

“A full part in community life”

Solihull’s Strategy for Disabled Children and Young People, 2011 – 2014

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Disabled children and young people have a range of needs that challenge different agencies to work together well. This Strategy is about ensuring that support for disabled children and young people is designed around their needs, co-ordinated, and makes the best use of resources available.
- 1.2 Partner organisations to this Strategy believe that if we remove the barriers that disabled people face they can play a full and active part in community life.
- 1.3 Giving disabled children and young people a full part in community life depends on community and family resources. The resources held by organisations such as the Council, Primary Care Trust and schools will never be enough to meet the needs of all disabled children and young people. This Strategy seeks to use organisation resources to build the capacity of families and communities to find their own solutions and make use of a far wider set of community resources.
- 1.4 The Equality Act 2010 defines disabled people as anyone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The Solihull definition of disability includes the following (an illustrative list, not exclusive):
 - **Health or Medical Needs**
for example Epilepsy, Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes, HIV, or Cancer.
 - **Cognitive or Learning Need**
for example Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Downs Syndrome, Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, learning difficulties and development delay.
 - **Mental Health Difficulties**
for example anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and self harming.
 - **Sensory Impairment**
for example hearing, visual, or multi-sensory impairment.
 - **Speech and Language**
for example verbal dyspraxia or developmental language impairment.
 - **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**
for example Aspergers, and Forensic Autistic Spectrum Disorder
 - **Physical Needs and Difficulties**
for example Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifada, Arthritis and Dyspraxia.
 - **Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development Needs**
for example attachment and attention-deficit (hyperactivity) disorders.

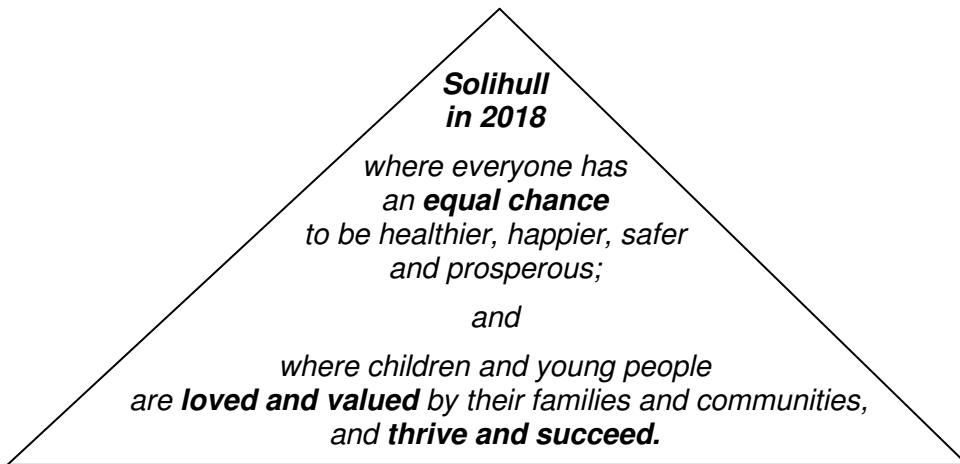
- 1.5 The exact number of children and young people in Solihull who are disabled is not known as different organisations have used different criteria to identify disability, and there is no central register.

In Solihull in July 2011 320 primary age school children had a statement which equates to 2% of the school population; 362 secondary age children had a statement which equates to 2% of the school population. In special schools 428 children had statements which equates to 96% of the special school population.

However it has been estimated that nationally the number of disabled children is around 42.3 per 1,000 population (4.2%) which would equate to a total of about 2,150 children and young people aged 0-19 years in Solihull. Although inexact this method of assessing numbers may be more reliable than using statements of special educational need from the school census as this does not include pre-school age children (0-4 years old) and not all children with a disability have a statement of educational needs.

- 1.6 This Strategy belongs to the Solihull Children and Young People's Trust Board and is overseen by the Disabled Children's Project Board which reports to the Trust Board.

2 Our Vision



Solihull Children and Young People's Plan 2010

3 How will we know if we are achieving our vision for disabled children and young people?

- 3.1 Solihull Council conducts an annual parental survey called 'Ask Parents'. We will include the following questions for parents of disabled children:
- *I am able to find the information I need for my family easily*
 - *Information I receive is always useful and helps me get what my family needs*
 - *The childcare I use fully meets my needs*
 - *I feel I can influence decisions made about services for me and my family*
 - *I feel that I have enough support in my parenting role*
- 3.2 Solihull Council and schools conduct a biennial pupil survey called the 'Health Related Behaviours Questionnaire'. It is used to inform strategic developments and develop services relevant to need. We use feedback from disabled children and young people on a range of issues such as:
- Diet, mental health, physical activity, relationships and sexual health and drugs
 - Bullying, perceived local safety, victims and protection
 - School aims and objectives, support for parents and young people, sources of support and information
 - Active citizenship, pupils' voice, responsibilities at school
- 3.3 Children's Centres will ask parents of disabled children using the Centres how confident they are that they will receive an inclusive service from children's centres, measured by annual survey.
- 3.4 We will meet with disabled children and young people on a 6 monthly basis to ask them whether they think we are making progress with our strategy, and whether we are focusing on the right issues.
- 3.5 We will meet with Solihull CAN, a forum for parents of children with additional needs on a 6 monthly basis to ask them whether they think we are making progress with our strategy, and whether we are focusing on the right issues.
- 3.6 This Strategy includes an action plan with specific measures for each objective.

4 What parents of disabled children and young people tell us

- 4.1 Local research (DCATCH 2009-11) has told us that parents are concerned about the lack of accessible social opportunities out of school; family support; short breaks for children across a range of needs; speech and language therapy; support for behaviour problems; and post 16 opportunities.

Some families say that they feel they are often consulted, with no observable resulting action.

Pupils and young people indicate that they feel they lack social opportunities out of school and some young people with moderate learning difficulties would like more opportunities in mainstream schools

5 Our objectives for 2011 onwards

5.1 To give families greater control in meeting the needs of their children and young people

Rationale: Local Authorities are expected to give parents the opportunity for direct control over support for their family, including the option of 'personal budgets' by 2014. In Solihull parents tell us that they want greater choice and control. We believe that giving parents more control over the resources used for their child will make support more personalised and encourage parents to be innovative in using wider family and community resources.

5.2 To create greater choice for families of disabled children and young people

Rationale: If families are to secure personalised support for their disabled child they need to have a choice of different services providing for different needs, in different ways, at a competitive price. In Solihull there are high quality services but insufficient choice which reduces how parents can make the support for their child more individual and personalised.

5.3 Secure quality information services for families

Rationale: For parents to exercise greater control and choice they need to have access to straight-forward information and advice about what support is available and how to access it. Local Authorities are required to provide information to parents, including on what services are available to support children who are disabled or who have SEN and their families. Parents and practitioners have told us that they would welcome improved access to information, particularly at times of change and to help disabled young people to find employment.

5.4 Enable timely access to appropriate support, especially at transitions

Rationale: There are times when families need additional help, particularly at transitions between schools or other life changes. Solihull is a leader in the use of 'Early Support' but we need joined up support for disabled children and young people of all ages, helping them to deal with transitions and preparing them for adult life, work and independence.

5.5 Strengthen capability and confidence of services to meet the needs of disabled children and young people, to promote their independence and to raise their aspirations

Rationale: Families of disabled children want support in universal settings such as schools, children's centres and leisure centres, just like any other family. Just like any other family they have aspirations for their children that they will live fulfilling lives and be as independent as possible. We want to embed an inclusive culture in Solihull, and develop skills and confidence to support disabled children and young people to be the best they can.

6 Supporting documents

Available online: www.solihull.gov.uk/cyptrust

- Needs Analysis and Service Mapping
- Progress report 2010/11
- Disabled Children's Action Plan, September 2011 – March 2013