams, students, social workers, local authority employees, etc. Sign up here to complete the collection of inclusion modules: <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

Dingley's Promise -Solihull learners for the child's voice module	
<b>Training completed</b>	36%
<b>Begun</b>	45%
<b>Signed in</b>	19%



## Support for transition into work

The idea of transition from school to work can be daunting. Support is on offer to help young people with further needs to achieve their full potential with a bright future. The Employment and Skills Team deliver programmes such as Supported Internship and Supported Jobs to help with the transition.

[Supported Internships](#) are a year long study programme for 16-24 year olds with an EHCP. The programme combines practical work experience and formal training with the aim of paid employment upon completion. A designated job coach will accompany the intern throughout the internship and taper support while the intern progresses.

[Supported Jobs](#) are another programme which the team work with local employers to support their recruitment of young talents with further needs, with access to disability support if appropriate.

Read various success stories of residents from all walks of life that we have supported [here](#).

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## Solihull Parent Carer Voice

Solihull Parent Carer Voice has welcomed 2 new staff members, Tracy and Clare. They will be working with 20 schools in Solihull to help set up school/parent engagement groups. More information about Tracy and Clare, this work and the schools involved will be available on our website soon: [www.spcv.org.uk](http://www.spcv.org.uk)

We have recently added information about the EHC Needs Assessment process to our website, this includes info from the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice and explains the process and what Councils must use to guide their decision making. This can be found at: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](#)

### Our next Coffee and Chat meetings are:

- 13 December 9am-11am Boston Tea Party, Herbert Road, Solihull
- 9 January 1pm-2.30pm Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road, Bentley Heath

We also have a new email address- [enquiries@spcv.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spcv.org.uk) please do get in touch if you want to know more about what we do or how to get involved.

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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)

Thank you.

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25



# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## December 2023

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**Welcome to our new monthly newsletter.** We hope increasing the frequency of these will provide more regular updates on key items of interest and reduce the amount of information we share at one time.

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### *#SENDSpotlight*

The first Family Hub has opened at the Evergreen Space in Kingshurst. Family Hubs will provide joined up services and activities for families so they get the support they need in their area – including with SEND support.

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### Strategic Update

As we begin to evaluate the second year of our [Additional Needs Strategy](#) it is important we hear from children and young people, and their parent carers, on their experiences of SEND in Solihull. Thank you to everyone who has responded so far. Please do take the time to complete this survey; and encourage others to do so!



For Parent Carers:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Parent Carer Survey 2023](#)



For Children & Young People:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Children and Young People Survey 2023](#)

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## EDI Champions Update

Building on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work that schools are leading on, the training to develop EDI Champions started at the beginning of November. We have 18 schools participating in the EDI Champions training (including primary, secondary and specials schools) and project work that has started this term led by Anna Flory, Lead for EDI. We are very excited to hear about the projects they'll be undertaking in their schools and will be providing regular updates as the work moves forward.

Schools who attended the EDI training in the summer term will be sending in their EDI Action Plans so headteachers and the Council can look at support/training needs for staff moving forward. Opportunities to take part in this work for schools not already involved will be announced shortly and the EDI Kitemark work will begin in January.

Universal SLCN whole school training is now being rolled out to primary schools and will be available to secondary schools from January 2024 - we've had a large number of schools sign up in the first week.

The National Nurturing Schools Award training will also be starting in the spring term. This will be run on a cohort model over the next 2 years, with schools having the opportunity to sign up to a cohort and use this as a bespoke package to help in developing their whole school approaches to nurture. All of this training is available to all schools at no cost.

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## Graduated Approach

The final stages of the Graduated Approach information for schools has been drafted. We are now looking into how we can format it into an accessible presentation on the Local Offer pages and school extranet. There will then be lots of work to do to add audio and video pieces and we look forward to working with SPCV on this.

The SEMH roadmap workshops have been taking place in the autumn term collating information about what services are available, and at what stage, in a child, young person and families' journey. Feedback from services and parents/carers about the development process with Mulberry Bush Consultancy has been positive. The key takeaways are that it has been great to hear about what is actually available and the sharing of information has been as important as the roadmap will be, with a draft of the roadmap to be completed in early 2024.

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## SISS

Thank you to the 54 school staff and 94 parent carers who took part in our end of year survey - your feedback is so valuable in enabling us to understand what we are doing well and what could be developed further, or needs changing. The report for 2022-23 has now been finalised and is

available on the Local Offer [Specialist Inclusion Support Service \(SISS\) \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://www.solihull.gov.uk). It includes feedback on training, suggestions given from respondents and the actions planned in response. Feedback from parents/carers included:

*'My son and I both received excellent support from the autism team key worker, her support got my son into school after a very long time of not being able to attend. He engaged really well with her and got amazing results, as a parent with not much support from anywhere else she was invaluable.'*

*'The SISS sensory and physical impairment team staff are great listeners. Always supporting and helping to meet our child's needs, and to us as parents. Guidance with applications for both EHCP and Deaf CAMHS this year. The local Fire station visit was nice, to help with both safety and building relations with other families.'*

*'The Inclusion Support Practitioner (ISP) has been absolutely amazing, going above and beyond for the little boy who needed an advocate. I truly feel the relationship that he built with her was the starting foundation of him realising the world is an ok place. I can't put into words how grateful we are.'* (High Needs SEMH Team)

*'We were listened to! The advisory teacher also was able to ascertain her own excellent understanding of our foster child and her work with him and us has been invaluable.'*

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## Autism Education Trust (AET) Training

We have been busy this term delivering the AET training. So far this term 648 delegates have received direct AET training from the autism team.

- 13 Solihull schools have received their Whole School Making Sense of Autism refresher training.
  - Making Sense of Autism Training was also commissioned and delivered to a further two out of borough schools.
  - 22 parents from across the borough have attended the Autism Team autumn term Parent Understanding Autism workshops.
  - The Inclusion Service have received AET Autism and Inclusion training.
  - 13 child minders have received AET Early Years Making Sense of Autism training in an evening session arranged via the EY Team.
  - AET Good Autism Practice has been delivered to a group of Foster Carers.
-

## Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

In collaboration with the Speech and Language Therapy Service, we held a DLD awareness day at Elmwood Place in October, raising awareness that current data indicates 7.6% of children have DLD, more common than autism, yet fewer people have heard of it.

Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) training is being delivered to all staff in schools over the next 18 months which will include raising awareness about DLD. The newsletter you can download via the link below details other bespoke training that schools are able to access to support staff with identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SLCN, including DLD.

[Speech Language and Communication Disorders Team Newsletter Autumn Term 2023.pdf](#)

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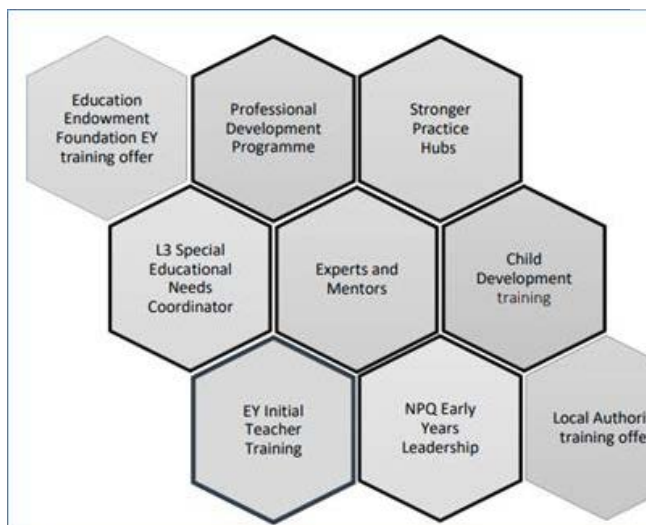
## Makaton

The Early Years Team has been delivering Makaton training to staff in PVI settings, schools and childminders including a taster session for the childminding network. The entire Early Years Team are now trained in Makaton Signing for Babies, enabling us to support children in their homes and for Area SENCOs to support staff in settings. We have delivered whole setting training to 11 different nurseries ensuring all staff know over 100 Makaton signs.

We are delivering two evening sessions per term with up to 10 participants. We have been fully booked, so far with settings keen to learn this complementary form of communication.

We have received positive feedback from participants who have attended the training:

- *“Fantastic trainer, very informative and engaging.”*
  - *“It was accessible and engaging, enabling me to learn many useful signs and giving more confidence in using them.”*
  - *“It was fun, and I remembered a lot more than I thought I would.”*
  - *“Thank you I really enjoyed the course and learnt a lot that I will definitely be using also will recommend to other childminders.”*
  - *“Thoroughly enjoyed the course which was delivered by a friendly and effective trainer.”*
-



## DfE's early years training programme

Some of the opportunities available through Department for Education (DfE) finish in summer 2024. This may be a last chance to apply for Experts and Mentors, Professional Development Programme and Best Practice Level 3 SENCo amongst others. Find out more at

at <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/> within the DfE Early Years Training Programme document.

## Child's voice training module

In Solihull, 47 practitioners have signed up to complete the new early years module on the child's voice from Dingley's Promise. This can be accessed by anyone working in early years in Solihull. This includes child minders, group settings, schools, health teams, students, social workers, local authority employees, etc. Sign up here to complete the collection of inclusion modules: <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

Dingley's Promise -Solihull learners for the child's voice module	
<b>Training completed</b>	36%
<b>Begun</b>	45%
<b>Signed in</b>	19%

## Equality Training

This term, the Area SENCo team have been supporting settings to develop their knowledge and understanding of Early Years providers' responsibilities to children with SEND, through an additional online Network Briefing.

The team were joined by Hazel Clarke, from Solihull SENDIAS, who talked through some of the relevant legislation that settings must follow. She was also able to answer some specific questions that settings had, giving very useful advice.

The session was well attended, and we were able to address some common misconceptions as well as share some great practice. It was great to hear how dedicated and passionate our settings are in their journeys to provide inclusive education for all children.

If you were unable to attend the briefing, a recording is available on our Solgrid page: [Equality Training \(solgrid.org.uk\)](#)

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### Mini Peer Challenge from Local Government Agency (LGA)

We have begun to organise a Maternity and Early Years peer review. We completed a self-evaluation ahead of producing our Maternity and Early Years Strategy and had support from Ann Van-Dyke as a peer reviewer. Ann is coming back to support some focus groups to help us reflect and to find out more about the needs of Solihull children and their families. This will include how well we support children's emerging special educational needs and speech, language, and communication.

We are still at the planning stage, but Ann will hope to talk to Solihull parents, settings and services to find out more about what is working well and how we can develop our support to ensure Solihull early years children have a super start.

*Success for today, prepared for tomorrow.*

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### Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Department for Education (DfE) has recently shared the results of their EYFS consultation and [resulting changes](#) from January 2024. The recently published evaluation of the 2021 EYFS reforms raised the needs of early years children with SEND and transition to Key Stage 1 as areas for future national policy development. We have a range of recorded briefings and face to face support for early years settings, available on our training link below.

Each term, Solihull Early Years Team create briefings to share news such as the EYFS changes, and you can find the recordings here – <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/>. The next briefing will be available from 24 January 2024.

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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)



Merry Christmas!

**Charlotte Jones**

Head of SEND service 0-25

