

Volunteering opportunities in Solihull

Solihull Family
Information Service

If you are interested in volunteering in Solihull the following organisations can help you:

- Solihull Sustain 0121 711 3148 or go to www.solihull-sustain.org.uk
- Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) 0121 643 4343 www.bvsc.org
- 'Do It' is a useful website for potential volunteers www.do-it.org

If you want to work specifically with children, young people and families, the organisations listed below can help you explore your options. Some require a regular time commitment and others will allow you to give your time when you can. For some of the roles you will need to have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check (CRB) which is usually paid for by the organisation.

Babies and young children (age 0- 5):

Children's Centres

Children's Centres often welcome parents as volunteers to help out with the range of services they offer. Opportunities may include helping with childcare, baby massage, stay and play sessions, dads' groups, rhythm time, office duties, marketing, gardening and community events. Children's Centres also have parents' forums which meet regularly to help centres make decisions about which services to provide. To find out if there are any opportunities near you please contact your local centre. Contact details can be found at www.solihull.gov.uk/childrenscentres

Homestart

Homestart is a national charity which helps families experiencing difficulties. Volunteers visit families in their home and offer practical help and reassurance. Homestart offers optional accredited training to enhance volunteers' skills and knowledge. Homestart does not operate in Solihull, so volunteers from Solihull help families just outside of the borough. For more information please contact Homestart on 0800 068 63 68.

Nursery (age 3 - 5):

Nurseries and playgroups offer many opportunities including helping with activities and fundraising. Contact the Family Information Service to find your nearest nursery or playgroup.

Schools (age 5-18):

Schools across the borough offer parents a wide range of opportunities to get involved:

- Parent/Teacher Associations (PTA) fundraise and support activities and events. Ask at your child's school to find out more.
- Parent Governors are formally elected by other parents to be members of the governing body. They contribute to all decisions that are made and not just those related to parent/pupil matters. They are normally elected for a four year term of office. To find out more please call 0121 788 3161 or go to www.solihull.gov.uk/governors
- Parent Councils are made of parents who meet regularly to talk about things that are important to them and put their views to the head teacher and governing body of the school. Half of all schools in Solihull have a Parents Council. Talk to your school about setting one up if they haven't already got one or contact Kay Hart on 07881 500139 or email kay.hart@jhart.co.uk
- You can also help out in school informally by supporting children with their reading, with school trips and after school activities. Speak to your child's school to find out more.

Solihull Family Information Service

Call: 0800 389 8667

Email: familyinfo@solihull.gov.uk

Web: www.solihull.gov.uk/familyinfo



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Supporting parents who have a child with additional needs:

- Several organisations in Solihull offer a range of support for families who have a child with disabilities. Volunteering opportunities range from helping with leisure activities, administration, befriending parents, marketing and publicity. Please contact Solihull Life Opportunities (SoLO) on 0121 788 3468, The Inclusion Resource Centre on 0121 706 3932 or KIDS 0121 355 2707.
- Some Children's Centres hold drop-in sessions run by parents who have a child with additional needs. They are an opportunity for parents to get information and support and meet other families. Volunteers run the sessions and provide a listening ear. If you have a child with an additional need and are interested in helping with the drop-ins please contact Alison Bermingham on 0800 389 8667 or email abermingham@solihull.gov.uk

Groups that influence borough wide decisions:

Solihull Parents' Forum

This is a group of parents and carers who have children of various ages and come from all parts of Solihull. It ensures that parents are involved in making important decisions about services for children and young people in Solihull. The group meets the third Thursday of every month from 7.30pm until 9pm to talk about things like; keeping children healthy and safe, schools and learning, leisure activities, support for parents and carers. To find out more please email solihullparentsforum@hotmail.co.uk or go to www.solihull.gov.uk/parentsforum

Solihull CAN (Children with Additional Needs)

This is a forum for parents who have a child with an additional need or disability. The group meets on the second Thursday of the month, 7.30pm-9pm and aims to influence decisions that are made about services for children with additional needs and/or disabilities. For more information please contact Hayley Moran at info@solihullcan.org or visit www.solihullcan.org

Other Volunteering Opportunities:

Youth Offending Team (YOT) (age 10 – 17)

The Youth Offending Team helps rehabilitate young offenders through a range of interventions and support mechanisms and supports first time offenders. They need volunteers for their referral order panels which regularly meet to decide which interventions would be most beneficial for young people who have been through the court process. They also need volunteer mentors to support young people to fully take part in their community, such as taking them to football practice and youth centres. For more information contact Karen Laing on 07766 803055 or email klaing@solihull.gov.uk

Solihull Action through Advocacy

Solihull Action through Advocacy works with parents who have a learning disability and may need extra support. Volunteers support parents by listening, sharing, encouraging and advocating. This might mean popping in for a coffee and a chat once a week or going to a parenting group together or speaking up on behalf of the parent to get the support they need.

Training and ongoing support is provided to all volunteers. For more information or an informal chat about what's involved please contact Emma Johnson on 0121 603 5576 or email emma@solihulladvocacy.org.uk

Would you like to know what's happening in Solihull for children and families? Then join our Parent's Network for regular information at www.solihull.gov.uk/parentsnetwork

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