

Solihull SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy

2021 - 2024

Summary Context

The Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) School Place Commissioning Strategy for Solihull seeks to set a baseline for specialist provision across Solihull and consider a range of factors that are driving the need for change over the next three years. The strategy provides information regarding the current and future SEND pupil population and draws conclusions regarding the potential need to add or make changes to specialist provision.

Solihull Council's High Needs Block for 2021/22 financial year is £33.5 million and is fully committed. The underlying trends of rising spending due to a combination of more pupils, pupils with greater needs and the placement of significant numbers of pupils in independent provision is a cause of significant concern. The High Needs Block overspent by £3.1M at 2020-21 year end, giving an accumulated overspend of £9.1M

However it is important to note that the creation of additional specialist provision is only part of a wider system that needs to support mainstream inclusion and strong and robust SEND processes.

The strategy aims to develop:

- › An inclusive education system with effective early intervention and supported by a skilled workforce able to access specialist support when it is needed:

- › Provide high quality SEND provision locally to meet the needs of Solihull pupils where these cannot be met in a mainstream school setting.
- › A shared understanding with schools, parents, children and young people (CYP) and the wider community the need for specialist provision planning and to establish future demand.
- › Value for money planning and support the work of the High Needs Budget Recovery Plan

This strategy is part of the reshaping education agenda which seeks to transform life chances by holding children and young people at the heart of everything we do and strives to be ambitious for children and young people - ensuring all have access to a high quality inclusive education which empowers them to lead independent and successful lives.

This strategy will also underpin the commitments made in the Additional Needs Strategy to help children and young people be the best they can be - by providing the right support, in the right place at the right time

The full version of the strategy and action plan can be found on <https://.socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education> and using the School Place Planning page.

Where are we now?

Solihull schools - In January 2021, 6,884 (16.3%) of CYP being educated in schools in Solihull had a Special Educational Need. Of these 1,427 (3.38%) had an EHCP, slightly lower than both the regional (3.59%) and national (3.65%) averages. 5,457 pupils (12.9%) are on SEN support compared with 12.2% nationally and 12.9% regionally. 274 of pupils in Solihull schools with an EHCP live outside of Solihull.

Solihull resident CYP - In January 2021, Solihull maintained a total of 1,743 EHC Plans, an overall net increase of 125 (8%) since January 2020 and an increase of 328 (23%) over the last 5 years.

Solihull resident CYP with an EHCP

The age breakdown	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Increase Jan 20 to Jan 21	% increase	Increase 2017 to 2021	% increase 2017 to 2021
Under age 5	42	25	42	57	65	8	14%	23	55%
Age 5 to 10	438	446	470	550	584	34	6%	146	33%
Age 11 to 15	607	618	644	672	751	79	12%	144	24%
Age 16 to 19	297	313	267	304	309	5	2%	12	4%
Age 20 to 25	31	42	38	35	34	-1	-3%	3	10%
TOTAL	1,415	1,444	1,461	1,618	1,743	125	8%	328	23%

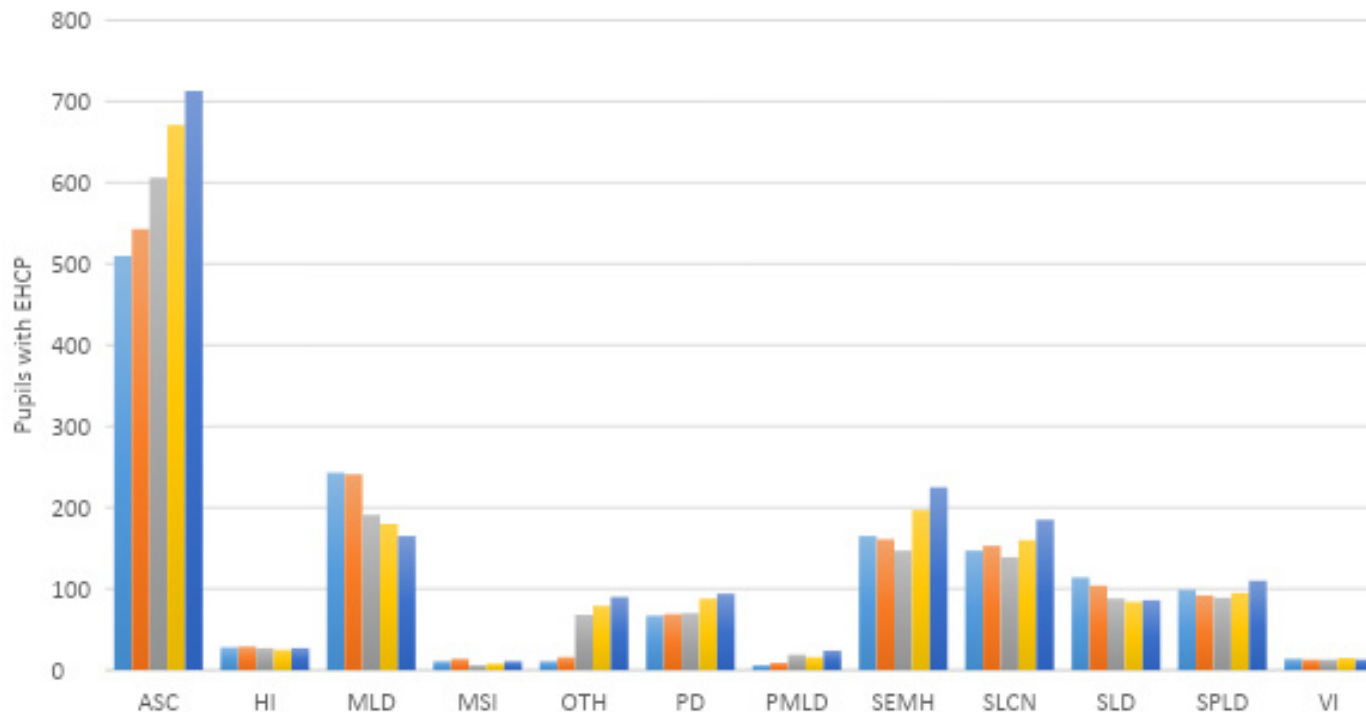
There has been marked growth in the number of CYP under the age of 5 that have an EHCP, an increase of 14% since January 2020 and growth of 55% since 2017. 343 (14%) CYP are over the age of 16.

Summary of Solihull Pupil Placements	January					% of EHCPs at Jan 2021
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Non-maintained early years	4	0	1	8	7	0.4%
Mainstream schools/ Academies	396	374	381	469	527	30%
Mainstream school/ academy resourced provision	86	78	86	84	93	5%
Mainstream school: independent school	29	22	25	25	37	2%
Special school/Academies	552	581	590	634	660	38%
Independent/Non Maintained Special school	92	102	108	108	115	7%
Alternative Provision and AP Free School	23	15	14	9	14	1%
Hospital schools (including foundation schools)	0	0	0	1	0	0%
Post 16: General FE and tertiary colleges/HE	134	183	166	191	138	8%
Post 16: Specialist post-16 Institutions	55	47	45	27	72	4%
Other arrangements made by Local Authority	8	8	9	13	8	0.5%
Elective Home Education	16	20	11	26	24	1%
Awaiting provision - final EHC plan issued but awaiting placement	15	14	25	16	47	3%
Other				6	0	0%
TOTAL	1,410	1,444	1,461	1,618	1,743	
% Growth	14%	2%	1%	11%	8%	

Placements in Independent Schools, both mainstream and Special, are increasing and there has been significant growth in the cost of post-16 placements. Solihull has a higher than average reliance on the use of independent special schools, than either national or regional trends.

3% of CYP with an EHCP were awaiting a school placement, this is a significant increase on the previous year.

Primary Need Comparison Jan 2017 to Jan 2021 SEN2 data

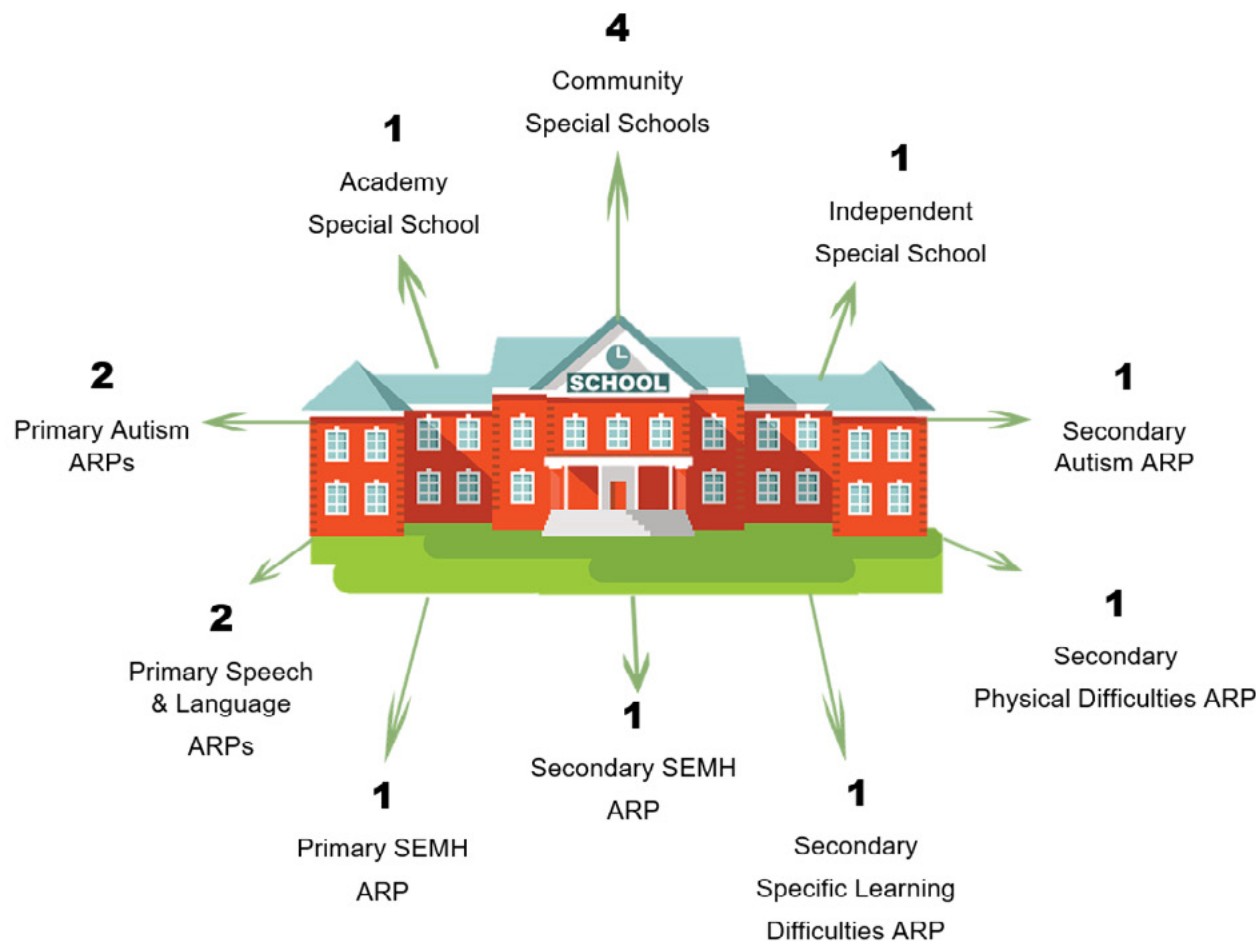


The top 3 primary needs for CYP living in Solihull are Autism (ASC), Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) and Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Autism is the primary need for 41% of Solihull CYP with an EHCP.

The percentage of CYP in Solihull identified as having Autism as their primary need, is significantly higher than regional and national levels.

Of the CYP placed in independent provision 53% have a primary need of Autism and 30% have a primary need of SEMH. This equates to 84% of all of the independent school placements. 47% of pupils awaiting provision are identified as having ASC as their primary need and 23% SEMH.

Special Education Provision in Solihull



737.4 places were commissioned in Solihull special schools at January 2021, with 688 CYP on roll. Places have increased by 18% in the last 5 years. 17% of all pupils in Solihull special schools are resident outside of Solihull this equates to 120 special school places.

142 places were commissioned in Solihull additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) at Jan 2021 with 122 CYP on roll. Places have increased by 19% in the last 5 years.

Future Demand for provision

Assuming current trends continue, the number of CYP with an EHCP, resident in Solihull, is forecast to grow by 639 (36%) over the next 5 years, with increases across nearly all phases but in particular in early years and post-16.

The top three areas of forecast primary need for Solihull pupils with an EHCP are ASC, SEMH & SLCN, but forecasts show a decline in the number of pupils with a primary need of MLD. Small increases in demand for MSI and PMLD are impacting on our special school capacity and will continue to do so.

Just under 50% of the additional Solihull EHCP pupil growth will be catered for in mainstream schools by 2026, the remaining demand will require specialist provision if current trends continue. Further increases in pupils placed in Independent provision is unsustainable due to pressure on the High Needs and Transport budgets.

Newly commissioned provision

A forecast overspend in the High Needs Budget should not prevent the Council from investing in new provision or specialist places. For every child placed outside of Solihull in independent provision, at least two pupils can be educated in a provision in Solihull. Using a spend to save model; the Council is endeavouring to fund the revenue required for the creation of new provision through the reduction of placements outside of the Borough.

Provision	Type	Need	Age	Places	Opening
The Heights Special Free School	Special Free School	Autism	KS2 KS3 KS4	100	September 2023
Reynalds Cross School	Special School	SLD	All	12 8	September 2021 - September 2022
Mill Lodge Primary School	ARP	Autism	KS1 KS2	8	September 2021
SISS Intervention Base	Intervention hub	SEMH	KS1 KS2	18	September 2021 & April 2022
TOTAL				146 FTE	

The Heights will create 100 additional special school places in the first two years and is expected to have a significant impact on the numbers of pupils placed in Independent Schools in the future. In addition the school will be able to cater for some of those pupils currently placed in Pupil Referral Units and potentially be part of the solution to the increasing number of pupils counted as awaiting provision, of which 47% have Autism as their primary need.

Development priorities for future SEND provision

The data has highlighted some key priorities for investment to meet the demographic growth within the Borough as well as reduce our reliance on high cost independent provision. Any future investment in specialist provision should seek to secure a correlating reduction elsewhere in the High Needs budget.

The development of Post-16 Autism and SEMH provision/pathways

The development of services/and or provision to support Early Years and Reception pupils with additional needs.

Further expansion of special school places in particular SLD places with a focus around Merstone School, or through the creation of a new special school.

Develop SEMH additionally resourced provision/special school hub for pupils with an EHCP in the secondary phase.

Review the need for SEMH additionally resourced provision for pupils with an EHCP in the primary phase.

Review the SEMH provision at Tudor Grange Primary – Yew Tree to include provision of KS1 places.

Explore and develop spend to save initiatives through the creation of additionally resourced provision to target out of borough placements.

In addition to the development of specialist provision there is a need to work with mainstream schools to both support and remove barriers to support SEND inclusion.

Commissioning Strategy Principles

When considering the need to expand provision to accommodate an increasing number of children requiring additional support through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) the following principles should be at the core of the commissioning process.

- › The individual needs of each child and young persons will be at the heart of SEND provision planning.
- › Children and young people with EHCPs should expect to have their needs met in their local mainstream provision.
- › Where specialist provision is required this should be located in or as close to Solihull as possible.
- › Children should only be expected to travel outside of Solihull for specialist provision in exceptional circumstances.
- › Where possible SEND provision in Solihull should be geographically spread to minimise the need for extended travelling times.
- › New specialist SEND provision should be created in partnership with children and young people, parents, schools and other providers and support organisations.
- › Where new specialist provision is created within existing schools and academies they will be Ofsted rated good or outstanding.
- › Opportunities will be explored to allow creative use of enhanced mainstream provision enabling more pupils to receive their education in a mainstream setting, potentially with the support of Special Schools and the Solihull School Inclusion Service.
- › Work with schools to create enhanced provisions within existing school buildings limiting the need for capital expenditure.
- › Children with Education & Health Care Plans should not be placed in short term provision.
- › The level of commissioned places at existing maintained special schools in Solihull will remain at current levels unless investment in additional accommodation is achieved.
- › Commissioning strategy supports the necessity to bring high needs spending in line with high needs grant provided by the government.
- › Reduce Solihull's reliance on expensive independent provision by investment in the creation of new maintained provision within Solihull.
- › Seek to reduce the current level of places within other Local Authority special schools and additionally resourced provision and place future pupils in Borough.
- › All new schools to be developed to include an Additionally Resourced Provision.
- › Commissioning briefs will be developed for all specialist provision in Solihull which will outline the pupil profile, number of commissioned places and admissions process for each provision.

Conclusion

Numbers of CYP with an EHCP is forecast to continue to rise. Growth in demand at early years/reception and at post-16 have been identified as a key issue. The largest growth areas are for pupils with Autism and Social Emotional Mental Health and these areas should continue to priority for development.

Ongoing demand for special school places, either through expansion or the development of a new special school, needs further consideration in particular around the provision of SLD places

If left unchecked, the demand for independent school placements will also continue to increase. The Council's High Needs Budget cannot meet the increased cost in out of borough placements, or the cost of the transport.

The growth in specialist places in Solihull will seek to reverse this trend. In particular the development of the Heights Special Free School, which will specifically target those pupils, with Autism, that currently cannot have their needs met locally.

This strategy has identified a priority list of developments to meet the growing demand, and to maximise value for money.

It is essential that work continues to support mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs and identify the barriers that may prevent them from doing so.

Glossary of Terms

ARP	Additionally Resourced Provision
ASD/ASC	Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition
CYP	Children and Young People
EHCP	Education and Health Care Plan
FE	Further Education
HI	Hearing Impaired
LA	Local Authority
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
NOR	Number on roll
PD	Physical Difficulties
PMLD	Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEMH	Social Emotional Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SLCN	Speech Language Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
VI	Visual Impairment