

Solihull Adult Social Care Local Account 2023/2024



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Solihull's Local Account – our annual report for Adult Social Care 2023/2024

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Foreword

2023/2024 saw us working to deliver our adult social care vision, ambitions and plans to deliver the best support we can for Solihull residents to help them maintain their independence and health for as long as possible, as set out in our 5 year plan.

In order to meet those requirements, we talked to many of you as part of our 'Get Involved' engagement approach. We heard views on a range of services including Extra Care, Care at Home, Appointeeships, and services for carers' breaks. These views were essential in helping us shape contracts which will come into place in 2024/2025. We also worked closely with our local care providers and voluntary sector to talk about their services, both in terms of opportunities for future developments and how improvements could be made to current services offered.

Working closely with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board and the developing Provider Collaboratives for Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism, Community Care and Acute Care, we have worked to make sure the needs of Solihull residents are heard and that plans reflect the particular developments required to meet local health challenges.

To make sure that all people are getting the standards of support we expect, we improved our case file audit approach, and extended that to cover assessments and support for carers. This helps us improve consistency and good

practice and identifies any areas for further learning.

We continued to progress our Great Care, Great Careers Workforce Strategy and Carers' Strategy delivery plans, as well as progressing new plans for the Day Opportunities and Dementia Strategies. The latter, in partnership with the wider Integrated Care System, aimed at continuing to set a clear path to keep helping our residents retain their independence and have support that is person-centred.

Keeping people safe remained one of our key responsibilities in 2023/2024 and we continued our focus on preventing harm and abuse as well as responding to reports of abuse quickly and effectively. We took opportunities to remind our partners, including the care workforce, of their responsibilities to raise safeguarding concerns when they became aware of situations indicating abuse or neglect.

There is a significant programme of work for the year ahead and work to ensure prevention is embedded across our service offer, making sure at whatever stage of a person's social care journey they are supported to keep as independent as possible.

This Local Account looks back at what was delivered by Adult Social Care teams through our work with the care sector, the voluntary sector and other partner organisations to help people receive the care and support they needed.



Cllr Ian Courts

Leader of the Council
and Chair of the Health
and Wellbeing Board



Cllr Tony Diccio

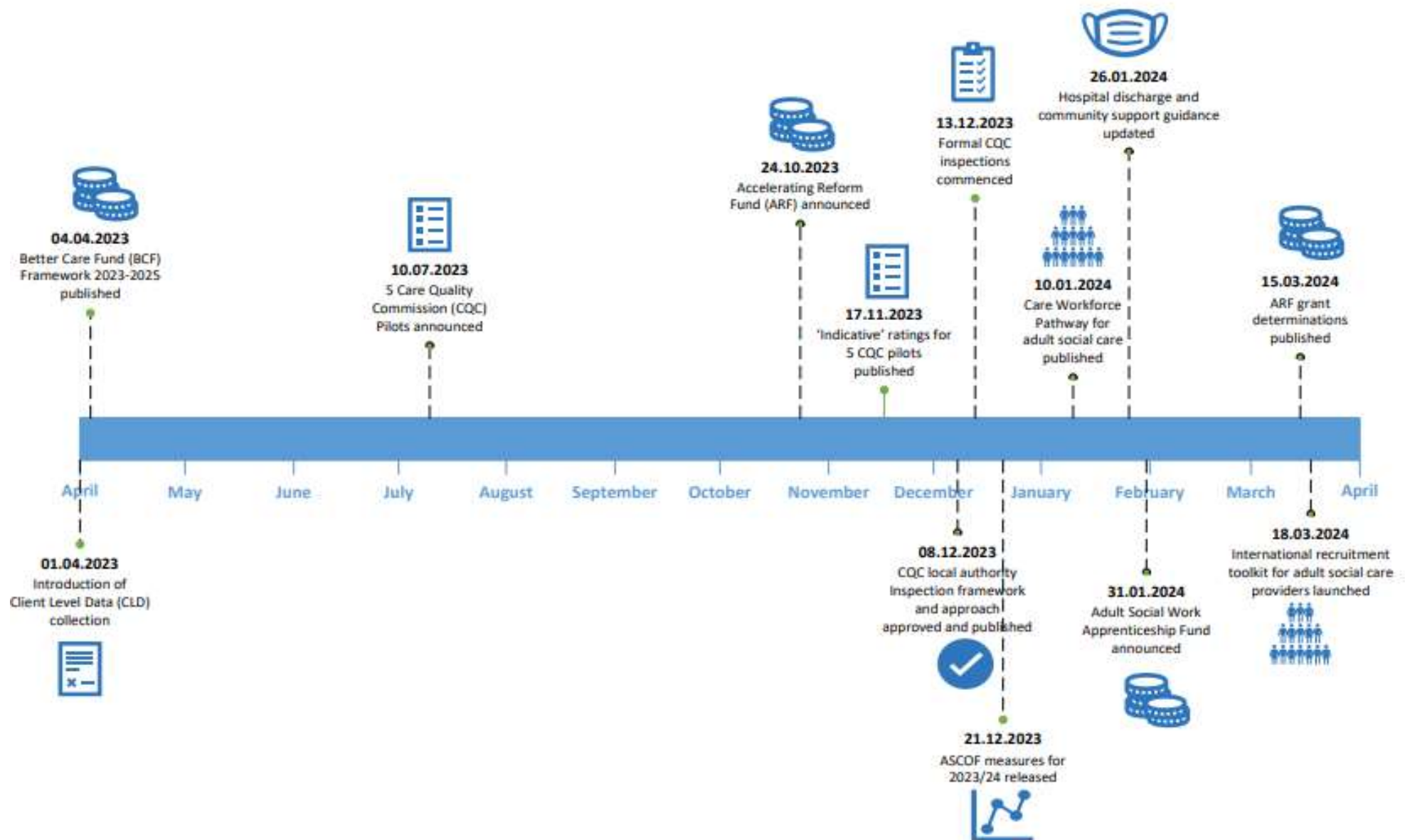
Cabinet Portfolio Holder
Adult Social Care
and Health



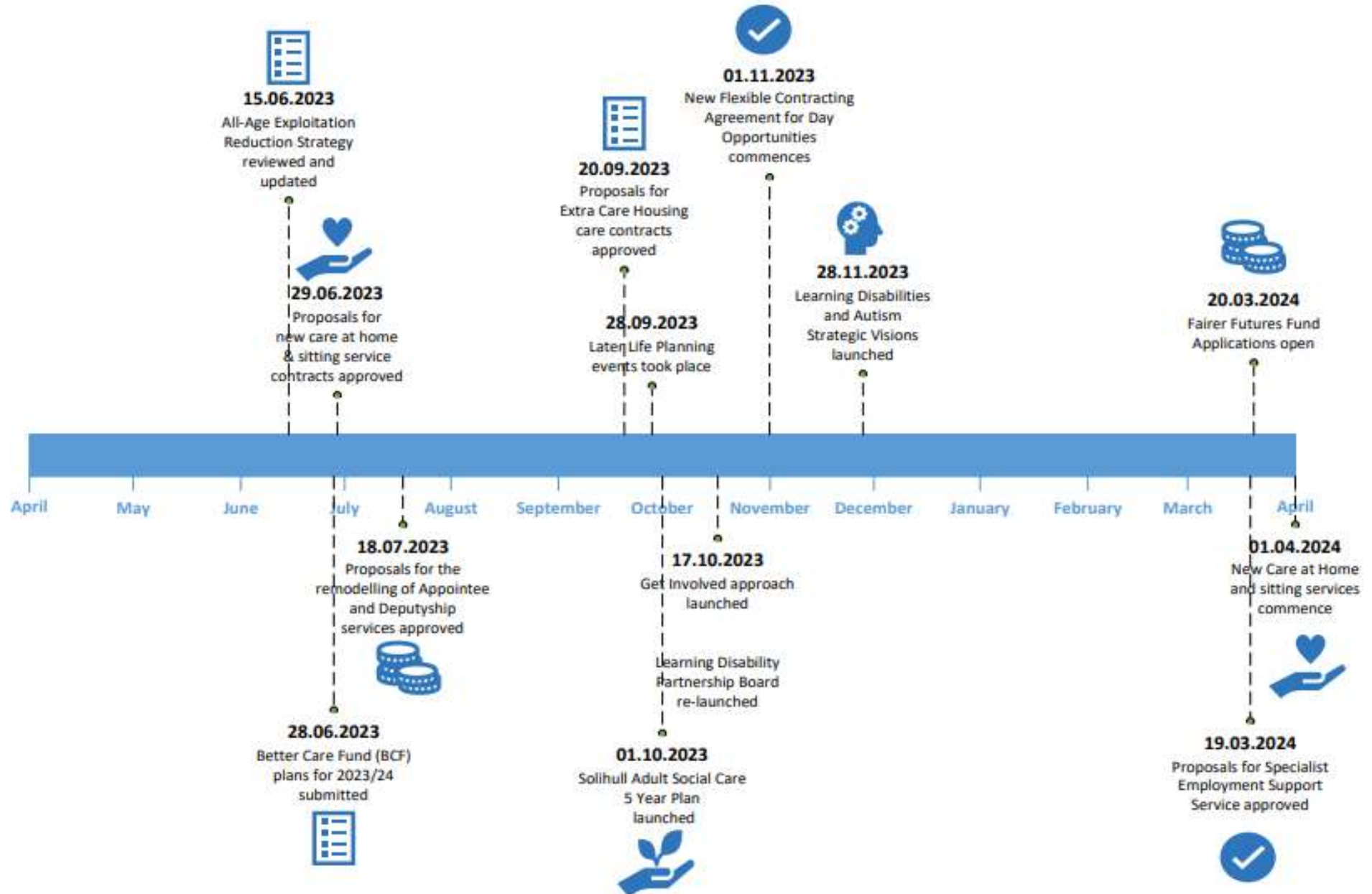
Jenny Wood

Director for Adult
Social Care and
Deputy Chief
Executive

National context – key events from 2023/2024



Local context – key events from 2023/2024





- Solihull has around **216,245 residents**



- Solihull has slightly fewer younger adults (aged 18 – 39) compared to the national average and **more people aged 65+**



- In 2021 there were around **20,000** Solihull residents providing at least some unpaid care



- The number of people from an ethnic minority background in Solihull increased by 72% between 2011 and 2021 and this upward trend is expected to continue



- Overall, life expectancy in Solihull is **longer** than national, however there is a more than a 10-year difference, between least and most deprived areas of Solihull



- It is estimated that over **4,000** adults aged 18 or over in Solihull have a learning disability.



- It is estimated that over **5,000** Solihull adults (aged 18-64) are physically disabled.



- In 2023 around 42,800 Solihull adults (aged 18-64) were estimated to have a diagnosed mental health condition, and this is **expected to increase**



- In 2023 it was estimated that around 1,200 Solihull adults (aged 18-64) are autistic and this is also **projected to increase**



- Solihull has a higher-than-average rate of care providers who have been assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Facts & Figures

All of the figures above are drawn from the Council's own data, or the most recently available information from a range of public information sources such as the national census as of June 2022. This is a summary of a wider set of information we use to help develop the right services for Solihull residents.

What is adult social care?

The delivery of adult social care is the responsibility of the local authority. Solihull Council has an Adult Social Care Directorate to arrange care and support services for adults in Solihull, working with a range of other local authority functions to support people in our communities, including Housing, Public Health, and Children's Services. Solihull Council works closely with our public sector partners, businesses, the voluntary sector and communities to improve the lives of the people we serve. This includes helping residents plan for the future and live as independently as possible, manage their everyday needs, adapt to new circumstances, and stay safe from harm. Our residents are at the heart of everything we do, and we always put them first.

All our work is tested against our Directorate Purpose:

'To enable people to stay as independent and well as possible for as long as possible. When people do need long term support, this is timely, proportionate, responsive and good quality and enables people to continue to live their lives the way they want to'.

We work together as a respectful, diverse, compassionate, and inclusive group of staff and managers to achieve this. Evidence of our progress towards this overarching purpose is demonstrated through the many interactions between our staff and people with care and support needs each day, and through a series of improvement projects aimed at constantly improving the services available and how we work to help the community.

Our work is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). While CQC began carrying out inspections of adult social care local authority functions in 2023, Solihull Council has not yet been inspected in 2023/2024. The inspection purpose is to ensure that we meet our obligations to local residents and the care sector within Solihull and follow our duties under the Care Act 2014. The Council already has small homes for adults with disabilities which are CQC inspected and rated good.

Our vision: Making a difference in the right way, every day

As set out in ['Our Offer To You'](#), we start from the point that people are part of families and part of communities. Care and support provided via the Council should primarily be a means to help people live the lives they want with their families and friends; enjoying the best that Solihull has to offer.

To achieve this, our [Adult Social Care 5 Year Plan](#) was published after extensive involvement, engagement and feedback from people. This included public sessions, pop-up sessions in retail areas, engagement with community and faith organisations, general social media communications, individual communication to individuals and carers currently in receipt of support, as well as a range of involvement with key partners such as care providers and NHS organisations. The extensive feedback helped us create a plan which now underpins our ongoing work.

We focus on choice, independence, and what individuals can do. This is known as our 'strengths-based approach'. Our vision is 'making a difference in the right way, every day'. This reflects how we want to get things right first time and make a positive difference to people's lives, using our strengths-based approach alongside the skills and expertise of staff. We want to get this right every day, whilst recognising there is always room for improvement.

- We will support residents to have choice and control over their own health and wellbeing,

enabling people to take responsibility and find solutions that work for them.

- We will continue to work closely with the strong and established community of organisations, groups and businesses that can help residents to achieve a better life. Often the best solutions will be found in the community, rather than through Council services and we will work with people to focus on building on positives in their life and how these can be supported or improved.
- Residents rightly expect what we offer to be of the best quality we can possibly achieve with available budgets, and we will continue our focus on this standard, as demand continues to grow.
- Finally, we remain absolutely committed to protecting the most vulnerable residents from neglect and abuse, and we will continue to work to ensure that everyone is valued, and everyone is safe.

Delivering our vision, purpose and 5-year plan depends on our strong leadership at all levels, robust governance and clear accountability, a committed and engaged workforce, and an outward-looking openness to challenge from partners and Solihull residents. These factors are the foundation for our organisational self-knowledge – we are confident that CQC will find that we are “good” or “outstanding” in many areas, to use their terms. We are also aware that we can always do better, with clear plans to drive and evaluate improvement where it is most needed. We can demonstrate how we learn from feedback, compliments and complaints and looking at our data, while also celebrating and recognising what is going well.

What feedback have we received?

We continued to welcome feedback in 2023/2024 to help identify where things are working well and to highlight where improvements may be needed.

To help us understand the views and experience of people we support and carers, we have a local adult social care survey which is issued following the completion of an assessment process, providing timely quantitative and qualitative feedback. Included in this, we ask people to rate the information they received, how they found the assessment process, how they felt about their worker, how involved they felt in the process, and how they felt about the services they received. This is reviewed regularly by teams and leadership to celebrate where things are working well and incorporate any learning and improvement.

People also continued to send their feedback to us through our Compliments and Complaints Team.

We received 322 compliments in 2023/2024

Here's just a few of the ones we received during the year:

She is an amazing and supportive person and is always responsive to any support and queries I have. She is always available to give advice and will do all she can to help, we are really grateful to have her as our Care Quality Monitoring Officer. She is always professional and we value and appreciate everything she does."

"We are writing to thank and commend the Social Worker for her hard work and support of our mum. She has been of invaluable assistance to our family at a difficult and distressing time, for which we are very grateful. She is a lovely caring person and a truly exemplary Social Worker; professional, knowledgeable and proficient, friendly, empathetic and dependable"

"When doing my assessment the family expressed how satisfied and pleased they were with the care staff providing the HDS support. They expressed how professional and kind they have been, so much so that they want long term care with yourselves rather than returning to their previously self-funded provider"

"As a family, we are on a difficult journey and my mums appointed Social Worker has been highly professional throughout, but more importantly he brought kindness, compassion and a great deal of common sense to a situation that presented a number of unexpected events. He was also very approachable and reliable in replying to messages. We feel that we were very lucky to have had him as our appointed Social Worker. We wish him well with his career."

" I cannot praise her enough, she has always been so easy to talk to, very supportive and listens to anything we want to discuss. She is very caring and made both myself and husband feel at ease from the first time we met her. She supported us for which we are thankful. I have met many social workers and she stands out as the best that we've had. I hope that she gets the recognition that she rightly deserves. "

We also heard a lot of feedback through our Get Involved involvement activities which has been used to shape services. Some examples are:

- We have heard that our language can be too technical and hard to understand – to improve that we have included glossaries where we need to use specialist terms, and we have worked to test our leaflets with the people they are intended for to check they are clear. We have also started to put core documents into easy read.
- We have heard about what matters to people regarding their care provided at home, particularly timeliness and better communication about call times, and have ensured this is included in the contracts that have been put in place.
- We heard the need for more carer breaks and more flexibility to have shorter breaks. This has led to the development of new carer respite at home (sitting services) which launched on the 1st April 2024.
- We worked closely with the residents of our extra care schemes to understand what needed to be improved in their services and used this to develop a new contract to deliver that support.

In 2023-24 we also received the results of the 2022-23 Customer Survey and how we compared against other councils

90% of adult social care users in Solihull say that they are satisfied with the care and support services they receive (England 79%).

69% were extremely or very satisfied (England 64%)

1.9% were extremely or very dissatisfied (England 2.4%)

60% of adult social care users in Solihull say that the quality of life is very good or good (England 61%)

10% say that the quality of life is bad or very bad (England 11%)

Nearly 93% of Solihull respondents say that care and support services help them to have a better quality of life compared to the England average of 91%.

64% of Solihull respondents to the survey say that the way they are helped and treated makes them feel better about themselves, slightly higher than the England average (63%)

74% of Solihull respondents who have looked for information or advice in the last year say that it has been easy to find (38% very easy) much higher than the England average of 67% (29% very easy)

67% of Solihull respondents say either they are able to spend their time as they want, doing things they value or enjoy, slightly lower than the 68% England average

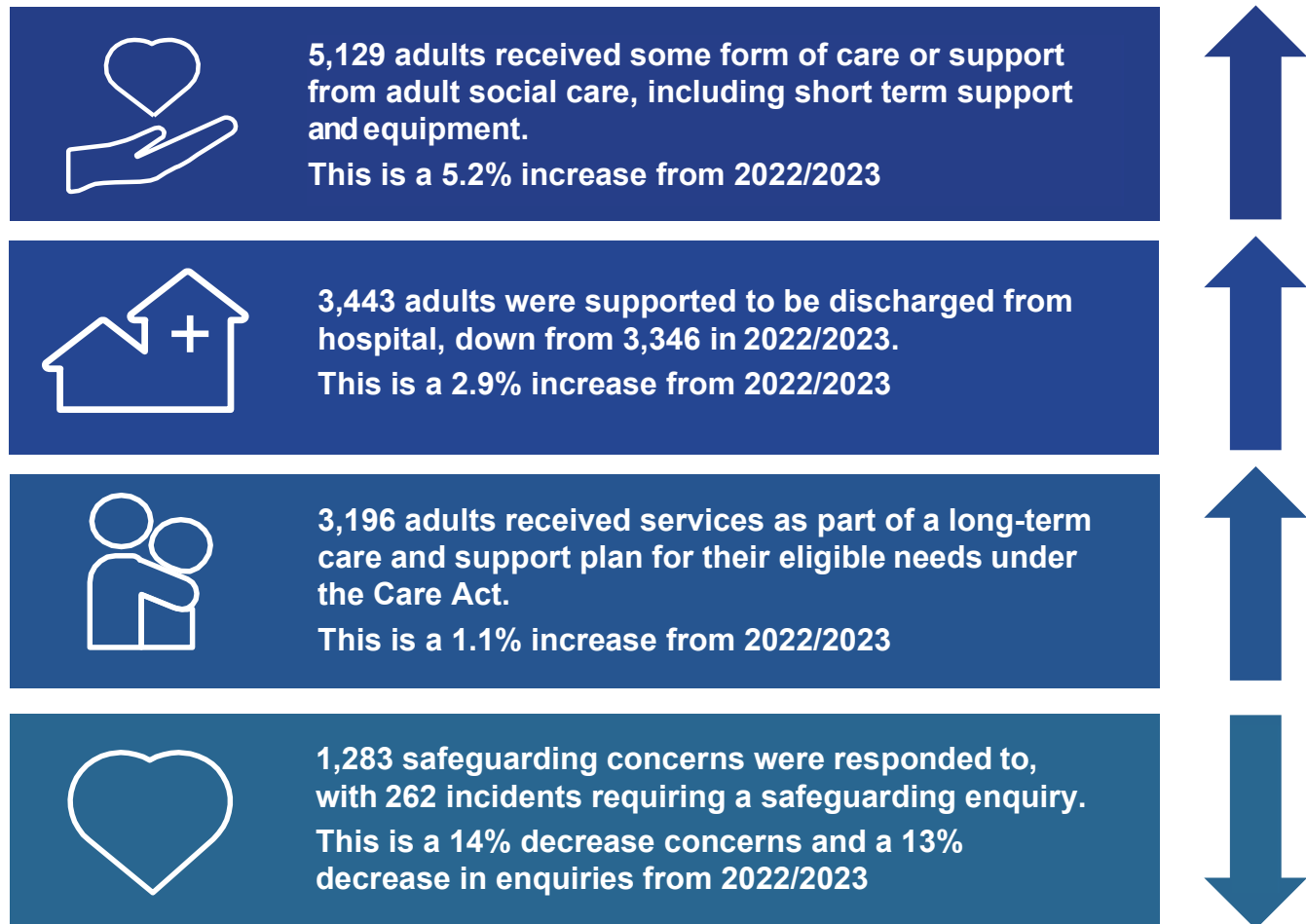
We received 50 complaints about adult social care functions compared to 46 complaints in the previous year.

Where complaints are received there is a thorough investigation is made and a response sent to the complaint detailing what has been found. A learning form is completed for each complaint to ensure that actions are taken to address any faults found.. Customer feedback is sought following each complaint via an on-line questionnaire (also available in printed format on request).

Who did we support during 2023/2024?

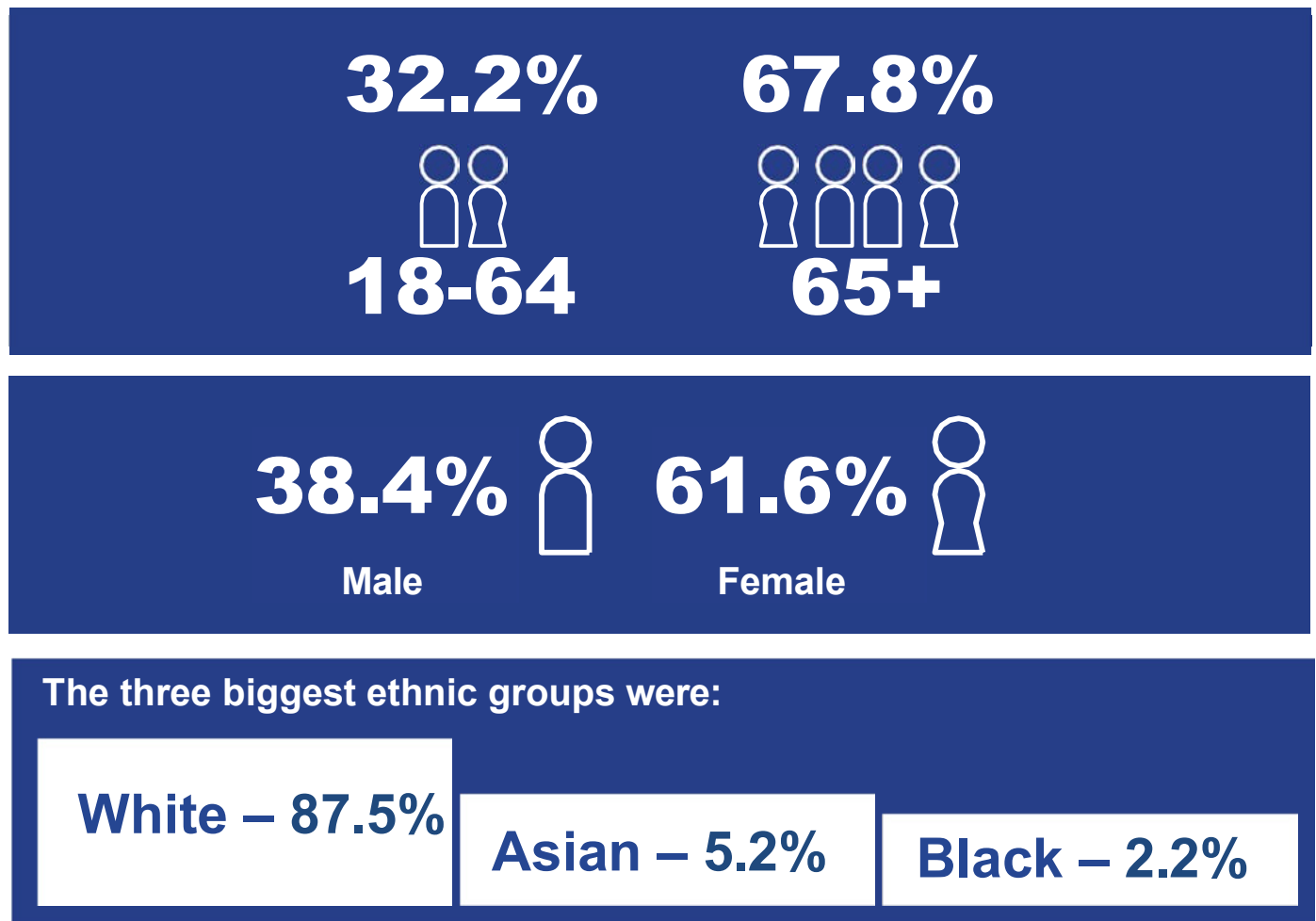
There were 14,308 individual contacts with adult social care, an increase of 7% on last year. Of these, 6,372 adults approached Solihull Council for the first time for support, an 8% increase on the previous year.

Most people who approach us for support are helped with information, advice, and signposting to community services.



Solihull has a higher percentage of people aged 65+ (and the population who are 85+ is increasing rapidly) compared to other parts of the country and it is projected to be the fastest growing group over the next ten years. Life expectancy in Solihull is around a year longer than the England average, and the highest in the West Midlands for women and the second highest for men. Safeguarding concern levels fluctuate, and therefore no conclusions should be drawn from the decrease in concerns raised.

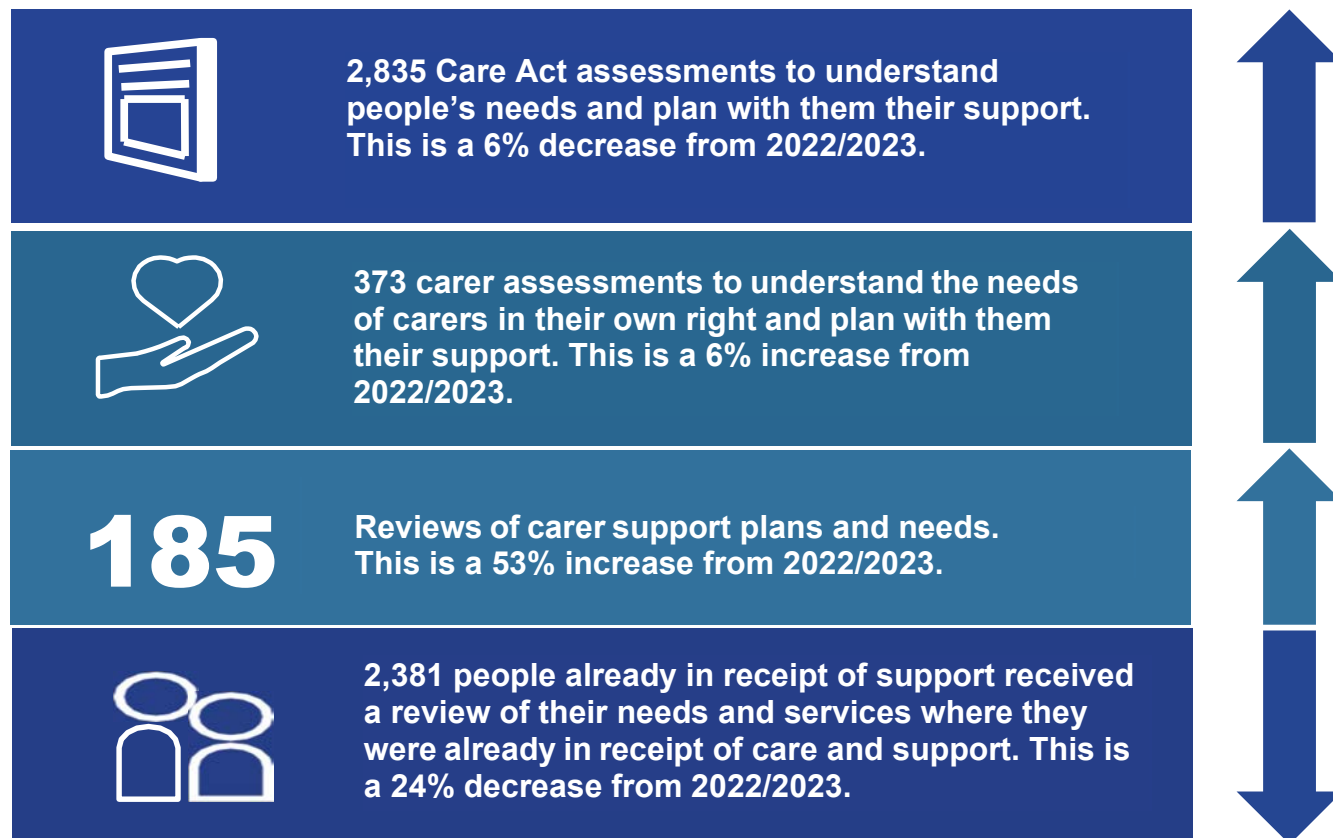
What do we know about those who received care and support?



In addition to this we are working to improve the completeness of our other data about the people we support, for example sexuality and religion. These will be included when the data quality is improved.

What kinds of support did they receive?

In order to understand people's needs and plan their services, we conducted:



With the population of over 65 year-olds increasing and projected to continue to increase over the next ten years, we will need to adapt to these changes in demand. Our approach of supporting individuals to be as independent as possible and recognising people's abilities and support networks is the foundation for this.

During 2023/2024 we continued to use a simplified assessment ('light touch') for those being discharged from hospital. This helps people to move quickly into short term reablement services as soon as it is safe to do so. We increased our use of those services to give people the best chances at recovery. People then had a full Care Act assessment where it was agreed they would need long term support whilst they were still being supported by those short-term services.

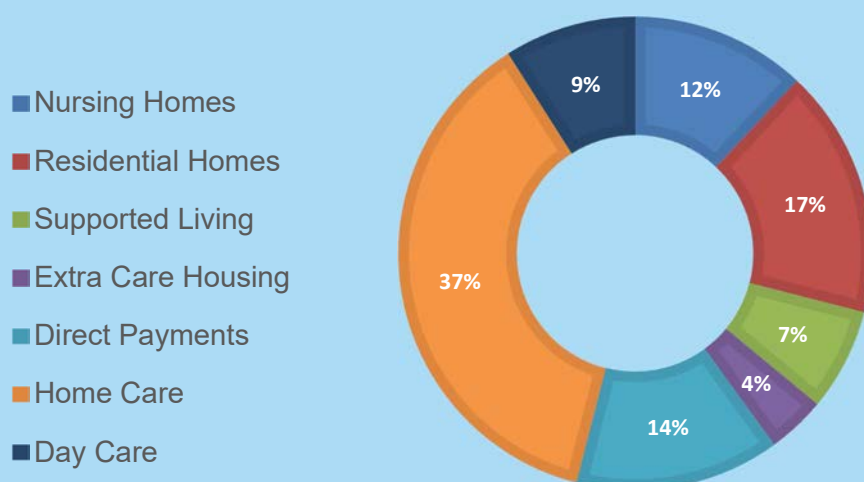


The percentage of safeguarding concerns that result in a full safeguarding enquiry (full investigation) is lower than last year. However, this is now more in line with the regional conversion rate of 15% for 2022/23. The trend has been monitored in weekly reports and fed back to Social Work teams. Regular audits of safeguarding concerns that did not progress to enquiry are in place. During 2023/24, these identified that decision making is robust, evidence based and safe and that all safeguarding concerns are fully investigated, reducing the need for full enquiries in all cases. During 2024/25, further work will be undertaken with SSAB partners and independent care providers to ensure that they are utilising safeguarding concern threshold guidance, and that referrals are of good quality.

For those who received long-term care and support, what type of support did they receive?

In 2023/2024, 57% of support provided was in their own home (including where they have chosen to live in extra care or supported living) and 29% in a residential care home with 14% of people receiving long-term support in the form of a direct payment. We support people to move to supported living or extra care housing where this would provide an opportunity to maintain their independence, as well as benefiting from on-site support and being part of a community.

Long-term social care support provided in 2023/2024 for Solihull adults



The chart above shows the proportion of individual care packages made during the year that were for each type of support. Individuals can have multiple types of support at once, or over the course of a year, dependent on their needs.

As well as long term support, over 35,000 pieces of equipment were issued to support over 12,000 residents to maximise their independence, with 76% of equipment collected back where it was no longer needed, recycled and reissued. Equipment can range from specialist beds and mattresses to kettle tippers and grabbers to support with reaching items.

A significant improvement has been relating to access to reablement, with 46.4% of people offered reablement on discharge from hospital in 2023/2024, compared to 3.4% in 2022/2023. This has resulted from a programme of work to enhance reablement services, and to record all individuals receiving reablement in this measure.

What did we spend on adult social care in 2023/2024?

£132.7 million total spend

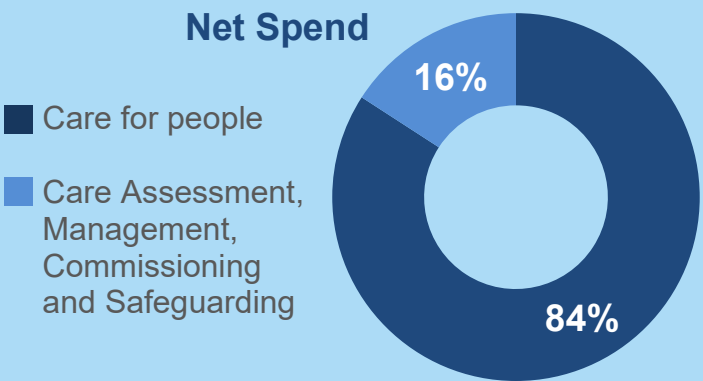
Including spend on care, assessments, staffing, commissioning, and safeguarding.

How was this funded?

£75.1 million from mainstream council funding (council tax and business rates), with the rest met by £57.6 million of specific grants, contributions from health bodies and contributions from individuals towards the cost of their own care.

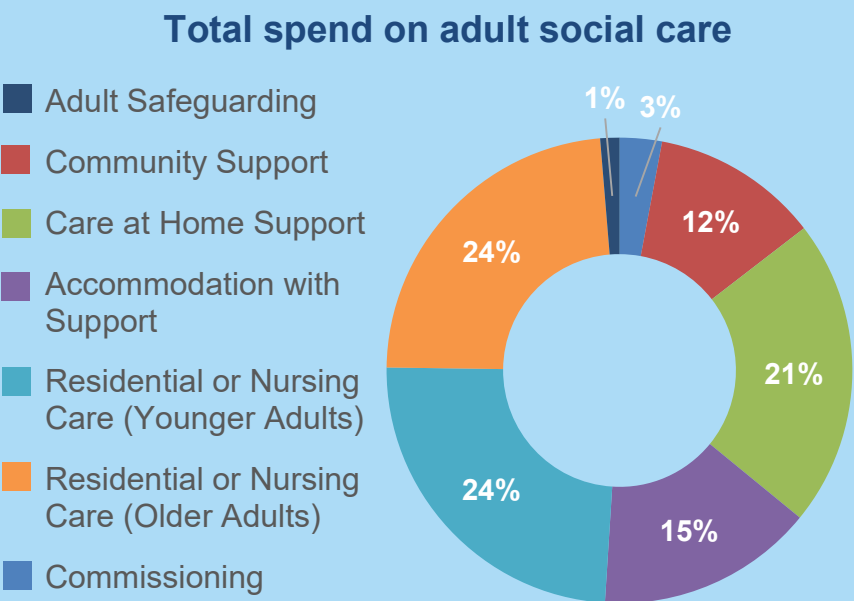
How was the funding used?

The majority of the spend on adult social care is spent directly on care for those who need it. The remainder is spent on employing social workers and occupational therapists and delivering information and advice services.



What support did that fund?

Over half of the total spend on adult social care goes on residential and nursing care, and housing with care because these services are more intensive levels of care and support.



How do we know we are doing well?

Our strengths-based approach

The Council has developed a 'Strengths Based Practice Framework' for Adult Social Care, following a review of our approach to how we work with our residents, which was supported by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). This framework was co-produced with staff from across the Directorate and Experts by Experience. The framework sets out how staff should be working, the tools they are to use and the support available to them in order to deliver positive outcomes for adults with care needs and their carers. The framework can be applied by everyone who works in adult social care, supporting the wellbeing of our residents and building upon their strengths and existing support to maximise their independence and meet their social care needs.

Work has been undertaken with people who receive services, carers, and providers to develop new models of delivery for care at home using this strengths-based approach. Programmes to make better use of assistive technology and digital tools have also been introduced to support individuals and carers. Working with our colleagues in the Stronger Communities team will also ensure that we make the most of services and activities in the community whilst promoting the wellbeing and independence of individuals.

As social care is constantly evolving, so too will the Strengths Based Practice Framework, changing as our approach develops, using feedback from the people that we support and staff to inform this ongoing development.

Quality assurance approach

Quality assurance is essential to make sure we are doing in practice what we say we will do in our plans. We have established a 'Quality Assurance Framework' that sets out the approach we will take to ensure consistent high levels of performance and quality across the work we do in Adult Social Care Directorate. The framework brings together all the key assurance and governance processes in place to support the delivery of the [Adult Social Care 5 Year Plan](#).

Fundamental to the framework is the Continuous Improvement Board chaired by the Director of Adult Social Care to ensure accountability for the delivery of key performance targets and continuous improvement plans. Deep dives into key performance areas are also undertaken through a Quality Assurance Board to offer positive challenge and support with the development of action plans.

To track this journey of continuous improvement, performance benchmarking data is used to monitor plans to become a top quartile performing authority at the national level. We will use independent case auditors to check the quality of our work.

Quality oversight of our care providers

As of March 2024, 92% of all Solihull care providers rated by the CQC were Good or Outstanding. This includes 95% of residential and nursing care providers who have been rated by the CQC as either Good or Outstanding, and 88% of registered community care providers. This compares favourably with the national and regional picture, and we have good reasons to be proud of the services care providers deliver in Solihull. This also reflects the work of the dedicated Quality officers in the Commissioning team who visit providers, provide support and advice, and put in place improvement plans where needed to improve the quality of the services that providers

deliver.

Providers have appreciated the Council's constructive approach to supporting them. Where a provider fails to make improvements, we support people accessing services to find replacement care to protect their quality of life and find security in good quality services.

What we delivered during 2023/2024

We have grouped our key achievements under four areas:

- **People and communities** – where we have made progress in how we work with local people and communities.
- **Supporting care quality** – achievements here support giving people good care.
- **Working with partners** – progress in how we work with others, including health, to deliver better services.
- **Accelerating improvements** – how we are making positive changes to services.

People and communities

Get involved and engagement

[Get Involved](#) is the name of the programme of work to ensure that the voice of residents and people who access services is heard, either as a person needing support or as a carer and has real influence in how we design and deliver services.

The Get Involved webpages launched in 2023, and we are continuing to encourage people to register and take part in different ways in shaping adult social care services. Residents have also got involved through surveys, focus groups and meetings to talk about changes to specific services and meetings or through social work teams, surveys, and meeting social care staff at events.

As we have continued to promote Get Involved, we have reached out to people who are part of community organisations and faith and special interest groups to make sure we are hearing a diversity of voices. This is essential to make sure services meet the needs of all residents. We have arranged meetings with them to encourage them to join our project work or take part in specific engagements, working with Council colleagues and the voluntary sector to help this. The Council's webpage for consultations, '[Your Voice Solihull](#)', has been used where there is high public interest in activities, for example for specialist projects and important consultations.

We are also working to meet our equality and diversity commitments which is essential for making sure we are hearing from all residents and working with them in the right way. We have developed our approach, including increasing the number of accessible Easy Read materials we have available. Additionally, the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board first met during 2023 joining the already established Carers Partnership Board and in Autumn 2024 will see the launch of the Autism Partnership Board. Members on all of the Partnership Boards will include health and social care professionals as well as people with lived experience.

From this engagement, 'You Said, We Listened, We Did' documents set out how we have taken on board what we have heard from residents and others we have spoken to and used that to shape our decisions.

Preparing for later life

We want to help local people to get ready for later life, ensuring they have everything in place to live as independently as they can for as long as possible. In 2023, we held events in North and South Solihull for people to attend to get information and advice about preparing for later life, covering these topics:

- Financial and legal planning.
- Housing choices - adaptations, right-sizing and how the right housing can keep you well.
- Looking after your health and wellbeing.
- Support for carers.
- Supportive technology choices.
- Occupational Therapy and supportive equipment.

In the coming year we will continue with smaller focused events in venues across the borough and as part of community group, parish council, and other meetings which will go in detail on all or some of these matters. We need to make sure we are reaching as many people as possible with these messages.

Learning Disabilities and Autism Strategic Visions

In 2023/2024, Solihull Place Committee approved new Strategic Visions for Learning Disabilities and Autism which set out the Birmingham and Solihull (BSol) Integrated Care Board's priorities for improvements to health, social care and other services to enhance the lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people. These were developed with people who have lived experience and carers, setting out the 'I-Statements' of how our residents want their lives to be.

There are now 7 BSol priorities for improvement to make these visions a reality:

- Priority 1: Joining up our system – working through the Provider Collaborative. Many people told us that they feel they are having to repeat themselves and that key information is not shared between health and social care. We want to join up to stop people having to tell the same thing to each person they have support from.
- Priority 2: Care pathways to avoid admission and improve discharges. We heard people were struggling to get early support and we want to improve this. We want people with learning disabilities and autistic people to live well with their family or within their community with support. We want to avoid people having to spend time in hospital unless they have a health condition to treat, and then to help them to return home.
- Priority 3: Improved support offer and care pathways for autistic people, pre- and post-diagnosis support with appropriately trained staff.
- Priority 4: Improved outcomes and reduced inequalities for people with a learning disability and autistic people, removing barriers to accessing the right support.
- Priority 5: Improved access to NHS care for people with a learning disability and autistic people, recognising and addressing barriers to accessing the right care.
- Priority 6: Supporting the development of the care market with housing and care providers to achieve good quality provision to support people to live in their communities.
- Priority 7: Embedding co-production with service users and carers – making sure all the other priorities are done with the people who are affected.

Supporting care quality

Care at home

Supporting people to live in their own homes is a priority for the Council. We have worked to reshape and recommission the Care at Home support services that people receive in Solihull to make sure there is enough support for residents and that there is a mix of providers to give stability. The Care at Home contracts provide workers who go into people's homes and support them with activities such as washing, dressing, preparing food and drink, and using the toilet. These services are fundamental to support people to live with dignity and supporting them to stay in their own home for as long as possible.

The Council wanted to address a number of issues that had emerged for which changes were needed. We wanted to make it easier to have access to care in some of the more rural parts of the borough, ensuring a sufficient supply of care workers to support our ageing population and to ensure that services are resilient enough to meet future demand. During 2023/2024 the Council sought care providers to deliver services under a new model which divides the borough into 6 zones, each with 3 providers deliver care and support in that area. New contracts were put in place in April 2024. People who were already in receipt of home care services continued to be supported by the care workers and providers that they knew and had built a relationship with. New people needing support will be supported by one of the new list of providers.

Home First

Our Home First services focus on encouraging and supporting individuals to regain or maintain as much independence as possible as well as on wellbeing and recovery after ill health. This includes supporting people to remain in or return to their own home rather than being admitted to a hospital or care home, wherever possible. During 2023/2024 we commissioned new contracts for these services:

- to support people to return straight home from hospital with support where possible,
- to support people at home to prevent avoidable hospital admissions,
- and to support people to have a temporary stay in a residential setting if they need more intensive support before they can hopefully return home.

The new model makes sure that reablement support is available where needed through these services. Where inpatient treatment in hospital is unnecessary and can be avoided, we aim to have everything in place to support people at home to aid their recovery, including working with community health staff and use of our own equipment service. Where someone has been admitted to hospital, we work to support a prompt return home. This helps to ensure that every chance is taken to maximise someone's ability to return home to continue their recovery and regain their confidence and independence. We work together with hospital and community health staff and use our equipment service to have everything in place to support people at home and continue their recovery avoiding having to be admitted to a hospital where they don't require inpatient treatment.

Day opportunities

Day opportunities are where a person is supported outside of their home (in a day centre or in the community) to do activities and have social time with others. As part of the [Solihull Day Opportunities Strategy 2022-2027](#) we have developed the range of options available. This year, we put in place a new contract for quality assured providers of day opportunities for adults of all ages to work with the Council. These new contracts support the delivery of an increasingly

personalised offer of activities for our residents, working to a clear set of quality standards. This will help us ensure that services delivered are of a good quality. We are continuing to work with those providers to ensure that the offer reflects the diversity and requirements of our local population

We continue to offer high quality provision from the Council's own day centres. This mixture of support options provides social activities for people with care and support needs and often support for family carers to have a break from caring as well.

Working with partners

Home First

The national '[Hospital Discharge and Community Support Guidance](#)', updated in January 2024, outlines how National Health Service (NHS) bodies and local authorities should plan and deliver hospital discharge and recovery services from acute and community hospitals. The Guidance sets out how acute hospitals should arrange the appropriate services to enable people to be discharged safely. It also reiterates the importance of adopting a 'Home First' approach to ensure that individuals being discharged from hospital are supported to return home (to their usual place of residence) wherever possible. The Solihull approach to Home First is set out above.

Through the Solihull Home First Programme, the Council has worked with NHS partners to improve the support for people through hospital discharge to home wherever possible and the integration of the services which support people when they are discharged.

Further improvements to the Single Transfer of Care Team in May 2024 should reduce the time people are waiting unnecessarily in hospital to be discharged to a short-term placement to continue their recovery. The Home First Programme will continue to ensure that health and social care services, including those commissioned to support timely discharge work together effectively to enable people to remain as independent as possible.

Working with providers

Council officers responsible for commissioning meet regularly with social care service providers. The Market Engagement Forum is where officers meet with business owners to share ideas for new strategic developments in care services. We share information and analysis of the local range of provision, helping providers to understand what additional services are needed and share the feedback from people about what they value about the services they use. The Solihull Care Quality Forum is where we continue to work with and support providers to share learning and raise awareness of quality improvement ideas. During 2023/2024, these forums have covered a wide range of subjects including current and future tender opportunities, international recruitment, Veteran Aware Accreditation, and improving the responsiveness of services to meet the more ethnically diverse population of the borough.

We have been working with providers to support the increased online records for social care by expanding the use of Digital Social Care Records for CQC registered providers, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care through the Digitising Social Care Programme (DiSC). Through the programme, 26 providers from Solihull have received grant funding to support a move from paper to a digital social care record. This should make it easier for providers to offer remote access to records with families where they have permission to do so, to provide additional assurance on care being received by their loved ones.

In February 2024, we implemented an e-Brokerage system. This uses a digital system to make the work of the team responsible for sourcing care and support to meet people's needs more efficient.

Accelerating improvements

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

In Solihull, we work to ensure that services meet the diverse needs of residents living in the borough. Having the right services and skilled staff is fundamental to supporting people to maintain their sense of dignity and to be able to live their lives as they want to.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is one of the Adult Social Care Directorate's priorities. The Adult Social Care Directorate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan has been refreshed for 2024/2025 recognising our continued commitment. The action plan includes themes of staff development, equality monitoring information and workforce data, service commissioning, celebrations and awareness raising, leadership. Underpinning this is a commitment to reflecting equality of access to care and support that reflects the diverse needs of people in the borough. We are taking active steps to reach out to be inclusive, finding people with care and support needs who may not have presented before. We aim to make sure that we understand people's needs and meet those needs in an appropriate way. This approach is embedded in all aspects of how the Council puts in place their support, from the conversations with the person to the expectations and monitoring of what our care providers deliver.

Housing

Good housing is fundamental to supporting health and helping people maintain their independence. For people who are ageing, housing with care environments, such as extra care housing can provide the double benefit of well-adapted flats which are easier to maintain, being part of a ready-made community which can provide companionships, alongside on-site care and support when it is needed. Following discussions with residents at four of the affordable extra care housing schemes in Solihull, the care there was re-commissioned following a competitive tender process that was based on service quality not price. There was extensive engagement with residents, carers and landlords to help design the service to make sure there was the right balance of background support, and individual support, and that the provider would work with people to make sure they retained as much independence as possible. A new provider was selected to much positive feedback from residents and started delivering the support from April 2024.

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is one of the four enabling priorities for Solihull Adult Social Care, and the revised [ASC Environmental Sustainability Plan 2022/2027](#) outlines our approach to working together to deliver sustainable services with a low carbon impact in Solihull.

During 2023/2024, our Community Equipment Service:

- processed 22,540 items delivering at an average of 4.1 miles per call, this compared to 18,383 last year at an average of 5.5 miles.
- We continue to support and encourage recycling with our staff within our offices with 19 tonnes of waste diverted from land fill, including 2.9 tonnes of food waste, saving 16.3 tonnes of CO2 in 2023/2024.
- At the Park View building in which day services are offered, we have identified opportunities to reduce gas consumption at the weekends when the building is closed, alongside a continued focus on energy consumption at the site. This has seen a 5% reduction in the kWh usage KWH, saving 3 tonnes of CO2 in 2023/2024 compared to 2022/2023.

We continue to see the environmental benefits from home working arrangements and online

meetings, reducing the environmental impact of home to work travel as well as travel journeys to attend internal and external meetings. We have maintained the reduction in business miles travelled, with a 63% reduction in business miles from 223,000 miles in 2018/2019 to 83,000 miles in 2023/2024. Savings on travel time enable us to spend more time talking to people about their care, and reduced costs of travelling mean more funding is available for care.

Additionally, in consideration of the environmental impacts and benefits within our commissioning activities all tender evaluation processes undertaken in 2023/2024 have asked providers to demonstrate how they will reduce the environmental impact of their services over the life of the contract. This has resulted in greener transport options, reduced printing as providers move to electronic rostering and recording and reduced waste.

Our priorities for 2024/2025

Looking ahead to 2024/2025, we have a number of priorities for development as well as continuing to deliver existing services and support.

These build on the four high level priorities in the [Adult Social Care 5 Year Plan](#) and give some more detail to the changes people will see.

People and communities

Refresh of the 5 Year Plan

This year we will refresh our Adult Social Care 5 Year Plan to ensure it remains current and reflects the latest challenges. To achieve this, we will use updated data and incorporate relevant feedback from residents, staff, and care providers. Additionally, we will update the financial information, refresh our data sets, and reassess our priorities to ensure they are still appropriate and aligned with the current needs of people we work with. This comprehensive review will help us continue to provide high-quality, responsive, and effective social care services for all adults in Solihull.

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

The Integrated Neighbourhood model, which unites multi-disciplinary professionals from across health and social care services, aims to enhance preventative care and streamline access to services. By applying these principles, the Solihull model in development this year will prioritise early intervention and coordinated, proactive care, ensuring people receive the support they need to stay healthy and independent in their own homes for longer, while reducing the need for crisis interventions.

Learning from the successful implementation of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams in Birmingham will be key to designing and delivering a tailored model for Solihull. This work is being progressed alongside NHS colleagues and will remain a priority focus for the Directorate throughout 2024/2025.

Autism Partnership Board

As part of the delivery of the [Birmingham and Solihull Autism Strategic Vision](#), the Council will establish an Autism Partnership Board. This will be chaired by an autistic person and give autistic Solihull residents and their families a place to come together with Council staff and staff from partner agencies, for example the NHS and housing, to talk about the issues that are important to them and work to improve the inclusivity and impact of services. This will make sure that autistic people are able to make their voices heard and to be able to hold the Council and others to account for the things that they have said they will do.

Supporting care quality

In-house providers

Solihull Adult Social Care directly provide some care and support services as part of a commitment to delivering high quality local provision, ensuring Solihull residents have access to local services.

In-house services provided by Solihull Adult Social Care include Day Services in hub sites across Solihull which support adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and older people. We will be consulting on a new model of charging for these services. These are supporting the delivery of the Day Opportunities Strategy – offering a wide range of activities to support different needs and interests, including offering employment opportunities at the Honeycomb café.

Solihull also has Small Residential Care Homes consisting of 9 homes for three to four adults with learning disabilities. Our Small Residential Care Homes are set in ordinary residential properties around Solihull, helping people with complex needs to lead as ordinary a life as possible.

One way we aim to deliver high quality services is through strong engagement with people who use our services and their families. For example, in our day services we have regular carers' groups to support families and engage with people who use our services around ways we can improve, such as by finding new ways to work with individuals to meet their personal goals and interests.

In our Small Homes, we have a strong focus on person centred reviews, making sure that we offer as personalised a support to people living there as possible. We also ensure peer advocacy from an independent advocacy organisation visit people in their home, which is best practice to make sure all residents are able to express their wishes.

Continuous market improvement

Solihull's strong independent care sector has a mix of local, regional, and national companies and third sector organisations involved in delivering care and support in the borough. The Council will continue to work with the care providers to ensure that standards are maintained and continue to improve to develop the changing needs of local people. We will tackle issues where we find concerns about care quality in a service and help the provider to address those issues to ensure that care improves. We will continue to share with care providers the feedback we receive from people who use services, share best practice and learning, provide training opportunities and make visits to carry out spot checks on standards. We will continue to work closely with providers as partners in helping to improve the quality of life for local people, ensuring that Solihull residents are well supported.

Appointee and Deputyship

A new Money Management Service has been commissioned by the Council starting from July 2024. This is a priority for the Council, ensuring that people without capacity to manage their own financial affairs can access money management support to continue to be as independent as possible.

The Money Management Service covers the provision of an appointee and deputy for people without suitable family or friends to provide such support. This ensures that their income, benefits, property and affairs are maintained and protected, to improve their health and wellbeing and promote independence. This is accessed through adult social care teams.

Working with partners

Working with the new NHS Delivery Collaboratives

As part of national changes to the organisation of the NHS, there are new “collaboratives” which will bring together different local organisations to coordinate health care and support. For adult social care this means working closely with 2 new NHS organisations: the Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Provider Collaborative, led by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, and the Community Care Collaborative, led by Birmingham Community Healthcare.

The Council will be working with the collaboratives to achieve better integration of mental health services for residents and deliver the Mental Health Strategy to improve mental health services for Solihull people. We will continue to seek continuous the improvements in services for people with learning disabilities and autistic people set out in the Strategic Vision documents. We will seek improved community health and care services to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. Adult social care services will look at how the organisations can work better together, where we need to commission different care solutions, and how we make sure that the views of people who need those services help to shape the solutions and influence the decisions that are made.

Working at Place

It is important that we see the whole person when we are meeting their care and support needs and connect with others who contribute to a person’s life. We will improve integrated working with each person and their families, carers, voluntary and community groups and the health and care providers who support them. Through this, we are able to see a rounded picture of the person and work together to avoid gaps, duplication or people having to repeat themselves to many professionals. To do this, in Adult Social Care we have worked closely to make the connections that are local to Solihull people, especially with the NHS.

We are part of a larger Integrated Care System (ICS) for Birmingham and Solihull which brings together organisations that arrange and provide health care services, social care, and voluntary and community sector support. Local planning specifically for Solihull people is brought together under the Solihull Place Committee where officers of the Council, NHS and voluntary organisations come together to understand local needs and plan how they will best be met.

Solihull Place Committee determines the kind of services needed to keep people healthy, tackling ill health and inequality across Solihull, promoting fair access to health and care services. Solihull Place Committee agrees the priorities for spending public money to enable Solihull people to lead healthier lives with access to the right treatment, care, and support to live independently for as long as possible.

An important area of work this year has been the development of the prevention strategy ‘[Living Well in Solihull](#)’. This strategy aims to prevent avoidable decline in health and disability, and ensure access to the early help, advice, and information that can help prevent deterioration in wellbeing for people. Voluntary, community and faith organisations have a key role to play in offering accessible support to people close to home, connecting them with help to support them to enjoy a good quality of life.

Accelerating improvements

CQC preparation

The CQC inspection framework for local authorities looks at how well we are delivering our Care Act duties, providing assurance for people accessing care and support in Solihull. We do not yet know when Solihull's inspection will take place, but during 2024/2025, our own commitment to continuous improvement, means that we will continue to review and monitor our practice and performance to ensure that we are delivering the best outcomes for people who use care and support services.

Continuous Improvement Board

The Continuous Improvement Board provides senior oversight of the areas where we want to continually improve or develop to drive high standards and performance across the Adult Social Care Directorate. This can include comparing our performance with other councils using national and local performance measures. For 2024/2025, the Board will look at some matters of particular importance to continually improving performance including the need for care home placements for people who have complex and specialist needs, reablement services, and what published performance data from the [Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework](#) and associated surveys tell us about our performance.

Brokerage

The Brokerage function for adult social care is responsible for sourcing care and support packages to meet the needs identified in a person's Care Act Assessment.

During 2024/2025 we will review our brokerage approach, including how we can maximise our investment in the e-Brokerage System, to ensure the timely and efficient sourcing of care and support packages, including care at home, residential care, day opportunities or supported living, to enable people to receive the right support for their needs.

Practice quality

A key area of focus for Adult Social Care is ensuring that the highest standard of social work practice is delivered to the people we support. We have a robust Quality Assurance Framework in place, with evidenced practice improvement and practice development opportunities. This includes case audits, where a manager reviews a case from another area, talks to the person to understand their experience and gives feedback for development to the worker if identified.

A review of the case audit framework, which was commenced in 2023/2024, has resulted in several additions:

- Obtaining the views of people that access our services, so that we can better understand how our practice impacts the people we support.
- A scoring process, which is aligned to the CQC rating levels, so that we can easily identify good practice or areas where further improvement is required.
- A revised audit toolkit set of guidance in the form of a toolkit which further supports practitioners and managers to prepare for the audit meeting and reflect on their practice.
- The introduction of independent auditors (not council staff) which provides an additional level of quality assurance.
- The co-production of audit tools and guidance for carer audits with our delegated partner organisation, The Carers Trust, who are now included within the care audit framework.

- Bespoke training sessions delivered to those who carry out the audits and for those whose practice is being audited, which ensures that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding of the care audit process.
- Strengthening our communication mechanisms to ensure that senior leaders and front-line operational practitioners and managers are aware of summary audit outcomes, and apply the learning to agreed actions.

Equipping Adult Social Care staff with the appropriate skills and knowledge is essential to ensuring that the service delivered to the people we support is of a high standard. The staff development conference, which has been held every year for the past four years, provides an opportunity for learning and reflection on practice. This year's conference theme is 'Prevention and Early Help,' which will further support practitioners in supporting people to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

Continued practice improvement will remain a key focus during 2024/2025 which will be supported by the introduction of the Solihull Social Care Academy. The academy will promote, develop and maintain excellent practice, which makes a positive difference to the lives and outcomes of people using our services. We will aim to develop a research culture across the Directorate, which supports embedding a strength-based approach, which builds on and amplifies what support and services are in the community. This will ensure that practitioners continue to work in partnership with adults, their families, and carers in delivering high quality and safe services that promotes independence, choice, and best value.

Glossary

Adult Social Care / ASC / Adult Social Services

Services delivered or arranged by the Council to support people with social care needs. The Care Act is the main law governing what councils need to provide.

Appointeeship

An Appointee is someone who manages a person's benefits on their behalf when they are no longer able to manage their own finances.

Autism

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave.

Care Act 2014

A law passed in England in 2014 that sets out what care and support you are eligible for and what local councils have to do.

Care at Home

Care at home, often also referred to as homecare or domiciliary care, is help available if you're having trouble with everyday tasks. That could be getting in and out of bed or cooking and cleaning.

Carer

Any adult or child providing regular unpaid emotional or physical support to a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction.

Carers' assessment

If you are an unpaid carer for a family member or friend, you have the right to discuss with your local council what your own needs are, separate to the needs of the person you care for.

Carbon Footprint

The total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by our actions.

Commissioning

A cycle of activity that starts with assessing the needs for care and support in the local community, then developing plans and actions to deliver the range and quality of services to meet needs and expectations and checking that services meet those expectations.

Community Advice Hubs

The first point of contact for information, advice, and support in Solihull.

Day Opportunities

Opportunities to do things during the day. These may include social activities, education, or the opportunity to learn new skills.

Dementia

Not a specific disease but a general term for the impaired ability to remember, think, or make decisions that interferes with doing everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS)

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is the procedure prescribed in law when it is necessary to deprive of their liberty a resident or patient who lacks capacity to consent to their care and treatment in order to keep them safe from harm.

Deputyship

When somebody lacks mental capacity to make a decision for themselves at a certain, a person can apply to their deputy to do things like pay the person's bills or organise their pension (property and financial affairs deputy) or make decisions about medical treatment and how someone is looked after (personal welfare deputy).

Enablement

Enablement means working with people to support them to do things for themselves e.g., supporting a person to learn how to budget themselves rather than managing their money for them. Enablement services focus on life skills that will support people to return to independence and build up confidence.

Environmental Responsibility

To take action to prevent and alleviate the environmental damage that may be caused by our activities.

Exploitation

Where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person, or adult.

Home First

A principle that when you are well enough to leave hospital you will be supported to return home wherever possible. If you still need some support, that will be provided in your home by the Home Discharge Service to enable the planning for your future support to take place in your own home rather than in hospital.

Housing with care / Extra Care Housing

An umbrella term which covers extra care housing (housing with care for adults over 55) and supported living services (housing with care and support for adults with disabilities), where the care is provided in a designated housing setting, often a building with multiple independent flats.

Integrated Care Board / ICB

ICBs are NHS organisations responsible for planning health services for their local population. They manage the NHS budget and work with local providers of NHS services, such as hospitals and GP practices, to agree a joint five-year plan of actions.

Joining Up Care for People, Places and Populations

Government white paper which sets out measures to make integrated health and social care a universal reality for everyone across England. Published in February 2022.

Learning Disability

A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities— for example household tasks, socialising or managing money – which affects someone for their whole life.

Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)

The Liberty Protection Safeguards is the procedure prescribed in law that will take over DoLS, to support individuals who lack capacity to consent to care or treatment.

Mental illness

Also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour. Examples of mental illness include depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders and addictive behaviour.

Provider Collaborative

Provider collaboratives bring together providers of local services to plan, deliver and transform. They are partnership arrangements of at least two trusts, working across multiple places with a shared purpose. NHS England has asked all acute and mental health trusts to be part of a provider collaborative, and some include independent providers.

Reablement

Reablement is a short period of rehabilitation which usually takes place in your own home and is provided by a team of social care workers and occupational therapists following illness or a recent stay in hospital.

Respite

A service giving carers a break, by providing short-term care for the person with care needs at home or in a residential setting.

Safeguarding

This is how we work with people to prevent harm and abuse. It includes helping people recover when abuse has occurred.

Social Care reforms

An overarching description of the government's future plans for adult social care.

Support plan

A plan we develop with you that says how you will spend your personal budget to meet your eligible social care needs.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The independent regulator of all health and social care services in England.

Useful contacts

Internal Council contacts	
Solihull Connect (working hours) – for all direct enquiries/referrals for Adult Social Care	0121 704 8007 https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Tell-us/Walk-in-centres
Social Care (out of hours emergency)	0121 605 6062 https://www.solihull.gov.uk/social-care-and-support
Main Council general enquiries	0121 704 8001 / 6000 https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Tell-us/Contact-us
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) team	0121 709 7113 https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Social-care-and-support/Mental-Capacity-Act-and-DoLS

Other useful contacts		
Advocacy Matters	Providing independent advocacy in Birmingham and Walsall areas for vulnerable young people and adults from the age of 13 years.	0121 321 2377 https://advocacymatters.org.uk/referrals/advocacy-in-birmingham/
Age UK Solihull	Supporting older adults, providing information and advice, support and groups.	0121 704 7840 https://www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/
Alzheimer's Society Solihull	Supporting adults with a diagnosis of dementia and their families with the provision of information and advice and group-based support.	0333 150 3456 https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/financial-support-near-you
Carers Trust Solihull	To help support carers of all ages and backgrounds, through expert information and advice.	0121 788 1143 https://www.solihullcarers.org/

Elder Abuse Helpline	Contact number for help and information on what to do if you think a vulnerable person is being abused.	0808 808 8141
Healthwatch Solihull	An independent organisation commissioned by Solihull Council to champion the views of patients and social care users in Solihull, with the goal of making services better and improving health and wellbeing.	0800 470 1518 https://healthwatchsolihull.org.uk/
The Care Quality Commission (CQC)	The independent regulator of all health and social care services in England.	0845 015 0120 https://www.cqc.org.uk/

