

Solihull SEND Newsletter

December 2024

#SENDSpotlight

In case you missed it (!) you can find a copy of our [Special Edition SEND Newsletter](#) on the local offer – where we celebrate all of the children and young people nominated for a SEND award this year. Solihull is so proud of you all.

#SENDSpotlight

52 schools are participating in a nurture training programme with NutureUK and we are pleased to hear that the first school has just achieved their National Nurturing School Award. Well done!

Online Parent Support

Did you know that parents and young people living in Solihull have access to a range of online training and resources about emotional health and wellbeing through the Solihull Approach? With a Solihull postcode you can register through their website [Online Learning](#) using the Access Code **AppleJacks**

Response to SPCV and OVH

Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Our Voices Heard presented two reports to the Council's Children's Services & Education Scrutiny Board in September on the lived experience of children and young people and their families. The Joint Additional Needs Board have considered the content and produced a report to help parent carers understand what is already happening and what is planned in response to the recommendations made. All three reports can be found on the SEND Engagement Hub - [You said, we did](#)

Additional Needs Board Meeting

The last Joint Additional Needs Board meeting took place on 13th December. The key messages were:

- The Board were very excited about the SEND Celebration & Awards evening and hearing about those who had been nominated. However, the most excitement came from talking about, and hearing, all of the strengths of our children and young people with SEND – which too often can be overlooked. Members committed to continuing this positive messaging in their work.
- The Board talked about 'Survey Fatigue' following few responses to the recent Additional Needs survey and others seeking families views. Some members were asked to think about how better to engage with children and young people and their parents carers and this will be looked at again next year. However, if you have any suggestions please feel free to email them to jand@solihull.gov.uk
- The Board talked about other Council's who used legal support in their SEND tribunals and the increasing number of parents in Solihull who felt they had to instruct solicitors for their case. Concerns were raised about the inequity for families in the level of support they could afford to pay for and whilst the EHCP Service was happy to look at this in more detail, it did not want to start using its own legal support in hearings as did not feel this was appropriate.

Educational Psychology Service

We've had a busy term working in schools and with families, including work to support emotional wellbeing in schools, Early Years pupils, Children Looked After and starting the next round of our Attachment and Trauma Aware project. Our waiting list has reduced in terms of EHC assessments and we've enjoyed supervising many members of staff in schools and services across the borough. In terms of staffing, we have fifty percent coverage and continue to use the service of a super team of associate EPs to help with our EHC assessment work. Next term sees the start of another ELSA training course and some additional training for staff in schools. Have a very relaxing Christmas everyone.

Solihull Apprenticeship Show

The event showcases apprenticeships at all levels. Attendees will have the chance to speak to employers and training providers from a range of sectors, as well as current apprentices. Anyone aged 15-18 are encouraged to come along on Wednesday 29 January 2025 from 2:30-3:30pm during the quiet hour, while the show will carry on till 7:00pm. The show will be at North Solihull Sports Centre. Sign up with [this link](#) now.

Eight week paid employment opportunity in the Civil Service for young people with Autism

The Civil Service are offering short term opportunities to two hundred 18-25 year olds with autism. With one of their office locations in Birmingham this is an exciting opportunity for young people to build their skills and experience and learn more about office work and the department. If you know of anyone who may be interested, the closing date for applications is 14th January and more information can be found online: [Ambitious about Autism](#)

Early Years

Solgrid/EYC -webpages

Over the summer we updated our training and resources available to support Solihull early years settings. You can find out about up-coming training, past training that has been recorded and access a range of support materials for settings to access. Have you seen the support materials to help you prepare for your annual visit? The [Area SENCo visit](#) can be adapted to meet a setting's needs, so look at the choices on offer. The early years and childcare advisers also offer settings a [self-evaluation visit](#) with themed options.

The Early Years Team around the Child referral - Microsoft Form

The EYTAC form which health visitors, health professionals and childminders can use to request support has launched this November. [Further information can be found here](#). The page also includes flowcharts which may help your understanding of the EYTAC referral process. Parents cannot refer using this form. We hope to seek feedback from those using the form and receiving support using the EYTAC process, in 2025. We are happy to receive compliments and comments for further improvement via TACpanelreferrals@solihull.gov.uk

Makaton Training

The Early Years Team [Makaton](#) trainers trained 80 practitioners across our Solihull Early Years schools and settings last year. Well done to all those who are using their skills to support young children to communicate.

We will continue to train our providers this year so why not [sign up](#) for the training for your setting. It is best to say and sign words together. You only need to introduce a couple of words and signs at a time, so why not give it a try.

Early Years Training – impact

There has been a lot of [free training](#) accessible to early years settings over the past couple of years. Access has been made easier with webinars and on-line recordings. Setting leaders need

to see the value of staff release and investment in time out for training. We asked some of our providers to tell us why they invest and the impact on children and staff.

Chris -childminder.

I am a great believer in training, whether on-line or at college. Over my many years as a childminder I have gone from no qualifications in childcare, right up to my level 6 degree. It helps me to feel equipped for the many diverse backgrounds and needs of children who come into my setting, especially in today's climate of mental health awareness, even for the youngest of children. If you worked in an office, you would have to train for the job, childminding is no different, we all need to keep up to date with the developments of our work.

Training accessed includes- Professional Development Programme, qualifications, etc

Gemma – Managing Director of a nursery

Experts and Mentors coaching offered another professional perspective. It enabled us to gain vital feedback concerning various aspects of our setting, such as practitioner interactions, the learning environment, and suggestions for future development.

As the leader of this setting, my enduring passion is to continuously elevate our environment, ensure that our dedicated staff are well-supported, and provide our young learners with an exceptional foundation in their early years and educational journey.

Training includes inhouse coaching from Early Years Team, Speech and Language Therapy, Experts and Mentors, etc

Sarah- Setting owner and lead

The impact of CPD for our setting: Continually building and upskilling with all training such as Makaton, and Dingley's promise training as just as 2 examples. We use staff meetings once per month, and half terms when we are quieter during the holidays to release staff.

This can keep us up to date with any changes, builds a portfolio for staff and looks great on a CV for further vocations.

The benefit to children and families means we are always being reflective on what knowledge we already hold and what we need to work on to promote children's well-being and learning through play. This builds confidence for a supportive team network to share good practice.

Training includes- Level 3 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, investing in becoming a communication friendly setting, and Makaton/ Dingley's Promise as mentioned.

We appreciate that many settings invest in staff skills and knowledge so that they continuously improve. To really impact positively on children, staff, and settings, leads know that they need staff to access professional development opportunities. They then need to reflect and embed enhancements into practice. Investing in staff also helps their well-being, recruitment and

retention. It obviously gives parents confidence that settings use research led practice to support their children.

Thanks to settings for their continued investment.



SPCV Enquiries

On 3rd December, we along with Our Voices Heard and Solihull Council hosted the first Solihull SEND Awards. It was a fantastic evening celebrating the strength and achievements of our children and young people, community organisations and school staff. Congratulations to all those who were nominated and to the finalists.

Also, earlier in December a focus group of parent carers met with the Council commissioning team to look at what a new SENDIAS service could look like. In the new year we will also be asking parent carers for their views on mediation services.

You may have seen on our social media that we have issued a statement regarding the waiting times for ASD and ADHD assessments. We continue to challenge the health system across Birmingham and Solihull to work to improve both waiting times and the process.

Our monthly SEND Coffee mornings for 2025 are now all booked in and our advertised on our social media and website.

We are also hard at work planning our 2025 SEND Community Event, please keep an eye on our social media and website for more information coming soon, about what the focus of this event will be and how to sign up to attend.

Multi-agency audits update

Thank you to all services, schools and parent carers who have been involved in the multi-agency audits over the course of this year. These are providing essential reflection and learning to ensure we can continue to improve our collaborative work to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. For more information [please see this PDF](#), which outlines Solihull SEND And Alternative Provision Partnership Multi-agency audits.



All Age Autism Support Service

All Age Autism Support Service

We're on the lookout for individuals of any age who have a connection to Autism and ADHD to become part of our amazing volunteer team! If you have an hour or two, to spare a week and you're interested in learning how to update an online directory, gain new skills, engage with your community, meet new friends, and help educate and inspire others, we'd love to hear from you! Reach out to us at aaa@landau.co.uk for more information.

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

Charlotte Jones

Head of Strategy - SEND & Additional Needs



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