

Solihull SEND Newsletter

December 2023

Welcome to our new monthly newsletter. We hope increasing the frequency of these will provide more regular updates on key items of interest and reduce the amount of information we share at one time.

#SENDSpotlight

The first Family Hub has opened at the Evergreen Space in Kingshurst. Family Hubs will provide joined up services and activities for families so they get the support they need in their area – including with SEND support.

Strategic Update

As we begin to evaluate the second year of our [Additional Needs Strategy](#) it is important we hear from children and young people, and their parent carers, on their experiences of SEND in Solihull. Thank you to everyone who has responded so far. Please do take the time to complete this survey; and encourage others to do so!



For Parent Carers:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Parent Carer Survey 2023](#)



For Children & Young People:

[Solihull Additional Needs Strategy - Children and Young People Survey 2023](#)

EDI Champions Update

Building on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work that schools are leading on, the training to develop EDI Champions started at the beginning of November. We have 18 schools participating in the EDI Champions training (including primary, secondary and specials schools) and project work that has started this term led by Anna Flory, Lead for EDI. We are very excited to hear about the projects they'll be undertaking in their schools and will be providing regular updates as the work moves forward.

Schools who attended the EDI training in the summer term will be sending in their EDI Action Plans so headteachers and the Council can look at support/training needs for staff moving forward. Opportunities to take part in this work for schools not already involved will be announced shortly and the EDI Kitemark work will begin in January.

Universal SLCN whole school training is now being rolled out to primary schools and will be available to secondary schools from January 2024 - we've had a large number of schools sign up in the first week.

The National Nurturing Schools Award training will also be starting in the spring term. This will be run on a cohort model over the next 2 years, with schools having the opportunity to sign up to a cohort and use this as a bespoke package to help in developing their whole school approaches to nurture. All of this training is available to all schools at no cost.

Graduated Approach

The final stages of the Graduated Approach information for schools has been drafted. We are now looking into how we can format it into an accessible presentation on the Local Offer pages and school extranet. There will then be lots of work to do to add audio and video pieces and we look forward to working with SPCV on this.

The SEMH roadmap workshops have been taking place in the autumn term collating information about what services are available, and at what stage, in a child, young person and families' journey. Feedback from services and parents/carers about the development process with Mulberry Bush Consultancy has been positive. The key takeaways are that it has been great to hear about what is actually available and the sharing of information has been as important as the roadmap will be, with a draft of the roadmap to be completed in early 2024.

SISS

Thank you to the 54 school staff and 94 parent carers who took part in our end of year survey - your feedback is so valuable in enabling us to understand what we are doing well and what could be developed further, or needs changing. The report for 2022-23 has now been finalised and is

available on the Local Offer [Specialist Inclusion Support Service \(SISS\) \(solihull.gov.uk\)](https://solihull.gov.uk). It includes feedback on training, suggestions given from respondents and the actions planned in response. Feedback from parents/carers included:

'My son and I both received excellent support from the autism team key worker, her support got my son into school after a very long time of not being able to attend. He engaged really well with her and got amazing results, as a parent with not much support from anywhere else she was invaluable.'

'The SISS sensory and physical impairment team staff are great listeners. Always supporting and helping to meet our child's needs, and to us as parents. Guidance with applications for both EHCP and Deaf CAMHS this year. The local Fire station visit was nice, to help with both safety and building relations with other families.'

'The Inclusion Support Practitioner (ISP) has been absolutely amazing, going above and beyond for the little boy who needed an advocate. I truly feel the relationship that he built with her was the starting foundation of him realising the world is an ok place. I can't put into words how grateful we are.' (High Needs SEMH Team)

'We were listened to! The advisory teacher also was able to ascertain her own excellent understanding of our foster child and her work with him and us has been invaluable.'

Autism Education Trust (AET) Training

We have been busy this term delivering the AET training. So far this term 648 delegates have received direct AET training from the autism team.

- 13 Solihull schools have received their Whole School Making Sense of Autism refresher training.
 - Making Sense of Autism Training was also commissioned and delivered to a further two out of borough schools.
 - 22 parents from across the borough have attended the Autism Team autumn term Parent Understanding Autism workshops.
 - The Inclusion Service have received AET Autism and Inclusion training.
 - 13 child minders have received AET Early Years Making Sense of Autism training in an evening session arranged via the EY Team.
 - AET Good Autism Practice has been delivered to a group of Foster Carers.
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Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)

In collaboration with the Speech and Language Therapy Service, we held a DLD awareness day at Elmwood Place in October, raising awareness that current data indicates 7.6% of children have DLD, more common than autism, yet fewer people have heard of it.

Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) training is being delivered to all staff in schools over the next 18 months which will include raising awareness about DLD. The newsletter you can download via the link below details other bespoke training that schools are able to access to support staff with identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SLCN, including DLD.

[Speech Language and Communication Disorders Team Newsletter Autumn Term 2023.pdf](#)

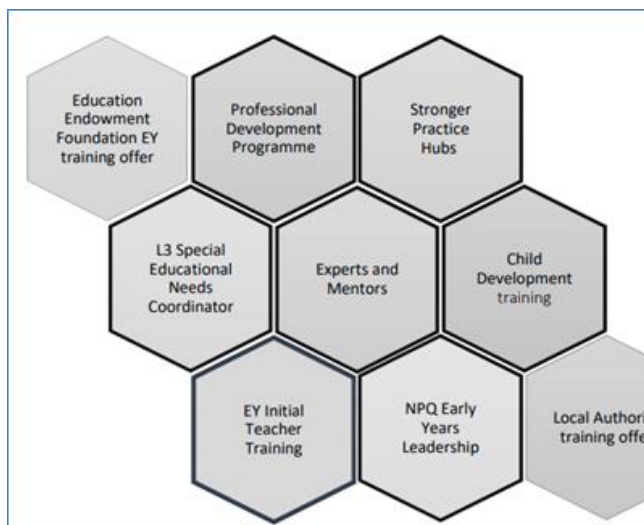
Makaton

The Early Years Team has been delivering Makaton training to staff in PVI settings, schools and childminders including a taster session for the childminding network. The entire Early Years Team are now trained in Makaton Signing for Babies, enabling us to support children in their homes and for Area SENCos to support staff in settings. We have delivered whole setting training to 11 different nurseries ensuring all staff know over 100 Makaton signs.

We are delivering two evening sessions per term with up to 10 participants. We have been fully booked, so far with settings keen to learn this complementary form of communication.

We have received positive feedback from participants who have attended the training:

- *"Fantastic trainer, very informative and engaging."*
 - *"It was accessible and engaging, enabling me to learn many useful signs and giving more confidence in using them."*
 - *"It was fun, and I remembered a lot more than I thought I would."*
 - *"Thank you I really enjoyed the course and learnt a lot that I will definitely be using also will recommend to other childminders."*
 - *"Thoroughly enjoyed the course which was delivered by a friendly and effective trainer."*
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DfE's early years training programme

Some of the opportunities available through Department for Education (DfE) finish in summer 2024. This may be a last chance to apply for Experts and Mentors, Professional Development Programme and Best Practice Level 3 SENCo amongst others. Find out more at <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/> within the DfE Early Years Training Programme document.

Child's voice training module

In Solihull, 47 practitioners have signed up to complete the new early years module on the child's voice from Dingley's Promise. This can be accessed by anyone working in early years in Solihull. This includes child minders, group settings, schools, health teams, students, social workers, local authority employees, etc. Sign up here to complete the collection of inclusion modules: <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

Dingley's Promise -Solihull learners for the child's voice module	
Training completed	36%
Begun	45%
Signed in	19%

Equality Training

This term, the Area SENCo team have been supporting settings to develop their knowledge and understanding of Early Years providers' responsibilities to children with SEND, through an additional online Network Briefing.

The team were joined by Hazel Clarke, from Solihull SENDIAS, who talked through some of the relevant legislation that settings must follow. She was also able to answer some specific questions that settings had, giving very useful advice.

The session was well attended, and we were able to address some common misconceptions as well as share some great practice. It was great to hear how dedicated and passionate our settings are in their journeys to provide inclusive education for all children.

If you were unable to attend the briefing, a recording is available on our Solgrid page: [Equality Training \(solgrid.org.uk\)](https://www.solgrid.org.uk/equality-training)

Mini Peer Challenge from Local Government Agency (LGA)

We have begun to organise a Maternity and Early Years peer review. We completed a self-evaluation ahead of producing our Maternity and Early Years Strategy and had support from Ann Van-Dyke as a peer reviewer. Ann is coming back to support some focus groups to help us reflect and to find out more about the needs of Solihull children and their families. This will include how well we support children's emerging special educational needs and speech, language, and communication.

We are still at the planning stage, but Ann will hope to talk to Solihull parents, settings and services to find out more about what is working well and how we can develop our support to ensure Solihull early years children have a super start.

Success for today, prepared for tomorrow.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Department for Education (DfE) has recently shared the results of their EYFS consultation and [resulting changes](#) from January 2024. The recently published evaluation of the 2021 EYFS reforms raised the needs of early years children with SEND and transition to Key Stage 1 as areas for future national policy development. We have a range of recorded briefings and face to face support for early years settings, available on our training link below.

Each term, Solihull Early Years Team create briefings to share news such as the EYFS changes, and you can find the recordings here – <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/>. The next briefing will be available from 24 January 2024.

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

Merry Christmas!

Charlotte Jones

Head of SEND service 0-25

