

# Solihull Local Area SEND Self Evaluation Framework Position Review Statement 2025



# Position Review Statement

The joint additional needs partnership has agreed to re-write the Self Evaluation Framework document at the end of each academic year.

However, the SEND and AP system is dynamic, and the partnership seek feedback throughout the year so this review seeks to provide a check point for progress and challenges so plans can be agile.

It especially considers the **Additional needs strategy** annual report which reviews the impact of the partnership plans.

This document provides an update on the content of the 2024/25 Self Evaluation Framework document against the SEND & AP inspection framework outcomes.



## Co-Production

- It has been identified that co-production is not as fully embedded in all areas as presumed, which means that the experience of co-production can be inconsistent for parent carers and children and young people. This is because in some areas good co-production has relied upon individual relationships rather than embedded systems and practice. We are revisiting the Partnership Agreement to help us monitor the effectiveness of co-production practice across the system, rather than just the impact of the work undertaken and UHB are working with SPCV to develop workforce training on co-production
- Our Let's Talk SEND events are becoming increasingly more successful, and a greater number of partners are involved in their co-production. Children, young people and their families particularly enjoyed the celebration event in December 2024.
- Children and young people are telling us that they are not always asked to input into decisions that affect them. We have begun our focus on children and young people attending their EHCP annual reviews so they can understand and influence how they are supported.
- We have noted that 'survey fatigue' in parent carers has begun to reduce the feedback provided to the partnership over this past year. We recognise we need to find alternative ways to address this to ensure voices are heard. We have started by combining some of the important questions in the partnership's annual survey with that produced by SPCV to reduce the ask but need to do more in this area.

## Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

- Our children's social care Ofsted monitoring inspections (**reports**) are evidencing that we are consistently making positive improvements. The focus on our working practices, decision making, staff stability, culture and partnership working have all helped to improve our support to children.
- Leaders share performance data to understand strengths and challenges across the local area but our systems to measure the impact of the partnership on children and young people's experiences and outcomes is underdeveloped. We have begun this journey through our focus on multi-agency audits but need to do more to plan these measures into the design of any new plan.
- Strong governance is well established to lead SEND in the local area. There has been a recent focus on strengthening reporting and accountability alongside cementing a responsive escalation and feedback loop; but it is too early to measure the impact of this across the system.
- Our Inclusive Education Strategy runs until July 2025. We have taken the decision to not renew this restricted strategy but take the principles forward into the development of a new Education Strategy. This will enable us to fully embed equity, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of the education system to create an environment where settings pre-emptively remove any potential barriers to learning so everyone can belong and succeed in their local school community. We are currently engaging with the education system, children, young people and their families to shape this work.



- We have seen a successful year one PINs partnership delivery improving neurodiversity understanding and support within 15 primary schools and are in a strong position to expand this for the second year of the programme. Whilst we are waiting for an assessment of the impact data from year one, we have had positive anecdotal feedback from the schools and professionals involved.
- We have been working closely with some of our young people to create podcasts about neurodiversity ([ND - YouTube](#)) and are developing our local offer content to include these and helpful tips/resources suggested by those young people to support others.
- The success the nurture approach in our Refresh Early Intervention provision has led us to roll out nurture training to over 50 schools in Solihull. This means that children who are struggling are more able to be supported in their home school rather than move to an intervention setting; improving their sense of belonging. We are therefore moving the specialist staffing capacity at the Refresh centre to our outreach team to support within schools.
- Achieving financial sustainability of the SEND & AP system remains challenging, with increasing high-needs budget deficits. A management plan is in place and school leaders are involved in looking for opportunities to provide earlier intervention to mitigate needs, and costs, escalating unnecessarily.

## Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

- The Early Help and Family Hub offer has been further developed; although we know that the system is still in its infancy and will need time and refinement to reach a fully embedded service. A more family friendly route to accessing early help and support has been established, without the need for a MASH referral through a Family Helpline and family support drop-ins from our family hubs. Where MASH referrals are made, multi-agency enquiries and decision-making is timely and of high quality. Every school and college now have an Early Help Coordinator and Family Hub connected, meaning immediate access to support from over 70 partners delivering services from our Family Hubs and Early Help case clinics for professionals.
- We have seen high levels of school engagement with training, support and learning opportunities to continue to improve their inclusive practice; especially through our Delivering Better Value programme. However, despite this, and our relaunch of our SEND Graduated Approach and toolkits for schools, we are still seeing too many requests for EHC needs assessments being turned down as children's needs can be met within the school's ordinarily available offer. This is creating unnecessary tension within the whole system. We have introduced Way Forward meetings to bring parents and schools together in these instances to discuss what else can be done to support the child at SEND support – and hope the wider learning of this work will further develop practice and confidence across the school system. We are also updating the EHCP information on the local offer website to make it easier for parents to understand the process.

- We are seeing an increase in the number of children who are advising they are unable to attend school for mental health reasons. Health representatives have joined the alternative provision decision making panel to ensure children's needs are understood when making provision and there are plans for a wider piece of work across the partnership to have a tiered response to these challenges.
- The partnership has begun to deepen its understanding of the links between SEND and involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour and exploitation and is being progressed through a neurodiversity project group under the Safer Solihull Partnership Board to promote better awareness across community safety agencies and changes in their engagement with young people.

## Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

- To continue our support for children in the early years to remain in their local setting we have introduced a model of enhanced funding when they receive an EHCP. This is responding to increasing levels of need in the early years and the financial challenges faced by some of those providers.
- Whilst we were advised in May 2024 that the DfE had approved our bid for a new free school, there has been no further update on progress. This means that we are cautious about the future of this provision, with any potential opening date already pushed back two years. We are having to look at other options for expanding our specialist provision and our upcoming all-age sufficiency strategy will begin to outline our plans for that. In the meantime, there are some children in mainstream schools who are having to wait for a special school place to be found for them but this group is subject to regular monitoring.

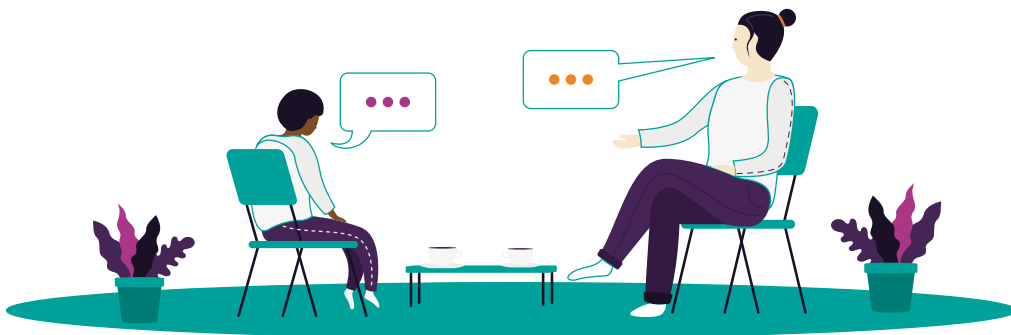
- There has been a greater partnership focus on health waiting lists, leading to more regular data reporting, a better understanding of the position and plans and emerging relationships between UHB and SPCV.
- However, the increasing demand for health assessments (especially for neurodevelopment) is providing a particular challenge for the local area with too many children waiting too long for both assessment and treatment across a number of health services. Additional capacity and refined ways of working have been put in place - but this is only able to sustain current waiting times, rather than improve timeliness. A design group has been established to focus on clinical prioritisation and co-design a new pathway.
- Our number of children in care and care experienced young people in EET has increased and we are in line with regional average. There are preventative actions in place, to work with schools, parents and young people to promote careers opportunities while young people are still in school or college. Where young people are at risk of becoming NEET, there are practical workshops delivered in schools or college throughout the year and a new link worker will focus on the most vulnerable.
- There has been an expansion of access to services and interventions available to children who are looked after with SEND but we are working to develop an approach for neuro-diversity prioritisation of those who are at risk of placement breakdown or to enable adoption to take place.
- We have begun the development of new model of care for children and young people's mental health, with a specific focus on addressing health inequalities, support for vulnerable children and for parents and carers and preparation for their future but this is still in its early stages.

## Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes

- There has been increased capacity to further strengthen our transition support to improve young people and their families' preparedness for adulthood. For young people already engaged in the children with disabilities service, transition is planned with adult services and families and young people are involved earlier. More work needs to take place where a young person hasn't needed to access children's services, but they do need support due to ongoing challenges (such as mental health needs) once they are of adult services age.
- We have revised the schools transition guidance ready for the preparation of the 2025/26 transition cohorts. This was led by school leaders and includes a toolkit of resources for schools to access and content has been created with parents and children's input. The impact of this will be reviewed later in the year.
- We have reviewed the clarity of our Post 16 offer across the borough and improved relationships with providers. However, young people with SEND tell us they need more local post 16 options and we are beginning to plan for this; alongside a forecast increase in that cohort.
- At primary phase children on SEND support or with EHCPs in Solihull generally achieve in line with their national peers; with the exception of those achieving a good level of development in the early years. At secondary phase we have seen results for young people on SEND support or with EHCPs increase in all outcomes.

## Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

- We have introduced the concept of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) with the school system and SEND parents to build a culture where the diversity of learners is pre-empted within the classroom and children and young people can be offered multiple means of engagement, representation, expression and action; developing their knowledge and agency. Training and support to change practice will be rolled out with primary schools through a UDL centre from September 2025.
- We have assessed the availability of the youth offer across the borough and the accessibility of this for children and young people which shows the gaps in provision we have for those with SEND. This information, and the voice of children and young people, is being used to plan the future development of this offer.
- As a result of extensive provider training, providing funding for increased staff ratios and some directed provision, the participation of children with SEND has regularly accounted for 25-30% of all children participating in our HAF programme.



## Alternative Provision

- We have streamlined referrals for alternative provision to improve the timeliness of decision making and support.
- We have strengthened our commissioning oversight of alternative provision. Solihull spends more money per head of capita on AP than its neighbours, and we are only just seeing the beginning successes of children returning to mainstream schools after a period of intervention - this is not yet a trajectory for every child but an EPAS AP lead now has responsibility for monitoring these children's progress and outcomes.
- We are working more closely with school leaders to better understand the provision and resources required to further reduce exclusions and enhance our impact on those children struggling to attend school.
- We have developed a structured model for effective quality assurance to ensure there is a continued growth in the AP offer but the first visit will not take place until the summer term.





