

Solihull's Additional Needs Strategy 2022 - 2025

Annual Report

December
2025



Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

We have continued to make lots of changes to how we support children and young people with additional needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) this year. We set out our plans for this year in January 2025 but, as expected, we have changed things during the year so we can keep working on things that you have told us matter the most.

In this report we want to tell you what we have done, what some of you think about this and some of the new things we are now thinking about and planning for.

In last year's report we shared some of the national changes with the previous SEND and alternative provision improvement plan which has now been stopped. We know the government has said that the SEND system isn't working for anyone and have been told that their SEND reforms will be shared in 2026. Any changes we have to make following these reforms will be co-produced across the partnership. Until these are clear, we will keep working locally in Solihull to make the improvements we can for our children and young people as we explain in this report.

What have we been doing?

We have been strengthening how all services are working together in Solihull to make the improvements you have told us are needed.

Our multi-agency audits look at the journey of individual children and young people and allows us to think about where things have worked well and where we could do better. This work starts with a discussion with parent carers, and the child or young person where possible, so we can hear directly what their experiences have been and use this to inform the conversations we have. We then bring together professionals from across education, health and care who know the child or young person to reflect upon those experiences and share what services have done to support. As well as seeing where our support has been helpful (to help us know when we are doing the right things) we also spend a lot of time talking about what we could have done differently to improve the experience or outcome for the child or young person. Where we can still make a difference



for that child or young person we agree actions that are needed and these are followed up. This work also helps us to think about what changes we can make to the way we work to make things better for other children and young people in the future. Some of these changes are included in this report as things we have already done, or things we plan to do next.

All services have been involved in developing our early help offer so everyone can take more responsibility in making sure children and young people can get help in the right place at the right time; and without unnecessary escalation into social care services. We have seen an increasing number of early help assessments being completed in the community by services who are already working with those children and young people; and who know them best. As part of this offer, our [Family Hubs](#) are also being well used as places where children, young people and their families can meet with services or access activities in their own community.

We have also improved some of our processes so more professionals are involved in the decisions we make for individual children and young people. This means we can look at all aspects of a child's or young person's situation to help us make better decisions. This includes health colleagues supporting education services when deciding whether alternative provisions are suitable when a child or young person is struggling with school, and social care and education teams working closely together when children or young people are waiting for a school place. We are developing arrangements for education, health and social care to come together to agree a joint offer of support where children or young people have complex needs across all aspects of their life.

Health services have been working hard to stabilise the growing waiting lists in a number of areas and share more information with families ([support and waiting times](#)). We have made changes to the way that services are organised which has increased the number of children who can be assessed and reduced the length of time children may need to wait for some services. At the same time all services across health, education and care have been working together, alongside parent carers, to look at how best we can change how children and young people can access assessments, services and support for mental health, speech and language, occupational therapy, autism and ADHD. We still have much more to do in this area and it remains a key feature of our plans for next year as mentioned later in this report.





We had a wonderful SEND Celebration Event in December 2025!

Schools nominated 121 children and young people for a range of awards, and children and young people (and their families) nominated 58 school and organisation staff for a SEND Champion award. Each nomination was a joy to read. We have many amazing people in Solihull and had a special edition [SEND Newsletter](#) to recognise their achievements.

Those children, young people and staff from schools and organisations who were shortlisted for an award enjoyed a wonderful celebratory event. Many certificates, medals, trophies and goody bags were handed out to everyone as friends and family came together in an evening which included entertainment from the brilliant [Solihull Inclusive Choir](#).

Child of the Year

Winner: Freddie

Highly Commended: Mia

Community Inspiration

Winner: Rhiannon

Highly Commended: Mikey

Young Person of the Year

Winner: Daniil

Highly Commended: Bobbie-Jack

Kindness

Winner: Bernard

Highly Commended:
Mollie

Bravery

Winner: Leo & Faye

Highly Commended:
Ethan

Shining Star

Winner: Kirean

Highly Commended:
Jamie

Achievement

Winner: Omar

Highly Commended:
Asiya

Leadership

Winner: Jack

Highly Commended:
Isabella

Young Carer

Winner: Nancy

Highly Commended:
Finlay

SEND Champion Special

Winner: Mr Birch

Highly Commended:
Mrs Jones

SEND Champion Primary

Winner: Mrs Hart

Highly Commended:
Mrs Goodman

Courage

Child: Leighton

Adult: Mrs Taylor

SEND Champion Secondary

Winner: Mrs Cowley

Highly Commended:
Mrs McNamara

SEND Champion Organisation

Winner: OVH Ambassadors

Highly Commended:
Solihull Music



What you have told us...

There has been lots of work happening in Solihull and we make sure that parent carers, children and young people are part of the whole process; working in co-production. Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) and Our Voices Heard (OVH) sit on all of our groups to make sure we are always listening to, and thinking about, what parent carers, children and young people want. We also attend SPCV coffee morning meetings and hold SEND drop-in events; which are being well attended by parent carers alongside professionals from a range of SEND services.

When SPCV spoke to Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board in September 2025 they said:

“For the experiences and outcomes of our children and young people, and their families to improve, everyone in the system; children and young people, parent carers, schools, health and the local authority must all work together to make positive changes.”

and everyone working within the Solihull partnership agrees with this and is committed to doing all they can to make this a reality.

We have continued our engagement with children and young people so we can build good relationships and hear their views and experiences. We have done this through our Celebration and Let's Talk SEND events.

Since March, OVH have collected the voice of 381 young people through Education Participation Sessions within 24 schools. With this information they bring the young people's voices into meetings to gain feedback on strategies and key questions for services. OVH currently have 9 Young Ambassadors. These young people assist with meetings and attend events; and they hope to start attending Scrutiny meetings soon.



During our Let's Talk SEND events in 2024, young people told us they liked being asked their views but also wanted to leave these sessions with useful information. They also asked us to do more around mental health as this was an area they were struggling with. So, our events this year have been a little different:

In January we held a mental health day with over 60 children and young people from our primary and secondary schools. The mental health in schools' team, Solar, SPCV and OVH delivered sessions focused on how to look after your friends, keeping yourself well and dealing with worries. The Lady Mayor also joined to hear about what they had learned.



Pupils said they loved the activities that took place and that they were asked lots of questions

Giving the children chance to meet others and gain confidence in themselves as ambassadors for mental health in our school

In July we met with over 60 children and young people at our Let's Talk SEND social media event. Sessions covered how to keep themselves safe when using the internet; but also looked at alternative ways of mixing with peers and helping them to have 'real' conversations. Attendees also enjoyed hearing from Alfie Ford (Town Councillor and autism and disability awareness campaigner) who talked to them about his own journey.



It helped me meet new people

I really feel cared for

Love it, interactions were great, learnt quite a bit on improving communications



In February 2024, parents and professionals met at the annual **SEND Community Event**. This is always a great way to come together to talk about what is happening in Solihull and what else needs to be done.

This year we focused on how we move from talking about inclusion, to **belonging**. This was about increasing our ambition for our children and young people. Not just that things are done to include them in school and the community, but us all striving for every child and young person to really feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by those around them.

We welcomed Dr Jamie Galpin who spoke about the importance of recognising that all humans are different, with their own set of strengths, challenges, perspectives and experiences – and encouraged us to celebrate these differences, whilst seeing how we can remove any barriers these present.



This was an important step in our belonging journey, and views from parent carers are helping to shape how we work with schools and services to recognise diversity, predict any barriers this may create in accessing or receiving support and plan to remove these before children and young people experience them.

"My child is now a young adult, but today is the first time I feel like I can really understand them. I wish I had thought about all of this before" (parent carer comment)

In previous years SPCV have carried out a survey in the summer to collect parent carer views on a range of topics and the SEND partnership has used a separate survey in October/November to inform this annual report. Last year we had very few responses (68) to the SEND partnership survey and were told that parents and carers were tired of completing lots of surveys. So, this year we worked with SPCV to add a few questions that were important to us in their survey and we are grateful to all those parent carers who replied.



This report includes the feedback parent and carers gave, along with the feedback children and young people gave to Our Voices Heard.

Parent Carer's report

The SPCV **report on parental views on SEND services in Solihull** ([Flipbook](#)) was written following the feedback from 293 parent carers in the summer survey, and feedback provided by some of the SEND support groups in Solihull on the views they had also received from parent carers.

Key points from the report include:

- Some increase in confidence in education settings, however this is still inconsistent.
- Parent carers reporting very good assessments for autism, however waiting lists for autism and ADHD assessments and for speech and language therapy are negatively impacting children and young people, the support they receive and their access to education.
- Waiting times for mental health support for children and young people are having a negative impact on children and young people and on their parent carers.
- Communication has a significant impact on the experiences of families and their trust in the system. Parent carers are crying out for support - emotional wellbeing and mental health support, support to understand their child/young person's diagnosis and how best to support them, and support to navigate the system.
- The Local Offer needs to be more accessible for young people, easier to navigate and clearer language to help families understand and access the support available.
- Parent carers have said they need more support while their young person is waiting for assessment, diagnosis or intervention. This is a period of heightened stress and uncertainty, and they need more sufficient guidance. Interim and preventative support measures should be strengthened to reduce pressure on families.



Children and young people's report

The Our Voices Heard **report on the voices and thoughts of children and young people with additional needs in Solihull** ([Flipbook](#)) was written following the feedback from children and young people over the last year.

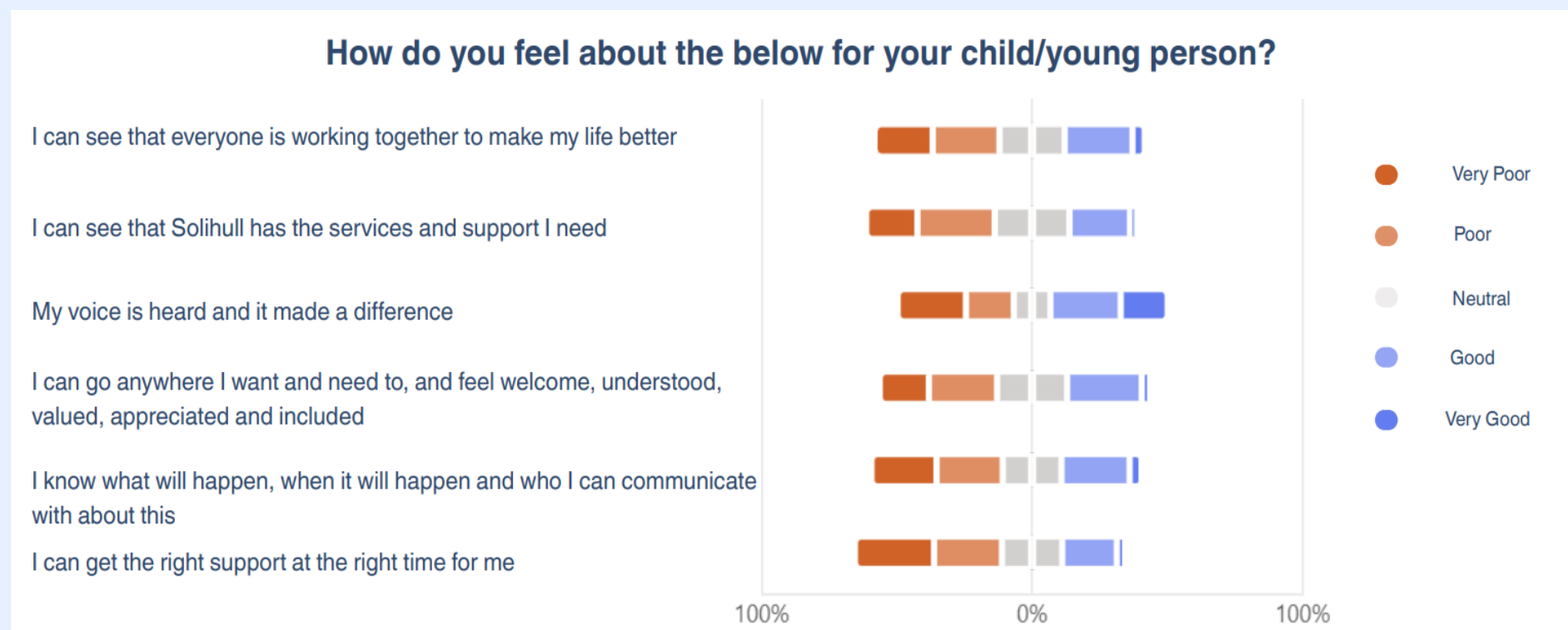
Key points from the report include:

- Young people recommend that services make more time to hear from them, offer different ways of communicating when required such as typing, writing or visual aids and provide feedback to show what they have said has been listened to and makes a difference. They want to be taken seriously and involved in the decision making.
- Young people say they want clear information about who they can talk to, where to find them, and what support is available. They want to build stronger relationships with trusted adults and be offered safe welcoming spaces where they can talk without feeling judged.
- Young people would like to be more supported with their healthcare. Young people stated they want to be heard without rushing, to feel understood as an individual with more appointments more readily available. They wanted medical terms explained in simple language and for someone to check they have understood.
- Recommendations from young people to improve mental health support included more availability and quicker access to appointments. Young people with autism felt their diagnosis stopped them getting the same support as others with their mental health.



Additional needs strategy

The SPCV survey asked parent carers to share how much they felt we were making an impact on the six priorities set out in our [Additional Needs Strategy](#). The results are shown below; but we will cover this more as we go through this report:



What have we been doing to improve the priority areas we shared with you in our strategy?

Priority 1

I can see that everyone is working together to help me make my life better...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work with a group of young people to help us set up information on our local offer aimed at young people and use different ways of showing that information.• We will work more closely with the Police to help children and young people feel safer when they are out.• Senior leaders will spend longer looking at what difference our plans are making to your lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We have worked with some amazing young people and staff at Alderbrook School to create podcasts and resources for young people on the local offer young people's page about ADHD, autism, dyslexia and sensory and panic disorder. Further podcasts on moving between schools (transitions) will be published shortly.• People from community safety, community housing, social care, education, public health, voluntary sector and the police are working together to ensure that streets, parks and neighbourhoods are safer for children and young people. This includes better responses where there are concerns and improvements to local parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Further work will be planned with Alderbrook School to develop more podcasts. We will also be looking to get more schools across Solihull involved with developing content aimed at children and young people for the local offer website.• We have established a multi-agency project to help us to do more to prevent children and young people who are neurodivergent from becoming victims of crime or being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. This is initially looking at the training that is available to the workforce and parents to provide a better



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Social Care will work with partners to make sure the Early Help Strategy works well in giving children and young people the support they need, when they need it. • We will release two more Dingley's Promise modules due in Spring 2025, which includes leading SEND. We will encourage more settings to complete the training and apply for a Mark. • We will review EHCP cases which have gone to tribunal to see what we can learn to improve this process for parent carers, children and young people and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a regular cycle of audits where the partnership looks at the impact of our work to inform changes (please see page 2). • We have seen a positive impact from our early help arrangements, with more than 70 agencies delivering early help services through our Family Hubs. Each Solihull school has a link to an early help co-ordinator to support this approach and teams around schools have been set up to help services work better together. • In Autumn 2025 three more Dingley's Promise modules (speech, language and communication, curriculum and assessment for inclusion and creating inclusive environments) were launched. A total of 10 modules are now available to early years settings and are being accessed by 693 staff. So far, 14 providers have been awarded the mark of achievement for their commitment to inclusive practice training. • We know that most tribunals are for school placements. We hold reasonable adjustment meetings with schools to help them look at how they can best meet a pupil's needs and have now begun pre-hearing meetings with schools and other professionals to help plan provision. • We are also seeing an increase in tribunals for education otherwise than in school (EOTIS) for either a package to be agreed, or for more 	<p>understanding of neurodiversity and its relationship with community safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will progress the Families First social care reforms which aim to make sure families get the right help as early as possible and when their needs change. We want to develop a system which provides a joined-up approach to meeting needs locally with tailored support and means families only need to tell their story once. • The free Dingley's Promise training offer ends in the summer 2026 so we will promote further so early years settings get the most benefit from this. • The SEND partnership will continue to reflect upon tribunal cases to improve this process for all involved. • The EHCP Team will meet with SPCV each month to seek feedback on communication with parent carers and attend SPCV coffee mornings on alternative months. Staff will also be asked to plan dedicated time each week to respond to parental queries received. • The Mental Health and Learning Disability and Autism Provider Collaborative and NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust will
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	provision to be made so have two dedicated staff working with families on these packages.	meet with SPCV each month to improve communications and co-production.
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49% (144 out of 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (29% of 68 parent carers) but still less than the 57% (140 out of 246) in 2023 and 59% in 2022.

Parent carers highlighted that they feel the quality and specificity of EHCPs is continuing to improve (with 86% reporting it accurately, or partially, reflected their child and their needs) and we know this can only happen with education, health and care services working closely together and with those children or young people and their parent carers.

Parent carers raised concerns around communication with services again this year, especially Solar and the EHCP Service. We know that parent carers who attend our termly SEND drop-in sessions find these really helpful in meeting with, and talking to, services so we want to think about how we can learn from that.

"We find that some services ... signpost us back and forth to each other with no one really taking lead and helping us resolve situations which then inevitably falls to us as parents to take on to try and resolve..." (survey comment)

"Very pleasantly surprised at how well organised this was. So many different services available to speak with and I have come away with a clear plan and next steps. I will be recommending this event to other parents." (drop-in session feedback)

Parent carers also fed back that more work was still needed on the Local Offer so it could be more accessible for families and easier to navigate (feeling it was "drab and business like") and that they wanted more information on education outside of school, which included college or university offers and what was available for children and young people who could not go to school.



Priority 2

I can see that Solihull has the services and support I need...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will set up a group (Quality Improvement Task & Finish Group) to check we are making progress on our plans for health support, communication, pathways, workforce and technology. • We will review our joint service models to make sure they are delivering what you need. • Education teams will start to review all specialist places to make sure the right children and young people are able to access them. • We will act on feedback about the structure of the Early Years Local Offer to aid it's use and help people find information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have introduced prioritisation for some health services so that children who may be at risk are seen more quickly. We have also developed 'myth busting' information to help ensure people have a clear understanding of how they can get support. • Working in partnership with an academy, we have delivered new specialist post 16 accommodation for Forest Oak special school. This provides an enhanced teaching and learning environment and will deliver additional post 16 places in the future. • We have revised our Education Sufficiency Strategy, engaging with stakeholders to outline how we will continue to meet the need for education places across the borough and ensuring we have a robust forecast of future demand. • Our mainstream schools have accessed a number of projects to help them better identify and respond to children's and young people's needs. This includes training on nurture, trauma and speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will improve the support available across health services to meet children's needs at the earliest opportunity and create a plan of actions to achieve this. • We are bringing together our improvement work for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and SISS so support can be better joined up. • We are working with our Special schools to ensure the physical environment can continue meet the changing needs of their children. • We will be continuing to explore physical space and expansion opportunities across our special schools. This will help them to meet the changing needs of their children



<p>about the early years offer with greater ease.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make improvements to the experiences of families accessing or attempting to access the Children's Disability Team. • We will review the targeted short break offer to make sure children and young people can continue to access the support they need. 	<p>and language - sharing best practice with each other and the local authority and engaging with their parent carer community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have set up a programme (CAIPE) where groups of schools can bid for matched funding to deliver projects which improve pupil's ability to engage in school and make better progress. Learning from these projects will be used to help all schools. • The local offer pages for Early Years have been updated and includes videos and images which make it more user friendly - as requested by families. • The Children with Disabilities Team now has a permanent leadership team which provides stability and consistency. The training staff receive has been improved to enhance services to families. • We have launched a new pathway for families to access social care support. There is also a new Early Help phoneline for families which means support can be sought without going through the MASH. The pathway, alongside our practice framework (Connecting Families) allows us to work with families in a restorative manner at the earliest opportunity, ensuring they get the right support at the right time. • We continue to provide an extended offer of targeted short breaks through the short breaks grants programme. A wide range of engagement has taken place to inform the new model for short 	<p>and should also provide more local places to meet the growing demand for specialist provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with our mainstream schools to increase inclusion through the development of additional resourced provision for pupils who need more specialist support. • The Children with Disabilities Team will continue to embed the pathway to provide timely support to families in need. We aim to build upon how we improve the participation of young people and their families and how we seek feedback from them in a creative and accessible way. • We will review how the mental health in school's teams are working with schools, children and young people and their families and waiting times to identify ways we can address long waits and help those whilst waiting. • We will recommission SENDIAS through a collaborative approach with SPCV to ensure the service meets the needs of families • We will implement the new model for short breaks based on the views,
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	breaks. Providers are shaping the nature of activities based on the voice of service users.	needs and experiences of parent/carers and children and young people.
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52% (154 out 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (24% of 68 parent carers) but similar to the 50% (123 out of 246) in 2023 and 54% in 2022.

When asked about education services, parent carers were much more positive about their experience of schools and settings this year. The percentage of parent carers reporting their confidence is shown below:

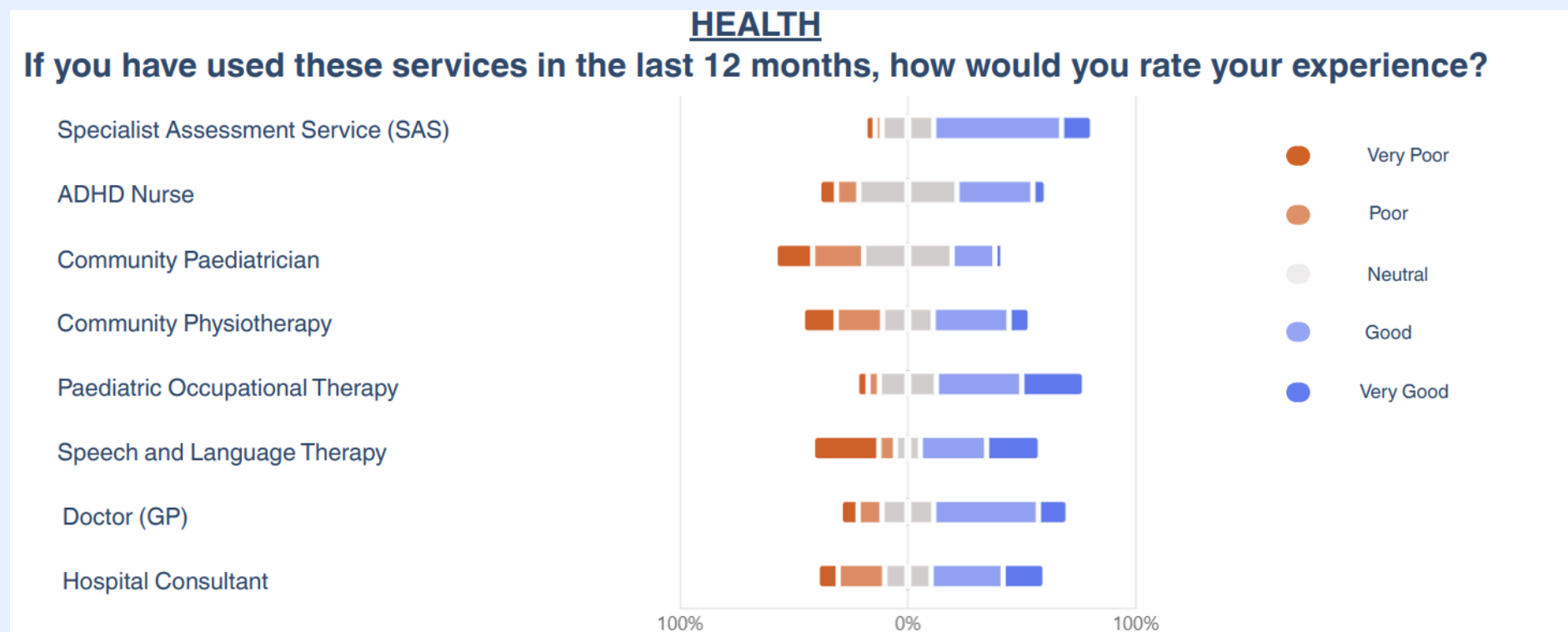
	academic needs	emotional needs	special educational needs
how confident are you in your child's school's/setting's ability to meet their:	75% 59% last year	63% 53% last year	57% 47% last year

When asked about children's social care services, parent carers reported a similar picture to last year; with 44% rating their experience as good, and more specifically, with 16% rating their experience with the Children's Disability Team as good.

When asked about adult social care, parent carers reported an improving picture; with 64% rating their experience as good - which is an 11% increase from last year.

Feedback on health services varied. In general, concerns were raised about the length of waiting times for assessment and treatment, and the impact that had on their child - with some families reporting they had needed to pay for private assessments for their child to get the support they need. Some parent carers also felt that neurodivergent children were not getting the right support they needed through mental health services. However, most parent carers did also recognise that when their child is seen by the right professionals, they did get the support they needed.

Information provided in response to the SPCV survey:



"When we see someone, the service is good, but getting to that point is hard." (survey comment)

"All involvement has been positive when accessed, waiting times are very long and don't respond to increase/variation in need." (survey comment)

Priority 3

My voice is heard, and it makes a difference...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We want to increase our parent and student groups, so they are in more schools. We are planning our next Let's Talk SEND events based upon what young people have asked for. The first event of 2025 will be about mental health and lots of people will be there to offer advice to children and young people and hear what is important to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With some money we have been given (through Delivering Better Value) we have helped SPCV set up new parent groups in over 35 schools so they can hear directly from you about the things that matter. Parents and schools have found this positive. OVH have worked well to increase the number of schools inviting them in to meet with their children and young people so their views can be listened to – and used to help make changes in Solihull. We have held a number of Celebration and Let's Talk events for staff across education, care and health to talk to children and young people about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPCV developed an offer for schools to buy into so they can keep their parent engagement groups after the council funding ended in October 2025. SPCV are sharing this with schools. We will continue to hold Let's Talk SEND events based upon topics feedback by children and young people. The July 2026 event will focus on transitions as we know this can be an anxious time for many. SPCV and OVH will take a greater lead in setting up their termly



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with SPCV and OVH to work out how best to seek your views throughout the year. • Education services will be working with schools to see how they can increase the number of young people attending their EHCP annual reviews and SPCV and OVH will be helping us with this. • The Mental Health transformation programme will have a focus on meeting the needs of those with SEND. • In children's social care we will continue to roll-out Mind of My Own so children and young people can more easily share their thoughts. 	<p>the things that matter to them. This year we have had a focus on mental health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have worked with SPCV and OVH to improve how we seek the views of parent carers and children and young people. This saw us combine surveys for parent carers and set topics for discussion with young people to make it easier to inform changes. • A SENCo meeting in the summer term was held to talk about how children and young people could be supported to attend their EHCP annual review. A follow up session is planned next year. In addition, OVH have captured and evidenced the feedback from young people on how best to support them attend their review and shared this with professionals involved. • The Mental Health and Learning Disability and Autism Provider Collaborative held a series of transformation days during June and July 2025 to scope how mental health services could be delivered in future to children, young people and families. This has resulted in a set of key principles being agreed for services – one of which includes how we ensure services are neurodiversity enabled. • The use of Mind of My Own has allowed children's social care to capture 182 express statements written by children under six years old or with additional communication needs since 2022. These 	<p>meeting with services so they are able to more quickly reflect any changes in priorities or new areas of concern being raised by parent carers or children and young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new posts will be put in place to help the mental health foundation trust and Solar co-design a meaningful co-production offer with children, young people and their families. These will work alongside a new group (Solar co-production strategic group) led by young people so they can become more involved and share decision making. • We are writing a new specification for mental health services across the life course, which will go live in 2026. The transformation required to deliver this will take time, but this will enable us to work differently to improve people's experience of care. • We are talking to children and young people about how we can best show them the changes we have made because of what they
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	<p>tell workers how the children are feeling and help them to have better discussions about what is going well in their life and where they are struggling (most often with their emotions).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have updated our partnership agreement so we can be clearer about how services will work with parent carers to develop systems, services and processes and how we will monitor this. 	<p>have told us, and we will develop a plan for putting this in place.</p>
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57% (167 out of 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (26% of 68 parent carers) and also higher than the 52% (128 out of 246) in 2023 and 2022. The voice of parent carers and children and young people is really important to us, so we are pleased to hear we are getting better at this.

Children and young people in the OVH report were also asked whether they felt they were listened to, and this told us:

	in the community	by my school or setting	about my health	about my mental health
I feel listened to...	53%	43%	46%	25%
I sometimes do...	25%	17%	23%	31%



"They should listen to me, and look at me – not just at my Mum"
(young person's comment)

"They are very supportive and helpful, they understand our emotions." (young person's comment)

Priority 4

I feel welcome, understood, valued, appreciated and included wherever I go...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use information in our different directories to develop one, new all-age directory which covers services, activities, places to go and events so you can find everything more easily in one place. We want to look more at how we can help children and young people feel safe in their community as they have told us this is a concern for them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new all-age "Here2Help" directory has been created. It will go live in January 2026 and provide a single source of information about local activities, services and places to go. The Minecraft Parks project launched in August 2025. This provides access to a newly created virtual version of Malvern Park to support individuals with social challenges and autism before they visit. We have reviewed 10 community buildings and spaces in north Solihull to assess how accessible they are to children, young people and adults with disabilities and sensory needs. This includes assessing how well marketed the buildings and their offers are to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to deliver the HAFP and ensure it remains accessible to and inclusive of children and young people with SEND. We will also continue to develop the local youth offer and its accessibility for children and young people with SEND, including the maintenance of a local directory to show what is available, where and for whom. Based on the recommendations from the community buildings review, we will start to deliver



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will identify what good looks like in Solihull with respect to community buildings and the practices of community organisations, to then develop shared standards and investment in practices, and buildings. • We will continue to develop the local youth offer, in line with statutory guidance and in readiness for government investment from the new National Youth Strategy. This will be whilst ensuring that the offer is relevant and accessible to children and young people with SEND. 	<p>these groups. Recommendations will then be made to improve accessibility and inclusion at these buildings, but also for community organisations across Solihull.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have continued to deliver the Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAFP) during the school holidays, also adding an offer for October half-term. During the summer 38% of all children participating were identified as having SEND (above the target of 30%). • Through the development of the local youth offer, we have been able to identify all the activities and places to go that are either exclusively for young people with SEND, or inclusive of young people with SEND. This will be shared on the Here2Help directory. • We have worked with parents and school leaders to change how we talk about children and young people being included. We are now focusing on the feeling of belonging as the best way to measure how well schools are responding to their needs. • We have started to talk about how schools can better plan to meet the different needs of all children in classrooms, so each child and young person feels like they belong. We have set up a group of interested schools to help us look at how we can do this across Solihull (using Universal Design for Learning model). • We worked with OVH to run a workshop with SEND young people in one of our secondary schools to talk to them about our school plans in Solihull and how we 	<p>training and support to community organisations to improve and grow their inclusion of children and young people with SEND.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are writing a document which sets out what the education offer is across Solihull to help us improve consistency and make it easier for schools, parents and children to work together so children and young people can thrive and belong in their school or setting. • We will look at how we can monitor how the Oliver McGowan training is making a difference to the experiences of children and young people and continue to improve practice. • Solar will continue to work with Autism West Midlands to train and support their staff to better meet the needs of neurodiverse children and young people.
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	<p>may need to create more SEND places in mainstream and specialist settings. Young people shared their opinions about what this should look like by talking to us and drawing their ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All health and care staff have been given the knowledge and confidence to understand how children and young people with autism or a learning disability experience care through the Oliver McGowan training package. 	
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55% (161 out of 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (32% of 68 parent carers) but also slightly lower to the 59% (145 out of 246) in 2023 and 57% in 2022.

You have continued to tell us that schools and colleges and medical appointments are more welcoming to children and young people than other areas – although we recognise that improvement is needed. We have the responses below:

My child finds this area very or mostly good for...	Education	Clubs, groups and holiday clubs	Medical appointments	Mental health appointments	Local community
making them feel welcomed and included	48% (139/290) <i>(51% in 2024)</i> <i>(45% in 2023)</i>	38% (100/263) <i>(39% in 2024)</i> <i>(55% in 2023)</i>	49% (141/287) <i>(44% in 2024)</i> <i>(52% in 2023)</i>	31% (78/253) <i>(18% in 2024)</i> <i>(48% in 2023)</i>	39% (109/279) <i>(30% in 2024)</i> <i>(55% in 2023)</i>

"More things that my family can afford." (young person's comment)

"Quiet times in shops that aren't always early in the morning." (young person's comment)

"Things to do in the park for older kids." (young person's comment)

"I still live a life like others only certain aspects are challenging. I still have dreams and want to do some things I just may need some support to get there." (young person's comment)

Priority 5

In planning for my future, I know what will happen, when it will happen and who I can communicate with about this...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We know that the number of young people with EHCPs who are 16 or older will continue to grow in Solihull so we will make a plan on what education, employment and community options we need to develop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A working group of college, school and further education leaders has been set up to help us work better together to improve the Post 16 offer in Solihull. We have now identified schools where career and employment advice and guidance could be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The working group will create plans to make changes to curriculum and pathways, SEND and inclusion and employability. This will also help us to develop courses which provide the skills employers in Solihull are looking for so young people can find employment more easily.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our new Preparing for Adulthood Support Worker based in the Adult Social Care Directorate will work directly with young people from the age of 14, and their family and carers, to help them plan for their future. • School leaders will be working closely with SPCV and OVH to make sure the views and experiences of children and young people are used to update the schools' transitions guidance. • Health services will share a child focussed animation video in January 2025 and a parent carer focussed video in March 2025 to promote annual health checks. Information leaflets for Community Services, Education, Social Care have will also be shared. We will continue to work with our experts by experience to develop a process to improve the quality of annual health checks. • There will be a series of Disability Confident engagement events 	<p>stronger and will be increasing our support for those young people next year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have moved Forest Oak Sixth Form (The Grove) to a new site which provides better facilities for its young people. • A new support worker in adult social care is helping young people to better prepare for adulthood. The support worker has enabled us to attend EHCP meetings from as early as age 14. This means Adult Social Care are actively engaging with young people at an earlier stage and providing families with clear information to help prepare them for their transition into adulthood. • We trialled holding Way Forward meetings with parent carers and schools when a request for an EHC needs assessment was refused. This has helped us have better discussions and agree what support children can access without an EHCP so things can be put in place more quickly. • The EHCP service have restructured to provide a dedicated team for Post 16 which can better support transition planning. • Our school leaders re-wrote transitions guidance so they can better support children moving schools, settings or classrooms. This included information that parent carers and children and young people said would be important to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be working with Solihull providers to expand the pathways available once young people leave school so there are options to meet their needs and aspirations. This includes looking at how we can change the offer following the new Post 16 education and skills white paper. • We will be working more closely with Solihull College as they make changes to their offer to meet the needs of more young people with SEND. • The Preparing for Adulthood Team will be focusing on two key priorities. To make planning simpler and more coordinated for young people and their families we will continue to align Adult Social Care reviews with annual EHCP reviews. We will also trial supported employment workshops within our specialist schools, the first of which will take place in early 2026. • We are now looking at what staff we have in the council teams to offer these Way Forward meetings to all families in the future.
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<p>throughout 2025 - the first being an in-person event at Blythe Valley Business Park in January.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next event Apprenticeship Show on 29th January at North Solihull Sports Centre will have Supported Internship Providers in attendance to promote into work opportunities for young pupils with an EHCP. • Wider development of Supported Internships in Solihull to increase current offer. • Solihull Careers Hub to work with Schools, SENCo's, SPCV and OVH to promote the Local Offer (incl. Supported Internships). Every article or update from Careers Hub uses the local offer to provide parents/pupils with information (routing for them) to support post 16 transitions, providing all with as much information as possible to help inform career related decisions. • Using the findings from the Castlewood/BBV collaboration, the Careers Hub want to link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have produced a video produced for young people to explain the learning disability annual health check, including what to expect and why they are important. We are now working on a video aimed at parents and carers to support their knowledge and awareness and encourage them to support their child to take up the offer. • We have put a new system in place to improve communication between the EHCP services and the Employment and Skills team so we can better track young people as they enter post 16 education and offer support to those who are struggling. • The Careers Hub has delivered a series of SEND transition events to provide all schools, professionals and parent carers with options to consider for a 'work first' approach. Workshops have provided more clarity on engagement, support and employer needs and a SEND Transition Community inputs into the Local Offer on careers related opportunities. • We have revised our employer engagement strategy due to low interest in our Disability Confident events. Employment & Skills now record the businesses they are working with and once a job (or positive experience) is offered, the business can submit an application to the DWP for Disability Confident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Transition Community is looking to deliver workshops in 2026 to progress post 16 provision and alongside this the Careers Hub will work with schools and EHCP Service to improve the Local Offer and promote opportunities. • Employment & Skills will be leading on employer engagement through Connect to Work initiatives. A qualitative database of local employers who want to be involved, will lead to more opportunities for young people to benefit from. • As part of that offer, Employment & Skills (Careers Hub) will be working with businesses on how they can help young SEN or neurodiverse pupils to aspire and achieve more through qualitative careers options. We will also reshape work experience to help promote this as an attractive opportunity for both employers and young people to think 'work first'. • The Council was successful for further funds to provide Supported Internships in Solihull (2025/26) and is
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<p>more employers with special schools to provide careers related support to help those pupils achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Link Worker Post will work with Social Workers and Personal Assistants to help broker a triage service for employment related asks. Another post has already made a significant impact on the numbers of older age residents with learning disabilities accessing jobs. • Skills for Success operating across Years 11 upwards (some Year 10 preparation work) in all Solihull Schools to help those pupils at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training) to sustain school and move into internships, apprenticeships or further education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have had successful examples of our work with businesses including: Arcadis Management Group delivering a virtual work experience project to young people with SEND at Smith's Wood and WMG Academy with a view to potential future work trials and mentoring to help them achieve appropriate grades, the Arden Hotel recruiting to full and part time posts through the disability confident approach and Balfour Beatty Vinci recruiting a previous supported intern. The Council has also provided its first Inclusive Apprenticeship following a successful Supported Internship placement. • All Apprenticeship Shows now have quiet hours to encourage SEN or neurodiverse students to attend during this period and this is being well used. Supported Internship Providers (Solihull College and Mencap) attend these shows to attract EHCP pupils into job opportunities sooner, there is a focus on providing better information for pupils/Parents to consider options. • Castlewood continue the relationship with Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV) and BBV are now working with Lyndon school to help neurodiverse pupils to raise their career aspirations. • A new Link Worker Post is in place for the next two years and will support the EHCP Service in thinking about how the offer for young people can be improved – in considering a 'work first' approach 	<p>hopeful further funds will be released to continue development in 2026/27.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional promotional plans are in place for Supported Internships. There are currently more employer pledges than Solihull young pupils on EHCP choosing to take up this offer, so more engagement is required. • The Link Worker will be working up plans with services to help broker better access to Supported Internships as route into employment for care experienced young people with EHCPs and work experience and support for 18-21 year old NEET young people.
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	<p>and improving access to education and training programmes which provide career opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solihull Skills for Success offer schools an opportunity to provide additional support for young people with EHCPs or neurodiversity in Year 11-13 at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET) to sustain education and achieve better qualifications. This includes extra curriculum activity, workshops, inspirational talks/mentoring and 1:1 support. In the summer holidays career sessions and workshops were also delivered to help those students who required more regular activities.	
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51% (149 out 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (18% of 68 parent carers) but this is the same as the 51% (125 out of 246) in 2023 and 2022.

Parent carers have shared positive feedback about their experiences; with Adult Social Care and the Preparing for Adulthood Team improving. However, community groups also shared their discussions with parent carers which raised that more focus on preparation for adulthood and post-16 was needed and that they felt that young people did not have much choice when it comes to Post 16 – *“needing a SEN college in Solihull that can meet the needs of young people, in an environment that is SEN friendly”*. Young people have previously feedback about how important local post 16 options are for them.

Children and young people in the OVH report were also asked whether they knew who to talk to, and this told us:

I know who to talk to for help.....	in education	in the community	about my health	about my mental health
Yes	49%	47%	39%	25%
Sometimes	23%	24%	47%	39%

"If they explained things better so that I can understand" (young person's comment)

Young people say they want clear information about who they can talk to, where to find them, and what support is available.

Priority 6

I can get the right support I need at the right time for me...

What we said we would do	What we have done	What we are doing next
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will work closely together to put our plans in place to help support children and young people as early as possible and reduce waiting times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have changed the way that some services are organised which has increased the number of available appointments and reduced the length of time children have to wait for some services We have set up check-in calls to all children and young people on the waiting list for mental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are developing a plan to run a 'waiting list initiative' to reduce the number of children waiting for an ADHD and autism assessment. We are working with general practice to improve access to 'shared care' for children with ADHD.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Years Team Around the Child [EYTAC] process is launching as an online form to help early identification, support of need and automatic referral sharing. This encourages a shared graduated approach for young children. • We will improve access to support so children and young people who are struggling are able to remain at school. 	<p>health intervention to help us prioritise appointments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Early Years Team Around the Child [EYTAC] has successfully supported young children with high needs to get education support and SaLT if needed. Parents feedback is positive, and the on-line form includes parents in the submission from health services. 119 children were referred for support through this process. • We have worked on different ways to improve support available to help children and young people attend school. We have arranged whole school conferences and regular meetings with schools to talk about the pupils they are concerned about to discuss what else could help. We hold attendance drop in's at our Family Hubs so parent carers who need some support with their child's school attendance can talk to teams outside of the school. • We have met with SENCos to explain the timescales which have to be followed for an annual review. This is to improve the number of schools submitting paperwork within two weeks of the date of the annual review – and enable us to issue more Notice of Amends EHCPs to parents within a total of 4 weeks. • Several schools we have supported through advice, guidance, and solution-focused meetings have shown marked improvements in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are exploring digital solutions that could help make the process of referral and assessment quicker and easier. • In mental health we want to understand why so many children, young people and families do not turn up to their appointments. This is so we can remove barriers and also offer those appointments to others to reduce their waiting times. • In mental health, we are also looking at all our waiting times to find ways we can reduce these to improve access to services and interventions. This includes looking at how mental health support teams in schools are working and how we maximise use of the i-thrive model. • We will explore commissioning a research project in North Solihull schools to better understand barriers to attendance. Insights will inform a targeted approach to improving overall attendance and engagement - and narrow the gap compared to schools in the south of the borough and national absence rates. • We will provide targeted support for high exclusion and/or suspension schools and embed restorative and relational
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	<p>reduction of suspensions and exclusions, indicating our approach is yielding positive results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have drafted and published our Section 19 policy detailing how the LA discharges its statutory duty for arranging provision for compulsory age children who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive a suitable education. • We have begun to look at what improvements we can make to our specialist support (SISS) offer so schools are better able to recognise, and meet, the needs of their children and young people and access high quality, timely, specialist support when they need it. 	<p>approaches through training and workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A SISS review is underway to look at how best to flexibly support children and schools moving forward. It is anticipated that a newly structured offer will be in place for September 2026. Focus groups have been held with invested partners. • All schools have a link Senior EHCP Officer. When parents raise concerns that provision in EHCPs is not being delivered they will visit schools and escalate issues if patterns develop. All schools are offered half termly meetings with this link officer.
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46% (135 out of 293) of parent carers told us that you thought we were improving against this priority. This is much better than last year when we had a poor response to our survey (22% of 68 parent carers) but still less than the 50% (123 out of 246) in 2023 and 2022.

Many parent carers continued to share their concerns about delays in assessments or support, and we have spent a lot of time this year looking at what we can do to help families now whilst changing the system for the future. We also heard from children and young people in the OVH report about how receiving their diagnosis had been important to them.

This year there was an increase in the number of parent carers who indicated they were confident that their child's education setting was putting the provision included in their EHCP in place - with 53% of parent carers saying this was the case compared to 49% last year. Whilst we are pleased to see this has slightly improved, we know there is still more to do and will look at what is possible.



"I stopped comparing myself to others, because everyone's different - like fingerprints no two are the same"

Thank you to every child and young person, parent carer and professional for working so hard again this year to make things better in Solihull. We look forward to continuing this work together.



Useful Links:

To sign up for the Council's monthly SEND Newsletter: [Solihull Council \(govdelivery.com\)](https://solihullcouncil.gov.uk/govdelivery.com) (SEND is under the Education option)

To engage with us through our SEND Hub: [SEND and Additional Needs | Your Voice Solihull \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com)

To find information on our Local Offer: [Solihull Local Offer | solihull.gov.uk](https://solihull.gov.uk)

To get support from SENDIAS: [Solihull SEND Information, Advice and Support Service - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](https://family-action.org.uk)

To talk to Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV): [Solihull Parent Carer Voice SPCV | Inspiring Positive Change](#)

To join Our Voices Heard (OVH): [Children and Young People's Voice- Our Voices Heard! - Solihull Parent Carer Voice \(spcv.org.uk\)](https://www.spcv.org.uk)



