

Solihull SEND Newsletter

November 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

Solihull Council has doubled the amount of funding available for Short Breaks Grants from January 2024. This means that more children and young people will be able to benefit from accessing services in their community.

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. Please 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](#)

Council staffing update

Due to the national pressures and changes in relation to SEND, and the growth of our development work, I will take up a new post from January 2024. As Head of SEND Strategy & Development my focus will be on our local and national priorities aimed at ensuring the SEND system is sustainable and provides the right support for children and young people, in the right place and at the right time. There are many areas the local area partnership are working on to improve outcomes for children and young people and we hope this additional capacity will help us deliver those more quickly.

Donna Wright will take over the Head of SEND role and will have responsibility for SEND operations; including the EHCP Service, SISS and the Educational Psychology Service. Donna is moving from her School Improvement and Delivering Better Value roles so understands the pressures within the SEND system.

Solihull Educational Psychology Service

Great news on recruitment for our team with two new starters in January 2024. Wendy and Janet come to us from posts in other local authorities with lots of experience of work as educational psychologists (EPs) in the UK and Hong Kong. We look forward to welcoming them! Our Facilitated Consultation Groups for SENCOs are running well and training for schools in Attachment and Trauma continues to be rolled-out.

We are currently open for applications from schools for the next ELSA cohort. ELSA is a programme that trains and supports Emotional Literacy Support Assistants in schools. ELSAs are usually also teaching assistants and provide impactful support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, receiving regular supervision from EPs. Please contact us for more details on edpsych@solihull.gov.uk

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 their lived experiences. Although supporting the specialist support needs of children and young people with SEND is the largest area of our work, we also work with young people who have SEND that are looked after by the Local Authority or subject to Child Protection or Child in Need plans.

Should your child have new or ongoing social care needs or be at a transition point, please remember to complete the social care questions on the EHCP Annual review document that is completed with your school representative. This will ensure the social care team who are reviewing the document are aware that you want us to review your child's needs.

EHCP Team update

The EHCP Team are happy to share that Laura Stott has now been appointed to a senior role and will be managing the Annual Review Team that deals with reviews from 0 to Year 8.

A reminder for all schools that Annual Review paperwork needs to be sent back to the Council within 10 days of the review.

We are busy processing transition reviews with the help of schools. The legal deadline for first time admissions to school, infant to primary and primary to secondary children is 15 February 2024. All EHCPs should be updated with the next settings by this date. For those in year 11, year 13 or leaving a post 16 provision the deadline is 31 March.

The next drop in session for parents is 21 February 2024, 9:30 – 1:30 in The Loft, next to Chelmsley Wood Library above Asda. This is a chance for parents to come and talk to the EHCP Service, Educational Psychology, Social Care or Solihull Parent Carer Voice about their child or case. Your child does not need to have an EHCP to come to this and you do not need to book in – you can just turn up, have a cup of tea and a biscuit and talk to the team.

Listening to our Children and Young People

The Local SEND partnership is working on a DfE funded project with KIDS around the importance of pupil voice in the SEND community. We want to meet with children and young people and talk with them about why it's important we listen to them, the consequences when we don't and the positives when we do. We are also looking at the different ways that our young people communicate, so we will be having a discussion around that too and would like to include some art work, poetry, music, or other methods of communication they might use.

The end product will be a digital piece of work showcasing their thoughts and opinions which will be used in the community. If you would like your school/organisation to be involved, please contact Bridget Morris at bridget.morris@solihull.gov.uk



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 using the

service with online counselling, through chat-based messaging via drop-in or booked session and is available for children and young people in Solihull and Birmingham.

The Early Years Team

Solihull Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Pathway

This half term saw the official launch of our simplified pathway. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the resources and videos shared in the SLCN sway.

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/super-starts-speech-language-and-communication-needs/>

Dingley's Promise

On 14 November, Dingley's Promise's launched their Manifesto for Early Years Inclusion.

Solihull is part of the five-year inclusion training programme funded by the National Lottery and is well represented with our parent reps attending both local and national meetings. Thank you to everyone who contributed to their surveys. Further information is available

here: <https://dingley.org.uk/manifesto/>

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%

Support for transition into work

The idea of transition from school to work can be daunting. Support is on offer to help young people with further needs to achieve their full potential with a bright future. The Employment and Skills Team deliver programmes such as Supported Internship and Supported Jobs to help with the transition.

[Supported Internships](#) are a year long study programme for 16-24 year olds with an EHCP. The programme combines practical work experience and formal training with the aim of paid employment upon completion. A designated job coach will accompany the intern throughout the internship and taper support while the intern progresses.

[Supported Jobs](#) are another programme which the team work with local employers to support their recruitment of young talents with further needs, with access to disability support if appropriate.

Read various success stories of residents from all walks of life that we have supported [here](#).

Solihull Parent Carer Voice

Solihull Parent Carer Voice has welcomed 2 new staff members, Tracy and Clare. They will be working with 20 schools in Solihull to help set up school/parent engagement groups. More information about Tracy and Clare, this work and the schools involved will be available on our website soon: www.spcv.org.uk

We have recently added information about the EHC Needs Assessment process to our website, this includes info from the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice and explains the process and what Councils must use to guide their decision making. This can be found at: [Resources - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](#)

Our next Coffee and Chat meetings are:

- 13 December 9am-11am Boston Tea Party, Herbert Road, Solihull
- 9 January 1pm-2.30pm Bentley Heath Community Centre, Widney Road, Bentley Heath

We also have a new email address- enquiries@spcv.org.uk please do get in touch if you want to know more about what we do or how to get involved.

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

