

Solihull SEND Newsletter

March 2024

Strategic Update

Additional Needs Board Meeting

The Joint Additional Needs Board met on 9th February. They key messages were:-

- The Board talked about how successful the Children's Celebration Event on Tuesday 30 January was and how wonderful it was to see all of the children and young people who attended and feel the energy in the rooms. Some great messages came out from children and young people on the things that were important to them, and services will now see how they can respond to these. The summary from the event is on the Local Offer and SEND Hub: [CYP Celebration Event](#)
 - The Board heard from SATa on their new Young People Advocacy offer which they provide on a group or 1:1 basis. Members were excited about this offer for young people (aged 14-19 – and in some cases up to aged 25) who have, or may have, a learning disability and/or autism and live in Solihull, with a Solihull GP and education setting. The Board committed to sharing this information to help more young people have a voice. More information is available online: [Referrals — Solihull Action through Advocacy \(solihulladvocacy.org.uk\)](#)
 - The Board heard about the creation of a new online resource (Support Whilst Waiting) which would provide health waiting list information, but more importantly act as a central point for all resources available to help families with support whilst they were waiting across services. Members welcomed this development and committed to sharing as widely as possible once it is published next month.
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#SENDSpotlight

100 parent carers and professionals came together on Wednesday 6 March for the SEND Community Event to talk about what changes are needed in Solihull and to begin to develop plans to improve lives.

Young People's Advocacy – Solihull Action through Advocacy (SAAtA)

SAAtA have some capacity for young people's advocacy - providing 1:1 and group advocacy to help them understand information, say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services that they need. Schools/colleges and other groups working with young people can refer individual young people for advocacy or request group sessions. Young people or their parent carers can also refer themselves. Capacity is limited so this may depend upon the demand received. More information is available on their website [Referrals — Solihull Action through Advocacy \(solihulladvocacy.org.uk\)](https://www.solihulladvocacy.org.uk)

National disruption of medication supplies to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

There is a national issue with the supply of some medications prescribed for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), including some brands and/or strengths of:

- Methylphenidate
- Lisdexamfetamine
- Guanfacine
- Atomoxetine

The supply disruption is caused by a combination of manufacturing issues and an increased global demand. Some other ADHD products remain available but cannot meet excessive increases in demand. The supply problems are expected to resolve later this year.

All GP practices, hospitals and specialist clinics in England have been contacted through the National Patient Safety Alert system and asked to identify patients prescribed these medications. GP practices and specialist services across Birmingham and Solihull are currently in the process of responding to the alert. You may be contacted if you are prescribed one of the medications above.

If you are contacted your doctor will check how much of your medication you have left, and if needed can advise if there is an equivalent product that is available. You may be referred back to a specialist team for further advice on your ADHD management plan.

Please do not share your medication with anyone else, order your usual prescription earlier than it is needed, or stop your medication suddenly without discussing with your GP or specialist.

Across Birmingham and Solihull, specialists, GPs and community pharmacy will work together to minimise the impact of these shortages, but the availability issues are likely to affect some patients.

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The supply issues for some medications to treat ADHD are still ongoing. The service (i.e. community paediatrics / ADHD nursing service) that provides your prescriptions has access to the latest stock availability information and if a particular medication goes out of stock they will be available to advise on alternatives to enable your child to continue to have access to the most appropriate treatment and advice. Please contact them on the same phone line you would use to request repeat prescriptions. Your GP or specialist will assess whether there is an alternative medication or brand available if your usual medication is out of stock and will discuss this with you.

Teams are working as quickly and as safely as possible to manage these medication shortages. At times medications become unavailable at very short notice; even during the time between prescription creation and it being ordered by your pharmacist. This is not the fault of the medical staff or their administration teams and they will work as quickly and as safely as they can to issue a new prescription. We appreciate your patience and co-operation at this time.

Useful resources

The following links signpost to national and local resources that patients/parents may find helpful:

- [NICE guideline \[NG87\]: Information for the public](#)
 - [RCPSYCH: ADHD in adults](#)
 - [Medicines for Children](#)
 - [NHS: Living with Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder \(ADHD\)](#)
 - [CANDDID: ADHD Resources](#)
 - [The ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity](#)
 - [ADHD Information Service \(ADDISS\)](#)
 - [Mind: ADHD and Mental Health](#)
 - [Young Minds: A guide for parents and carers – Supporting your child with ADHD](#)
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EHCP Service Update

Annual Reviews

As a service we have worked hard to improve our work on Annual Reviews. We have managed to do this successfully for transitions deadlines and of other Annual Reviews we are completing an average of 80% within legal timescales.

From April the Government Ombudsman have told us we need to be working towards the revised timings that have come about following a court ruling against the local authority in Devon. For us to be able to do this it will be even more imperative that schools are meeting their legal duties around reviews. As a reminder these are:

- All invitations to be sent to reviews, with all supporting evidence and reports must be circulated a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the review. This information should always include school information as well as young person and parent views.
- An Annual Review is to review the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and progress towards outcomes – to help with this the Council has worked with schools and parents to produce paperwork to guide you through the review.
- The review paperwork must be returned to the Council and other attendees within 14 days.

New Requests

We are seeing more requests for EHC needs assessments from schools being sent on a letter rather than the request form. Technically this is legally allowed – however, we are experiencing some challenges with this.

If you apply via a letter then that letter *must* include – parental/young person consent, consent to consult with health partners and parent/young person contact details – the request cannot be logged as received without this information.

To consider a request, the local authority is allowed to have regard, under the law, to things such as the progress the child/young person is making, the support already in place, the understanding of needs as well as other things.

If a school applies via letter only then we have to get in touch for further information which the school is obliged (by law) to supply. This has to be supplied to enable the LA to make a decision whether to assess within 6 weeks. This is why we have developed a form – with schools and parents, to support schools to know what information is needed and to help structure this. **By applying by letter only you will end up having to do two pieces of work – letter and information; or you can chose to use the request form to guide you and do it once.**

Early Years

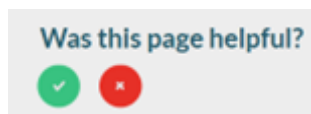
Local Government Association peer review - Solihull Super Starts

We now have a draft report from LGA. One of the themes discussed by contributors was around school readiness and supporting children in their Reception year.

How is the [Solihull School Readiness definition](#) understood and how well are children supported into their Reception year? This question was asked of parents, settings, the local authority, and health representatives, and all those who joined the discussion.

We are planning a May meeting for schools with Reception classes. We have asked schools what themes they would like the focus of the meeting to have. Our Solihull definition of readiness is about the readiness of the individual child, the school's readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support the best early child-development.

We have a range of website that support parents including <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Children-and-family-support/localoffer/early-years-support>. We would love to know more about how useful the information we provide is to you. What else do you need to know to support a child's school readiness? Click the link on the Local Offer webpage [image below] and let us know.



What did we find out about the things that are going well and what we can do to further improve?

Join Ann Van Dyke and Lisa Morris as we summarise the key findings in the final LGA report.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Monday 22 April 1pm-2pm (All welcome).

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Supporting young children's mental health

[Three in four parents of children under five years old are anxious about their child's mental health | NSPCC](#)

Having read the above [NSPCC](#) report, I thought it would be helpful to share the links within the [Local Offer webpage to support this area.](#)

This is also a golden thread within the Family Hub offer: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-family-support/family-hubs> and Solihull Parenting Team have a range of opportunities for parents to engage. The link to their meetings is here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/solihull-parenting-team-public-health-solihull-mbc-52701625953>

The Child's Voice

There were 30 people at the recent Early Years SENCo briefing on the child's voice. We share the briefing recordings [here](#). 480 people have signed up to do The Child's Voice [Dingley's Promise](#) inclusion training and 70 have completed it. Well done to the Solihull early years community!



UNBOUNDED THEATRE

DRAMA | GAMES | CONNECTION



We are looking for **young people with disabilities** aged **11-19** to be part of our **weekly evening drama workshops**. We will be using physical non-verbal drama activities to unlock our creativity, confidence and fun!

Date: Every Tuesday, 4.30PM - 6.30PM

Location: The Core Theatre, Solihull, B91 3RG

Price: £3 per session (weekly)

For more information or to book, please contact:

lynnebarton@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk

This service is funded by the Short Breaks Grant Scheme.

Solihull Music Hub Update

1. New Music Centres

Solihull Music is working with the Council's Public Health team to develop music provision as part of three new Family Hubs. The Family Hubs will provide a neutral and accessible venue for the Music Hub to deliver a wide range of activities for children, young people and families aged 0-25 years and be open for the local community from 8am-8pm.

Our new centres will be at:

- Elmwood Family Hub
- Riverside Family Hub
- Hatchford Brook Family Hub

We hope to be able to publish our programme of activity for the new centres once they officially in June, which will include summer holiday music provision and then weekly music provision sessions from September 2024.

Planned activity:

- Early Years Music sessions
- Dedicated sessions for care experienced children, young people and their carers
- Inclusive music sessions for children and young people with SEND
- Out of school music sessions for KS2 and KS3
- Holiday music activities

One Big Music Question – Youth Voice survey

To enable Solihull Music to develop a programme of activity in the music centres we have launched our simple youth survey [One Big Music Question](#) using just one simple question. We want children, young people to tell us what music activities they would like us to deliver during the week, weekends, or holidays. Please do click on the link above and give your feedback to help develop our music offer.

2. Sing and Sign project – Project Mountain

Solihull Music has launched its first Sing and Sign project. The aim behind the project is for as many young people to learn to sing and sign our chosen song and share the joy of singing and signing together using our specially created resources!

Through this and future sing and sign projects we hope to:

- Promote and celebrate our inclusive musical communities.
- Promote the use of Makaton as an inclusive communication tool.
- Promote [Solihull Music Inclusive music groups for pupils with additional needs](#)
- Raise funds to enable care experienced children and young people to access more musical making opportunities in Solihull

- Promote the work of [OVOS- Solihull's Care Experienced Youth Council](#) who will support Solihull Music to develop an annual local music offer for care experienced and young people in Solihull.

[For more information about our Sing and Sign project please click here](#)

3. New digital microsite page launched to promote our Inclusive music groups

Our inclusive groups celebrates that everyone has their own way of sharing their voice. We currently welcome over 50 children and young people with additional needs to our Inclusive Music Groups. To find out more and how you can join our FREE groups please click the link below:

[Solihull Music Inclusive ensembles](#)

Career Pathway Options at a Glance

Everyone's aspirations are different. When it comes to career planning, are you aware of the options available? [Have a look at the document](#) to get a better idea.

Birmingham Supported Internship

The Birmingham supported internship prospectus is available here - [Birmingham Supported internships prospectus \(digital\) \(9\).pdf - Google Drive](#)

Supported internships are programmes for young people with a learning disability and autism that help them to find work.

If you think other people you know would be interested in this newsletter please encourage them to [sign up on the Council website here](#).

If you have any feedback on the newsletter, or suggestions for future items please email and let us know: jand@solihull.gov.uk

Donna Wright

Head of SEND Operations



