

Solihull SEND Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation Framework Autumn 2023



“

Every child & young person matters,
and matters equally

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Executive Summary

In Solihull we are ambitious for all our children and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Our aims are clear and planned for in our [Solihull's Additional Needs Strategy](#), now entering its second year. We want our children and young people to be at the heart of our community, continuing to achieve above national outcomes. We want to support them and enable them to go on and make independent decisions about their lives by accessing further and higher education or, if they choose, employment following an internship or apprenticeship. We want more of our children and young people with SEND to attend a school or college within our borough - and wherever possible we are placing more of our children and young people in local mainstream settings alongside their peers or in special settings where it is the right course of action. Where it isn't, we are making sure that the independent provision we are funding offers our children and young people an excellent education whilst giving us value for money. Schools and educational settings are a key partner in the Local Area. 97% of Early Years settings are rated as good or better, 84% of primary pupils attend a good or outstanding school and 88% of secondary students attend a good or outstanding school. Quality First Teaching and an embedded graduated approach is key to identifying and meeting need at the earliest opportunity. The Department for Education's [Delivering Better Value](#) programme in Solihull is focussing on working with schools to further develop inclusive practice in mainstream classrooms.

Solihull is not an island, and like other local authorities we have seen a rise in the number of children at risk of, or, permanently excluded. We have had to respond quickly to this need and so we have formulated a forward-looking [Alternative Provision Strategy](#) which also seeks to prepare for a future described by the national SEND & AP Improvement Plan. Solihull's Children's Services are undertaking an [improvement plan](#) following an 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS), with SEND as one of the priority areas.

Our key priorities as a partnership are outlined in the co-produced [Partnership-agreement](#) 2023 which seeks to respond to the feedback received from parent carers and professionals at the SEND Community Event in March 2023. These short-term (one year) priorities support the wider aims of the Additional Needs Strategy and other important aligned work over the next few years; particularly in relation to the Delivering Better Value Programme of work which supports inclusion of all children and young people with SEND within their local settings and with appropriate levels of support. We aim to ensure a straightforward experience when dealing with the local partnership services for some of our most vulnerable children and young people, as well as their families, and have worked to improve our joint working practices to do so. We want our children and young people with SEND and their families to feel that their voice is heard

and is valuable and have implemented timely and innovative ways to communicate with them. Our work to understand the needs of our colleagues across the partnership has been improved by a structured and calendared programme of communication and engagement. The use of online platforms has made staying connected with all our stakeholders and information sharing much more accessible.

Leaders have a better understanding of children and young people's experiences on account of Solihull's Parent Carer Voice leading the jointly commissioned project 'Our Voice's Heard'. The group has a membership of over 120 children and young people and direct involvement with 420 children and young people. Engagement is through a range of methods including in person school activity and questionnaires. Children's Social Care use Mind of My Own with children and young people to gather views to support assessment and planning. Parent feedback has been reflected in these processes so that gathering views is more structured to avoid unexpected requests of children and young people. This is a growing area of work and is valuable in triangulating the quantitative data that services hold.

The Local Area Partnership assessed its effectiveness of delivering services to ensure impact for children and young people with SEND against its Additional Needs Strategy and the 6 co-produced priorities, which can be found below:

Priority 1: I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better

Priority 2: I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need

Priority 3: My voice is heard, and it makes a difference

Priority 4: I feel welcome, understood, valued, appreciated and included wherever I go

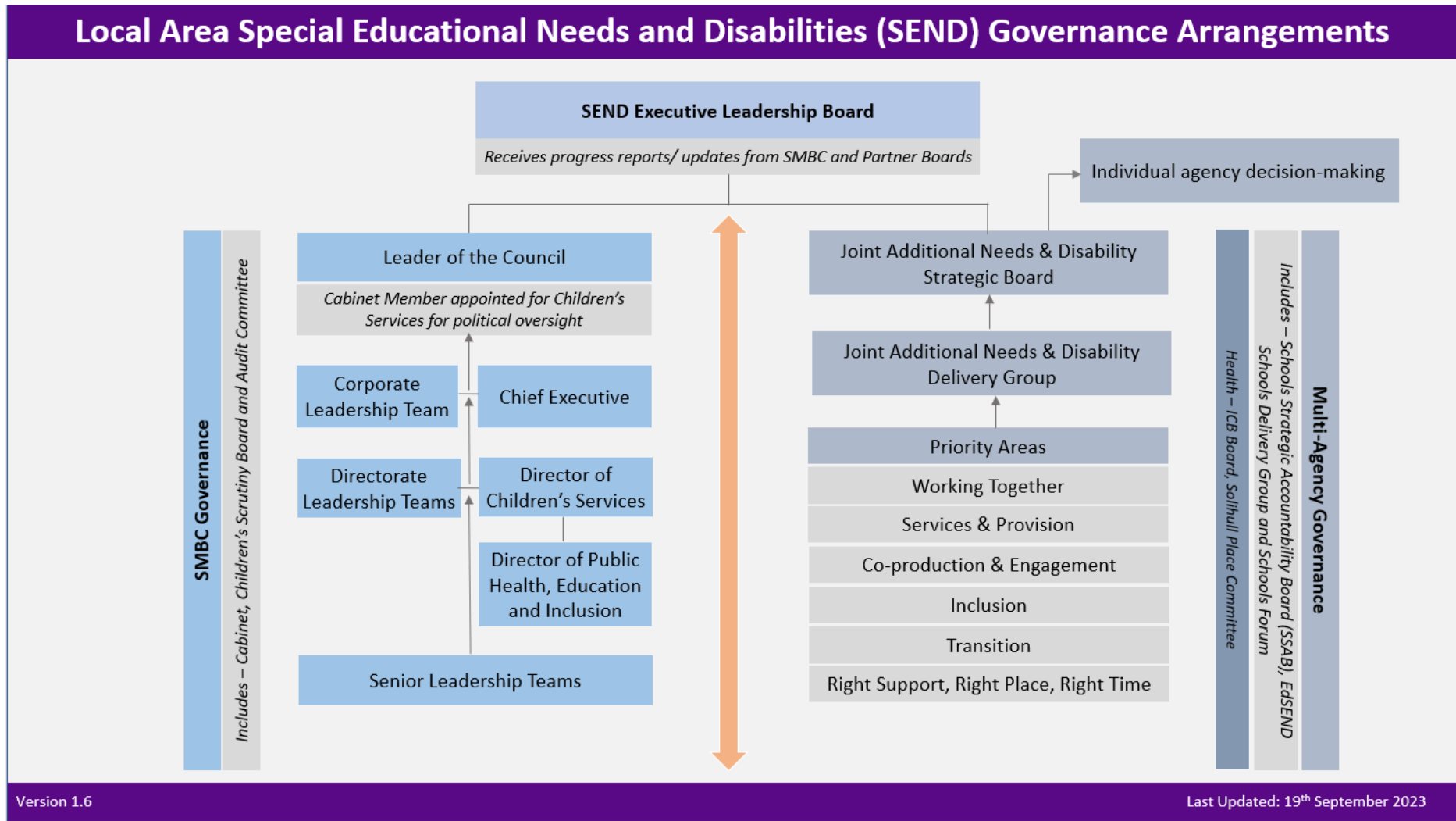
Priority 5: In planning for my future, I know what will happen, when it will happen and who I can communicate with about this

Priority 6: I will receive the right support at the right time for me

This evaluation enabled the Local Area Partnership to carry out a self-assessment against the Ofsted Local Area SEND Framework, which is provided in this document. ***The two are intended to be read together.*** Further detailed information for each priority is set out in the six supporting appendices.

We have identified the strengths we possess across the local SEND system including; renewed governance, co-production with Parent Carer Voice and improved timeliness of Education Health Care Needs Assessments. We clearly recognising the challenges we face including; the need for a more responsive early help and early intervention offer and reduced wait times in key health services. We recognise that whilst significant improvements have been made, with evidence of good practice in many areas, Solihull local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND given the depth of some of the challenges we face.





Version 1.6

Last Updated: 19th September 2023

Context

Overview of SEND Population



There are 64,284 children and young people aged 0-25 residing in Solihull



16.9% of the pupils studying in Solihull have special educational needs (4% have an EHCP and 13% receive SEN Support which equates to 1,498 pupils with an EHCP and 5,327 pupils receiving SEN Support).



At time of publishing, there are 2,204 children and young people for whom the local authority maintains an EHCP.

Link between SEND and deprivation



26% of Solihull pupils with SEND lived in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally compared with 20% of pupils with no SEND.

School readiness



In 2021/22, a similar percentage of pupils studying in Solihull with SEN reached a good level of development by age 5 (16%) compared to the average for England (19%) and statistically similar local authorities (17%). The difference between the Solihull 'All SEN' cohort and the average for England and statistical neighbours is not statistically significant. For the no SEN cohort, Solihull performance (73%) was similar to England (71%) and Statistical Neighbours (72%).

Geographical prevalence of SEND



The highest proportions of residents with an EHCP are found in the north of the borough in Chelmsley Wood (4.5%), Kingshurst and Fordbridge (4.4%) and Smith's Wood (4.4%).

The lowest prevalence is seen towards the south of the borough in Knowle (1.8%), St Alphege (2%) and Dorridge and Hockley Heath (2.2%) wards.

Quality of setting



90% of children and young people with a Solihull EHCP attend a provision that is rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

How many residents have SEND?

	Solihull rate of EHCPs per 1,000 population (2022)	England rate of EHCPs per 1,000 population (2022)
Under 5	9.5	5.9
Age 5-10	36.7	38.4
Age 11-15	57.5	49.6
Age 16-19	46.7	38.3
Age 20 to 25	6.5	8.3



Compared with its ten statistical neighbours, Solihull had the **second highest percentage of appeals that go to SEND Tribunal** in 2021 (3.25%), a level that exceeds the statistical neighbour (1.28%) and England (1.84%) averages by some margin and **suggests a relatively high level of dispute in Solihull in relation to local authority decisions and/or a gap in terms of the efficacy of the mediation process.** The extent to which this trend is a contributing factor in the overall EHCP rate is unknown, requiring further investigation.



A greater proportion of Solihull residents with an EHCP attend special schools (43.4%) compared to the national profile (34.8%) and comparable local authorities (32.8%), and fewer attend mainstream schools (32.5%) compared to England (40.5%) and statistically similar local authorities (44.3%).



Overall, of the 1,876 residents with an EHCP that attended the principal provider types in 2022 (93% of all EHCPs), 1 in 4 did so in another local authority area (24%).

Primary Need



- A larger proportion of Solihull pupils with SEND have Autism Spectrum Disorder (19.9% vs 13.7% for England and 13.8% for statistical neighbours)
- A smaller proportion of Solihull pupils with SEND have Speech, Language & Communication needs compared to the national profile in particular (17.6% vs 24.1% for England and 20.1% for statistical neighbours)
- A smaller proportion of Solihull pupils with SEND have Moderate Learning Difficulty compared to the statistical neighbour average in particular (14.6% vs 17.3% for England and 19.5% for statistical neighbours)
- A higher proportion of Solihull pupils with SEND have Specific Learning Difficulty (15.1% vs 12.3% for England and 12.3% for statistical neighbours).

Overview of SEND population in Solihull schools



The percentage of secondary school pupils with an EHCP or receiving SEN Support (16%) is relatively high compared to statistical neighbour (13%) and England (14%) averages and this is driven by the prevalence of SEN Support pupils at secondary level in particular (14% vs 12% for England and 11% for statistical neighbours).

Impact on Educational Attainment - Key Stage 2 and 4



At Key Stage 2, a higher percentage of Solihull pupils with SEN are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared with the national average. In particular, the percentage of SEN pupils (without an EHCP) meeting the standard (27%) exceeds the average for England (21%).

The picture is equally positive for Key Stage 4 attainment. In 2021/22, pupils with SEND achieved a higher average attainment 8 score compared to the national average and scores were at least as good as the average for statistically similar authorities.

Inclusivity in mainstream schools



Overall, 43% of residents with an EHCP attend special schools, a higher proportion compared with England (35%) and statistically similar local authorities (33%).

Absence and exclusion



- A higher percentage of pupils with SEND are persistent absentees (35%) compared with pupils without SEND (21%) and it's similar nationally.
- Pupils with SEND have a higher overall absence rate (11%) compared with pupils without SEND (7%) and it's the same nationally
- Pupils with SEND have a higher unauthorised absence rate (3%) compared with pupils without SEND (2%) and it's the same nationally.
- Pupils with SEND have a higher rate of fixed period and permanent exclusions compared to pupils that do not have SEND. For all categories except 'permanent exclusion - SEND without an EHCP', Solihull performed slightly better than the national average in terms of its SEND exclusion rates in 2020/21.

Overview of the SEND Population in Solihull

- There are 64,284 children and young people aged 0-25 residing in Solihull.
- There are 164 young people aged 14-19 known to their GP within Solihull with a learning disability.
- There are 358 two-, three- and four-year-olds either with an Educational Health & Care plan (EHCP) or receiving SEN support. Of those benefiting from early education, 0.7% of two-year-olds have an EHCP and 1.2% receive SEN support. For three- and four-year-olds, 1.2% have an EHCP and 3.7% receive SEN Support.
- 16.9% of the pupils studying in Solihull have special educational needs.
- At time of publishing, there are 2,260 children and young people for whom the local authority maintains an EHCP.

(All statistics are taken from SEND JSNA Report)

Prevalence of SEND is not equally distributed across the population. In line with national trends, Solihull pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are more likely to have a SEND need compared to their less disadvantaged peers, and this presents a challenge in the diversity across the local area between the North and remainder of the borough. Nationally, recent Census 2021 data indicates an association between deprivation and disability. In the most deprived areas of England there were higher levels of disability in 0–24-year-olds (11%) compared with the least deprived areas (7%). An increasing number of Solihull neighbourhoods (LSOAs) are in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in England. Using Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility as a marker of income poverty, the percentage of pupils eligible for FSM in Solihull has increased over time (as per the national trend). In 2022/23, 26% of pupils were eligible for FSM compared with 13% in 2015/16.

According to the latest published ONS data, the 0-25 population is predicted to increase by 6% in the next ten years (compared with a 1.5% increase nationally). However, this does not take into account national policy initiatives that have impacted on UK immigration and have happened since the ONS population projection exercise was published. For example, between August 2020 and April 2023, Solihull admitted nearly 1,400 pupils into its schools as a result of Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Welcome Programme; particularly impacting on KS2 and KS3. In addition, local intelligence is showing a 9%

drop in the birth rate in Solihull, which when combined with a drop in the 0 to 4 migration rates, will lead to around 500 (17 forms of entry) empty reception places by September 2025.

Given the aforementioned link between SEND and poverty more work is needed to establish which areas in Solihull will see greater youth population growth over time, with a view to creating a more accurate growth prediction.



What we are doing well

Governance arrangements have been strengthened and are beginning to drive improvement activity; albeit at a slower pace than the system requires due to the level of change needed and the time taken to galvanise the whole system into taking action. Due to be overseen by a new SEND Executive Leadership Board, the Joint Additional Needs Strategic Board co-produced the Additional Needs Strategy written directly to children and young people (with their support) to assist them in understanding the local areas priorities, and impact for them. These arrangements have helped to prioritise SEND across the partnership - although there is still more work to. This ensures that system leaders have a clear, and joint, focus upon the experiences and outcomes of children and young people and can make effective strategic decisions to support improvements.

Co-production is visible and effective in the local area, with strong relationships **between statutory services and Solihull Parent Carer Voice** - challenges and solutions are jointly owned and service priorities are reviewed to respond to feedback from families. The improved communication between services, and strength of Solihull Parent Carer Voice, has led to many effective coproduced areas of work; including: Strategy for Inclusive Education, Autism in Schools Project, The GP Handbook, Work on Situational mutism and Cross border principles. The Council and ICB also commission project capacity for Our Voices Heard to provide a forum for the voice of children and young people to influence, and evaluate, changes. This ensures the experiences of children and young people, and their families, directly influences the SEND system; and future developments have a positive impact on their lives.

Feedback from families, SENDIASS and an independent consultancy shows that there has been a marked **improvement in EHCP quality** in recent years, as well as improvement in the health and social care participation within the EHCP process. This shows that those supporting children and young people with EHCPs have a clear understanding of their needs and provision requirements so they can be effectively supported in reaching their outcomes.

There has been significant **improvement in timeliness of the EHCP process** (92% in 2022 from 51% in 2021) in addition to a far greater focus on co-production and embedded person-centred planning. This ensures children and young people are at the centre of work from the start, and through the EHCP process they can gain timely access to the support they need to improve their outcomes and experience.

There has been a **27% increase in special school places over the last five years**, including the first phase of places at The Heights Special School and further expansion of Forest Oak and Merstone Special Schools which came on stream in September 2023, and expansion of the alternative provision offer within the local area. This has enabled more children and young people with more complex needs to be educated within their local community whilst receiving the specialist support they require.

We have **sustained agility in SEND support services** to settings and families, so they remain responsive to changes in demand and need; in particular, the rise in children and young people experiencing SEMH needs and those awaiting an autism assessment/diagnosis. This has helped more children and young people gain access to the specialist support they require and for mainstream schools to receive advice and guidance to better respond to their needs, mitigating increasing behaviour challenges or reducing attendance levels for a more positive, and effective, education experience.

We are proud of the **educational attainment** that our children and young people achieve in Solihull, which across the board is better than national. This highlights strong partnership working and that many of our children's needs are well known and understood with the right provision in place for them to succeed. We continue to focus on the North / South divide across the Borough to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality first teaching.

What we could do better

Development of Early Help/Intervention arrangements and an increased focus on SEND within that offer so more children and young people have their needs identified earlier and can access timely support when they need it. This is a key part of our local Children's Improvement Programme and will begin by the end of 2023 with the creation of an Early Help team and phased roll-out of Family Hubs in highest need areas from October 2023 - April 2024.

Developing effective joint commissioning across services to provide a multi-agency response in meeting children's and young people's needs holistically so children and young people experience seamless services and provision which is responsive to their needs. From the end of 2023 on a two – year rolling programme, joint commissioning will be integrated into SMBC Children's Commissioning Team's work programme with additional resource to undertake this provided by Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board. The initial focus in the first year will be on Speech and Language therapies, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Lyndon House (Overnight Short Breaks) and SENDIASS.

Support **better links and transitions between children's and adult's services** and take a holistic view of the whole family when undertaking assessments and making support decisions. A suite of transitions information is being co-produced. This will support earlier conversations with children, young people and their families and will provide key information regarding education, employment and care and support options for people to consider as they approach adulthood. This has been partially launched on Council web pages, and the remainder will be launched by the end of 2023. A transitions case audit tool is also being developed and will be implemented in practice before the end of 2023. Although regular case audits are already in place for Children's Services and the Adult Social Care Directorate, this tool will provide a holistic approach. The audit tool will also provide further opportunities to seek feedback from children, young people, and their families to understand their experience of transitioning from Children's to Adults services, to identify areas of good practice and areas for further development.

Whilst the quality of Education Health and Care Plans has improved, we continue to focus on consistent **quality of advice from all partners**. SENCo training started in July 2023 and will run through this academic year. A new health advice template was implemented at the end of July 2023 to provide greater guidance to completing professionals. Additional training is taking place for workers in the Children's with Disability Team regarding writing the social care element of EHCP's and upon completion of this training during the autumn of 2023, it will be rolled out across other teams in children's social care. Solihull have high numbers of families proportionately seeking resolution regarding decisions made by the Local Authority through [SENDIST](#). A dedicated team have been commissioned to look at factors that are leading to this including where therapy is the main driver for the request.

Improving inclusion of all children and young people, regardless of need, **in their local education settings** whilst providing appropriate and effective learning so every child and young person can have a positive experience of their education, make expected levels of progress and remain within their local community - through the activity supported by the Council's Delivering Better Value programme of work between September 2023 and March 2024.

To ensure all children and young people have a positive education experience, as a partnership we have gained an understanding of specific challenges relating to exclusions and two 'team around the school' plans are in place. The Education Inclusion Team are working with partners to utilise the vulnerability tool to use quantitative data along with practitioner knowledge to ensure targeted support. This has been developed and is being put in place this academic year. This work needs to continue in order to better **understand how to reduce permanent exclusions**.

To ensure the **experiences of children and young people consistently inform strategic and operational improvements** further improvement in co-production is required, specifically in relation to accountable professionals directly hearing children and young people's views - for which Our Voices Heard (children and young people's forum) are establishing a calendar of meetings throughout the 2023/24 academic year, where appropriate professionals will be invited to talk about topics which matter to members.

To ensure all children and young people and their families are empowered to make informed decisions on their future **further development of the Local Offer** is needed to build upon recent changes to accessibility and content (increasing visitors by 54% in the last quarter) through services revisiting content and feedback from children and young people directing further improvements over the next year.

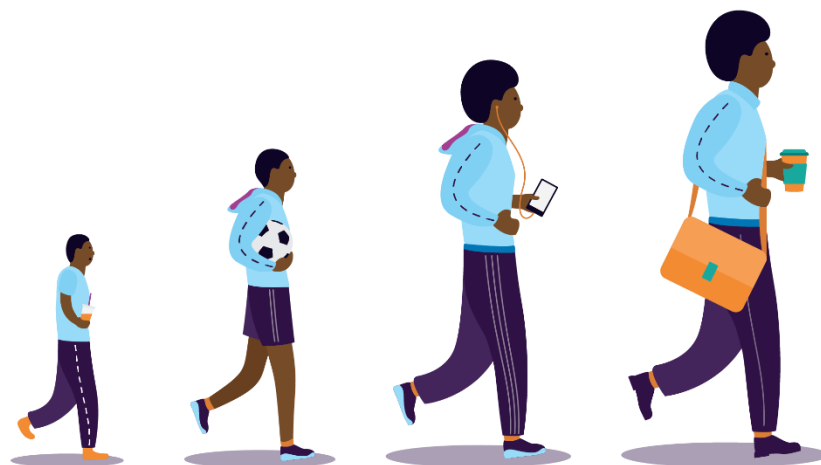
Developing systems for **measuring the impact of work** across the local area on improving outcomes and lived experiences of children and young people. Utilising a range of qualitative and quantitative measures to understand current and future need and drivers of need, to monitor service and system performance and evaluate the outcomes for children, young people and their families at every stage of their journey.



Key priorities for the next 12 months

- 1) To ensure children and young people with complex needs have timely access to education we need to **increase the supply of local specialist placements** to meet current demand – with the creation of a further 30 MLD/SLD places from September 2023 and beginning plans for a new special school following an unsuccessful free school bid.
- 2) **To reduce the number of children and young people being permanently excluded**, and to ensure that primary aged children struggling within their mainstream school have access to timely and appropriate support, we need to develop further the primary alternative provision offer. We plan to open a primary provision by Easter 2024; with outreach support into schools available from September/October 2023.
- 3) To ensure children and young people (and those supporting them) can benefit from the right level of specialist support they require to understand their needs and achieve their outcomes, we need to **address the workforce issues across the local area** to improve service capacity and increase access to independent providers to meet remaining capacity gaps – this includes a priority of increasing educational psychology capacity within the 2023/24 academic year following corporate investment in recruitment and retention.
- 4) To ensure that all children and young people have a good experience of being educated alongside their local peers, which is **consistent** wherever they live in the borough, and ensures they receive the right support at the right time for them we need to fully embed the Strategy for Inclusive Education within all schools during the 2023/24 academic year and update the Graduated Approach by March 2024 - facilitated by a greater focus through the Delivering Better Value Programme.
- 5) To provide more timely assessment of need, we need to **reduce waiting times for autism diagnosis and therapy services** through commissioning of additional providers to provide additional capacity (i.e., instigating a further contract with Healios to complete an additional 120 autism assessments from September 2023). However, it is recognised that further work will be needed to make reductions to autism assessment waiting times due to the significant increase in demand; alongside developing and communicating the local area waiting well offer.

- 6) To ensure more timely mental health support, we need to **reduce waiting times for Solar** and have an improved service for emotional wellbeing. Solar have commissioned 300 initial assessments into the service from April 2023 - October 2023 and recruited 3 Cognitive Behaviour Therapists and 3 Art Psychotherapists on 12-month fixed term contracts to reduce the treatment waiting list for secondary care interventions.
- 7) To **ensure that the local area has the right strategic priorities and focus**. Following a review of additional needs/SEND governance in June 2023 and further revisions in September 2023, we need to consolidate a partnership approach. With strong oversight in monitoring needs analysis, SEND performance management and outcomes for children and young people across the system.



The OFSTED Schedule of Judgement

Using the thorough Local Area Partnership evaluation of the six priority areas linked to the Additional Needs Strategy, a review summary of the current position addresses the Ofsted Inspection Framework. There are areas of good practice, but as a partnership, recognise that experiences for children and young people and their families across Solihull remain inconsistent.

1: Experiences and Outcomes of CYP with SEND	
Description	Evidence and impact – including links to the additional needs strategy and supporting evidence
<p>1.1 Needs are identified and assessed in an effective and timely way</p>	<p><u>Priority 6: I will receive the right support at the right time for me.</u></p> <p>The impact of the improvements to date are that 92% of children and young people that require a statutory assessment of their special educational needs have this carried out within the 20-week timescale.</p> <p>SUCCESS: The rate that <u>Education Health Care Needs Assessments</u> are being completed within 20 weeks has increased (from 26% in 2019) and currently stands at 92%, to ensure that the most complex children and young people’s needs are assessed and understood in a timely way. The impact of this has been <u>celebrated by our parent carers</u>. In the 2022 SEND parent carer survey, 51% of respondents responded positively in regard to “I can get the right support at the right time” – which was a 32% increase from the 19% reporting this in 2021.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Our specialist support services are having to be increasingly creative in response to recruitment challenges and expanding demand. A number of services have created effective work arounds to ensure that those supporting children and young people (including, but not limited to, school staff) still receive support to identify and consider their needs in a timely way - such as the <u>Educational Psychology Team</u>.</p>

			<p>CHALLENGE: We know that post-COVID <u>waiting times</u> for key health services have increased due to recruitment challenges and significantly increasing demand and accessing assessments and support when children and young people need it has been a consistent concern raised by parents. Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board have worked with NHS providers to improve access to accurate waiting time data and have developed plans to improve access to these services.</p>
1.2	CYP and families participate in decision making		<p>Priority 3: My voice is heard, and it makes a difference</p> <p>The impact of the improvements to date means that children, young people and their families have had direct involvement in the writing of the Local Area Additional Needs Strategy.</p> <p>SUCCESS: The local area benefits from a strong strategic partner in <u>Solihull Parent Carer Voice</u> which provides effective support and challenge across the system; alongside an unwavering desire to assist the drive-in improvement for the benefit of all families in the borough. In addition, <u>Our Voices Heard</u> has provided a great opportunity for children and young people to <u>influence</u> the services they receive, as well as enabling their personal growth and independence.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: <u>Feedback</u> from parent carers and from children and young people shows that they have experienced improvements in professionals and services listening to them and making changes as a result – ensuring they are involved in their own decision making; but also the future of services in the local area.</p> <p>In the latest quarterly data (April-June 2023) from the children’s and young person’s survey, 71% (of the 70 responses) said they felt their voice was being listened to and was making a difference, or that this was improving.</p>

		<p>From the 2022 parent survey there was a 23% increase in parents responding positively to the statement “My voice is heard, and it makes a difference from 31% to 54%. There is still some way to go but encouraging that improvements were being noted.</p> <p>“We sometimes meet up with our PAs and we go out for a meal and to the cinema, we also met up to make a song together” (two young people regarding social care support from Our Voices Heard)</p> <p>“The doctor talked to me and my carer and it was a good experience” (young person responding to a question on support in hospitals from Our Voices Heard).</p> <p>Following engagement in the Autism Project, a teacher reported “All of the children have been really positive about the intervention and have identified that they find it enjoyable and useful. They appear more accepting - this is evident in the change in their confidence levels since they have started the intervention”.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: We are continuing to engage with more parent carers and receiving more feedback to assess our developments. However, inconsistent experiences of children and families mean that there are challenges in engaging effectively with some parent carer groups. SPCV have increased their co-production reach with a number of other support groups and organisations, and the LA continues to promote any survey and engagement activity with all parent carers, but further work is needed to build trust and confidence.</p>
1.3	CYP receive the right help at the right time	<p><u>Priority 6</u> : I will receive the right support, at the right time for me</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that children in the early years are accessing support and services at an earlier opportunity to support the start of their educational journey.</p> <p>SUCCESS: The creation of an Early Years Team ensures a combined focus on a settings quality and capacity building to meet the needs of children with additional needs and SEND, whilst ensuring those with more complex needs get the support they require in a timely way. Alongside changes to the <u>Inclusion Fund</u> to enable settings to receive funding earlier</p>

		<p>so children can receive the support they need as soon as it is identified, there has been an <u>increase</u> in the proportion of early years children receiving EHCPs – to ensure their needs are well understood, and provision identified early enough to support their early development goals and supported transition into formal education.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Following investment within children’s services, and the appointment of additional social workers, social care <u>contribution to assessments</u> is now completed as part of the Education Health Care Needs Assessment – meaning that children’s holistic needs are understood in a timely way and the right support can be put in place at the right time.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: More children and young people in the local area are educated outside of the mainstream school system; with 7% more attending a special school than the national and statically similar local area averages.</p> <p>Wait lists for key services in health are over national guidelines. Support whilst waiting has been put in place but the partnership recognises this is still an area of high priority.</p>
1.4	CYP are well prepared for their next step	<p><u>Priority 5:</u> In planning for my future, I know what will happen, when it will happen and who I can communicate with about this.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that young people have signposting available to them to inform their next steps.</p> <p>SUCCESS: Young people told the <u>2023 Peer Review</u> team that they were optimistic about their provision and preparation for adulthood and “<u>Routing for Them</u>” provides an easy-to-use guide to support their navigation of on future pathways.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Joint working practices across services ensures that young people are supported during their transition to adult services with close performance oversight of data and case studies to understand the benefits for children and young people are being achieved. There is an agreed pathway in place. There is good oversight of performance through</p>

a quarterly 'transitions' dashboard that is presented to Joint Directorate Leadership Team, comprising of senior leaders from Children's Services, the Adult Social Care Directorate, and the Public Health Directorate. As outlined above, there are improvement actions underway to further improve these processes, including development of a suite of publicly available information to help children and families to prepare for adulthood, and the case audit tool. We have also been learning from other local authorities and are considering next steps to further improve on the agreed process.

Compliments were received during a recent survey undertaken by the Solihull Parent Carer Forum on the transitions process.

"College on the whole is a positive experience, but sometimes they don't think I need help when I do" (college student, Our Voices Heard)

From the 2022 parent carer SEND survey there was a 32% increase in parents/carers responding positively in regard to "In planning for my future I know what will happen, when it will happen and who I can communicate with about this" to 51% from just from just 20% the previous year. This indicates that there has been a significant improvement in the experience of parents and carers in this area – however, this is one of the areas where parent carers said we had the most work to do; and 70% said we have to make more improvements to help them move between services.

CHALLENGE: Our Voices Heard have raised transitions from primary to secondary schools as a theme for further improvement, with children and young people wanting more support and information earlier on to help them prepare, as outlined above, there are actions in place to address this.

<p>1.5</p>	<p>CYP are valued, visible and included in their communities</p>	<p>Priority 4: I feel welcome, understood, valued, appreciated and included wherever I go.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that many families can access inclusive community activities and resources.</p> <p>SUCCESS: <u>Parent carers</u> have identified many community services which are working well for their children and young people, providing good opportunities to become involved in activities outside of school or home and with peer groups they feel comfortable with. In addition, there has been much done to improve the access to Initial Travel Training for our young people to encourage independence and allow them access to the communities they live in.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Supported by the partnership, school leaders have driven our <u>Strategy for Inclusive Education</u> and led its implementation during the last academic year. This has a broader focus on inclusion, which was important to schools and their wider communities, but will benefit those with SEND and additional needs as inclusive practice becomes more consistent and widespread across the system.</p> <p>The spend on targeted community short breaks has been increasing annually. In response to the success of the Short Breaks Grants programme which was introduced from January 2023, funding has been released – (equating to an approximate 40% increase in spend) for targeted community short breaks from 2023/24</p> <p>CHALLENGE: In 2022, 11.3% of children and young people with an EHCP had to be educated in the independent sector to be in the right provision to meet their needs; with the majority in settings outside of the local area. Despite the opening of a new special school in September 2023; the demand for specialist placements is outstripping supply – meaning less children and young people can be catered for within the local area.</p>
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2: Local Partnership working to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system

Description		Evidence and Impact- including links to the additional needs strategy and supporting evidence
2.1	Leaders are ambitious for CYP with SEND	<p>Priority <u>1</u>: I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that we now have governance structures in place to ensure continued development and improvement in services for children, young people and their families.</p> <p>SUCCESS: Our <u>Additional Needs Strategy</u> clearly sets out our aspirations for children and young people in the local area; and is aligned to the outcomes they have told us are important to them in fulfilling healthy and happy lives.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Our governance arrangements have been reviewed to provide greater rigor and accountability across the partnership; ensuring the local area works collaboratively to achieve defined actions aimed at improving the lives of children and young people.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: SEND has only recently come back into sharper focus across the local area, following significant investment in this area. This means that SEND leadership, the improvement journey and ambition is relatively immature compared to other local areas.</p>
2.2	Leaders actively engage and work with CYP and their families	<p>Priority <u>3</u>: My voice is heard, and it makes a difference.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that Solihull Parent Carer Voice are a key and established strategic partner to ensure that parent carer views are represented in discussion and decision making.</p>

		<p>SUCCESS: Solihull Parent Carer Voice are fully integrated into the local partnership; with representation on all Boards and working parties as well as working in close <u>coproduction</u> with services; including the coproduction on all SEND Strategies (previously linked). This ensures all work in the borough is reflective of families’ experiences and priorities and that professionals are constant in their promotion of high aspirations and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and SEND.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Leaders have increased the ways in which children and young people, and their families, can engage with partners on a strategic, operational, and individual basis through the new engagement platform and associated SEND related projects to make information, and submitting feedback, more accessible.</p> <p>Greater collaboration across the system has been recognised by Solihull Parent Carer Voice and they now report improving connectivity between services and organisations alongside strong co-production; especially with education services. Within the 2022 SEND survey, 59% of parents and carers responded “<i>Definitely/True/It’s improving</i>” to the question “<i>Can you see that everyone is working together to make your life better?</i>” – which was a 32% increase in the 2021 result of just 27% <u>(JSNA p.64)</u>.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: Parent carers have reported good improvements to the information on, and accessibility of, the <u>local offer</u> however they would like more clarity and information about processes so they can be better informed and empowered in discussions with services.</p>
2.3	Leaders have an accurate and shared understanding of the needs of CYP	<p>Priority <u>1</u>: I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better</p> <p>Priority <u>2</u>: I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that leaders have an improving understanding of the needs of children and young people and are able to plan and adapt services accordingly.</p>

		<p>SUCCESS: Our <u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</u> outlines quantitative data from services, parent carers and children and young people on all aspects of SEND across the local area to ensure that leaders have a shared understanding of the population profile and level of need, and outcomes.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Leaders have access to a wealth of child, young person, and parent carer views to ensure the partnership gives them equal weight to quantitative data and service perspectives when evaluating individual decisions, service effectiveness and overall performance. This is also used to review action plans in place to ensure they continue to reflect priorities from children and young people and their families.</p> <p>An example of where data has been used to understand performance is the Annual Health Check. 67% of 14–19-year-olds with a learning disability have received their Annual Health Check in 2022/23 to date. This compares favourably with the England and Midlands average for 14–17-year-olds (of 45%) during the same period (equivalent national and regional figures covering the 14-19 cohort were not available).</p> <p>Solihull has a much higher than average level of appeals against EHCP decisions which are taken to SEND tribunal. Work has commenced to understand the root cause of this. The 2023 peer review comments that at times the graduated approach is used as a entryway for statutory assessment, rather than a pathway in it’s own right. The work with Delivering Better Value is key in gaining deeper understanding to be able to address this.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: Whilst there are examples of the use of data to show high performance and issues that need focus, this needs to be embedded at operational and strategic levels across the partnership.</p>
2.4	Leaders commission services and provision to meet need and aspirations	<p><u>Priority 2:</u> I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need.</p>

	including Alternative Provision	<p>The impact of improvements to date means that investment has been targeted at areas where there is greatest need, including special school places, Family Hubs and increasing mental health support.</p> <p>SUCCESS: Since 2019/20 to 23/24 there has been an increase in revenue spend on alternative provision of £3.6m in order to expand the <u>alternative provision offer</u> in the local area by over 56%, including intervention provisions. The intended impact of the investment is to support positive outcomes for children and young people and close joint working with their home schools for successful reintegration where appropriate. Locations for new Family Hubs have been determined by data evidencing higher levels of need and poorer outcomes for Children and Young People.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: <u>The Learning Disability & Autism programme</u> is focused on identifying needs and developing provision across a range of projects and holds co-production at the heart of this to ensure the local area can respond to the needs, desires and aspirations of children and young people and their families.</p> <p>Joint Commissioning across the Local Area is currently undergoing a renewed focus and strategy, with it being a priority of 2023/24. Key strategic plans are in place and work is underway to ensure that the SEND Executive Leadership Board have the detail in order to inform and monitor key joint commissioning arrangements.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: The last academic year saw the number of permanent exclusions double in the local area highlighting the need for greater outreach provision within schools to support children and young people before their behaviour escalates and they require alternative provision as a result of exclusion. Multi agency Team Around the School groups have been put in place where there are a concentrated number of children experiencing exclusions.</p>
2.5	Leaders evaluate services and make improvements	<p><u>Priority 1:</u> I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better.</p>

		<p>Routine interrogation of outcome data at service and system level has identified areas for improvement across the partnership.</p> <p>SUCCESS: In recognition of the lower proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment in 2021, leaders instigated a range of <u>programmes</u> and schemes to support employer engagement and provide young people with employability skills – increasing this by 2% in 2023 to the national average level of people with learning disabilities who are receiving adult social care services and are in employment. The work has been led by the Adult Social Care Directorate, supported by the Council’s employment and skills team and with corporate funding for posts allocated for people with learning disabilities across the council.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: The multi-agency quality assurance of EHCPs enables continuous evaluation of professional advice and content of EHCPs; providing partnership support and challenge to facilitate improvements to professional skills and working practice.</p> <p>CHALLENGE: Whilst the JSNA provides a sound local area overview, performance data across the partnership is in its early stages of development, meaning that leaders have not always been able to easily identify system-wide issues, or interdependencies.</p>
2.6	Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and	<p><u>Priority 1</u>: I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better.</p> <p>The impact of improvements to date means that the core strategy to bring the partnership together is has been written by and for children and young people.</p>

	multi-agency working can flourish	<p>SUCCESS: Leaders have ensured the <u>Additional Needs Strategy</u> provides the partnership with a clear set of cohesive goals for effective multi-agency working to take place and made arrangements for strategic and operational multi-agency forums governance arrangements to bring partners together to make, and oversee, improvements to the outcomes of children and young people.</p> <p>IMPROVEMENT: Leaders create the right environment to bring partners together from across the local area to improve collaboration and provide a system-wide approach which responds to the main challenges faced by children and young people, and their families</p> <p>CHALLENGE: Feedback from parent carers is clear that more needs to be done across the partnership to improve multi-agency working; especially with the most complex children and young people, to ensure their needs are responded to holistically and effectively</p>
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Driving Quality and Improvement in Practice

This Self Evaluation Summary is a snapshot in time and more detail is provided in the appendices which outline the strengths, improvements and areas of challenge for the 6 priority areas along with action plans for the partnership.

To ensure that the Self Evaluation process remains relevant, reviews will take place biannually and the SEND Executive Leadership Board will take accountability for both the oversight of the review and the monitoring of driving the quality and improvement in practice in the highlighted areas.

Partnership signatures

Paul Johnson

CEO, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

David Melbourne

CEO, Birmingham and Solihull ICB

Heather Delaney

Chair, Solihull Parent Carer Voice

School Representative

Child and young person representative

29.09.23	Sign off autumn 2023 SEF by partnership
April 2024	6-month review of SEF as instructed by the SEND Executive Leadership Board
May 2024	Report to strategic leads and partnership about success over past 6 months. All partners to sign SEF

