

Solihull SEND Newsletter

July 2025

#SENDSpotlight

Last year Solihull Council issued over 80% of new EHCPs within 20 weeks. This was significantly higher than the England average of 46% - making us the highest in the West Midlands and 37th in the country.

National updates

The Chancellors [Spending Review 2025](#) last month explained that the intended approach to SEND reform will be set out in the Schools white paper in the autumn. The long-awaited changes to the system will focus on increasing inclusion and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Additional Needs Board

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

- The Board heard about the plans for the upcoming Let's Talk SEND event and were pleased with the number of schools taking up the opportunity for their pupils to benefit from a range of discussions. *More detail on the event is included with this newsletter.*
- Members were advised that the [SoLO](#) contract for children's short breaks has been extended until August 2026 and noted how much families valued this offer.
- Members heard about the brilliant work Our Voices Heard were doing with children and young people and how schools were beginning to become more engaged to give their pupils more of a voice. A key focus has been understanding how more children and young people can better involved in decision making through their EHCP annual review.

Educational Psychology Service

- We have enjoyed a busy year working with everyone, especially our FCG meetings with a variety of professionals, ELSA supervision and training, collaborating with colleagues in other services and supporting a range of pupils in our schools. Thank you to all those who have liaised with and supported us, we are looking forward to working with you again next year!
- Over the Summer, we will be completing EHCs, writing-up remaining work, evaluating, preparing for the new year and planning training. Although it gets a little trickier for EHCs

in the holiday with schools being closed, we will do our best. We currently do not have any EHCs awaiting assessment, but as the Summer is a time when staff take holidays, we anticipate a waiting list will gradually build over the coming weeks. Therefore, we plan to complete additional EHCs in September with a view to catching up, as we did back in May. This means a month of slightly reduced service to schools over September which we hope colleagues will understand, but please be reassured that support for vulnerable pupils and critical incidents will remain ongoing. We wish you all a fantastic Summer!

Success Story of Supported Internship

Morgan is celebrating his success with his first paid job after he completed a Supported Internship which aims to support young people aged 16 and over with an EHCP to be ready for work. It combines work experience and formal training over an academic year. Find out more about Morgan's journey from [this webpage](#).

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. Please [email](#) our team with "Supported Internship" as email subject.

Early Years Updates

There has been quite a lot of news coverage about early years in recent weeks. The government has launched their strategy [Giving every child the best start in life - GOV.UK](#) outlining their plan for change for early years. This reinforces the importance of early years and the government has a reception and school readiness focus. We have a co-produced [Solihull School Readiness](#) definition. Some of the representatives of the group came back together to consider the national [Reception Ready](#) guidance.

We would like to stress that the suggestions and skills listed in the national guidance would be best used to *guide* parents about the skills that help children access reception learning and development. Many children can demonstrate these skills independently, after support, as they enter reception [aged between age 4 years old and age 5 years old who are born between 1st September and 31st August]. Supporting children to develop these skills will help them to get the most out of their reception year and to be as autonomous as they can be. We do not encourage the use of the 'Reception Readiness' guide as a checklist to be handed to parents as a list of skills children should be expected to master before starting reception. We heard from parents who welcome advice but feel overwhelmed when this is the approach. We hope that Solihull parents, children and schools will work together to understand what life is like in each reception class and how to help children to be prepared for being part of this larger group. That parents can share their knowledge about their child and discuss how best to support them. This may include discussion about the 'readiness' areas that may need to be supported in a different way due to a child's unique needs. It is, however, a way we can share the national research and guidance which supports us to match the early years curriculum to age-guided expectations such

as guidance linked to language development, screen time, toilet training and oral hygiene. We shouldn't wait for children to be 'ready' but encourage readiness in a range of different ways. Solihull early years were asked to share information about our support for SEND with Local Government Association. This was summarised into a **case study**- linked below...

[Solihull Council: A collaborative approach to early years SEND provision | Local Government Association](#)

Thank you to those of you who contributed to our **early years team around the child** approach. It was great to hear that help was valued and that our communication was sound. We have begun to develop the Solihull Local Offer website. We hope to include a video explaining the early years support for families. It was good to hear that parents appreciate the guidance to places to go for support - [Early years education \(0 to 4 years\) | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)



In the Solihull Early Years Team, we have been helping each other as we cope with the loss of a talented and deeply respected colleague- Charlotte Urquhart. Thank you for your comfort and sharing memories as we honour Charlotte's lasting impact across Solihull both professionally and personally.

We have chosen just two of the many evaluation comments that we had received about Charlotte's Area SENCo setting support...

Charlotte is very supportive and knowledgeable and has been of great help to us with our children.

Charlotte has always been emotionally supportive and available when we have needed her.

Charlotte's passing is a great loss to us as a team and the Solihull early years community of support.

SENDIAS

You can [find details of our upcoming programme of SEND Advice Workshops here](#). You can also find useful resources and more information on [our regularly updated facebook page](#).

Landau - All Age Autism Support Service (AAASS) Directory

The AAASS Directory is a simple, easy-to-use online resource helping autistic people, families, and professionals across Birmingham & Solihull find trusted local support.

What can you find?

- ☒ Local events
- ☒ Support groups
- ☒ Newsletters & articles
- ☒ Podcasts

What people are saying: *"As an autistic adult, I appreciate how inclusive and non-judgemental this space feels. It's empowering to have resources tailored to our needs."*

"This directory bridges gaps between services, families, and individuals. It's a vital tool for connection and support."

"The peer-recommended services add a level of trust. It feels like a true community effort."

Get involved! The AAASS Directory is growing all the time. If you:

- ◇ Can't find what you need
- ◇ Have ideas or suggestions
- ◇ Want to add an organisation or event

We'd love to hear from you! Email us at: aaa@landau.co.uk

Our Voices Heard in Conjunction with Solihull SEND Partnership – Let's Talk SEND Event

We were pleased to welcome over 60 children and young people to the Civic Suite in early July to take part in our third Let's Talk SEND event. The topic this time was Social media as this was something highlighted by attendees at our January event.

Sessions included

- How to Keep myself Safe
- What's the alternative?
- Real conversations

The aim of each session is to provide children and young people with some transferable knowledge to take back to their schools and share with peers through notice boards and assemblies.

We are grateful to the children and young people for taking part in the activities so fully – you were amazing! Your feedback has been really positive too, we are so glad you enjoyed the event.

Thanks also to Her Worship the Mayor, teachers and staff of the attending schools, partners our CICS, Super SEN and Inclusive Sports and colleagues from Family Hubs, SOLAR, SPCV, the EHCP team and the Strategy and Transformation team.

Special mention must go to Tracy Inman and Clare Hughes (OVH) for their role in organising the event and to Alfie Ford an amazing advocate for young people with SEND who was involved in the planning and introduction of the day.

If you would like to be involved in the planning or delivery of our next event contact – Bridget Morris Strategy and Transformation Manager at bridget.morris@solihull.gov.uk







Here2Help Families this Summer

Solihull Council is Here2Help families this summer, with support and services available ranging from free school meal vouchers and food parcels, access to family support services, fun summer day events, support with school uniforms and other essentials, Solihull's dedicated Family Hubs, and more summer activities than ever before through the Holiday Activity & Food (HAF) Programme.

In addition, for the first time, Solihull residents qualifying for free school meals whose children attend school outside of the borough can now [register online](#) for a free school meal voucher for the summer.

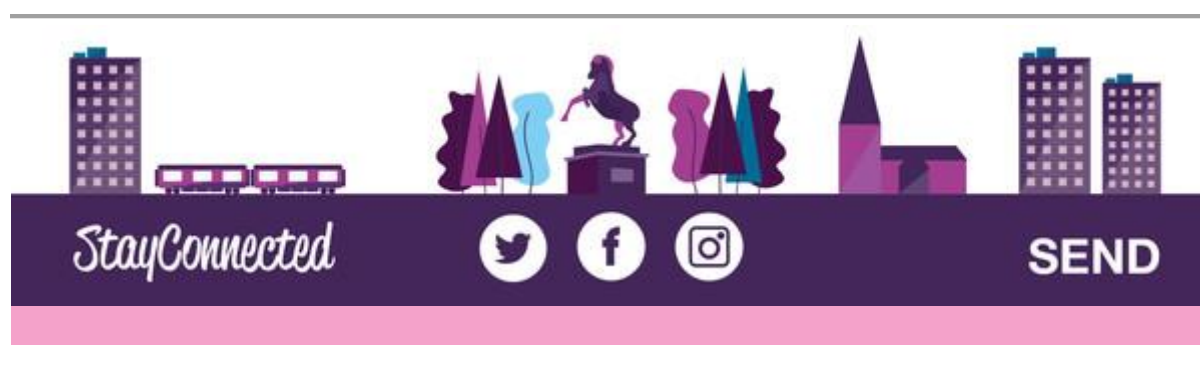
We want to ensure that families know about all the support available over the summer period, [click here to find out more on the Here2Help website](#).

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

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