

# Solihull SEND Newsletter

June 2025

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## #SENDSpotlight

Did you know that by clicking on “Accessibility tools and translation” on the [Solihull Local Offer](#) you can change the text to your own language, or have it read to you in your language? as well as changing how the pages look so you can read the information more easily.

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## National news

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have published the outcome of a review of the way local area services for children and young people with SEND are inspected. This includes more training for inspectors, making their findings more accessible and providing more opportunities for young people and their families to share their thoughts during the process. You can read more about the changes, and the outcomes of the last two years of inspections on their [website](#)

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## Local updates

As we prepare for the annual refresh of our own Self Evaluation against the Ofsted and CQC inspection framework, we have reflected upon the year so far and written a [Position Review Statement](#) to provide an update on where our services for SEND have gotten to.

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## Additional Needs Board

The last joint additional needs board meeting took place on 6 June 2025. The key messages were:

- The Board heard about the updates which have taken place this year on the [Solihull Local Offer](#) but noted that feedback had been limited. Members were asked to remind people they can provide [Feedback on the Local Offer | Your Voice Solihull](#) to help improve the helpfulness of the content.
- Members discussed the health challenges with people not attending their appointments and heard that the UHB Community Paediatrics team were launching text appointments and reminders this month to try to help this.

- Members were advised that the next EHCP and Send Support drop-in session (27<sup>th</sup> June from 9.30am – 12.00pm) had been moved to the Orchard House training room at Solihull Council House; to provide a more accessible venue for parents in central Solihull.

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## Early Years DAF

If you receive children's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and early education funding in an early year setting then your child's setting may be eligible for disability access fund (DAF). This one-off payment can be paid to providers who are eligible to receive early education funding supporting children eligible to receive DAF. Further information is available here -

[Disability Access Fund \(DAF\) https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/disability-access-fund-daf/](https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/disability-access-fund-daf/)

We asked settings about this funding and how it was spent....Here are a couple of the comments... *"it was so useful for us to receive this funding, it really helps". "The money was used for outings, sensory toy, and buggy board"*.

We know that there are more children eligible for DAF than settings receiving it so please check out the link above for more information.

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## Early years level 3 SENCo award

DfE have extended the contract for the level 3 early years SENCo qualification. Please sign up to keep up-to-date with future cohorts as application for the July intake is now closed.

<https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/early-years-SENCO>

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## Dingley's Promise Training Modules

The next training modules available at no cost to Solihull early years practitioners, parents, students and health professionals are focussing on communication and language and an inclusive approach to curriculum and assessment. These should be available in July.

<https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

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## Inclusive childcare- training for wrap around and holiday schemes

We are running training meetings to discuss the content of the [Creating Inclusive Provision Toolkit](#) and [Inclusive wrap around](#) support materials. They are free to access toolkits for providers of wraparound childcare, breakfast clubs and holiday activities and food programmes', developed in partnership with Mott MacDonald and Nasen.

Inclusive childcare for wrap around and holiday play scheme providers training is on

Date: Monday 23rd June 2025 time: 9.30 to 11am

Venue: Solihull Council House – Orchard House B91 3PX [parking off-site]

These in-person meetings can be booked using the following link (with more information about the content) - <https://forms.office.com/e/wihmCC1R8H?origin=IprLink>

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## Early Years Transitions

It is crucial to carefully consider children's moves to a new setting or within a setting. Further guidance on early years transitions and our June events can be found here-

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/>

Early Years is a priority in the government's [Plan for Change](#). Listed within the plan are the following areas which are focussed on the early education years ...

- Set every child up for the best start in life.
- Work towards a stronger early years system, beginning with offering sustained professional development and working with providers to help spread evidence-based programmes as part of comprehensive plans to drive high-quality early education and care.
- Strengthen and join up family services to improve support through pregnancy and early childhood. One aim is to improve early identification of special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

We will continue to reflect upon our practice and update you as more details emerge.

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## Specialist Inclusion Support service

Thank you to all the schools who returned their Service Level Agreement requests on time, buy back for the Communication and Learning Difficulties Teams and Social Emotional and Mental Health Teams continues to be stable, growing slightly each year. Staffing allocation will be sent to schools before the end of the academic year.

The SISS survey is now out, and we ask that as many school and parent carers complete this to provide honest feedback about the services they have received from SISS. As usual we will take on board all feedback and use it to inform improvements, as well as to inform the review of SISS taking place in

2025/26. <https://yourvoicesolihull.uk/engagementhq.com/embeds/projects/25054/survey-tools/47872>

Staffing across SISS is stable with a few staff moving on to pastures new in September 25. We would like to thank Jane Shaw (SISS SEMH Team Manager) who has worked for Solihull for over 30 years in various roles, for all her dedication to the children and young people in Solihull with SEMH needs. She has been a constant advocate for developing and improving support for this group of children and young people and has made a significant difference to so many lives; including those of colleagues who have worked alongside her. We wish her well in her new ventures, outside of education.

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## Speech and Language Communication Leads

Following the success of the whole-school universal Speech and Language training offered across Solihull, we are now inviting **all** schools to nominate a Communication Lead (CL). These leads will attend half-termly meetings delivered jointly by SISS and NHS Speech and Language Therapy specialists, focusing on targeted topics such as supporting speech sound development and stammering. Dates for these sessions will be shared with schools in the coming weeks.

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## NHS England Autism in Schools Project the next phase: September 2025 – June 26

In the new academic year the programme, led by specialist teachers from the SISS Autism Team, will focus on developing the Autism Champion role in 10 mainstream schools through a mixture of AET evidence-based training, collaborative working with other schools, provision of resources, consultancy with a specialist advisory teacher from the SISS Autism Team and support to deliver Understanding My Autism work with pupils in the setting.

This aims to ensure that all autistic pupils receive good autism provision in school from staff who are confident and have received up to date training, as recommended in the SEND Code of Practice. The schools will also be supported to strategically develop their whole school autism friendly practice.

SPCV will be providing a full day of further training for all Champions around supporting neurodivergent children and will also be running 2 in-school workshops for parents in each of the 10 schools.

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## SISS Autism Team Parent Workshops – Understanding my child's autism.

The dates for next academic year are currently being finalised, flyers with all information and booking links will be shared with SENCOs and the Specialist Assessment Service (SAS) before the end of term. The sessions are held in the Family Hubs at Hatchford Brook and Riverside to ensure parents and carers are aware of how to access these wonderful resources.

Any parent whose child (5-16 years old) has an autism diagnosis, or who has been accepted onto the waiting list for an autism assessment, and has not attended previously, can access the training.

The workshops are closely aligned with the AET training received by school staff, to facilitate shared understanding and consistent support for the children. Families will receive information, advice and practical resources to take away.

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**\*New for Spring 2026 – Early Years Parents Workshop.**

This will run at Hatchford Brook Family Hub, specifically for parents / carers of children 0-5 years of age.

Across the 2 days we will deliver the Autism Education Trust (AET) modules:

- Making sense of autism in the early years
- Developing toileting in the early years
- Developing play skills in the early years

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## SEMH High Needs (HN) PATHWAY

So far this academic year 67 pupils at risk of permanent exclusion have received support from the SEMH HN pathway. Only two of these pupils have been excluded. Feedback from schools and families in exit surveys where cases have closed has been overwhelmingly positive.

### Schools say:

*'Fantastic team and without their support, our children would not be able to remain in school'*  
*'The support on offer from the entire team has been outstanding. Planning meetings/review meetings have always been centred on the child and have enabled excellent professional discussion to take place. The meetings have never felt a 'done to' experience and school voice/parent voice have always been heard. The one-to-one support offered to children has been exceptional Building successful relationships is not just at the heart of theory; it is lived out in practice. I have been delighted with the significant progress made and we are incredibly grateful to the entire team'.*

### Parent/carers say:

*'The SEMH High Needs Team have honestly changed mine and my family's life for the better, there is a lot that I value in terms of the support I've received. From understanding my son's personal needs and neurodivergent needs more, to little changes I've made to my parenting thanks to the psychology team and adapting my home life for my son. My son has made so much positive progress thanks to the team especially with him expressing his needs and emotions in a safe and healthy way, not just with me but with his teachers and peers. His conduct in and around school is so much better due to his methods of communication changing drastically for the better which has improved our bond and his motivation to come into school so much more! I will be forever grateful for not only their support but their honesty and creating a safe space for me to talk about my fears, struggles and inexperience'.*

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## Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

Funded by Health and delivered by education, health and Parent Carer Voice (PCV), support has been provided by the PINS multi agency team to 15 Solihull schools. These schools accessed 37.5hours of training and consultancy to support them to develop learning in the areas

of needs identified from their self-assessment linked to supporting neurodiverse pupils to be fully included within their school. In addition to this they were supported by PCV to set up parent carer groups in their schools.

**Feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive:**

*'A key impact of the project has been the promotion of student independence through accessible technology. Tools such as Microsoft Lens, Immersive Reader, and voice-to-text software are now becoming embedded in classroom routines. These technologies have empowered learners to engage with content more independently and confidently, fostering a greater sense of autonomy and inclusion. The overall impact on learners has been highly positive. Neurodivergent pupils are demonstrating increased engagement, independence, and participation. The integration of assistive tools has supported equity in access to the curriculum and contributed to a more inclusive classroom culture.'*

*'All staff have been extremely positive about the input we have received through the PINS project. Having the opportunity to work with so many professionals and have training on things which are personalised for our school has been invaluable. All the advisors and trainers have worked with us in partnership, and we would thoroughly recommend the project to any school.'*

*'Our involvement in the PINS project has been a highly valuable experience for our school. The support provided throughout has been of a high level, professional but also realistic and encouraging. It has had a tangible impact on both our practice and the experiences of our neurodiverse learners. One of the most valuable aspects of the project has been the access to high-quality training led by experts in the field of neurodiversity. These sessions have deepened our staff's understanding, challenged our thinking, and equipped us with practical, evidence-based strategies that we are now embedding across the school. Staff confidence in supporting neurodiverse pupils has grown, and we are already seeing positive changes in pupil engagement and outcomes.'*

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## Parental Engagement Groups September 2025 – June 26

This year the programme of parental engagement groups with caseload children led by specialist teachers and inclusion support practitioners from across the sensory and physical disability team have continued.

Little OWLLS has continued to be provided families with complex needs children an environment to use strategies of engagement in fun activities at Hatchford Brook with a music element led by Amber Trust.

A newly formed Little Listeners group is regularly attended by 7- 8 families each week at the family hub within Elmwood Place, to develop communication skills and promote positive deaf

identity. The children range from 6 months to 4 years and have covered many different topics with spoken and British Sign Language being a focus.

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## New resources and programmes

We have actively taken part in training to upskill the offer the team can provide to the caseload we serve. As a result Deaf UK came to train the Teachers of Deaf Children and Inclusion Practitioners in Cued Speech, Nan in a Van for use as a trail with some students out in mainstream schools. A very productive afternoon was had, and we thank Deaf UK for their positive article. The team were interested in taking up our trial offer to use the Nan in a Van resource free of charge for a term in exchange for sharing their experience and evidence. We were able to cover a lot of information in the session and attendees even learned the basics of how to cue. By the time we were working with the Cue-it card game I could see some great skills developing as people worked out how to blend the cues together to make words – (top marks for the person who figured out how to cue the word 'BUCKETS' in record time!)

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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)

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