

Solihull's Additional Needs Strategy 2022 - 2025

Annual Report

December
2023



Solihull

METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

We have continued to make lots of changes to how we support children and young people with additional needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) this year. We set out our plans for this year in January 2023 but have changed things since then so we can keep working on things that parent carers and children and young people have told us matter to them.

In this report we want to tell you what we have done, what you think about this and some of the new things we have to now think about and plan for.

What have we been doing?

At the start of 2023, we asked SEND experts from the West Midlands to carry out a peer review of our services in Solihull. We were pleased the review saw how well different leaders across Solihull were taking responsibility for delivering change and working together.

They reported a number of strengths and areas for improvement. You can read their full report (and our response) on the local offer [Solihull Local Area - SEND Peer Challenge](#) but a few highlights for us were:

- ✓ Improvements to the timeliness and quality of EHCPs;
- ✓ The success of travel support in young people's independence;
- ✓ The commitment of a number of head teachers to drive inclusion across Solihull;
- ✓ The support for young people to stay in education, employment or training;
- ✓ The powerful impact made by Our Voices Heard;
- ✓ The commitment and impact of Solihull Parent Carer Voice



But we also appreciated their thoughts on what we needed to do better:

- Helping all schools to be inclusive so children have a consistent experience wherever they go;
- Making better use of support available at SEN Support level and making sure this is working;
- Improving waiting times for some health services and support for families;
- Social care working better with schools and families so children get the support they need;
- Improving information on the local offer; especially in preparing for adulthood

We have started working on all of these things and will talk more about those later in this report.

We have increased the number of special school places in Solihull and were very pleased to see the new school, The Heights, open from September 2023 – meaning more Solihull pupils with autism can go to a suitable school in borough. We know more places are still needed - and are working on how best we can do this; including looking at options for building another new special school. We have also changed our alternative provision offer so more pupils can benefit from this type of support; and we will continue to change what this looks like so we can better improve outcomes for children and young people.

At the end of 2022, Solihull were one of the 55 local areas who joined the Department for Education's Delivering Better Value programme. The outcome of this work has been a need to focus on making sure children and young people get the right support at the right time – supporting more without the need for an EHCP and within their local mainstream school. We have spent much of this year planning activity within this programme but have been pleased to be able to start rolling out Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and audits in schools alongside SEND visits, nurture training and speech and language training – all aimed at helping schools to meet children and young people's needs early on.

We have also made lots of changes to how we communicate to parent carers, and in time children and young people, with improvements being made to the content of the [Local Offer](#) and the set up of our new website for SEND engagement



[Your Voice Solihull](#) so people can go to one place to find events which are happening, complete surveys and feedback on the local offer.

Behind the scenes we have changed how education, social care and health work together so there is more joint working and better arrangements in place for checking that improvements are made and, most importantly, outcomes for children and young people. We know there is still more work to be done, but services and professionals are having the right conversations with each other.

We have been pleased to hear about the governments [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#) as we know that things in the SEND system need to change across the country. However, the timescales for many of these plans are still some time away and therefore we know we have to continue to work with parent carers, and children and young people, to try to make the improvements we can in Solihull whilst responding to the increasing numbers of children and young people needing support, and challenges in recruiting the specialist staff needed across all services.

What you have told us...

In March 2023, 73 parents met with 36 professionals at the SEND Community Event. This was a great way to come together to talk about what is happening in Solihull and what else needs to be done. Improvements in EHCPs, information, community support and the increase Mental Health in Schools teams, the HAF offer and Parent Engagement groups were all named as positive changes in the past year. However, the four main themes of Communication, Support, Consistency and Inclusion were given as main areas for development. The full report from the event was published by SPCV on their website [SEND Community Event](#) and our response to the recommendations, including the actions we agreed to take, are on the SEND Hub [You Said We Did](#).



SPCV also conducted a survey of parents over the Summer about their experiences of SEND in Solihull. This again identified some positive changes such as: the local offer developments, EHC needs assessment person centred planning meetings and support from the Early Years Team. But also reinforced the view that more needed to be done to improve the consistency of school practice and access to support, EHCP processes, health waiting times and social care support. The full findings from the survey were published on the SPCV website [Reports - Solihull Parent Carer Voice](#) and considered in detail by the Children Services Educational and Skills Scrutiny Committee who made recommendations to improve services. Our response to these, including the actions we agreed to take, are on the [SEND Hub](#).

We have also received reports from Our Voices Heard on the things that matter to children and young people. Areas they have asked to be improved include information on EHCPs and transition to secondary school as well as asking for more conversations with professionals. Their specific requests, and the actions we have agreed to take, have been published on the SEND Hub [You Said We Did](#).

Professionals also regularly attend SPCV coffee mornings to have general discussions about parent carer experiences. It has been pleasing to note that over the past two years there have been less issues raised about the Council's education services and EHCPs due to the improvements made but we understand there is still more work to do in other areas; already highlighted in this report.

Towards the end of 2023 we asked parent carers and children and young people for their views using an online survey shared through Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) and Our Voices Heard (OVH); and other organisations providing support for parent carers. We received 246 responses from parent carers and 63 from children and young people.

54% of parent carers responding said they knew of the Additional Needs Strategy and 85% of those said they understood it. This is a drop of 9% knowing about the strategy compared to last year. Discussions with SPCV have suggested this may be due to less promotion of the strategy in its second year, and that there have been lots of other pieces of work in Solihull (like



Delivering Better Value and our Alternative Provision work) which are not clearly linked to the strategy. We therefore plan to bring all of our SEND improvement work together in a better way so we can communicate how it all supports the Additional Needs Strategy. Results from children and young people were still too low at 29% knowing about the strategy but out of those who had heard about it, 83% knew what it meant for them. This suggests that where young people have been supported to access the strategy they can understand it; but that we still have more work to do for everyone to hear this message. A [video](#) was shared online during 2022 to help explain the strategy but we will meet with Our Voices Heard Ambassadors in 2024 to find out what else could help.

55% of parent carers responding said they had seen improvements in support for children and young people with additional needs and SEND in the past year in Solihull (which is up from 46% in 2022); and 91% of those said they had felt these improvements themselves. 21 parent carers told us about the services where they had seen improvements and the most common area mentioned was the EHCP Service at Solihull Council (with 11 parent carers telling us about that) with other Council SEND support services mentioned (SISS, Inclusion, Educational Psychology and the early years team) as well as SPCV, schools and mental health. We are pleased that improvements are continuing to be felt by parent carers.

"My daughter has started to receive support in school"

"SISS have been incredible in supporting my daughter..."

"EHCP Team, my child's EHCP is the best it has ever been..."

"Quality of EHCP has improved. EHCP drop in sessions. SPCV coffee mornings"

"I think all the teams are getting better"



However, a few parent carers still felt there was much more to be done around the Council working better with, and communicating to, parent carers and the speed of diagnoses through schools and support services. Two parent carers referred to the system not being “*fit for purpose*” and needing a “*major overhaul*” alongside one who felt the EHCP process was “*long winded, purposefully difficult and ambiguous...*”. It is hoped that the local SEND improvement work of the Council, alongside the Department for Education’s commitment to improving the SEND system in the national improvement plan will address this for these families. Two parents raised concerns about the Council “*following the law*” so we will look at how best to follow this up with families – last year we committed to looking at this in more detail which identified the difference in view between the Council not agreeing with a parent carer rather than not following the law. Work is underway to create some video’s for parent carers to explain the processes the Council goes through to make decisions; and we have been very grateful for SPCV agreeing to observe EHCP decision making panels to ensure they are transparent and lawful where parent carers consent to this happening for their child’s case.

Some parents also referred to issues with school practice (responding to issues, supporting children at SEND support and providing information) waiting times for diagnosis or support, and a lack of access to information. We hope that our work to improve the consistency of practice across schools (like additional training, the graduated approach and our SEND school visits), development of ‘support whilst waiting’ resources for health waiting lists and continual development of the Local Offer will address some of these issues.

There has been lots of work happening in Solihull and we make sure that parent carers are part of the whole process, working in co-production, across all of our changes in education, health and care. SPCV sit on all of our groups to make sure we are always listening to, and thinking about, what parent carers, and their children and young people, want.



What have we been doing to improve the priority areas we shared with you in our strategy?

Priority 1

I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure everyone in Solihull thinks about how their work can help make things better for you. This includes sharing information and finding ways to check we are making things better. • Look for ways that staff supporting you work better together. For example, staff will work together to improve what is written in your Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) if you have one. • Look at when you aren't happy with our decisions and have to use the tribunal process, especially when there are many services involved. • Share an online feedback system with you so you can always tell us how you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have put things in place so we are using data and information to help us plan and check what impact we are having – this includes looking at Solihull data and what is happening across the country (needs assessment and performance data). • Health and social care have changed the way they give information (advice) for your EHCP and each month we look at how well some of your EHCPs are written (quality assurance). • We have set up a group (panel) of people from social care, health and education to work together if you have very complex needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to bring professionals together to look at your life across education, health and care so we can check we are making the right decisions (vulnerable children response). We will also review how people have worked together to support some of you throughout the year (multi-agency audit). • We will continue to carry out SEND visits in schools to look at their offer and see what is working well and where they need support to make changes. • We will keep working with you to make the local offer easier for you to use and find the information you want.



<p>are feeling about our support – so we can make the changes we need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review and update the Local Offer and hear from you about what information you want on the Local Offer, and how you want it to look. • Work with partners across the West Midlands to rollout Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training for all health and social care staff to further strengthen the training offer and increase knowledge and use of reasonable adjustments across health services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have looked at tribunals and written a plan for all services to work better together so this is easier for you. • We have set up an online form and asked professionals to complete with you when they meet you (Survey). • We have made more changes to the way our Local Offer looks so you can find information more easily. • We have begun delivery of Oliver McGowan Mandatory training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to support early years settings with the Dingley's Promise training so they can better support young children. • We will continue to embed Oliver McGowan training at appropriate levels for all staff.
--	--	---

57% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority which is similar to the 59% in 2022. We know we still have work to do. You did say that the Local Offer was improving, with 80% of you who have used it in the last year saying it had improved and 78% saying the information was very or mostly helpful. The biggest issue for you was how well, or not, things were joined up; with the right people involved to help when needed.

“When multiple children and services are involved, it's a nightmare for parents to pull everything together...”

“We find services that work with the school are working together with group meetings when needed...”

79% of children and young people told us that you could see people working together to help you (44% said they could sort of see this).

Priority 2

I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree what we want to do with families and how we will work together with the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) to change things for you across Solihull and the area you live in. We will help other people supporting you to know how to get the help you need. • Look at how we can do more joined up work between the Council and ICB to give you better support. Learning from what has worked well in the past or where we have seen problems. • Look at how we can better plan and pay for support for you if you need help from education, social care and health at the same time. • We will share the Mental Health transformation plan for 2023 and 2024 on the Local Offer website. • The Children and Young People Delivery and Improvement Group had 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have increased our offer if you cannot attend school (alternative provision) so there are more ways to support you. • We have introduced an All-Age Autism Service to bring together Solihull's autism offer. • We have been working together to join up commissioning between the Council and ICB for some services (such as community therapies). • We have worked together to learn from experiences of children and families to support services to be joined up in the future. • We have put a number of health and community pilots in place to find out what makes the biggest difference in bringing care closer to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are putting more support in for you if you are in primary school and cannot attend school (alternative provision). • We are working with schools to look at how they can offer you different lessons and courses (vocational) if you are finding learning hard. • It has been agreed the Council will take some of the health responsibility for making sure the services you need are in place (joint commissioning) so decisions can be made more easily starting early next year. • We are setting up a group (CYP Strategic Partnership Board) to look at health provision and delivery and bring things to enable easier access for children and families. • We will progress the north Solihull integrated model of care pilot. This includes how we plan and use resources



<p>an away day in December 2022 which will focus on how we can connect services together and bring them closer to you in the community. It will also look at how we can help communities to have a voice in their care and the development of support services.</p>	<p>home and connected to other services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot Family Hub was launched at the Evergreen Space in Kingshurst for families with children aged from before pregnancy to 12 years (with activities for 12-25 year olds following in the Spring). 	<p>for the needs of the local community, and setting up a new way of working with local partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solihull Family Hub offer will launch in Spring 2024 with four hubs, outreach and a digital offer with services and advice for families with children/young people aged from before pregnancy to 25 years. • We are looking for ways to increase our special school places, so if you need one for your learning you can get this more quickly and closer to home.
---	--	---

50% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority, which is down slightly from 54% in 2022. The main concerns raised were with waiting lists for support and the capacity of services; which are felt to be worse now than they were last year. We recognise the pressure on services and have taken steps to recruit specialist staff within the Council (including to improve our Educational Psychology capacity) alongside looking at information to help families with “support whilst waiting” for a health service or diagnosis. A number of issues were also raised with school support for SEND children and we hope our work on improving consistency through revisiting the graduated approach and supporting schools with their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work will start to make a difference.

“Diagnosis needs to be a priority and support for parents whilst awaiting confirmation of a condition need guidance and advice to help them support children ...”

“More support from schools. Some schools are so much better than others and this is not fair.”

Children and young people told us they had seen improvements in all areas of help and support compared to last year – although less completed the survey this year. They said that they felt they had less help and support in school. This is very different to last year when this was the area they thought was the best - but improvements in all areas are still needed. We have included the response from our survey from children and young people below:

Do you feel you are getting the help and support you need....	Yes	Sort of
in school or college	33%	35%
in the community	40%	29%
with your health	48%	29%
with your thoughts and feelings	48%	25%

"If you don't know about the place or have information about it before hand you don't know where to go or what to do its expected you just know."

"My college are really disappointing. They don't help me like they should."



Priority 3

My voice is heard, and it makes a difference...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make sure that all the work we do, the plans we make and the services we review includes you and your parent carers from the start. • We will write an Engagement Plan so that everyone knows what we will be doing and when. This is so you, and your parent carers, can be involved as much, or as little, as you want to. Helping us plan what we need to do and seeing if this has made a difference. We will find different ways to listen to the voices of all children and young people so we can hear what you have to say. • We will make sure there are chances for you to be involved in the way you want to be. About the things that matter to you and at a time and place that works for you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are still working with SPCV and OVH on the things that you, and you parents, have said are important to you all. • We have set up an Engagement Plan so you can see what is happening, and when. This is kept up to date on our SEND Hub. • We have put more information into our SEND Newsletter so you can see what is happening in Solihull. • OVH and SPCV give us your feedback and thoughts and we tell them what we do to make things better. We do this on the You Said We Did page of our SEND Hub. • With some money we have been given (through Delivering Better Value) we have helped SPCV set up 20 more parent groups in schools so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with a national young people’s group (KIDS) and some of you in schools to make a video which helps people understand why your voice is important, and how it can be heard. • We are beginning to ask schools to let us know if you have been involved in your EHCP annual review, if you have one. This is so we can see how much you are a part of deciding what is, and isn’t, working. • We are working with OVH to find out what matters to you the most and what you want to talk about – so we can make sure the right people listen to you. • More work will be done to encourage a wider use of the Mind of my own App.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to increase our parent and student groups so they are in more schools. • From January 2023 we will be setting up quarterly drop-in sessions for parent carers to meet staff from the EHCP Service, social care and other SEND support services to help you access these teams and have your questions answered. • We will work with Our Voices Heard to find out what else we need to do so you feel listened to by those supporting you. • We will continue to ensure that the use of Mind of My Own is rolled out to all social worker and children and families currently involved with children social care. 	<p>they can hear directly from you about the things that matter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have held drop-in sessions for your parents to meet people from the EHCP team, social care and Educational Psychology so they can talk more easily when you need support. • The Mind of my own App is being used with some children. • We have worked with Solihull young people and parents to design Learning Disability and Autism Support services and media resources. 	
---	---	--

52% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority which is similar to 2022. At the SEND Community Event in March 2022 we talked a lot about improvements to the Local Offer and we have started to make these changes; although there is more work to be done. Some parent carers felt that some of the new things we have put in place were making a difference – with 49% of parent carers saying they received the regular SEND newsletters to stay up to date:

“EHCP service- the drop in sessions are great...”

“I really like the SEND newsletter, I like that there is so much more information coming out of the local authority.”



As well as using other services to get the support they need:

"I tell SPCV what I think of services. I can see them getting better"

"Charities such as Signpost inclusion and parent support groups are invaluable."

Responses to the survey suggested there was more work to improve communication with parent carers and for services to be listening to them. We will explore this more over the coming year.

59% of children and young people felt that people made changes when they asked them to – with only 30% saying people asked for their views before making a decision which affected them (and a further 52% saying this happened at times). There was little difference in where children and young people felt heard or listened to (school 65%, health 62% and by their community 64%) but all were improvements on last year.

There were a number of things children and young people said would help them to tell people how they felt:

"To not be spoken over and ignored."

"If people give me different ways to communicate, such as they do in school. I find speech difficult though I am getting much better."

"If I could talk to someone and trust them."

"Calm and nicer voice and being friendly."

"Not having to say things out loud."



Priority 4

I feel welcome, understood, valued, appreciated and included wherever I go...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how inclusive Solihull is - the places you go and the help you get. This includes community buildings, spaces, services, groups and organisations. We will increase trust and confidence in what they offer by setting a local inclusion standard. • Have more training, learning and development options for all people working with you (staff or volunteers). This will include voluntary, community, social enterprise, public sector and schools. This is so they can provide better support and always value what you, and your parent carers can do, and are interested in. • Develop a Solihull promise for help, support and activities to always be available for you. This includes better support for the Short Breaks offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools met to talk about how they can be better at including all children and have started to look at what they do well and what they could do better (Equity, Diversity & Inclusion audit). • The Council is providing training for schools on inclusion, nurture and speech and language so staff are better able to support you. • The Council has increased the choice of providers offering short breaks for children and young people with a disability, as well as the capacity through bringing new providers on board. This has had very positive feedback from parents, children and young people. • We have been looking at how we can work better across education, communities and children's services so you, your parents and your school can have more support when things are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will continue to be trained and look at what they are doing; and can do. We will give them more support on the things they are struggling with. • We are looking across education, care, health, community safety and the community to see how we can better work together where you are struggling to attend school, or are at risk of being excluded from school. • We will continue to promote the important role, which youth sector organisations can have in promoting inclusion, wellbeing and outcomes for young people in education settings. • We will fund improvements to community buildings, which will make them more inclusive and accessible to children and young people with SEND. • We will identify local good practice that promotes the inclusion of children and young people in their community,



<p>and Holiday Activity & Food programme so more children and young people can be included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work with your parents to think about other short break activities so there will be some new things starting in 2023. 	<p>going wrong for you (graduated approach and alternative provision).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has secured funding to help make community settings and buildings to be more inclusive and accessible to children and young people with SEND. 	<p>and use this to inform training, development and a recommended standard for voluntary, community and faith organisations.</p>
---	--	--

59% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority which is similar to the 57% in 2022. Parent carers said this was the priority area where we were doing the best; although we have more work to do.

In contrast to last year you told us that you felt schools and colleges were the least accessible and welcoming to children and young people (a big reduction from 64% and 71% last year) but you said that all other areas had made improvements – with mental health appointments improving the most. We have included more responses from our survey below:

My child finds this area very or mostly good for...	Education	Clubs, groups and holiday clubs	Medical appointments	Mental health appointments	Local community
being accessible	41%	49%	47%	44%	46%
making them feel welcomed and included	45%	55%	52%	48%	55%



Parent carers raised issues about the availability of community activities, support in schools and the ability to access services.

"I find most clubs don't have clear accessibility protocols and have always found hesitation when asking about offering child a place"

"My child is excluded from most meetings about her at school and both of my children with complex diagnosed needs have had their reasonable adjustments removed and are struggling as a result."

"My child is very sensitive and doesn't always feel included and always feels like everyone is against them. But if they or I need to speak to someone, someone will be there to hear what we've got to say. It's getting them to act and provide support that's the issue."

54% of children and young people said they felt welcome and included when they went to different places, which is better than last year; and 83% said they did feel, or sort of feel, that. However, only 46% went to activities which weren't based in their school. You told us you wanted people not to stare because you are different and for places to be quieter with less people. You said these things would help:

"People to have more understanding of individuals."

"Feeling like I'm known."

"When I am out and about people will look and stare at my cochlear implants which makes me feel self conscious."



Priority 5

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

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join up more of our processes and communication across education, health, care and the community so we work better to support you in being the best you can be. For example, we will look at our Youth Offer. • Provide information so people supporting you (including in schools and colleges and your family) can start to talk to you about your future and what could be possible. We will do this in different ways. • Understand Solihull's Post 16 offer and improve this. For it to be more welcoming to all young people, provide different options and help them into employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have met with some of your parents to look at the Post 16 education offer in Solihull and what they would like to be available. • We have worked with schools to update the transition guide for when you move to secondary school. • When your parent says it is ok, we ask SPCV to sit on our meetings (panel) where we make EHCP decisions. This means they can check we are following the law. • We have worked with parent carers and children and young people to update the Preparing for Adulthood webpage information to provide clearer information regarding post 18 care, accommodation, education and employment options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be arranging to meet with those of you who have attended college in Solihull to see what worked and what you need. This will help us get the right offer as more of you move into college in the future. • Transition audit tool pilot will be undertaken to gain feedback from people who have or are transitioning from Children's to Adult Social Care, to understand, learn and make improvements to existing pathways. • We are continuing to work with our experts by experience to develop information to support people with a Learning Disability and their families to understand the value of and access to Annual Health Checks.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • education offer is for young people over 16 in Solihull and seeing how we can give you more options. • We want to hear from you more about where you think the law isn't being followed so we can provide more information on the work we do and how we do it so you feel more confident in that. • We will be looking for more supported Internship opportunities with other businesses in Solihull. • We will work with more employers to help them become Disability Confident. • If you have an EHCP and are looking for work, we will make sure you get support more quickly. • We will evaluate the impact of the work through joint social care transition audit in order to understand the impact that this work is having of Young People and their families. • We will be joining up processes between social care and health in order to maximise people's opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Transitions Audit Tool has been developed and will be piloted in Spring 2024. • We have increased the number of young people on Supported Internships (with 17 starting in September 2023) by bringing people together to make plans for more places, giving more information to schools and on the Local Offer and offering training (Internship Works). A young person who did a Supported Internship in 2022 is now planning to work at the Council. • 12 Supported Internship jobs have been given to people (of all ages) and 4 others are in progress and the Council is using DWP funds (Local Supported Employment) for providers (Experts by Experience, Colebridge and Ideal for All) to support people with learning disabilities and autism into work. • There has been more Employability Support in schools to help young people with SEND and further development of the Careers Hub with information for schools and parent carers as well as the updated Routing for them guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with more providers to try to have even more Supported Internships in 2024 (our target is 36). • The Council and Solihull Community Housing are looking to offer more internships, supported jobs and job opportunities. • Job Fairs for people with SEND are being planned for 2024-2025 to promote opportunities as well as Disability Confident events for businesses so they can offer more placements. • We will look at how best to make sure young people in schools outside of Solihull have timely and appropriate information on career and work options by working with those schools and parent carers. • We will write a Young Person friendly and an easy read version of the Routing for them guide and look at how else to promote information with schools, pupils and parents, including through our Schools Career Enterprise Advisors.
---	---	---

<p>to have a healthy and fulfilled adulthood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have further work to do to promote Annual Health Checks for people with Learning Disabilities so they are aware earlier on. • We would like to hear from you where you think the law isn't being followed so we can provide more information on the work we do and how we do it so you feel more confident in that. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working with practices to improve access and uptake of Annual Health Checks. A new Quality Assurance process has been developed to improve quality of these checks. Information has been shared with Solihull Health Community Services to promote checks with parents and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that the number of young people with EHCPs who are 16 or older will continue to grow in Solihull so we will be looking at what education, employment and community options we need to start developing.
---	---	---

51% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority which is the same as in 2022. Parent carers gave a mixed picture – services such as transport, Solihull Music and the Transitions team had been experienced positively but many areas of development were highlighted; including mental health and ADHD support, children's social care, community health services and school practice, including how schools dealt with bullying.

"We have been fortunate to have had a smooth transition from Children's to Adult's Services through the All Age Disability Team (Transitions)."

"More help with ADHD children. More support for parents and the children. More training into schools so that teachers understand better."

More children and young people told us this year that they knew where to get help or have their questions answered, with 64% knowing where to go and 22% sort of knowing.

Priority 6

I can get the right support I need at the right time for me...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work with our therapy services to find ways to speed up the waiting time. We will give you more information and advice whilst you are waiting and make sure you, and your parent carers, know where to find this.• We will improve the information within our social care assessments for EHCPs to ensure services which can support you and your family are clearly identified and signposted to.• If we have agreed that you need social care support, we will review this every year. This information will support the annual review of your EHCP if you have one.• We will be finishing our work on the Graduated Approach and checking this with everyone before we share it. We will put it on the local offer as work in progress in March 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have met with services, schools and your parents to look at what support there is if you need help with your mental health (SEMH graduated approach).• We have changed the way schools give us information on your EHCP annual review, if you have one, so we can make sure we have the right information for you.• We have given training on SEND and EHCPs to social care staff so it is easier for them to work with schools and education teams.• Social care staff now screen all EHCP annual reviews and assess where social care needs are identified.• Where a social care need is already known as part of the EHCP annual review, a visit to the child/ family is undertaken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will be sharing information on how schools can support your SEND needs, and where they can get more help from (graduated approach) on our website by Easter 2024. We are sorry this has taken us longer to do than we thought last year.• We will be making it easier for schools to ask for help to support you when you need something more than they can give you (alternative provision).• The Early help service is being developed in Solihull and all Family Hubs will be open by April 2024.• We will be working further with children, parents and carers, and professionals to design how waiting list information is shared, ensuring that it is easy to understand with a



- The new CATCH service, website and referral form will be launched January 2023.
- We are reviewing Special School Nursing, Community Paediatrics and Looked After Children services is being planned, so they can better support you.
- We are working with parent-carers to improve the way waiting list information is shared to make it easy to understand for all.
- All children will be screened by social care as needed as part of the 12 months annual review process to ensure that the updated assessment reflect the changing needs of children and families.
- We will continue to improve our work with children and families to ensure that the social care contribution to EHCP is in line with the children and family's needs and look at the timeliness of this work.
- We want to work with other areas on our [cross border principles](#) to reduce barriers if you live on the border between areas.

- We have been working together to improve how we share waiting times for therapy and health services so these can be visible to you, your families and staff, and looking at how we can speed these up.
- [Resources, advice and guidance](#) are available to support children, parents and carers whilst waiting for community health services.
- Children are now offered extra coaching sessions with a speech and language assistant, while waiting for review.
- We have been working together to review some health services (such as community paediatrics and Looked After Children services).
- We are reviewing our health cross-border principles to ensure smooth access to care if you live in border areas, and they are up to date in line with recent changes.

- new "support whilst waiting" webpage in early 2024.
- We will be reviewing pathways of care and investment into some community health services across Birmingham and Solihull.



This is the priority area where parent carers felt we had the most to do. 50% of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority, which is similar to last year. However, this was the area where the most of you (33%) said that you did not think things were improving at all. Given the feedback from the SEND Community Event and the Summer SPCV survey, alongside increasing waiting lists for diagnosis and the challenges we are facing in recruiting specialist staff into services, this is not a surprise. Many of you stated that improvements were needed in most areas, especially health services, consistency in school practice and increased capacity within specialist services so you can get support more quickly. A number of you also said you felt the EHCP process needed to improve, and schools needed to do more to put the EHCP provision in place. However, some of you also said there had been some improvements in access to mental health, the Council's SEND support services and support in schools.

"Mental health provision is showing slight improvement but needs to link in better to schools."

"More help with ADHD children. More support for parents and the children. More training into schools so that teachers understand better."

"Looking for the signs much earlier and being proactive in getting SEN involved e.g. school refusal, social issues."

"School transportation for my SEND son... It has been life-changing for us as a family and we are delighted with the service.."



Thank you to every child and young person, parent carer and service lead for working so hard this year to make things better in Solihull. We look forward to continuing this work together.

Useful Links:

To sign up for the Council's monthly SEND Newsletter: [Solihull Council \(govdelivery.com\)](https://www.solihull.gov.uk/govdelivery) *(SEND is under the Education option)*

To read engage with us through our SEND Hub: [SEND and Additional Needs | Your Voice Solihull \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com)

To find information on our Local Offer: [Solihull Local Offer | solihull.gov.uk](https://www.solihull.gov.uk)

To get support from SENDIASS: [Solihull SEND Information, Advice and Support Service - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](https://www.family-action.org.uk)

To talk to Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV): [Solihull Parent Carer Voice SPCV | Inspiring Positive Change](https://www.spcv.org.uk)

To join Our Voices Heard (OVH): [Children and Young People's Voice- Our Voices Heard! - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](https://www.spcv.org.uk)



