

Solihull SEND Newsletter

July 2023

Well, we have made it through another interesting year. Whilst it is tempting to move our minds to whatever the summer holds for us, it is also a good time to take stock of what we have achieved.

The national SEND data was released last month and whilst we take time to look through in detail to see how Solihull compares to the rest of the country, I was extremely pleased to see our remarkable improvement in issuing new EHCPs within 20 weeks. Whilst the national average reduced by 9%, to 51%, we managed to increase last years 50% to 92%! So a huge thank you to the EHCP team, professionals, schools and parents for working together to make this happen and enabling us to support more children and young people and reducing the time taken to put that in place.

National News

Whole School SEND

Whole School SEND represents a number of schools and organisations which work together to better support children and young people with SEND. They provide a range of resources for settings and for parents. If you wish to keep up to date with their work and new resources you can sign up for their monthly newsletter by joining them: [Log in | Whole School SEND](#)

Settings: you can access a range of free resources ([Resources listing | Whole School SEND](#)) by joining the community. Nasen are also supporting the West Midlands Youth Suicide Awareness & Prevention Conference on 11th October 2023 for senior leaders in schools. Tickets can be purchased here: [Youth Suicide Awareness & Prevention Conference TicketSource](#)

Parent carers: you can also see the resources they have available to schools, and find some helpful information for parents [Parents and Carers | Whole School SEND](#)

Local Area SEND Inspections

You will have seen that Ofsted & CQC have begun their new round of inspections following the publication of the new framework. At the heart of their evaluation will be the experience and outcomes of children and young people so their approach focuses heavily upon hearing from them, and their parent carers. Information about the inspection for parent carers and children and young people can be found here [Area SEND inspections \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/area-send-inspections)

Strategic News

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis

As part of our work in understanding SEND in Solihull, we have produced a SEND focused deep dive into our needs analysis. This is an important document as it will help everyone across education, health and care to understand the current picture for our children and young people. It also identifies a number of key areas for further development work, or where we need to understand the data better to know what work needs to be done. This will help us ensure our further improvements, services, and commissioning work has the right impact for children and young people. The document will be made available on the local offer shortly.

The Local Offer

There has been a flurry of activity over the year to improve the information on the [Solihull Local Offer](#). We have heard from parent carers that the content is improving and we have seen a 54% increase in visitors to the website over the past 3 months. This is one of the priority areas children and young people have told us they want to work with us on improving so we will be working with Our Voices Heard to start that. In the meantime, if you have any feedback for us on the local offer, please do let us know using the online form [Feedback on the Local Offer | Your Voice Solihull](#)

Children and Young People's Feedback – Additional Needs Strategy

Thank you to everyone who has supported a child or young person in sharing their experience of Solihull services through the online survey. Their voice is vital in helping us understand what is working well and what we need to focus on. The first quarterly report will be shared with the Joint Additional Needs Board before the summer to relook at our priorities. Please do continue to encourage children and young people to give this feedback – using either the website link [Additional Needs survey | Your Voice Solihull](#) or the QR code to the right.



Specialist Inclusion Support service

We are in the process of collating our annual feedback from school staff and parent carers who have worked with the different SISS teams this year. If you haven't yet completed our survey please click on the link below to have your say

<https://yourvoicesolihull.uk.engagementhq.com/siss-feedback-survey>

We want to hear about what we're doing well and what we could be doing better, so do appreciate feedback that provides suggestions for us to consider.

We've had some lovely feedback so far which in terms of what had been valued by schools and parent carers:

'Practical help, prompt responses and a real understanding of the children's need. Thank you.'

'Their consistency They will support my staff as well as pupils They feel like part of our team'
'An excellent service'

'The consistency of having the same person supporting my child. Also having the regular contact with that person. ... without her my child would not be either in school or able to go to school because of his mental health and ASD. The support given to him and school to meet his needs and understand him as been amazing.'

We know it's difficult when in some teams we have vacancies and some change of teachers and Inclusion Support Practitioners, but we are fully staffed for September and will try to ensure that those schools affected this year have consistency next year.

REFRESH Primary Early Intervention Provision - spaces available for 23/24 cohort

We currently have places for the 23/24 cohort at REFRESH in KS1 and KS2. We will be offering another opportunity for schools to seek support for pupils from REFRESH and will be holding a further panel on September 14 2023. The deadline for referrals is 14 July. If you require any further information, please contact Claire Kennedy clkenned@solihull.gov.uk

Little OWLLS



A small group run by Specialist Inclusion Support Service for under 5's, with the help of the John Lewis community room in Solihull for children who meet our caseload criteria of support for sensory impairments. The group has enabled children and their parents to come together in a social learning space to develop skills and attainment.

After successfully winning a proposal with the award winning *The Amber Trust*, we have been delighted to provide workshops to enable music sessions over the summer term.

Lots of fun and enjoyment has been had by all as they develop their fantastic musical talents!



Sensory and Physical Impairment Team Fire Station Visit

A cohort of 20 key stage 2 children, who experience hearing loss/deafness, along with their parents from across Solihull Borough attended Solihull Fire Station.

The session covered fire safety, including identifying fire hazards, and learning the technique Stop, Drop, and Roll. A range of alarms were shown, designed for people with a hearing impairment. Staff also covered how to contact 999 by phone, considering the difficulties and implications hearing impairment has.

The workshop also facilitated parents and children to identify with each other and share experiences. The workshop was very well received with some lovely comments being shared after as a reflection of the event:

'We like whole idea; it is very important for kids to see and meet a real life hero in their local area. Have experience of something new'

'It was great for our daughter to meet other children who like her wear hearing aids.'

'Kids loved the Fire engine experience. Meeting up with other deaf parents and children.'



Delivering Better Value

Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The Department for Education (DfE) acknowledges the current challenges which local systems are experiencing in delivering SEND services. The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme (DBV in SEND) is aiming to support local authorities and their local area partners to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.

The DBV Programme recognises the current challenges faced and will provide valuable, short-term support to Local Authorities (LAs), and the local systems supporting children with SEND.

Solihull Council has been successful in its bid for an implementation grant offered by the DfE and is one of 55 LAs taking part in this 18 month programme. The programme puts children and young people at the heart of the approach and aims to provide sustainable changes that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We want to understand the experiences of the partners within the SEND system and have conducted a vast amount of diagnostic work including gathering opinions and views of parents and carers and will continue to share progress through a digital platform.

Health

University Hospitals Birmingham Community update – *Claire Howell (Therapy Lead Paediatrics and Pelvic Health) and Rachel Yeates (Matron – Paediatrics)*

Early Years Autism pathway – this pathway has been in place since January 2023 for children who are below school age, referred with multiple professionals' input over time, with significant areas of need. They are being allocated for assessment with clinicians in the team with specific early years experience and the assessment process involves a more streamlined approach, utilising the information already gathered and often an play based observation of the child via virtual access or a placement observation.

Autism Assessment update – the second contract is due to start imminently. Healios are a private company who are funded by the NHS to provide additional autism assessments. This will offer 120 assessments to children on the waiting list.

CATCH (Child and Adolescent Therapy Care and Help) Service – The roll out of the new CATCH service is currently on hold due to staff changes. Before we can launch one point of referral we need to have one patient record, which we are unable to progress with until an admin team lead post is in place.

Solihull Community Paediatrics: The Community Paediatrics team have seen steadily increasing numbers of referrals for all of the specialities they support – Looked After Children, Child Protection, Children with medical needs in special schools medicals, ADHD assessment and General developmental paediatrics. They are working as quickly as they can to prioritise urgent cases and give appointments. The current waiting time for a new appointment is approximately 12 months. Please understand where a referral or follow up is deemed clinically urgent due the complex medical or social needs of the child/ young person these cases are prioritised. The team are supporting the ICB with a review of the services they provide, the staffing levels in the team and our computerised patient records systems with the aim to improve support, response times and accurate waiting lists in the future. At this time we are continuing to meet the statutory timeframe for Education Health and Care Plan medical advice.

Solihull Nurse Led ADHD service: Again this team has seen steadily increasing numbers of referrals. In fact referrals in the last 12 month period increased by over 100% on the previous year! This is reflective of all ADHD services for children and adults across the West Midlands and UHB are working with the ICB to look at how to better manage and co-ordinate referrals for diagnosis and support to be as timely as possible.

At the start of this year we had a change in our Clinical Nurse Specialist for this service and it has taken a while for us to get clinics back up and running following the vacancy period; now with some sickness in the team we are trying our best to run as many clinics and assessment appointments as we can each week but are very conscious that wait times will start to increase. This is a very specialist team and we are a small service of just 1 Nurse Specialist and 1 Clinical support worker. We are looking at 'agency' nurse and recruitment solutions to support this sickness period in our very small team.

The team continues to carry out school observations as part of the diagnostic process until the last few weeks before schools break up (we cannot make accurate observations during sports day's, leaving assemblies, class productions or parties as these are not reflective of a child or young person's concentration and behaviour). We have recently introduced QB testing which will hopefully help us to give definitive diagnosis quicker than arranging and performing school observations.

Please do bear with us while we embed this new test into our pathway; we are setting up numerous clinics for the school summer break period. There are currently 354 children and young people waiting to access our service and the 'average wait time' is 16.5 weeks. Realistically we know that this will increase if the sickness in the team continues.

Co-Production Plans: University Hospital's Birmingham is working very closely with its Vulnerabilities Team and Patient Experience Team to review its Emergency Department and Out Patient experience for children, young people and adults with SEND. We have made contact with leads in parent carer forums and young persons forums and are in the process of planning some 'expert by experience' visits to our areas.

Children and Young People's Annual Health Check Uptake – ICB Learning Disabilities and Autism Team

- **81%** of eligible people in Solihull aged 14 and above received their Learning Disability Annual Health Check (LD AHC) in 2022 – 2023.
- However, only **67%** of eligible 14 – 17 year olds in Solihull received their LD AHC.
- ICB is working with our experts by experience to co-produce focused resources to ensure as many children and young people as possible receive their entitlement in 2023 - 2024. Focused resources to encourage uptake will include videos/animation and easy read leaflets/posters.
- If you have an eligible child or young person who hasn't yet had their LD AHC then please contact your GP surgery to request one.
- Helpful resources around LD AHCs for people with LD, their families and professionals can be found on the ICBs Learning Disability AHC resource page via <https://www.birminghamsolihull.icb.nhs.uk/health-information/learning-disabilities>

Children with Disabilities Team

The Children with Disabilities Team continues to support children and young people and their families in all areas of social work practice to support positive changes to the child/young persons lived experiences. To support the team in delivering these changes there has been two networking events during the last quarter to support social care and partner agencies developing and improving partnership working.

On the 17th April 2023 a Networking event was held between the Children with Disability Team and health colleagues from the Community Nursing Team, LD Nursing Team and specialist

school nursing team. This helped to support identifying the roles of each service and how collaboratively we can work together to improve services for our children and families.

On the 18th May the Childrens Disability Team held a network event with several local provider PA agencies and with SMBC contracted short break provider SOLO. This event supported in identifying services which were available to children and families with whom the team work with but also services that children and young people and their families can be signposted to.

In addition to the two Networking events held during April and May the Children with Disabilities Team also undertook a full days training on Mental Capacity Act. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) applies to everyone over 16 years old who lives in England and Wales and lacks the capacity to make some or all of their own decisions. The purpose of the MCA is to empower people to make their own decisions wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the MCA outlines how to allow others to make decisions on behalf of someone that lacks capacity whilst protecting their rights and interests. The training delivered will support the team moving forward in supporting young people and their families over 16 understanding the implications of the Act relating to their individual situations.

EHCP Service

- Staffing Update – We recently had a successful round of recruitment for the service and have new EHCP officers and caseworkers joining the team over the summer holidays, as well as sadly losing some colleagues. A new staffing chart will be available from the end of August to reflect this.
- Drop in sessions – After our previous success with the drop in sessions for parents/carers and schools held at The Loft Chelmsley Wood, we are excited to offer these again in the next term. Details on dates and times will be advertised in due course.
- Transition season approaches – This year's transitions data reflects the hard work and progress in the service. We achieved 93% compliance on timescales for our year 11 transitions and 99% in primary age transitions. We hope to continue this as we begin our transition planning next term and encourage schools and parents to plan for these review meetings in the next term. The impact of this work will enable children and young people with an EHC Plan to positively transition to their next phase of education, supporting them to achieve their aspirations.
- SEN 2 Data – The service has continued to improve on last year's data and has achieved 92% of new assessments being finalised within the 20-week time scale. This is a significant achievement and we know that the positive impact of this work supports children, young people and families across the borough. We are thankful to all our stakeholders and partners for their support to achieve this fantastic outcome.

Community Educational Psychology Service – Jane Sowter

It has been another eventful term with successful service delivery to schools, families and services - including the conclusion of our first training course for ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) and the last peer supervision meetings for SENCos. Both these activities have been highly appreciated by the school staff involved so we will be doing more of the same next year.

Our associate team continue to work tirelessly to cover most of the EHC assessments and we have also started to plan training delivery 23-24, including round two of the Attachment/Trauma workstream. Following another recruitment drive due to the national EP shortage, we have secured one EP from Sept 24 but current frontline staffing levels have become severely low. This means that next year we will be offering a small and specific traded service – I will be writing to head teachers this week to explain how things will operate, so watch this space!

Many thanks to all our schools, families and colleagues for their superb support this year, we greatly appreciate it. Have a lovely Summer.

Maternity and Early Years Strategy - update

The attached [document](#) gives an update on the current position of the strategy. Work continues in the focus areas, and we will continue to be mindful of the special consideration needed for very young children in Solihull as we work within the complementary strategy groups.

EYFS consultation

You may want to contribute to the Early Years Foundation Stage consultation which closes on Wednesday 26 July 2023. It could have some implications for settings and the care, learning and development arrangements for early years age children.

You can watch a vodcast about the consultation [here](#).

You can respond to the consultation [here](#).

Who helps early years children in Solihull homes, schools and settings?

Find out more about some of the team members who might be coming into your home or setting to help you. This [document](#) introduces some of our team members.

SchemaPlay in Solihull

Find out more about SchemaPlay, and the Solihull project, by reading this [summary](#) and watching the SchemaPlay video.

Inclusion – a child's view

Ending on something to make you smile. The next Dingley's Promise training to be released to Solihull practitioners is the Child's Voice. If you haven't already seen it here is a CBBC video with children explaining why everyone's welcome from a child's perspective.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/everyones-welcome>

Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities

Short breaks are leisure opportunities for children and young people with disabilities which give their parent/carer a break/respite from their caring responsibilities – usually lasting at least 2 hours.

Solihull Council provides funding to a number of organisations to provide Short Breaks. 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.

Social Life Opportunities (SoLO) is our main partner and provides short breaks in the evenings, weekends and during the school holidays. If your child is not registered with SoLO and you'd like to enquire about becoming a registered service user please email referral@sololifeopportunities.org.

You'll then be given details of any suitable activities that has availability for your child to take part in.

In January this year Solihull Council awarded grant funding to a number of organisations to increase the number and ranges of short break activities available (see below table). 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](#).

Name of Provider	Name of Project	Location	Age Range	Summary	Contact email address
Entrust Care Partnership	Unbound	The Core, Solihull town centre	12-19	Weekly theatre club run in partnership with Open Theatre. Aiming to develop young people's skills, independence and abilities to facilitate transition to adulthood.	lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk
Inclusive Sports Academy CIC	Inclusive Sports Package	Hatchford Brook Youth centre and Chelmsley Wood venue	7-14	Project will focus primarily on ensuring Children/Young People are part of an active environment to improve physical activity levels, whilst simultaneously embedding skills and knowledge surrounding the cost-of-living crisis. 2 sessions a week	Claire@inclusivesportsacademy.org
North Solihull Additional Needs	Opportunities for ALL	Connections Church in	7-19	Weekly evening activity to provide opportunities for	northsolihulladditionalneeds@outlook.com

Parent Group		Fordbridge B37		up to 10 cyp to take part in social activities and develop skills, rolling programme of arts/crafts for 7+, sensory activities/games for 7+, cooking/independence skills for 12+, physical activity for 7+	
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion Holiday Clubs	Renewal Family Centre or Hatchford Brook youth centre	8-16	Weekly holiday club for 9 children focussing on confidence building, friendships, independence, parent respite and social opportunities.	info@signpostinclusion.org.uk
Signpost Inclusion	Signpost Inclusion After School Clubs	Renewal Family Centre	3-16	Range of after school/evening activities providing social opportunities and a chance to develop skills. Younger dance (3- 7), Dance and singing (8-16), Younger youth (8- 16), Gaming (8-11 and 12-16)	info@signpostinclusion.org.uk

Solihull Moors Foundation	Inclusive Youth Club	Solihull Moors Football Club	11-19	Inclusive Youth Club that will provide a weekly opportunity for 25 young people with additional needs to enjoy inclusive activities. Activities will include team sports, craft sessions, drama and music therapy sessions, mentoring and employability support.	becci.fox@solihullmoorsfc.co.uk
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Who can access short breaks?

Children and young people will be eligible to attend a targeted short breaks service:

- Up to their 19th birthday (or until the end of Year 13 if they attend a special school)
- If they are resident in the borough or are in care and are the responsibility of Solihull Council, wherever they are placed.
- If they have a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) that prevents them from accessing universal services without substantial ongoing additional support.

When applying to attend, families should provide confirmation of their child's eligibility. This could include any of the following:

- Evidence that the child or young person is in receipt of middle or higher rate disability living allowance (DLA) or any personal independence payment (PIP), or
- An Education, Health and Care Plan or Social Care Assessment showing a relevant assessed need, or
- A letter from a relevant professional (e.g. their GP, consultant, school's special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), community nurse or another relevant professional) confirming that the child or young person's needs mean that they require targeted services for children and young people with disabilities.

Eligibility for the targeted Short Breaks services provided by SoLO, and those activities funded through Short Breaks grants, can be accessed without having to undergo a social care assessment, providing the above criteria is met.

Employment and skills support

Enhanced information on employment support for Local Offer

As the academic year is coming to an end, some of our young people will be considering starting a career. There is a range of support on offer from the Council's Employment and Skills Team to help young people get ready for work from assessing career aspirations to developing CV and interviewing skills. There are also programmes connecting young people with supportive local employers. You can learn more from the enhanced webpage: [Local Offer - Apprenticeships and Employment](#)

Supported Internship opportunities

To equip young people with EHCP with the skills needed for work through learning in the workplace, the Council is partnering with Solihull College & University Centre and Mencap for Supported Internship programmes. Primarily based with the employers, they are unpaid programmes with the aim of paid employment at the end of the one-year programme. If you are interested to learn more, please contact our Employment and Skills Team with 0121 704 6869 or srtc@solihull.gov.uk.

Solihull Parent Carer Voice

At the end of May we held a transitions event for families. This event enabled families to talk to services and gather information. We do have some copies of information leaflets that were available on the day. If you would like any of these, please do contact us at Solihullpcv@outlook.com We are also exploring ways to put some of this information on our website, however in the meantime there is some transitions information on our website including a guide for parents: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](http://resources-solihull-parent-carer-voice.spcv.org.uk)

We also currently have our Summer SEND Survey open- it is really important for us to gather as many views as possible from parent carers to enable us to help make changes to improve experiences for our children and young people. The survey only takes a couple of minutes to

complete and can be filled in for each child/young person. This can be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Uibuy88KkN>

Our quarterly newsletter is currently being written and will be available soon on both our Facebook Page and our website. Please do look out for this as it will let you know what we have been up to over the last three months, what areas we are working on and what we are doing with your views and experiences.

We are also monthly coffee mornings around the Solihull borough. Sendias attend and support our parent carers and at some of the events professionals attend to talk directly to families. The coffee mornings are a great opportunity for us to hear the voice of parent carers, for you to find out about things in Solihull and to ask questions, as well as meeting other parent carers.

19th July- 10am-11.30am The Family Tree Social Club, Clopton Crescent, B37 6QT (Tim Browne, Assistant Director for Education will be attending)

11th September- 10am-12pm Evergreen Hub

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 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

Solihull Music Service

In partnership with Mac Makes Music, there are a number of free inclusive ensembles available at Solihull Music for young people with additional needs and their families. Contact solihullmusic@solihull.gov.uk for more information and to sign up for September 2023.

Creative Sounds: Wednesday Music Making is an inclusive out of school music group for KS2/3 children and their families who are interested in composing new songs, trying new instruments and singing to come together in a safe and friendly environment.
Wednesdays 5.00-5.45 or 6.00-6.45

Creative Sounds: Wednesday: Drumming Club

An opportunity for young people aged 16-25 to come together to play djembes, learn new songs and make new friends in a friendly, welcoming environment.

Wednesday 5-5.45pm

Creative Sounds: Saturday Music Makers is a bi weekly music group for children, young people and their families who are interested in learning to play new instruments, sing songs and make music with new friends. Sessions incorporate free play enabling young people to explore the instruments as well as short group activities where we sing and make music together.

Saturday 10.00-10.45am bi weekly

[Creative Sounds flyer](#)

Solihull Inclusive Choir:

A singing and signing choir open to all children, young people and their families. There is no need for any previous experience, just a desire to get creative and have fun!

Saturday 11.00-12.00 bi weekly

All Age Autism Support Service

How is the *All Age Autism Support Service* supporting Solihull?

The All Age Autism Support Service provides support to autistic people, their families/carers with the following three areas. Its aim - to bring new autistic support services onto the market to enhance support, to encourage innovation and creativity, to reflect local issues and the need of autistic people & their families/carers. These services include support in emotional support, sleep, education & learning, social support & sensory issues.

- **A self-help, searchable Service Directory listing all autism support** available in the area for all ages – this includes events, organisations providing autism support
<https://www.aadirectory.co.uk/>
- **A website referral process allowing self-referrals** to organisations in the Birmingham & Solihull community providing **FREE autism support**
<https://www.aadirectory.co.uk/signpost-to-services/aaa-grant-awardees--referral-options-here>
- **A Grant award process** for third sector community organisations providing autism support. Grants of £5,000 to £30,000 are available <https://allageautism.co.uk/>

Grants will support a range of activities aimed at helping individuals towards leading happier, healthier and independent lives.

To-date we have awarded grant funds to 22 organisations supporting 1300 autistic people/their families/carers with FREE support services

In Solihull we are working with 7 organisations offering support services to over 350 autistic people & their families.

For more information on the places available & to refer onto their services please follow the link to the Service Directory/Solihull [AAA Grant Awardees - Referral Options Here \(aaadirectory.co.uk\)](http://aaadirectory.co.uk)

- Family Care Trust
 - Inclusive Sport
 - Ordinary Magic
- SPCV – Solihull Parent Carer Voice

Delivery combined with Birmingham

- Resources for Autism
 - Hunrosa
- Expert by Experience

Please click on the links to view the information available & access the FREE services that are being offered in Solihull.

For more information please contact us at: aaa@landau.co.uk

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



