

Solihull SEND Newsletter

December 2022

It seems that many retailers this year are rising to the John Lewis challenge over Christmas adverts. Christmas can be a mixed experience for many families, but I am heartened that many of the adverts are all focusing on the same thing; everyone having the people around they need to support them, feeling understood and accepted and us all going that extra step to bring happiness.

We are all very aware that nationally the SEND system has not been able to deliver what was expected, and we are all dealing with the challenges that brings, but every day we can see those small actions making a big difference by working together.

Strategic News

Strategy for Inclusive Education

In November, the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) ran training on Inclusion, Equity and Diversity, for the seven schools who are piloting the Inclusion Audit Tool this term. The training received great feedback and was thought provoking for all involved, particularly reflecting on issues such as intersectionality, power and bias. It was great to hear this month how the seven schools involved in the pilot (Langley Secondary Academy, Coleshill Heath, Dickens Heath, Knowle and Smithswood primary schools, Streetsbrook Infants and Hazel Oak Special) are using the Audit Tool and gaining the voice of their school community to reflect on their current inclusive practice. This training has also been rolled out to all SENCo/Inclusion Leaders at the SENCo network meetings in November, feedback so far has been really positive. Pilot schools will be feeding back their thoughts on the Inclusion Audit Tool at the end of term, so it can be tweaked and finalised to share with all schools at the Head teachers Conference on 9 February 2023.

We are also really pleased that three schools have signed up to the match funded National Nurturing Schools Programme (Coleshill Heath, Dickens Heath and Greswold Primary schools) Training will commence in January 2023. Finally, two schools (Bishop Wilson and Greswold) have signed up for an exciting 'Action Research for inclusion and SEND project, part of NASEN's

DfE funded '[Universal SEND Services](#)' programme running from now until 2025. The two schools will be piloting a key part of the Strategy for Inclusive Education, which is Action Research in schools, learning will inform future setting up of Strategy Linked School Enquiry Groups. Working with The University of Derby, both schools will benefit from guidance from leading academics in the field of ISEND (who are also qualified teachers), learning how to setup and run their own Action Research for ISEND projects.

Finally, CSIE and Professor Brahm Norwich from the University of Exeter and Professor Peter Hicks from Edge Hill University met with Education Heads of Service and Team Managers to share initial baseline data in relation to Solihull's inclusive practice. This is a historic perspective, within the context of the COVID pandemic, and will provide a working document to inform and measure the impact of the Strategy for Inclusive Education over the next three years.

Delivering Better Value

We are grateful to the many people across education, care and health who have come together over the last month to undertake case reviews and help us to identify what some of the barriers are to children and young people with EHCPs achieving their 'ideal' outcomes. The themes from these sessions will be informing our next steps on the Delivering Better Value programme as we start to reflect on what we can do to remove these barriers. We know from the baseline work we have completed that there is no specific cause of the pressures in Solihull – and we are simply facing rising demand for EHCPs and increasing costs across the whole system. We are therefore looking at how we can best increase support and capacity to better meet the needs of all children and young people in any provision in Solihull and this will shape our action planning.

Additional Needs Strategy

As mentioned in the last newsletter, and our special edition, we have been seeking the views of children and young people, and their families to what difference the strategy has made over the past year. Thank you to everyone who participated, and those of you who helped parent carers and children and young people do so. We are currently analysing the feedback and will include it within our annual report on the Additional Needs Strategy which will be available early in 2023.

SEND Inspection Framework

As you may be aware, Ofsted consulted on a new local area SEND inspection framework to come into force during 2023. In preparation for this we have liaised with the West Midlands Peer Review Programme to request an inspection readiness peer review visit relating to SEND. This will take place on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 January and contact will be made before that date with those who need to be involved. This will give us an impartial view on how well Solihull is meeting the needs of its children and young people with SEND and help us to prioritise our ongoing work.

Specialist Inclusion Support Service

The SISS annual report will go to EdSEND this week and will be published on the Local Offer.

Feedback on the services provided has been really positive from both families and schools.

- 76% (42 out of 55 parent/carers) who responded to the SISS survey this year rated the support from SISS teams at the highest level of 5 'very good'.
- 64% of 42 school respondents rated the quality of support from SISS at the highest level of 5 'very good' rising to 79% and 78% for the CLD and Autism Teams respectively.

Feedback included:

Schools

"The flexibility and availability from both SISS teachers we access have been incredible. The information and advice they have provided staff, students and families has been fantastic."

"Excellent INSET delivered. Positive impact for all teaching staff."

"Has been amazing! Reports are incredibly thorough and useful and have helped greatly with placements for children as well as identifying dyslexia and gaining insight into learning needs."

"Invaluable support provided. Supporting 1:1, small group work and assessments. Providing advice for the development of nurture facilities and attended complex TAC meetings."

Families

"The specialist has been amazing, the support she has given to my son and us as a family has been both above and beyond."

"My son's case worker, well what can I say, amazing at his job, so supportive, understanding, but teaches amazing ways to cope. But always support the family as well...such an amazing service to have in schools."

REFRESH

The REFRESH provision based at Coleshill Heath primary school now has its KS1 provision up and running, alongside the KS2 provision. We have recruited to the Play and Family Therapy post following the departure of our previous play therapist and are currently recruiting to some of the KS2 roles, as some of our teaching staff move on. After such a short period, it has been great to see how much the majority of children are enjoying attending and how well home school staff and families are working with the REFRESH team to enable the children to be successful.

High Needs Pathway

We have also been able to recruit this month a play therapist to join the High Needs SEMH Pathway providing much needed support for children, families and schools, working alongside the High Needs teacher, educational psychologist, and Inclusion Support Practitioners.

The High Needs Pathway report is due to be published shortly and support will be reviewed as part of the Graduated Approach workstream to ensure resources best meet the needs of the children and clearly feeds into and out of other pathways.

Health

Kooth

Kooth offers emotional and mental health support for children and young people aged between 11 and 24. On Kooth, qualified counsellors are online seven days a week to provide young people with online counselling. This is done through chat-based messaging via drop-in or booked sessions and is available for children and young people in Solihull and Birmingham.



CATCH Launch Event

Solihull CATCH is the new name for the Children's Therapy Services in Solihull Community. We'd like to invite you to come and learn about our new vision, how the service will work for you as a professional or as a parent and to meet some of our staff. The launch event will include a presentation/video and an opportunity to discuss the service. Tea and coffee available. We look forward to meeting you!

When - Wednesday 18 January 2023, 9.30am – 3pm

Where - Chelmsley Wood Primary Care Centre
– Room 2 (1st floor)



ADHD Nurse-led Service

We are pleased to share that the Solihull ADHD Nurse-led service has been successful in recruitment and a new Children's Nurse will be joining the service in early 2023. The new Clinical

support worker is now in post and has completed induction. Temporary nurse specialist staffing is in place currently to ensure service delivery continues whilst the team wait for their new member to start.

UHB have advised that QB testing is being explored for Solihull which would further enhance the diagnostic process for children and young people with ADHD. The QB test is a computer-based test that measures the core symptoms associated with ADHD including hyperactivity, impulsivity and inattention/distractibility.

Solihull Children's Learning Disability Nursing Service

The Solihull Community Learning Disabilities Team are in the process of recruiting Learning Disability Nurses and registered nursing associates to replace nurses who have left recently. There are new team members starting in December, a maternity leave staff member returning in January and a nursing and a support worker vacancy still to be recruited to. This has not affected our service for direct referrals and referrals continue to be triaged and managed by the team.

Education Inclusion Service

Attendance Support

We have begun implementing the new guidance from the DfE, 'Working together to improve attendance (May 2022)'. So far this term we have hosted two workshops for school staff aimed at introducing the new guidance and exploring strategies for supporting pupils with persistent absence in schools.

These sessions were well attended and the feedback very positive. Thank you to all school staff who attended the sessions both for your time and contributions to the sessions. It is important that we use these sessions to hear about your challenges and share good practice. We are currently planning future workshops and training and welcome any suggestions on particular areas that we should focus on. The next training session for schools is being developed in partnership with Solar and the Educational Psychology Service and will focus on the impact of mental health challenges and attendance. This workshop session will focus on building resilience and will include an element of sharing information about the services that are available to support schools, children, and families. Further details on this and other sessions will be available next term.

All schools should now be aware of their named Education Inclusion Service Officer and we have started rolling out a programme of meeting attendance leads in schools. Currently the team are focussing on those children with severe absence (less than 50% attendance). Schools unsure of their named officer should contact the Education Inclusion Service on 0121 704 6663.

Elective Home Education

The policy and processes relating to the oversight of children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) has been reviewed in advance of an expected requirement that the Local Authority hold a

register of EHE children. All families have been contacted to ensure that we hold up to date contact details, and our process for considering suitability has been revised. In cases where the education is deemed to be unsuitable, we are working with families to help their children access an educational placement. Currently there are 295 children and young people known to be EHE in Solihull, which is a significant reduction compared to recent years.

Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions

We are seeing a significant increase in the numbers of children and young people being suspended or permanently excluded this year. So far this term there have been 37 children permanently excluded compared to 46 during the whole of the last academic year. Officers are currently looking into the reasons for this increase to see what intervention and prevention support can be made available. We are also exploring ways to increase provisions for children following permanent exclusion.

EHCP Service

Once again, we are at that time of year where we are focussing on transitions into (and between) schools.

Positively, many schools and nurseries have been very helping in holding the Year 6, Nursery 2, and Year 2 (Infants) EHCP reviews before the October half term period, enabling us to name placements by the 15 February 2023 deadline. There are, however, some reviews where paperwork remains outstanding, so this is a gentle reminder that we need this urgently.

The next deadline is then 31 March 2023 for school leavers, and we have asked schools to have all those reviews done (and paperwork with us) by the end of the Christmas term. We know that people are working hard on those!

Everyone's support to meet these deadlines is greatly appreciated. We know that it makes a real difference for children and families.

The EHCP service is currently recruiting Officers and a Caseworker (including maternity cover which could be a secondment). If you know of anyone that would be interested, please encourage them to get in touch.

The EHCP service are holding two parent 'drop-ins' at The Loft (West Mall, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5TN) on 20 January 2023 from 10:00–13:00 and 20 March 2023 from 13:00-16:00. These are for any parents that would like to pop in and talk to us – no appointments needed! We are also working with other teams to see if we can make this a multi-agency drop-in for parents, too. We are holding a similar event for schools on 22 March 2023, also at The Loft, from 14:00-16:00. If these events are a success, we will consider scheduling them regularly.

Preparing for Adulthood

Moving forward, the 0-25 SEND Team (that work with young adults with disabilities in education) will also be supporting young people that have a diagnosis of Autism who are transitioning from Children's to Adult services. If a young person already has a Children's Social Worker, they will ensure a referral is made to Adult Services. If you are a carer of a young person with Autism who is 18 years of age or above and they do not receive a service from Children's Services, please contact our One Front Door duty on 0121 704 8007 to request an assessment.

Education Outcomes and Intervention

Early Years

The Early Years Team have been talking to Solihull parents and practitioners working in Solihull to re-define our Solihull School Readiness definition. Here is the centre of the word art which represents the largest words that most people felt were important when considering 'readiness' for statutory school. We will share the final guidance when it is complete.



In the summer we had 165 practitioners registered to access the Dingley's Promise training. There are now four modules of inclusion available through our Solgrid Early Years and Childcare site [www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training]. Complementary to the module on Managing Behaviours That Challenge for settings, is the Understanding Your Child module available on Solihull's Five to Thrive website <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/fivetothrive>.

The course is free for families to access, and the code APPLEJACKS can be used for anyone in Solihull to complete this course. Both courses focus on the communication that younger years [and older years] children use to tell us they have needs and wants. There are also courses for pregnancy and after the birth.

The Five to Thrive website is also where you will find a summary of the Solihull Maternity and Early Years Strategy and an update on the current context as [key indicators](#).

The Department for Education [DfE] are soon to share the details of their Professional Development Programme for early years. PDP is an evidence-based programme aimed at helping practitioners to support the recovery and learning of the most disadvantaged children. It comprises modules on communication and language, maths and personal, social and emotional development (PSED) delivered through a combination of self-study and online webinars. Feedback from those practitioners who accessed the previous PDP were positive. So, if you are a setting who has disadvantaged children and those with SEND then look out for your invite from the Education Development trust and DfE. The course is free to those registered and eligible to access it. It will be on-line training with some funding available for cover.

Music Service

Solihull Music is continuing to grow. A recent recruitment campaign has enabled more new teachers to be appointed to enable the hub to meet the current demands for lessons. The new middle management team has provided well needed capacity for the hub to focus on it's main aim which is removing barriers so that all pupils can access music. There are already inclusion groups set up to enable pupils with SEND to participate in group performance, SEMH groups, support for young offenders. Solihull Music also works in close partnership with the virtual school to provide lessons for LAC. Schools can contact Claire Batty should they want any more information about these groups or lessons. There are now also locality leads within the management team. These leads will be conducting a needs analysis of their area so we hope schools will provide some feedback to enable the best provision to be put in place. locality leads will share more information around the education hub at the next collaborative meeting.

Education Improvement Team

A priority for us is working with schools to identify the gaps in current provision for pupils with complex needs. This work has started with pulling together all of the current provision and pathways and working with schools to establish current pressures and how the local authority can The team are currently completing this terms school improvement visits and challenge and support meetings. The focus for next term is going to be provision for SEND pupils and capturing best practice in schools.

Children with Disability Social Work Team

Our Children with Disability Team has continued to grow to meet the demand for the service over the last 12 months. We have recently welcomed the addition of a new Assistant Team manager who has settled into the team over the last month. Now we have three Assistant team managers, two of these focus on the management of the social work element, with the third managing the

EHCP social care and Family Support Workers. We continue to make every effort to recruit Social Workers so that we can continue to meet the demand for support.

Our Children with Disability Team continues to support children, young people and their families with all areas of social work practice to implement and support positive, impactful changes to the child's life experience. This may include an assessment and tailored support for children and young people with complex disability needs that require higher levels of support in which the local offer cannot meet. Our Children with Disability Team recognises that there remains a significant difficulty with Personal Assistant recruitment across the region. As such Solihull MBC are working with providers and local universities to help facilitate recruitment which we are hopeful will reduce waiting times for children and families to get support.

There will be a representative from our Children with Disability Team that will attend the drop-in sessions for the EHCP co-production meetings that are starting in January 2023. Please feel free to come along to speak to us.

Community Education Psychology Service

We are delighted to be introducing the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) programme to Solihull next year! The programme offers training and ongoing supervision for staff to become registered Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, who are able to make a big difference to the mental health needs of your pupils.

Costs are great value – just £650 for the six-day training course and a further 300 a year for the supervision that ensures ongoing registration with the national ELSA network. There is a maximum of one place per school and initial invoices will be sent before the start of the course. The additional time commitment from your senior leadership team is minimal – line-management for ELSAs runs as it usually would at school, but we ask that line managers attend a half day training with their ELSAs at the start of the course and also join at least one supervision session each year subsequently.

If your school would like to nominate a delegate to become an ELSA, then please email us on edpsych@solihull.gov.uk by Monday 12 December to claim your place.

Children and Young People Commissioning

The number of learners with complex and challenging needs that necessitate bespoke provision is increasing. This is particularly for learners requiring regular therapeutic input to support their education, or where mental health difficulties are leading to behaviours that may present as significantly challenging and therefore children/young people are not accessing or engaging with school.

Solihull Council is currently engaging with the market to determine what model would be most effective in delivering tuition services to our children and young people. We want to learn from those organisations currently delivering services for children and young people in the borough, and those who might be interested in doing so in the future.

This market engagement also provides the opportunity for organisations to specify their interest in delivering services in Solihull.

Solihull Council is seeking to understand views of the provider market and its ability to offer innovative solutions to meet the needs of our children and young people in the borough.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice

As always, Solihull Parent Carer Voice have been busy over the last few months. We have been awarded funding to set up two Autism Support Groups in Solihull, one is for parent carers and family members of autistic individuals and the other is for Autistic individuals aged 18+, these support groups are being run by Emma Bowden and more information can be found on their dedicated Facebook page- Solihull Autism Support Groups, or on the Solihull Parent Carer Voice website.

Events

On 10 November we held a SEND Careers Fair for young people and their families, this was a fantastic event attended by over 160 people. If you would like more information on the exhibitors, please do contact us.

On 25 January 2023, we are holding a meeting for parent carers with Tim Browne, Charlotte Jones and Iona Payne, at the Fordbridge Centre, 10am – 12pm. If you would like to attend this meeting, please register here: <https://forms.office.com/r/huZdmTWiM3>

We are also busy planning more events including a transitions workshop. All our events are on our Facebook page, on our website and are emailed out to our membership and to schools to share so please do keep an eye out.

We try to make our events accessible for as many people as possible, we do have sensory equipment available for both children and young people and for adults if it would help with attending. If there are any barriers for anyone accessing our events, please do let us know and we will try to overcome these.

Resources

We have developed a library of resources that parent carers are able to borrow. We also have a number of iPads available for parent carers to use if they are struggling with access to online meetings/consultations/appointments.

We also have links on our Facebook page to websites where information on Cost of Living Support can be found. If you can't find this information, please do get in contact with us and we can send it to you.

Parent Engagement Groups

We are working with numerous schools across Solihull to help facilitate parent engagement groups in schools. The aim of these groups is to build strong relationships between parents/carers and schools to better support the children and young people attending. The groups look at what is working well in the school, what can be learnt from that and transferred to other areas, as well as what could be improved within the school and then focuses on working together as a school community to improve.

We know that when schools and families have strong positive relationships the outcomes for children and young people is better, so this work aims to support that.

Work streams

We are involved with many different work streams across education, health and social care, working to improve services for our children and young people and their families in Solihull. Information about these workstreams can be found in our quarterly newsletter that is on our website, or if you would like more information, please do contact us. Some of these work streams are: Joint Additional Needs Board, Inclusion Programme Board, Speech Language and Communication Needs, Autism in Schools, Parent Engagement Groups in Schools, Holiday Activities and Food, Children and Youth Offer, Maternity and Early Years, All Age Autism Support Service, Children and Young Peoples Mental Health board, and many more.

Healthy Parent Carer Course

As parent carers ourselves we know the challenges that we can all face and we know the impact it can have on our own emotional wellbeing and mental health. We also recognise that there is often little support available. As such we have trained to deliver a course to parent carers called Healthy Parent Carer Course. This course was written by Exeter University and Parent Carers and specifically focuses on wellbeing for parent carers.

The course is run for two hours a week for 12 weeks and is online. Parents can self-refer, or we accept referrals from schools and services with consent.

Solihull SEND Community Roundtable

The roundtable is bringing together community organisations and support groups that work with or support children and young people with SEND or their families in Solihull, enabling organisations to share knowledge and support each other. Currently the Roundtable has 24 member organisations which is fantastic.

If you are interested in joining us as a Parent Representative or Steering Group member, please do get in touch.

solihullpcv@outlook.com

www.spcv.org.uk

Facebook: Solihull Parent Carer Voice

Twitter: @solihullpcv

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

Thank you.

Charlotte Jones

Head of SEND service 0-25

