

Solihull SEND Newsletter

May 2023

Please accept our apologies for the late arrival of this newsletter, we've had a few gremlins in the system we use to distribute it which are now (hopefully) all sorted.

Spring may have finally arrived now the days are getting longer.

Our Delivering Better Value implementation work began this term so we are busy planning how to use this funding to best support schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and how to join this up with the other development work which is happening across the borough – there is more on this below.

With lots of activity underway we are working hard to try to join these up for everyone so you can easily see what we are trying to achieve. Most important in this process is hearing from parent carers and children and young people so we are grateful to SPCV for their report following March's SEND Community Event and to OVH for their report summarising the views of children and young people – so we can clearly align our activity to the feedback we are receiving and what is important to them.

Strategic News

Delivering Better Value

The Delivering Better Value work is well underway. Currently the project is being scoped and recruitment has started to ensure we have additional capacity to deliver the required outcomes. After half term we will be sharing the project brief more widely and the specific detail of the workstreams.

There will be opportunities for schools to work collaboratively to support each other with the SEND priorities for their school and access to nurture training. A clear graduated approach for schools will be delivered and additional support and strategies to support our SEND children in

the right way in the right settings. More details and information on how to become involved will be coming next half term...

Strategy for Inclusive Education

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion workshops took place in March and April. These were free to two senior leaders from every school in Solihull and were delivered by the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) who have been working closely with us on the strategy actions.

Here are some examples of the very positive feedback received from senior leaders in attendance:

‘Stimulating session. Interesting and helpful to look more closely and consider where we are with equity etc.’

‘Really useful to discuss with colleague and the resources are fantastic.’

‘Clear understanding of the audit tool and how as senior leader I can lead this in school to develop inclusivity.’

‘Great content, well-thought through and clear. Valued the Opportunity to reflect and consider our school strengths and development points. Audit will make a huge difference.’

53% of our 59 primary schools have now attended the training and are starting to use Solihull’s EDI Audit Tool. 33% of our secondary schools and 57% of our specialist or alternative provision settings have also attended the training. A number of schools who were not able to attend have contacted us to find out when we will be running another session. The Council have agreed to commission this and will be in touch with all schools who have not yet had the opportunity to be part of this work to arrange a suitable timescale for this to happen.

Schools will be using the EDI audit tool and developing an EDI Action Plan for 2023-24, these will come into the LA at the end of the summer term so that we can plan support/ training and help coordinate similar pieces of work across our school community. The enthusiasm for this work from senior leaders has been fantastic to see.

At the Head Teachers' Partnership meeting on May 18, Nurture UK came in to explain the National Nurturing Schools Programme and the proposed cohort model. Speech and language and Nurture training were agreed as the initial priorities for work force development by the Inclusion Board following proposals put forward through the Strategy development work and the

Task and Finish group. This approach has been highly successful in other areas and feedback from the 3 pilot schools is really positive.

This term we will also be working with the Speech and Language Therapy service to agree the rollout of universal SLCN training in Solihull - free to schools from September 2023, and to put together a training programme with schools for developing speech and Language leads in schools, using a model similar to that with AET leads.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice and other Strategy Leads have been working on other actions within the Strategy to support Inclusive Practice, this will be fed back in future editions.

Additional Needs Strategy – Feedback from Children and Young People

As highlighted in the last newsletter, we have worked with partners to develop a short survey for children and young people to complete after meeting, or working with, professionals or services. People working with children and young people should ask them to complete the survey at the end of any session they are involved in (at a regularity appropriate for the child or young person). We are pleased to have received 76 responses so far and would like to thank everyone who has been promoting and supporting this.



The feedback will be collated on a quarterly basis and be used by the Joint Additional Needs Board to understand future areas of development. As well as the website link [Additional Needs Survey](#), we have also developed a QR code (right) to improve access for those using mobile devices.

You Said, We Did

In response to feedback from parent carers, we have developed a section on our [Your Voice Solihull SEND Hub](#) which all partners will use to provide updates on the work undertaken in response to feedback received from children and young people and parent carers. This will continue to be developed and updated to show the impact of their voice on services. This new page can be accessed [here](#).

SISS - Paula Thompson

Specialist Inclusion Support Service

This term we will be reviewing the service provided by the Specialist Inclusion Support Service.

This includes our four teams: Autism Team, sensory and physical impairment, Communication and Learning Difficulties (CLD) team and Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) team. We will publicise the survey at half term and ask that as many services, schools and settings, parent carers and young people feed back to us so that we can review our service delivery for 2023-24 and make any changes necessary to develop and improve our service offer.

After May half term we will be working with parent carers and schools who have placed children at REFRESH to carefully plan and support their transition back to their home schools full time. This will also be an opportunity to review this provision and look at how to develop further when we take our next cohort in September 2023.

We have now received SLA returns for our traded services and would like to thank schools for their timely response in getting their SLAs back to us so that we can plan staffing for September. We have had an increase in the number of Solihull schools buying into the service for both teams next year. To clarify for parent carers, schools who don't buy into the Local Authority provided SISS CLD or SEMH teams, will buy in external specialist services from either a private provider or from another neighbouring LA. This information will be available on the school website and in the school information report.

Health - Clara Mcdonald

SEND GP training event

An information event for GP practices was held on 20th April 2023. This was delivered by the [Health SEND Designate Team](#), Solihull Parent Carer Voice, and [Landau All Age Autism Service](#). The online event was held for GP practices across Birmingham and Solihull and the topics covered were:

- Understanding of SEND and EHCPs,
- GP role in supporting families of children and young people with SEND
- Referrals for Specialist Assessments
- The All Age Autism Support Service

- Support and contacts including signposting to the GP SEND handbook which can be found [here](#).

In the session it was identified that further events like this would be helpful to provide further information relating to support and services available for families.

Early Years - Lisa Morris

Inclusion Fund

As part of my role as Early Years Team Manager I work with Rosie Ratcliffe in the Family Information Service to write an annual Early Years Inclusion Fund report. I shared this with the School Forum Finance working-group and it is available to read [here](#).

The chair commented on the innovative ways that the fund was used and how it also allowed for practitioners to be released to take part in [Dingley's Promise inclusion training](#). There are a range of positive comments from both parents and settings which celebrate the impact of the support given to children in Solihull settings. We will be looking at those settings who did not return monitoring forms in 2021-2022, to identify settings to visit to monitor use of the funds. We will be using a similar Microsoft Teams form again this year to gather evidence.

Developing Practice and the Road to a Successful Early Years Ofsted

Two members of the Early Years Team talked to [First Steps](#) Nursery in Solihull and you can read about their journey to an outstanding Ofsted graded inspection [here](#). As part of their inspection report and feedback, their inclusive practice was celebrated. Well done to the First Steps team and their Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

Supporting Transitions

The Early Years Team work closely with health professionals such as Health Visitors to support children and families where there are emerging special educational needs. The Early Years Practitioners who give inclusion support in both homes and settings often work with children and families and their new setting to aid smooth transitions. Please read this [case study](#) of one 2 year old in Solihull who was supported to join a nursery for the first time. With everyone working together, and both the setting and family sharing information and strategies to support 'S', this was a positive experience.

We are hosting a North Solihull Early Years Transition event for Early Years Settings in June. Now is a good time to access the [Dingley's Promise Transitions module](#) and reflect upon your [arrangements](#) to support continuity and well-being.

Parents of children joining Reception in September may like to sign up to, or watch, the Preparing for School presentation [here](#).

At their recent **Solihull Parent Carer Voice** event parents asked about a 'pathway' for early years children with SEND. We have developed [a page](#) on our Solihull Local Offer as a starting point to support this.

Early Years SENCo training- Level 3

The Level 3 Early Years SENCO qualification is for a Level 3 practitioner in a private, voluntary or independent setting. It is also appropriate for Ofsted-registered childminders. This is an important role to ensure the best possible educational outcomes are achieved for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The Department for Education have funded places for Early Years SENCo training with Best Practice – apply using [the on-line form](#).

Graded Care Profile

The [Graded Care Profile 2](#) (GCP2) is a tool designed to provide an objective measure of the care of children. It is primarily based on the qualitative measure of the commitment shown by parents or carers in meeting their children's developmental needs. Solihull Early Years Designated Safeguarding Practitioners are encouraged to attend one day of multi-agency training per year provided by Solihull Safeguarding Children's Partnership (SSCP). By working together with families we can best support them and their young children. Further information about this training can be found on the [SSCP website](#).

Two of our [Solihull Early Years Leads](#) are core trainers and our Neglect Champions will be promoting the training at our network meetings. This is a priority area for Solihull and Early Years DSLs.

EHCP Service – Amanda Hana

Transition 2022-2023

The team with the support of schools and partners have had another successful transition year, improving again on last year's success. The outcome is a real testament to the hard work of the team and improvements that have been made across the service.

- February 15th Legal deadline: 99% of all Primary transitions were completed within timescales.
- March 31st Legal deadline: 93% of Year 11 transitions were completed within timescale and 97% of our post 16 plans.

Capturing Childrens voices in Annual Reviews

We are always looking to improve the experience and participation of children and young people in the EHCP process. We are currently exploring and developing how we can support schools to capture the voice of children and young people in the annual review process. Their voice, regardless of age or ability, is a crucial part of a good EHCP. If you have any ideas on this you wish to share please email us at jand@solihull.gov.uk

Team recruitment

We have recently completed a round of recruitment for six new EHCP officers and a temporary maternity cover. Four of these posts have resulted in temporary staff being given permanent contracts. These posts will start during the summer.

Maternity

Paige Roberts is expecting her first child in early July. Paige will be on maternity from the end of June.

School representation on panel

We currently have good representation from Primary Schools on panels on Tuesdays. However, we are struggling to get representations from Secondary schools – we have therefore decided that we will co-ordinate a list of willing secondary staff and send out invites to panel rather than this being co-ordinated through the collaboratives. If you are a secondary member of staff and would like to sit on panel occasionally please email edsen@solihull.gov.uk

Children's Social Care – Anna Stephens

Children's Disabilities Team

Our Children with Disability Team has continued to grow to meet the demand for the service over the last 12 months. We had a new assistant team manager start this in May, who is settling into the team.

We currently 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 have continued the recruitment of permanent Social Workers to the team and this is improving. Whilst we do this we have interim social workers supporting the team.

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. We recognise that there remains significant difficulty with Personal Assistant recruitment across the region. Solihull Council is working with providers and local universities to help facilitate recruitment and we are hopeful this will reduce waiting times for children and families to get support.

Early Help

As part of the improvements within Children's Social Care, a new Early Help Service is being developed which will support children and families much earlier. We have been working hard on developing and expanding our early help offer and this last week has seen adverts go out for family support worker and parenting worker roles. We are going live with our specialist team of Early Help Assessment workers within our Front Door, headed up by our permanent ATM Jade Price, to make sure that families receive the right help at the right time.

We are continuing to build on our partnerships with schools as we move our Early Help to a Team Around the School model, as well as working closely with the Family Hub development to make sure that we are able to provide a seamless and graduated service.

We will be putting more roles out to advert within the coming weeks including youth workers and a Head Teacher Coach.

Our teams have been working extremely hard as always and I am met with many case studies weekly with examples of positive feedback and great work. It is vital we get our Early Help offer right to ensure that we are best supporting children and their families and stopping their needs from escalating.

Solihull Family Hub offer - Denise Milnes

Work is underway to develop a Family Hub offer for Solihull creating a network of 4 hub buildings, outreach support and a digital offer for families in Solihull, launching in March 2024. The hub offer will bring together existing family support services delivered by the Council, the NHS and local charities and is a fundamental part of the new Early Help model.

This exciting development will offer activities for families from pregnancy to 25 years with a strong focus on special educational needs and disabilities. Families can attend health appointments, social activities, parent support and peer group sessions. There will also be expert advice on debt, mental health issues, healthy lifestyle, adult education and more.

More information can be found at [Family Hubs \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://familyhubs.solihull.gov.uk) This webpage will be updated with latest developments on the hubs so please check back regularly to find out more.

Commissioning - Julie Hackett

Short Breaks for Disabled Children

Short breaks are leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respite from their caring responsibilities. Short breaks are intended to have positive benefits for both children and young people with a disability and their parents/carers.

Solihull Council has provided grant funding to a number of organisations to increase the number and ranges of short break activities available. This funding means that the costs to families will be kept low, but for most activities parents will be expected to make a small payment. Providers have been asked to prioritise the allocation of places to those eligible children and young people who aren't attending a short break elsewhere. More details about short breaks and other leisure opportunities available for children and young people with disabilities are available via the recently revised [Short Breaks Statement](#).

Solihull Parent Carer Voice

The **SEND community event** on the 1st of March, 73 parent carers and 36 professionals attended. It was a great event for the whole SEND community to come together to talk about what's happening in Solihull, what changes need to be made, what is working and what the next priorities across Solihull should be. The report from the event can be [found on our website](#).

In April we also arranged for training for some community organisations in Solihull by Luke Clements who is a Social Care Law expert. Luke provided training regarding social care law and specifically how it applies to children and young people with disabilities. Slides from the training are also now available on our website: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](http://spcv.org.uk) We have set up monthly coffee mornings around the Solihull borough. Sendias attend and support our parent carers. The coffee mornings are a great opportunity for us to hear the voice of parent carers.

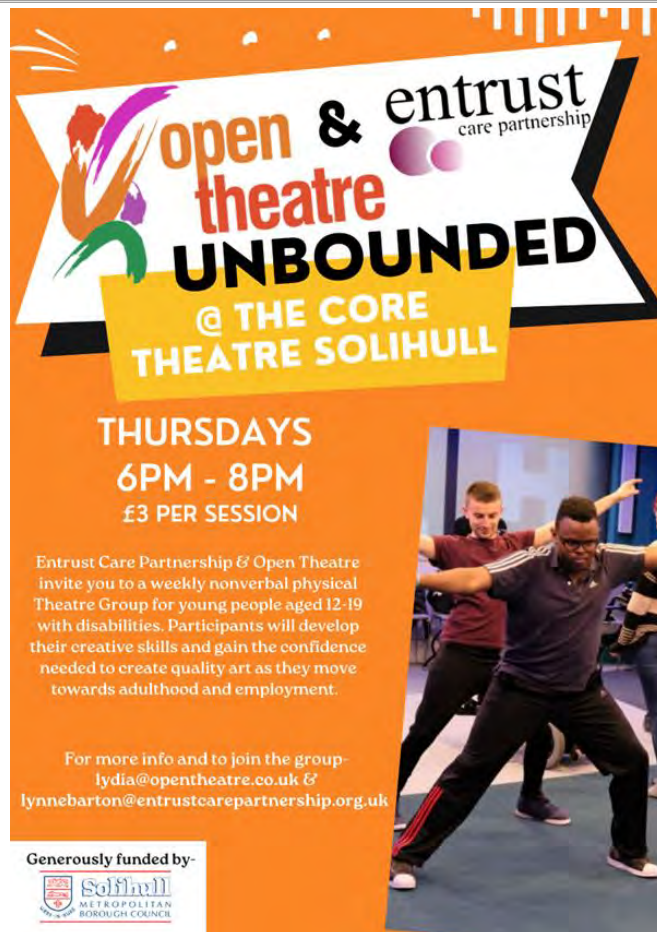
29th June: 10am-12pm Dickens Heath Community Room

14th September: 10am-12pm Three Trees Centre

19th October: 10am-12pm The Hub Touchwood

23rd November: 9.30am-11.30am Ulverley School

As always, we are looking for the views of parents and carers with regards to their experiences of education, health and social care in Solihull, and the experiences of navigating these to support children and young people with SEND. If you would like to speak to us please do get in touch at solihullpcv@outlook.com




open & theatre
UNBOUNDED
@ THE CORE
THEATRE SOLIHULL

THURSDAYS
6PM - 8PM
£3 PER SESSION

Entrust Care Partnership & Open Theatre invite you to a weekly nonverbal physical Theatre Group for young people aged 12-19 with disabilities. Participants will develop their creative skills and gain the confidence needed to create quality art as they move towards adulthood and employment.

For more info and to join the group-
lydia@opentheatre.co.uk &
lynnbarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk

Generously funded by-

 Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The poster also features a photograph of two young people in a physical theatre pose on a stage.

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

