

APRIL 2024

# Partnership Agreement

Working together for  
children and young  
people with additional  
needs



**Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC),  
Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (BSol ICB), Solihull  
Parent Carer Voice (SPCV), Our Voices Heard (OVH), University Hospital  
Birmingham (UHB), Birmingham Children's Hospital, Solar**





# Formal Agreement

Working as equal partners we are committed to making a difference to the lives and outcomes of children and young people with additional needs and their parent carers.

A revised improvement journey is being defined and co-production is at the heart of these plans.

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# Foreword

This agreement seeks to provide a framework across Solihull for all key strategic partners to work in collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. It is set within the context and principles laid out in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in recognition that all children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is enshrined in law via Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the Care Act 2015.

We acknowledge that good participation does not just mean listening to children and young people and their parent carers, but also acting on their lived experiences and giving them good feedback about the decisions we make.

In order to ensure that all voices are heard, we will make sure that appropriate and accessible participation opportunities are available, providing the support that parent carers, children and young people need to take part in a way that works for them.

Good participation will be embedded as standard across services and considered from the very earliest stages of the commissioning cycle and throughout (from assessing needs, looking at best practice, service design and transformation, ensuring capacity meets demand to monitoring service provision).

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# Roles and responsibilities

## Statutory Services

Children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities often receive a number of different services. These could be provided by nurseries, schools or colleges and specialist therapists, as well as professionals in education, health, and social care.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the government placed new duties on the local health, social and education services that provide for these children and young people. In particular, the local area health, social and education services need to work together to:

- › publish a 'local offer' setting out the support and provision in the area for children and young adults with special educational needs or disabilities (or both)
- › provide accessible information to children and young people as well as parents and carers, about the services and support available in the local area
- › work with children and young people, their parents and carers, and service providers to make sure that any special needs or disabilities (or both) are identified as early as possible
- › assess (in co-operation with children and young people and their parents and carers) the needs of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (or both) who may need an education, health, and social care plan (EHCP)
- › produce an EHCP for all children and young people who are assessed as needing one (all relevant agencies should cooperate to do this and involve the children and young people and their parents and carers)
- › provide children and young people with the support agreed in their EHCP, and regularly review their plans

# Parent Carer Forum

Recognising the importance of parent carer involvement at a strategic level alongside health, care and education services, the Department for Education provides a grant to facilitate Parent Carer Forums in every local area.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice is the established forum and the strategic partner of Solihull MBC and Birmingham & Solihull ICB.

Parent Carer Voice is a group of parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their aim is to make sure the services in the area meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

They do this by gathering the views of local families and then working in partnership with health, care, and education to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

Parent Carer Voice will represent parent carers in Solihull at all strategic SEND and Additional Needs forums within the borough – providing an insight into the lived experience of children, young people and families across the borough and working across the partnership to facilitate improvements. They are an equal partner in this arrangement and will provide effective support and challenge to services.

Parent Carer Voice will provide the recognised communication route with parent carers; raising collective parent carer views, sharing information, and collating parent carer feedback.

The partnership will also jointly consider how best to increase participation of children and young people, so they also have an equal voice in the services designed to support them.

# Child and Young People's Forum

Recognising the importance of the voice of children and young people themselves in both informing the support available for them and in evaluating the impact it has on their lives, Solihull MBC and BSol ICB provides a grant to facilitate a forum – Our Voices Heard.

Since September 2021, Our Voices Heard has developed as a project that supports children and young people living with SEND, between the ages of 0-25 accessing services or living in the Solihull borough, by providing an active voice to provision and enabling strategic change of those lived experiences.

Our Voices Heard actively engages with services including health, social care, education, third sector organisations and youth justice, alongside meeting children and young people in schools, the community, arranged community sessions and virtual sessions to provide safe spaces to hear honest voices.

Our Voices Heard are directly involved in Solihull's SEND and additional need strategies, alongside a wider range of co-production work with education, health, social care, and other services to focus on enhancing children and young people's experience and learning from what they would like and adjust to enable positive change.

In April 2024, Our Voices Heard had 149 members and 12 young people ambassadors to support gaining as many voices as possible. We also go into schools and community settings where to date we have spoken face to face with over 500 children, young people and young adults. After all, a collective voice has its own power.

# Education Services

Everyone at Solihull Metropolitan Council wants to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEN or a Disability. We all work together to commission the right services, make sure that our children and young people are included in our communities and at school and that they get the best outcomes whilst having a great experience. There is a whole team working on assessing the needs of our children and young people and giving the schools and colleges that they attend the best advice possible to make sure that they feel confident and learn well in school.

Sometimes our children and young people might need an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), this happens when we come to an agreement with them, their families, and professionals that they need something additional to what is usually on offer at school or college. This plan allows us to ask them to do some extra things, (maybe some therapy support or perhaps extra help to learn) to make their journey through school or college as productive as possible. There is a whole team assigned to this too. We assign EHCP coordinators to each request and they work with children, young people, and their families throughout the process. One of the most important elements of the process is agreeing that the provision is right and so the decisions made to assess need, whether or not an EHCP is the right course of action and when it is, what additional support is required is made by a panel of professionals from all services. We invite our Parent carer Forum to attend these panels to observe the process (with permission from parents or the young person) as we want to be as transparent as possible in our decision making.

When everyone agrees that the planned provision is right, and the child or young person is attending a school or college which is able to meet their needs, our Inclusion team works with those settings, supporting them in doing the right things for the children and young people in their setting. We want our children and young people to be happy to go into school and learn. We are ambitious for them and want them to gain the skills and knowledge to enable them all to be able to move onto the next stage of their life journey.

We know that there are things we need to get better, sometimes waiting times for assessments are too long, sometimes we listen but we don't always hear what is being said, sometimes we don't see what needs to change, things that used to work aren't working anymore. This agreement goes a long way to tackling this. By working together with children, young people, and their families as well as everyone named on this agreement, we know that things will improve.

# BSoI ICB

NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) has been established as the NHS organization responsible for NHS function and budgets.

An ICB is a statutory NHS organisation responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the Birmingham and Solihull population, managing the NHS budget, and arranging the provision of health services in the Integrated Care System (ICS) area. You can find out more about who we are and what we do here - [About us :: NHS Birmingham and Solihull \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#).

## Birmingham Children's Hospital

Birmingham Children's Hospital is the UK's leading paediatric centre, caring for sick children and young people up to the age of 16. Rated as "outstanding" by the CQC in February 2017, we are world leader in some of the most advanced treatments, complex surgical procedures and cutting-edge research and development.

## University Hospital Birmingham

University Hospitals Birmingham provides a wide range of specialist services from the following hospitals for young people and adults in different areas across Birmingham and Solihull: Heartlands, Good Hope, Solihull, and Queen Elizabeth Hospitals.

We also offer children and young people who live in the Solihull area a wide range of therapy services for those that may be experiencing difficulties with communication, physical movement or general everyday activities, or difficulties that may indicate an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Ensuring our patients have the best experience alongside excellent clinical care aids recovery and well-being. We are committed to a programme of continual improvement by listening, learning, and acting on feedback, and involving our communities in our work.

## Solar

Solar is a partnership between Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Barnardo's and Autism West Midlands and provides Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services to Children, Young People and Families in Solihull.

Solar is well established and provides multiple support teams. It operates in the community of Solihull and has clinic and office bases at:

Bishop Wilson Clinic

Craig Croft

Chelmsley Wood

B37 7TR

0121 3012750

Freshfields Clinic

Downing Close

Knowle

B93 0AQ

0121 301 2730



At Solar we are committed to the emotional wellbeing needs of children, young people, parents, carers, and families in Solihull’s community. We will work together within the Partnership and respond, in collaboration, to concerns with an integrated solution focused approach, to resolve within the Solar service remit. Outside of this Solar will engage with the most appropriate services possible. We will also ensure we share good news, new developments, and outcomes within the Partnership.

# Social Care

Solihull Children’s social Care is committed to working in partnership with children and their families, as well as with partner agencies such as education and health. Improving outcomes for children and families in Solihull is a priority for the council (Council Plan 2020–2025). Our vision is to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous through growth that offers opportunities for all. We will achieve this through being ambitious, open, honest, and keeping our promises to children and families. It is essential that we enable personalisation, choice and control at the centre of assessments and support for children and young people (from 0–25 years)

Our children’s social care services are on an ambitious improvement journey and we have made significant progress since 2019 in strengthening practice and embedding our restorative practice model. This includes support to develop practice in our children with disabilities team. We have invested in key services to shift the focus of our services to prevention and early help, providing the right support to families at the earliest possible stage.

*"We have the highest ambitions for all our children. We want them to prosper and to tell us they are healthy, happy, and feel safe. To achieve this, we place children at the centre of everything we do, working in a restorative way with children and families."*

Early help	Strengths focused	Trauma informed	Restorative	Own family	Corporate Parents
An Early Help approach, working with our families as soon as needs emerge	Needs led and strengths focused practice which understands and manages risk	Working with families to understand their trauma	Value based and relational working, doing with, not 'to' or 'for' – high support, high challenge	Supporting children to safely live at home or in their family network	Being ambitious for the children in our care and care leavers as our own children

**AMBITIOUS – OPEN – HONEST – KEEPING OUR PROMISES**

# Priorities for 2024



## 1. Mental health

To embed the Support whilst Waiting website and use parental feedback from the Community Event to help develop the offer. To ensure that there are ambitious plans in place to reduce waiting lists for those waiting for mental health care.



## 2. Health and Community Therapies

To have robust action plans in place to address waiting lists and enable cultural change by ensuring all health staff participate in Oliver McGowan training. This will improve communication and understanding of need to help health care services become more accessible for all.



## 3. Inclusion and SEND support in Schools

To promote inclusion by embedding the use of the graduated approach and a culture of nurture in schools and encouraging their uptake of free training and support available from the council. This will improve consistency across all settings and support effective practices which, keep exclusions and suspensions of those with SEND to a minimum



## 4. Post 16

To plan the development of Post 16 provision in Solihull. Children and young people have said they want to live and learn in Solihull. More options will be planned which allows them to move into suitable pathways; including education, internships, employment, and independence.



## 5. Social Care

To emphasise the importance of social care involvement in all decisions around children and young people with SEND. Increasing their involvement in all Partnership work.



## 6. Local Offer

For all stakeholders to share and signpost the Local Offer to children and young people and their families. To ensure the Local offer contains easily accessible and up to date information.

**The strategic partnership is brought together by the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Strategic Board which meets quarterly to monitor activity across all agencies and oversee outcomes for children and young people with additional needs. This board is held to account by the SEND Executive Board and Place Committee.**

**The outcome of the partnership's work will be shared with all stakeholders on a regular basis through each agencies usual communication routes and will be evaluated to inform the Partnership Agreement for 2025 onwards.**



## **Community Event March 2024**

# Co-Production Charter

## What is Co-production?

Co-production is not just a word, it is not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions. In practice, Co-production involves people who use services being consulted, involved, and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. When Co-production works best, people who use services and carers are valued by organisations as equal partners, can share power, and have influence over decisions made.

*National Co-production Advisory Group.*

**Co Production**



Doing with



Working with you to make things better

**Codesign**

**Engagement**

**Consultation**



Doing for



Working with you to make things better

**Informing**

**Tokenism**



Doing for



Trying to fix people who are passive recipients of service

**Coercion**

## **Our Co-production Principles**

We will:

- › Be welcoming and caring.
- › Treat everyone equally and with respect.
- › Communicate clearly and honestly.
- › Work in partnership and be inclusive.
- › Agree upfront the level of co-production on any activity.
- › Use a co-production logo on published documents.
- › We will develop and cultivate our working relationships in order to achieve trust.

We, as people in Solihull who access services, families, carers, Council Officers, decision makers, and partner organisations are committed to ensuring that we work together to ensure.

That the principles of effective Co-production underpin the shaping and improving of services.

## The process of Co-production

To ensure that genuine co-production happens in Solihull we will:

- › Be clear about the nature of the work to be undertaken and the level of co-production needed to get the best outcome.
- › From the start consider “who do we need to involve?” and make contact at the first possible opportunity. We will always ask “who have we missed?”
- › Directly involve children with SEND, their parent/carers along with other participants to ensure our way of working together is built on trust, transparency, and open communication.
- › Consider when, where and how any meetings will take place to make sure that they are accessible to all.
- › Come to the table with a blank agenda and build it together with the people that access a service, their families, and carers. We will monitor the agenda and how it progresses to ensure it is clear how all views have shaped the direction.
- › Give equal value to every participants contribution.
- › Ensure that everyone gets the same information, at the same time, in a way that they can access it.
- › Maintain confidentiality as agreed for every project.
- › Facilitate discussion and actively listen.
- › Always provide feedback so that people can see what happens as a result of their participation.
- › Understand that the final outcome may be a compromise, however we will ensure that all voices have been heard in reaching a compromise.

## **Always remember: Who, Where, When, What, Why and How.**

- › Who are we engaging?
- › Where are we meeting? Make sure this is a setting where everyone feels comfortable and can access it. Can it be a virtual meeting?
- › When are we meeting? Remember school run times and working parents. Make sure everyone is given enough notice.
- › What method of engaging will suit the purpose best?
- › Why are we co-producing and what is the outcome we are looking for?
- › How will we co-produce this piece of work?

# **The Definitions we will use**

## **Co-production**

Working with people to make things better. Working together from the beginning of a project, through to the end, to plan and design services that affect them.

We will co-produce when planning or designing services and documents, where it is important for all those involved to jointly decide on the next steps and have an equal say in the outcome. We have key partners who we work with to gather ideas from different communities

## **Consultation**

When we come up with plans, checking with people that they are right. Consultation happens when there is the opportunity for stakeholders to influence the work.

We will consult on policies, strategies, and decisions, where there is true scope for those consulted to influence the finished product. We will consult with people for whom the decisions will affect them. Sometimes we will consult on documents where there is a legal requirement to do so.

## **Engagement**

Talking and listening to people and gathering their views. Exploring what matters to people to feed into the work we do.

We will engage when we want to hear as many voices as possible, and to explore new or developing ideas on projects we are working on.



# Communication

Sharing information with people in a way they can understand it. To keep them informed about the changes that affect them.

We will communicate in different ways and in different formats, so everyone who needs to access the information, can do so. If needed, we will translate our communication for those that need it

## How will we know if it is working?

We will know that true co-production is working in Solihull when all parties can agree with the following statements:

- › I am an equal partner and am listened to and valued.
- › I am able to be a part of the process and am able to participate in all stages.
- › My views and experiences are represented.
- › I receive clear information, timely information in a format that is accessible to me.
- › I know that policies, processes, and services have been co-produced.

We will also monitor and evaluate to ensure that effective co-production is happening

## Evidence

- › All partners who have engaged in co-production should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken. This includes detailing the contributions in service specifications, policies, and procedures.

## Evaluate

- › We will gather feedback to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard and that they have been able to make a difference.

## Audit

- › All services and teams working with children, young people and young adults with SEND will complete an annual participation audit with a focus on improving participation





# SOLIHULL SEND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT APRIL 2024

