

Solihull SEND Newsletter

April 2025

Apologies for the delay in the issuing of this bulletin. All of the information contained within remains relevant.

#SENDSpotlight

On Thursday 3 April our Child of the Year winner, Lukas, was one of the children who helped to interview candidates for the assistant director role in education. Thank you for telling us what you thought Lukas!

National news

A House of Lords Committee has launched a call for evidence to understand how support for children, young people and adults with autism can be improved. They are keen to hear from everyone with lived experience, and those who support them. The closing date for submissions is 2nd June 2025. You can find more information [online](#)

Nasen LIVE 2025 – this year's event for professionals and parent carers will be held at the Vox Conference Centre in Birmingham on 4th July with a focus on preparation for life. For more information and to book tickets please visit their website [nasen LIVE 2025](#)

Additional Needs Board

The last joint additional needs board meeting took place on 4 April 2025. The key messages were:

- The Board heard about a new provision 'The Canopy' being set up for September 2025 which will support schools in finding more ways to design their offer in response to the differences of pupils in the classroom.

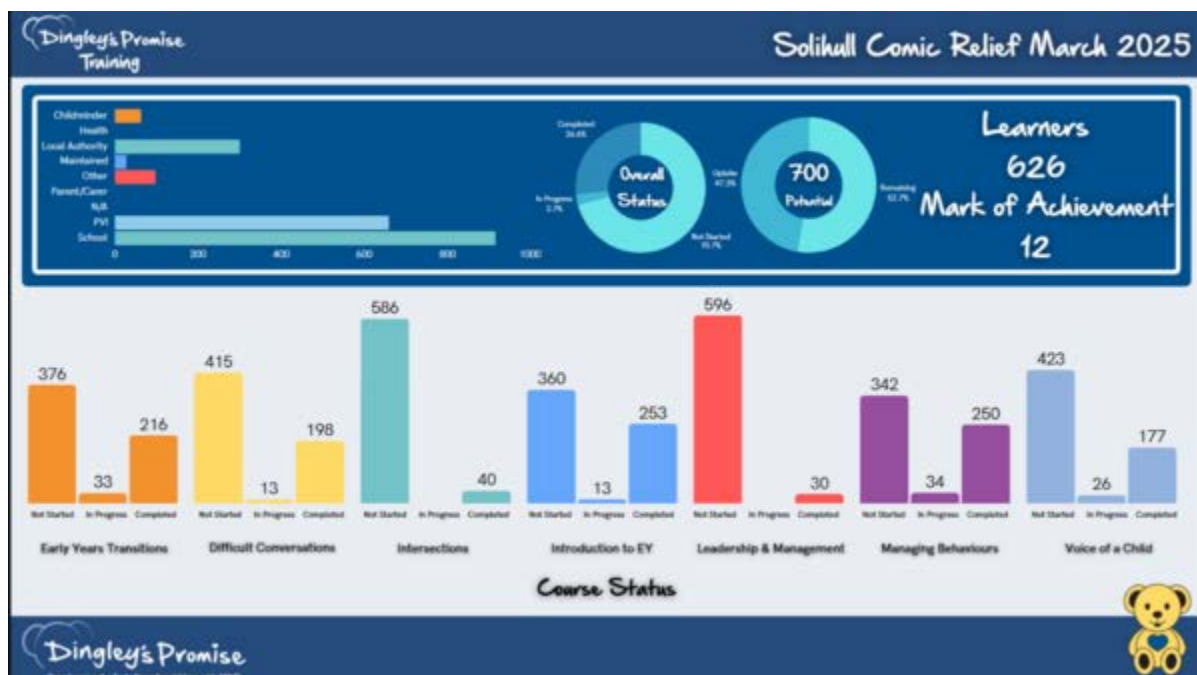
- The Board talked about the importance of young people with learning disabilities taking up their annual health checks after the age of 14 to make sure their health needs were well understood and supported. It was clarified that learning disabilities did not include a specific autism diagnosis. More information for Solihull is online [Learning disabilities](#) and Mencap also have a range of resources on their [website](#)
- The Board listened to feedback on service and family experience of preparing for adulthood and agreed this was an ongoing priority for development.

Educational Psychology Service

We have made the difficult decision to postpone traded work in schools during May so that we can complete many more EHC visits and catch up with unallocated assessments. Any work that is postponed will be re-booked as soon as possible. We apologise to the schools and families affected by this decision but please be reassured that all urgent work relating to critical incident support, training, FCG and ELSA supervision, Early Years advice and Looked After Children, will be ongoing. We would like to thank you in advance for your support at this time and hope you will work with us to help achieve progress. Wishing you all a Happy Easter.

Early Years

Well done to Woodies at Damson Wood and St Augustine's Catholic Primary School who have now been awarded their Dingley's Promise mark of achievement. With Easter approaching what better way to spend an afternoon than completing your Dingley's modules with a chocolate Easter egg 😊. You too can earn your 'mark' like our 12 settings, who have committed to this additional training and reflection upon their approach to supporting special educational needs.



The [early years toolkit from Ofsted](#) has a strong focus on disadvantage and SEND. There is a draft inclusion theme with a golden thread supporting this throughout the tool. You have until 28 April 2025 to respond to Ofsted's consultation on Ofsted's plans for the inspection in early years education and schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-way-ofsted-inspects-education>

The early years team have worked closely with Family Information Service and the EHCP team to consider EHCP funding for settings (including school nursery) to support young children. This will increase the future banding range available to the panel to award.

Our Solihull schools and early years settings play a critical role in supporting all young children to access their early education entitlement. The local authority has a duty to ensure there is sufficient early education provision. Working together we have continued to ensure quality early education and 94% of 2-year-olds benefitting from early education and 106% of 3- and 4-year-olds (we import from other local authorities). In 2024, 99% of out 2-year-olds were in a provider graded good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

Our provider numbers *have* reduced over the last 2 years. However, our responsive providers have expanded and adjusted to ensure that the needs of our Solihull community continue to be met. We work closely with settings to meet the future September 2025 expanded offer of 30 hours early education for eligible working parents of children age over 9 months. Our Solihull providers continue to ensure that children from families in receipt of additional support can continue to access 15 hours early education.

Numbers of early education and childcare providers in Solihull.	Child minders	All setting - early years	Childcare providers	Quality- Ofsted inspection grades of good and outstanding in Solihull.
August 2022	125	179	53	96%
August 2024	101	207	62	98%

Borrowing words from the recent [Festival of Childhood](#) where the Education Secretary said 'There is a rich diversity of early education and childcare of all shapes and sizes right across the country that is already working hard to give children the best start in life. And I can't thank them enough.'

There was also a push for men working in early education. Do you know someone who can help give young children a positive early childhood experience? [Solihull College](#) offers a range of early education and childcare courses. Read about [Jess' journey to management in a Solihull setting](#).

Our business support lead Jenna is also encouraging people to contact her if they would like to consider becoming a childminder. Is this something you might consider – working from home? <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/contact/>

Commissioning Update

What's Going Well?

- **Physiotherapy:** The average wait is continuing to reduce, it is now **13 weeks** (down from 14 weeks last month).
- **Speech and Language Therapy (SALT):** The Early Years Team Lead is now in post and reconfiguring the Early Year pathway to address extended waits using group education for parents and education staff, rather than 1:1 coaching. This will reduce wait times for longest internal waits and release capacity for more initials longer term.
- **Education Health Care Plan (EHCP):** There is now a Community Paediatric fixed term Medical post in place who supports with additional General Paediatrics, EHCP and Special Schools medical clinics. The average wait times for new appointments have reduced with this additional resource. Solihull EHCP report returns shows UHB maintaining 100% 6 week returns for all services including Community Paediatrics.

What We Are Working On

We know that there is more work to be done to reduce the length of time children and young people wait to be assessed for conditions like autism and ADHD. Working with Solihull Parent Carer Voice and our other partners we are going to begin a process to learn from what has worked in other parts of the country. We will then develop a plan to make changes to the way the pathway works in Solihull. This work will not be a quick fix but we think that there are things we can do which will make a difference.

BSOL Keyworker Service 0-25 years

Barnardo's provide an Autism and Learning Disability service which supports Birmingham and Solihull children, young people and their families to help avoid unnecessary admissions to mental health hospitals or to support discharges.

This service aims to provide dedicated key workers for children and young people with a learning disability and/or autism diagnosis, aged 0-25 years who are already in hospital or in crisis and at risk of hospital admission. The team provides support to individuals, and their families where appropriate, helping them to access the right help at the right time across our complex health and care systems.

The key worker will co-produce an individualised support plan with the young person to resolve their issues or concerns and then actively support delivery of the plan using the following key principles:

- Navigation & Co-ordination
- Support at home & in the community
- Independence & empowerment
- Champion of autism & learning difficulties
- Support the voice of young people & families

Referral into the service is through being added to the Dynamic Support Register or through Hospital staff.

If you would like further information, please contact bsol.barnardos@nhs.net

Independent Travel Training

The independent travel training team can help children and young people with SEND to travel safely. Please read their last two newsletters for more information on what they have been up to recently.

[Autumn edition](#)

[Winter edition](#)

Star of the Month – Alfie Ford

Alfie Ford has great ambitions, he is already a local town councillor in Chelmsley Wood and has been commended by the Prime Minister as “an inspiration not just to his community but to many others”. Alfie’s hopes are not limited to his own future he is championing other autistic people by walking 15,000 steps a day in April to raise awareness and raise funds for the National Autistic Society. Councillor Courts and Councillor Grinsell, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Solihull Council, met with him this week to talk with him about his fundraising efforts and his plans and aspirations for the future.



**Help raise awareness and funds
for Autism by supporting Alfie
stepping up even higher with his
2025 Fundraiser Challenge for the
National Autistic Society!**

**Backed by
Saqib Bhatti MP**



**Praised by the Prime
Minister in 2023 as "an
inspiration not just to his
community but to many
others"**

**Walking 15,000 steps
every day in April
Speaking at schools
and businesses**

**Raised over
£3,000**

**JustGiving page
for the main
fundraiser for
the National
Autistic Society**



**Doing the great
Birmingham Run on the
side in aid of Autistica.**

**Many more side
challenges to be
announced.**

**He is doing all of this
while being Autistic and
diagnosed with
Dyspraxia himself!**

**For interviews email
a4asdawareness@hotmail.com**

**As seen on
GBNews in April
2023**

**Fundraiser page
for the Great
Birmingham Run**



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

Charlotte Jones

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