

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

May 2025

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## #SENDSpotlight

From April we have increased the amount of funding early years settings receive when a child has an EHCP. We hope this means more children can attend their local setting more easily.

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## National news

BeReady's career development pathways offer school support staff fully funded opportunities to build their skills, confidence, and career prospects whilst progressing in their current role. Please complete their form to register your interest on their website: [BeReady Pathways](#)

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## Additional Needs Board

The last joint additional needs board meeting took place on 8 May 2025. The key messages were:

- The Board discussed the continued increasing demand for health services and assessment and the challenges this was creating in terms of team capacity. Members thought it was important to change the language used around waiting lists and planning to “stabilise” waiting lists was a more realistic outcome of the work being undertaken to address this – rather than “improving” waiting lists. It was agreed this was an important transparency for families
- Members discussed the referral processes into community therapies and autism assessments and agreed more clarity would be helpful to explain who could refer into these services, and who was best to do so considering the information required. It was agreed this would be communicated in the next SEND newsletter
- The Board heard about the work undertaken to get a clear picture on the youth offer that is available in Solihull – and how this would help teams to focus on gaps, including for those with SEND, moving forward
- Members recognised the improvements in increasing the voices of children and young people and were pleased to hear the next Let's Talk SEND event for 7<sup>th</sup> July was being planned with a mental health and social media focus (more information will be shared in the SEND newsletters)

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## Education Strategic Plan

[Our Education Strategic Plan \(ESP\)](#) brings together many projects which are aimed at improving the lives and education of children and young people.

Schools and the Council are facing real challenges with budgets, with increased levels of need not being matched by increased levels of funding. More children than ever require that extra bit of support to make sure they can access education, and the ESP is designed to help create the system they need to get that support.

We will be working closely with parents & carers and schools to efficiently and effectively deliver the right support at the right time for every child in Solihull. This means that any changes required to our current SEND system will be co-produced with those affected.

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## University Hospitals Birmingham Community Health Services for Children and Young People

University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB) provide community health services for children and young people in Solihull. This includes Community Paediatrics, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy and the Specialist Assessment Service which assesses children for Autism.

UHB paediatric teams have worked hard to bring the Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) advice back within the 6-week statutory time frame. We are happy to share that UHB is now achieving this regularly. We have consistently provided 100% of reports back to Solihull Local Authority within 6 weeks from all our community paediatric, community therapy and acute service clinicians for 9 consecutive months. We continue to monitor the quality of submissions which remain good.

The Solihull Community Paediatrics service is about to implement a text message appointment notification and appointment reminder system for community paediatrics appointments. We have been busy ensuring we have the correct mobile numbers for as many children as we can and we would really appreciate families letting us know if they have a new mobile telephone number so we can ensure they are getting their messages in a timely way. Parents/ young people can notify the team of any updates or changes using the contact details on the child/ young person's last clinic letter.

No personal or health details will be shared in that text message just the child/ young person's first name, appointment date and time and venue.

We are hoping this supports a reduction in missed appointments due to letters sometimes not reaching families in a timely way and offering a reminder of the appointment. We would also like this to support our young people looking at gaining some independence with their appointments in the lead up to transfer to adult services.

This is new to our service and we would welcome feedback from parents, carers and children and young people after a period of time. Please do give any feedback when you attend your appointments or when you have any contact with our administrative team. We will set up a process for more formal feedback later in the year.

## Working Together to Improve ADHD and Autism Support Pathways

Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (BSOL ICB) is working closely with University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB), Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), and Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) to redesign the support pathways for children and young people with ADHD and Autism.

The work began in May 2025 and will help us better understand how children and families currently move through the system – from referral to support – and where improvements are needed. We'll be using a system modelling approach, which allows us to build a virtual version of the current pathway, explore different ideas for change in a safe, virtual environment, and see what works before trying it out in real life.

We're committed to co-producing this work, meaning that parent carers and young people will be involved throughout the process. Solihull Parent Carer Voice are a key member of the working group that will lead the process of redesign. We'll also learn from other areas that have redesigned their services, and we'll continue listening to the experiences and ideas of families and frontline professionals.

Our goal is to have identified changes and improvements to the pathway that we can begin to put into practice in Autumn 2025.

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## Referral arrangements for children's community therapies at UHB.

This was a subject of discussion at the last Joint Additional Needs Delivery Group and we agreed to include some information in this newsletter.

There is lots of helpful information on the UHB website and a section about 'how to make a referral' for each service under the community therapies umbrella -

<https://childrenscommunitytherapies.uhb.nhs.uk/>

In summary parental referrals are accepted for Autism (Specialist Assessment Service), Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy. It's important to note that there is a range of information required to make a referral which will normally require the referrer to have liaised with professionals already working with the child.

Parent referrals are not accepted for physiotherapy.

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## Educational Psychology Service

We have embarked on our busy month, prioritising EHC assessment work and thank everyone for their kind support and patience as we go. Work in critical incidents and for vulnerable children and families continues alongside this. In recruitment news, we say a fond farewell to Dr Craig Joyce, who leaves us to manage a bigger team in Oxon next month and congratulations to Abbie Westwood and Carla Lowe, who will join us as qualified EPs in Sept 25 and Sept 26 respectively.

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## EHCP Team

Thank you to everyone who attended the EHCP drop in on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025. We had 71 appointments during the drop-in sessions and these included appointments with the EHCP team, Educational Psychology Service, Health, Employment and Skills Team, Social Care, Early Years Team and the Specialist Inclusion Support Service.

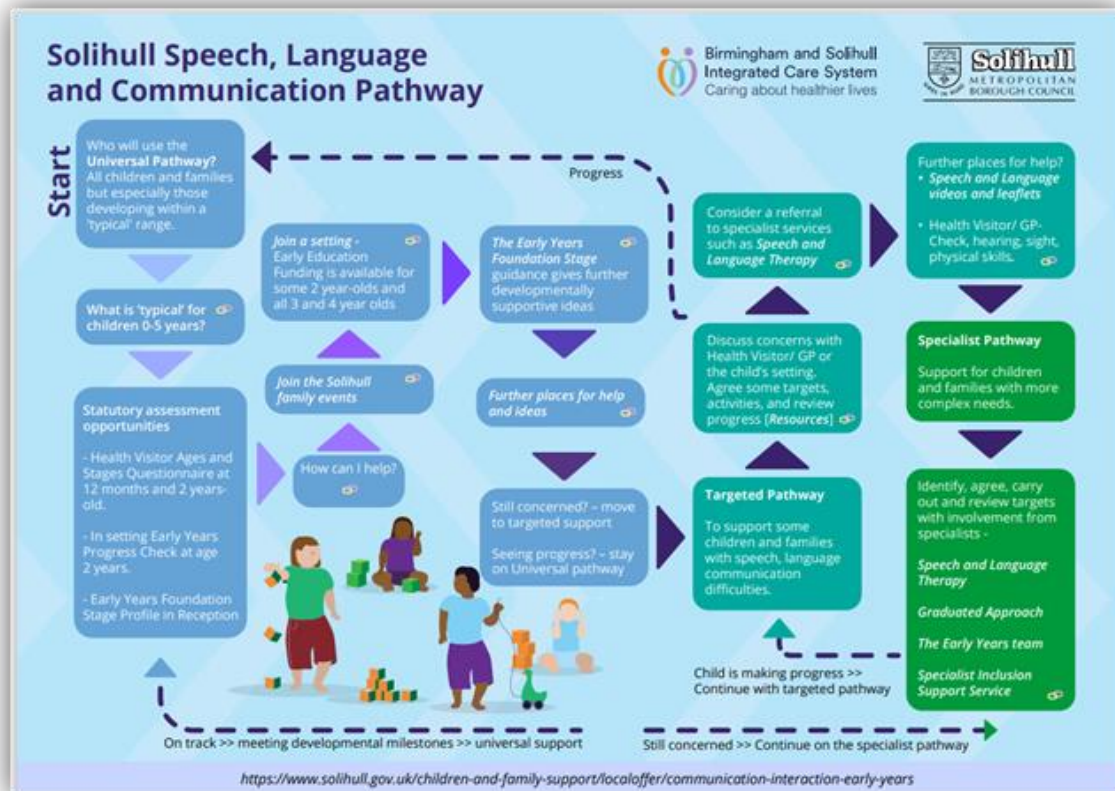
There will be another drop-in session during the summer term and the dates and venue will be circulated once they have been confirmed.

The EHCP team completed 92% of primary transitions and 97% of year 11 transitions by the statutory timeframes. Please be assured we are continuing to work any cases which remain outstanding.

The EHCP team have been working on developing an Annual Review Portal, the aim of which is to make the annual review administrative process smoother and improve the monitoring and tracking of annual reviews. We are currently in the building and testing phase of this project and we hope this will be live in the Autumn Term.

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## Solihull Early Years Team



### Supporting speech, language and communication needs in Solihull early years.

In November 2023 we launched our Solihull SLCN pathway. There are 2 versions of the pathway [simple and full versions] which were summaries of our wider work with Speech and Language UK and Solihull partners.

*What is available in Solihull to support families and children?*

You can access Family Hubs and the [Start for Life](#) offer as well as other [group activities](#) where children and families get the opportunity to talk, listen, and play.

Access [Health Visitor](#) guidance in your children's earliest years as well as [Solihull Parenting Team](#) support. This may include access to communication through play sessions and video interaction guidance.

National advice is available through [BBC Tiny Happy People](#), [Five to Thrive in Solihull](#) and [Solihull Approach information](#). [Speech and Language UK](#) also has helpful guidance.

Solihull schools and settings working alongside parents to encourage the [development of speech, language and communication](#). Our schools and settings work with Solihull [education](#) and [health](#) teams to meet [children's developmental needs](#). Parents, settings and the wider

community should work together to help support [school readiness](#) and children's care, learning and play.

The [early years](#) and [speech and language therapy](#) teams offer [training](#) and guidance as part of our targeted and specialist offer.

*Why not listen to Steph talk about her journey, and what supported her family [here](#).*

[Super Starts – Speech, Language and Communication Needs \(SLCN\)](#)

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## New mental health report calls for better access and early help for children and young people

A [report](#) based on feedback from young people, parents and carers and health and care organisations in Birmingham and Solihull has revealed that improving access to mental health services as well as early help and prevention are vital to improving the lives of children and young people in Birmingham and Solihull.

The report, which was commissioned by the Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Autism Provider Collaborative as part of a drive to transform mental health care for children and young people, highlights the need to reduce wait times and improve support available to children, young people and families whilst waiting for care, with more online and digital resources to be made available.

There was also strong support for more focus on prevention and early help – both in responding to the mental health needs of children and young people more promptly when they need it most and offering more support to infants and parents, at the very start of life.

More than 200 people and 12 organisations across Birmingham and Solihull responded to a 'call for comment' on a new way of providing mental health services.

Dr Fabida Aria, Consultant Psychiatrist and Executive Medical Director, said: "We would like to thank everyone that shared feedback on our plans. The key themes outlined in the report will form the basis of discussions around our priorities for action.

"In direct response to the comments around co-production and lived experience in the report and to ensure that we focus on the improvements that are most important to our young people, parents, carers and partners, we will be inviting them to co-produce the action plan that comes from these findings.

"There is some way to go before we can put the agreed actions into practice and see the benefits for our young people and their parents and carers - it will take time to get it right. And

this is only part of the story – there are a number of initiatives taking place, both with our partner organisations and engaging with children, young people and parents and carers to improve children and young people's mental health.

“However, we will ensure that we take every opportunity we can to collaborate and co-produce as we progress our planned improvements.”

The full report and a summary version are available to read on the [NHS Birmingham and Solihull website](#).

If you would like the information translated into another language, or have any other queries on the report, please contact the Mental Health Provider Collaborative by email: [bsmhft.jointcommissioningteam@nhs.net](mailto:bsmhft.jointcommissioningteam@nhs.net) or call 07985 882 137.



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### Dingley's Promise Mark of Achievement

Solihull early years team have been awarded our mark for accessing Dingley's Promise training. Settings, schools, parents and anyone working in Solihull can also access this free training. Sign up here - <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/> with information about gaining your mark [here](#).

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### Solihull Councillors' visit to Solar

Ten Solihull Councillors visited the Bishop Wilson clinic on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April, to learn more about our Solar service - Solihull's integrated mental health and emotional wellbeing service for children and young people.

Delivered by BSMHFT, in partnership with Barnardo's, and Autism West Midlands, Solar supports the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people up to the age of 19, along with their families. Currently, around 2,200 young people in Solihull are open to the service. The Councillors' visit provided an opportunity to see first-hand how the Solar team's commitment and compassion is making a real difference locally.

The team highlighted the service's strong partnerships across the borough — particularly with schools — to ensure young people receive the right support, at the right time.

During the visit, discussions covered the service configuration, community challenges around understanding autism, and Solar's proactive efforts in addressing health inequalities, especially in support of children in care.



Councillors also heard how most of the Solar team is co-located under one roof (with the exception of the TEDS eating disorder service), enabling stronger collaboration and coordination of care.

A key focus of the conversation was the service's ongoing work to reduce missed appointments — a critical area that impacts both those receiving care and those still on the waiting list. The team also explained how they continuously review the needs of young people waiting to be seen, helping to ensure each child is matched with the service that best supports them.

Throughout the visit, it was clear that children and young people remain at the heart of Solar's approach — shaping a model of care that is responsive, inclusive, and tailored to the needs of Solihull's young people.

Thank You to Steve Scrimshaw, Steve Harrison, Libby Thompson and Harvey Tagger for hosting the visit.

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## Gain work experience and structured training with Supported Internship

A Supported Internship is a structured study programme for young people aged 16 and over with an EHCP to get ready for work. It combines work experience and formal training over an academic year. A dedicated job coach will support the intern to adapt to the workplace. You can register your interest with the Council's Employment and Skills Team who are working with local employers to secure placement opportunities for the programme starting in September. Find out more from [this webpage](#).

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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](mailto:jand@solihull.gov.uk)

**Charlotte Jones**

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*StayConnected*



**SEND**