

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

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## October 2024

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### *#SENDSpotlight*

[Solihull's SEND Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation](#) has been updated and republished. This sets out what is working well in Solihull and what areas for development are being worked on. It is a document Ofsted and CQC will look at during the SEND & AP inspection but we have focused on writing it in a more accessible way for everyone.

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### National training for schools

This year's Festival of Inclusive Education is being held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024. "This year, we're focusing on one powerful theme: personalised learning. You'll walk away with fresh ideas, new perspectives, and practical strategies that you can use to make learning even more meaningful for your students with SEN." This free event is open to any member of staff within schools and can form part of their CPD. Sign-up is available on texthelp - [Join us for the Festival of Inclusive Education](#)

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### Additional Needs Board Meeting

The Joint Additional Needs Delivery Board met on 4th October. The key messages were:

- The Board heard about the plans from SPCV, OVH and professionals to hold a Celebration Event for children and young people with SEND on the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup>. The plan is for awards to be presented to a number of children, young people and adults so members committed to promoting this opportunity; and encourage nominations from services.
- The Board were updated on some of the Delivering Better Value work within schools and were pleased to hear that NutureUK training has been widely welcomed by schools – with 54 schools in Solihull signing up to this programme to improve whole school approaches to social, emotional and mental health needs of their pupils.

- The Board discussed the importance of schools and parent carers working together to ensure that EHCP annual reviews are held on time, gather the right information and attendees and ensure the child or young person has the ability to contribute in a way which is appropriate and meaningful for them. Members were also asked to remind schools that using the Council's annual review template made the process much smoother and enabled greater timeliness of amending plans afterwards.

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## Sensory spotlight!

Sensory rooms are almost certainly the most popular spaces in the Solihull Family Hubs. Whether at Elmwood, Evergreen, Hatchford Brook, or Riverside, each room offers its own unique sensory experience.

But what actually *is* a sensory room? And who can use them?

As the name suggests, the intention is to interact with all five senses. To provide a formal definition - they're rooms designed to develop a person's sense, usually through lighting, music, and objects. Simply put, they're dark rooms with cool stuff in.

They're available to everyone – young ones, parents, professionals – and are particularly therapeutic for those who struggle with sensory overload. Due to their popularity, the rooms are typically booked throughout the day in hourly time slots.

If you're feeling overstimulated or socially overwhelmed, sensory rooms offer an opportunity to shut the door and take a moment to regroup, helping to regulate emotions and rest the mind.

Physically, rooms include soft seats, jigsaw pads, and comfy cushions. Toys are aplenty, from textured cards and bean bags to bouncy balls and bubble wands.

Blackout boxes – effectively extra hidey-holes within the room – are also available for when you need some time alone with your own thoughts.

One of the standout attractions has to be the bubble tube, a colour-changing cylinder with bubbles that rush up and burst at the top. Its bright lights fill the room with warm rays and cool hues.

Finally, there's the interactive stuff – the board and games projector. Write, draw, and colour on the boards usually reserved for teachers only, or hop, skip, and jump around like a kangaroo

while playing on the projector. The array of games is impressive and the sounds they make are brilliant. Let your hair down and have fun with your young one.

So, where *are* the sensory rooms? There's one per Hub:

- Elmwood – Smith's Wood
- Evergreen – Kingshurst
- Hatchford Brook – Elmdon
- Riverside – Chelmsley Wood

The fun continues on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/SolihullFamilyHubs](http://www.facebook.com/SolihullFamilyHubs)

More \*formal\* information can be found on our website: [www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-family-support/family-hubs](http://www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-family-support/family-hubs)

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### Additional Needs Strategy

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we are currently surveying parent carers, children and young people and professionals to understand your lived experience in SEND in Solihull. Your feedback will help us to plan our priorities for 2025 so it is important we hear from as many people as possible.

All surveys are on the [SEND and Additional Needs Engagement Hub](#) but you can also go straight to the survey relevant to you on the links below:

- For parent carers: [Additional Needs Survey Parents](#)
- For children and young people: [Additional Needs Survey Children and Young People](#)
- For professionals working with children and young people: [Additional Needs Survey Services](#)

**The consultation runs until 1<sup>st</sup> November so please do take the time to share your views; and encourage others to do so. We had over 300 responses last year, so let's see if we can beat that! (we have some way to go so far).**

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### EHCP Service

The first parent drop-in sessions for this academic year took place on 9 October at The Loft in Chelmsley Wood. There were representatives from the EHCP service, Solihull Parent Carer Voice, Educational Psychology service, Specialist Inclusion Support Service, Health (community nursing) and the Early Years team. It was great for the teams to meet, and talk to, so many parents – so thank you to all who attended. The next parent drop in session will take place on 22 January 2025 venue to be confirmed.

We would like to reassure both parents/carers and schools that both parental and school requests for EHC Assessments are processed within the statutory time frames. For example, a decision of whether or not the legal test for an EHC Assessment has been met is made within 6 weeks of the request being submitted. Neither a school or a parental request is processed at a quicker rate.

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## Health

The new [Solihull ADHD referral pathway can be found here](#).

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## Solihull Parent Carer Voice

It was lovely to see so many parents at the EHC Drop-In earlier this month, over 80 appointments were completed with staff from the local authority and health. These sessions happen termly, so please do keep an eye out for information on the next one.

Our coffee mornings for the rest of this year are:

24<sup>th</sup> October, 9.30-11.30- The Hub, Touchwood.

14<sup>th</sup> November, 9.30-11.30- Sharman's Cross Pub.

5<sup>th</sup> December, 9.30-11.30- Whar Hall Community Centre.

Please do come along and meet with other parent carers, this is an opportunity to give us your feedback about how services and support for your child/young person is working.

Our School Engagement team are regularly in over 30 schools holding parent sessions, these should be advertised out through your school.

We are also starting sessions in 15 schools around Promoting Neurodiversity in Schools, again your schools should be advertising these sessions so please do look out for these.

As always, we can be contacted via Facebook messenger or at [enquiries@spcv.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@spcv.org.uk)

DfE have announced further training for early years as the recovery programme comes to an end. In September 2024 they will be publishing *additional resources for early years educators aimed at supporting children with developmental differences and special educational needs and disabilities*. These resources are a new free online module that will be added to DfE's Early years child development training and Early Years SEND assessment guidance and resources which will be available on the [Help for Early Years Providers](#) platform.

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## Our Voices Heard

In December we are holding another Let's Talk SEND Event, where we will be celebrating some of our children and young people from around Solihull.

We also would like to celebrate any school staff that children and young people with SEND think are doing a good job of supporting, welcoming and including children and young people.

<https://forms.office.com/r/J6JzZLpHaJ>

We are currently holding participation sessions for children and young people in schools and are arranging after school sessions which will be advertised soon.

If your child/young person would like to be involved with Our Voices Heard and give their views, please do contact us at [ourvoicesheardsolihull@outlook.com](mailto:ourvoicesheardsolihull@outlook.com)

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## Solihull Early Years Team

We have been enjoying working with our **new team members** Karen, Jenna, Peter and Sarah. A full list of our team is attached below. Our colleagues have a great range of experience to bring to their new roles- they are also lovely. If you are working with the team, please feedback to help us know if our work supports you in your role as parent or practitioner. You can [view contact details for the team here.](#)

**We were interested in the SPCV Parental Views report.** 86% of responses were positive about their child's setting which is great. I know that settings will be keen to continue to reflect on provision to ensure all children's academic and emotional needs are met. Our annual visits and interim support visits will focus on the impact of the child's voice and meeting children's special educational needs. Whilst a small portion of responses overall [2.8%] were from parents with nursery children we know that providers are always keen to reflect on their SEN and wider inclusive practices.



### **Thank you for taking time to access the Dingley's Promise modules.**

The 2 new modules, which have a focus on wider inclusion and managing SEND, have been delayed until later in the autumn.

Six settings now have the Mark of Achievement and I know it is something that parents have asked about when they look for settings with well trained staff.

Completing the training and being a reflective setting who seeks on-going quality improvement. Currently available training is listed [here.](#)

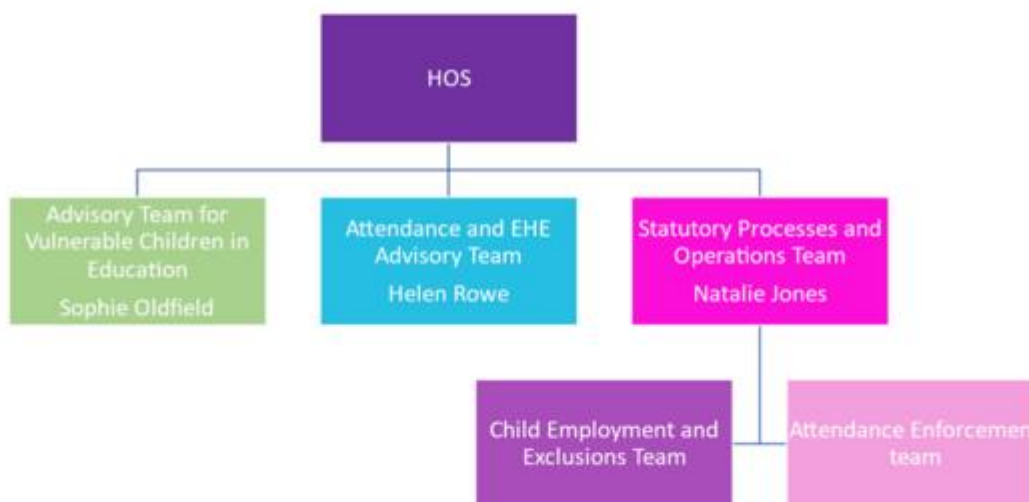
Over the summer we have been tidying our [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc](http://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc) web pages. You will find a range of information including local guidance to support practitioners. We are looking at how we can make the Local Offer work for you- so please do feedback via the short [survey](#)

## Education Participation Advisory Service (EPAS)

Following some work carried out over the summer including consultation with SPCV and OVH we are relaunching and reshaping the Education Inclusion Service. The main changes are below

- A change of name to the Education Participation Advisory Service (EPAS)
- A change to the overall team to 3 specialist teams - Advisory Team for Vulnerable Children, Advisory team for Attendance and EHE and Statutory Processes and Operations Team (encompassing the Child Employment and Exclusions Team and the Attendance Enforcement Team)
- Changes of job titles to come in line with the EHCP team.

## Structure



**Children's Services**  
We put children and young people at the heart of everything we do

		Administrator	Administrator
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Remit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision and PEV - reduction, avoidance, advice, 5<sup>th</sup> day provision, reintegration</li> <li>• SEND Graduated approach - Children in Mainstream waiting for special. Way Forward meetings</li> <li>• Vulnerable Children</li> <li>• AP - all aspects of advice and working with commissioning</li> <li>• Youth Justice</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:ycs@solihull.gov.uk">ycs@solihull.gov.uk</a> or 0121 704 6021</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Remit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance advice - all aspects</li> <li>• CME</li> <li>• Part time timetables</li> <li>• EHE - suitability checks, safeguarding, SAGs</li> <li>• Single Panel for AP</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk">attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ap@solihull.gov.uk">ap@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:sh@solihull.gov.uk">sh@solihull.gov.uk</a> or 0121 704 6191</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Remit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of statutory processes</li> <li>• Chaperones, licensing, work permits and visits</li> <li>• Permanent exclusion</li> <li>• Support attendance legal</li> <li>• Pupil tracking</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:childemploymentandexclusions@solihull.gov.uk">childemploymentandexclusions@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:exclusions@solihull.gov.uk">exclusions@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ap@solihull.gov.uk">ap@solihull.gov.uk</a> or 0121 704 6271</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Remit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of statutory processes</li> <li>• Attendance Legal</li> <li>• CME register</li> <li>• EHE register</li> <li>• PDS</li> <li>• Pupil Tracking</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="mailto:attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk">attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ap@solihull.gov.uk">ap@solihull.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk">attendanceenforcement@solihull.gov.uk</a> or 0121 704 6231</p>

## Stay informed about career events and information

Young people, parents and carers can find out about the latest career information and upcoming event in the borough with this [information page](#). It covers various post-16 options including apprenticeships to help young people plan their careers.

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## Short Breaks for disabled children and young people

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Solihull Council subsidises a range of leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respice from their caring responsibilities. More information about eligibility and the activities we subsidise can be found on the [Local Offer](#).

A number of the projects currently have availability, including:

**Elmwood Hub Solo Squad** - 37 Burtons Way, Birmingham B36 0UG

Monday 16:15-18:45

Higher Needs - 8-12 year old, Craft, Sensory and Play - £2.50 per session Contact [childrens@sololifeopportunities.org](mailto:childrens@sololifeopportunities.org) for more information

**Unbounded theatre club** – The Core Theatre, Solihull, B91 3RG

Tuesday 16:30 – 18:30

11-19 year olds – non-verbal physical theatre group led by Open Theatre and Entrust Care Partnership, any level of experience welcome - £3 per session Contact [lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk](mailto:lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk) for more information

**Wednesday Youth Club** - Streetsbrook Rd, Solihull B91 1QY

Wednesday 17:30-20:00

13-18 Year Olds - Lower Needs; Includes evening meal, cooking, baking, chill time, movie nights and craft activities - £10 per session Contact [childrens@sololifeopportunities.org](mailto:childrens@sololifeopportunities.org) for more information

**Active Solo** - Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, Blossomfield Rd, Solihull B91 1NB

Sunday 16:00-17:30

14-19 Year Olds - Lower Needs; supported to access gym equipment by support workers. Also includes Gym Membership which can be used in their own time, £10 per session Contact [childrens@sololifeopportunities.org](mailto:childrens@sololifeopportunities.org) for more information

**Solo Junior Parkrun Stars** - Meeting at Brueton park, Pick up at Solihull Fire Station

Sunday 8:45-10:45



*8-14 - Lower & Higher Needs - Includes a 2k run with Junior Parkrun and Breakfast provided - £5 per session* Contact [childrens@sololifeopportunities.org](mailto:childrens@sololifeopportunities.org) for more information

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# UNBOUNDED THEATRE

DRAMA | GAMES | CONNECTION



We are looking for **young people with disabilities** aged **11-19** to be part of our **weekly evening drama workshops**. We will be using physical non-verbal drama activities to unlock our creativity, confidence and fun!

**Date:** Every Tuesday, 4.30PM - 6.30PM

**Location:** The Core Theatre, Solihull, B91 3RG

**Price:** £3 per session (weekly)

**For more information or to book, please contact:**

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

This service is funded by the Short Breaks Grant Scheme.

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

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

**Charlotte Jones**

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

