

Solihull SEND Newsletter

February 2025

#SENDSpotlight

on 4th February Solihull Councillors focused upon the needs of children and young people with SEND and discussed how they could best support their constituents.

[You can view the meeting here.](#)

National news

This month the Education Secretary gave a speech to lay out plans for a new era of school standards and her vision to break down the barriers to opportunity for each and every child. You can read the [Education Secretary Speech](#) online.

Additional Needs Board Meeting

The last Joint Additional Needs Board meeting took place on 14th February. The key messages were:

- The Board were very excited about upcoming SEND Community Event arranged by Solihull Parent Carer Voice. Being held on 26th February it was recognised as a great way for parents and professionals to come together to improve lives in Solihull. The theme of belonging will help shape how we can all make improvements to our children and young people's daily experiences.
- The Board heard about the new family support helpline (here to help) being launched by children's services in March. Members noted the importance of making sure this was widely shared across the borough as would provide a great source of support to families.
- The Board discussed the Additional Needs Transformation plan which sets out the key areas of activity across the partnership for 2025 and agreed to share this on the local offer after half term.

Early Years Celebrations

We are currently celebrating the 20th Professional Development Programme practitioner training completion. Well done to childminder Deanne who completed the 3 areas of training- communication and language, social and emotional development and early maths modules. You may have seen the announcement by the Royal Foundation to sharing the '[Shaping Us](#)' guidance. This stresses the importance of social and emotional development in the early years. Well done to all 20 Solihull practitioners who have committed to completing this training.

We also have two new Mark of Achievement awards to celebrate. Well done to Burman Infant School and Coleshill Heath School who have achieved the Mark because they have supported their early years staff to access the inclusion training. We know that enabling the number of staff required to reach a Mark is not easy, so well done to all 9 settings who have now achieved this. There are now two new modules for 2025. The Leading SEND and Intersectionality modules have recently been added. Sign up to Dingley's Promise to access this free training <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

Early Years Team around a Child

In December we launched our on-line Microsoft early years team around the child (EYTAC) form. So, parents automatically get a copy of the form if their e mail is added, and service requests go directly to those services. We would love to explore how parents find this process. We have supported 43 children through this process so far, this academic year. Last year 127 children came through EY TAC. Feedback so far is that parents appreciate the quick response to the request for early years team support.

Evaluations from feedback from support in the home show 100% of feedback indicated that support is *extremely useful*. Comments include 'the service was excellent', 'helpful to be show strategies that work', and 'incredible support'. We are sorry we can't always come out to support you as often as you would like, but thank you for appreciating that there are others that also need the support. Visiting slightly less frequently means that others don't have to wait too long for their support.

Early Years Inclusion Fund 2025

The application for early years additional funding has been reduced for those schools and settings who have detailed plans. This includes details about a child's special needs, actions being taken and their effectiveness within their record of implementation and adjustments and how the additional funding will be spent. If plans do not contain this information then it should be detailed within the application form. Parents also need to give consent for this application

request. We advise settings always use this link for a funding application which is up to date (and may require less information than a saved version). <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/early-years-inclusion-funding-for-early-education-funded-children/>

Other funding which may be available for settings include the [Disability Access Fund](#) -if a child has Disability Living Allowance and [early years pupil premium](#). Children with an Education Health and Care Plan are funding through the EHCP process. There is a section within the Leading SEN module from Dingley's Promise on business planning.

We continue to see settings, in our daily roles, who work hard to meet the needs of all children in their setting. Each practitioner a child encounters can make a difference to their lives. We hope that the upcoming Ofsted focus on inclusion will shine a light on the great work settings do, in partnership with parents, to support our Solihull children.

[Update on Direct Payments payroll and managed accounts service](#)

Last year we invited providers to bid for a new contract to provide the Council's Direct Payments payroll and managed accounts service for adults and children.

After evaluation of all the responses, People Plus was the winner by a significant margin. They have been awarded the new 5-year contract which starts on 1st April 2025.

PeoplePlus provides the current service so support to existing service users will continue without any disruption. Following feedback from people using the service, the new contract puts emphasis on performance targets for PeoplePlus to improve the service they provide to our residents. This will include timeliness in responding to queries.

The Council website has information about [direct payments for adults](#) and [personal budgets for children and young people](#).

If you have any questions about the new contract, please contact Hayley Hadnum

Mental Health Provider Collaborative



Play your part in developing future mental health services

Do you live in Birmingham or Solihull and have an interest in mental health?

We are working on a strategy to improve services for people of all ages and we need your voice to help ensure we get it right.

Join one of the upcoming community engagement sessions, followed by lunch:

- Solihull College and University, Tuesday, 25 February, 9.30am-1pm
- H-Suite, Edgbaston, Friday, 28 February, 9.30am-1pm

If you can't be there in person, join the online session on Tuesday, 4 March, 6pm-7.30pm.

Book your free place via Eventbrite:
<https://engageinmentalhealth.eventbrite.co.uk>



Targeted Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities in 2025

Solihull Council is working with several providers to offer a range of short breaks activities: after school, evening, weekends and in school holidays.

This is thanks to continuation grant awards from the Council's Short Breaks Grants programme for activities from January to August inclusive.

[Inclusive Sports Academy](#)- "Youth Inspired" youth club at Hatchford Brook Family Hub (aged 10-18) and games club at Three Trees community centre (age 7-13)

[Inclusive Sports Academy](#)- "Inclusive Outings" trips and outings to the local café, around the borough and local area (age 16-19)

[Ordinary Magic](#)- "Magic Groups" Xperience SEMH climbing group at Flash Climbing Centre (age 11-14), Girls Autism Group at Coleshill Heath School (age 7-11), Boys Autism Group at The Bridge, Shirley (age 7-11)

[Solihull Moors Foundation](#)- "Inclusive Youth Club" youth club offering a range of activities, including disability sports) at Solihull Moors football club (age 11-18)

[Signpost Inclusion](#) – After School Activity Hub offering range of sessions, including dance & singing, younger youth club, gaming club at Renewal Family Centre on Thursdays (age 5-16 depending on the activity) and multi-sports on Fridays.

[Signpost Inclusion](#)– "Weekend Residential" range of activities designed to enhance self-esteem and independence at Boundless Outdoors and Chasewater Activity Centre (age 11-18)

[Signpost Inclusion](#)– "Holiday Activities" school holiday club offering range of activities, indoor and outdoors at a range of locations (age 5-19 depending on the activities)

[Strike9T](#) - "Accessible4all" school holidays camps (half-terms only) and weekly activity drop-ins at Tudor Grange Academy, Kingshurst (age 5-14)

[Urban Heard](#)- "Media for All" weekly group developing range of media skills followed by celebration event at Crabtree Hall (age 11-18)

Other subsidised Short Breaks activities are also provided by [Social Life Opportunities \(SoLO\)](#) on behalf of the Council.

More information about each of the projects is available on the Commissioned Short Breaks section of the FIS Directory.

These services provide group activities for children and young people who can't access mainstream activities due to the nature of their disabilities and support needs and don't require a social worker assessment to access. Families should contact their preferred provider to discuss booking a place for their child or young person.

Solihull Council has a statutory duty to provide short breaks for children and young people with disabilities, the main aims are to provide them with an opportunity to spend time away from their parents/carers, relax and have fun with their friends, and develop their independence. They also give families the chance to have a break from their caring responsibilities, rest and unwind, and spend time with other family members. More information about short breaks is available on the [Local Offer](#) including eligibility.

Many thanks to all those who responded to our Short Breaks survey in November/December – the findings will help inform how we work with providers to offer short breaks. If you have any comments about the targeted short breaks offer in Solihull please contact


childrenscommissioning@solihull.gov.uk

Free Sleep Support for Parents of Autistic Children in Solihull

Hunrosa is excited to offer free sleep support for parents and carers of autistic children in Solihull!

After a successful partnership with the All Age Autism Support Service, we are back to help families improve sleep. Parents and carers of both diagnosed and undiagnosed autistic children can:

- Join a **Sleep Wise workshop** (in-person or online)
- Get **12 months free access** to the Sleep Wise App
- Book a **1-hour 1:1 clinic session** with a sleep consultant

 **Limited time only – available until April!**

 **Sign up now:**

- [In-person workshop](#)
- [Online workshop](#)
- [1:1 sleep clinic appointment](#)

Support Internships

A range of supported internships are available to people over the age of 16 with an EHCP.

[Please see this flyer for details.](#)

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

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