

Solihull SEND Newsletter

December 2025

#SENDSpotlight

Our Voices Heard collected the voices of 149 children and young people in September and October through their school, community and ambassador sessions. Their views have been used to help work on a co-production charter (promises) and understand what works well when transitioning between schools, or classes. Thank you to all involved

National news

Following the announcement that the SEND reforms were being delayed to allow for more engagement, a number of national sessions are being held to hear the views of everyone involved in the SEND system. You can find the dates of sessions online:

- The Department for Education are hosting virtual sessions with the Schools Minister on each of the reform principles - [SEND Reform National Conversation](#)
 - The Council for Disabled Children are hosting face to face regional sessions and virtual national sessions with the Department for Education and expert advisors - [SEND Regional Engagement Events](#)
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Local news

Over 200 children, young people and their families, school staff and organisations came together on 2nd December for the 2025 SEND awards ceremony. It was a highlight of the year and full of smiles and energy as we celebrated the strengths of the wonderful children and young people we have in Solihull, and those who support them. The evening's energy began with songs from the fantastic Inclusive Choir, fresh from their recent performance at the Albert Hall. Please look out for the special edition of the SEND newsletter dedicated to the SEND awards coming soon!

We would like to thank the whole SEND partnership for their hard work again this year in developing services to improve the outcomes and experiences of our children and young people. We are also thankful to those children and young people, and their families, who have taken the time to work with us on these improvements, or to feedback their thoughts on what is, and isn't working. 'Fixing' the SEND system remains an aspiration of government and we look forward to

seeing what changes can be made - but in the meantime we have continued to do what we can locally.

We are therefore pleased to publish our 2025 additional needs annual report which outlines the work we have done this year, feedback from children and young people and their parent carers, and our plans for further improvement during 2026. You can read this report on the local offer: [Additional Needs Strategy | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

We have now welcomed Jane Sowerby to Solihull Council as the new Assistant Director for Education & Inclusion. The new energy and direction she has brought to Solihull has already been well received and Jane looks forward to meeting more parent carers and school staff over the coming months.

During November we welcomed the scrutiny of two inspections. Ofsted finished their three-week inspection of our Children's Services and the Care Quality Commission carried out their onsite phase of the Adult Social Care inspection. Both reports will be published sometime in the new year. We are now anticipating the SEND & Alternative Provision inspection across the partnership.

Additional Needs board

The last joint additional needs board meeting took place on 5 December 2025. The key messages were:

- The Board discussed the annual report which will be published at the start of January and how this provided everyone in Solihull with an interest in SEND the opportunity to see what has happened over the last year and what the plans are for 2026. It was noted that this would be presented to the Children's, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board in January and included how SEND services were responding to the feedback from parents and carers and children and young people.
- Members reflected upon the recent meeting with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission who wanted to be updated on the local area SEND journey. The closer working across all services in the partnership was felt to have grown stronger, and whilst challenges remain in the support and provision for children and young people, there is a greater understanding of the plans in place and more joined up approaches.
- The Board were delighted to hear of the success of the SEND awards evening and were extremely thankful to Our Voices Heard and Solihull Parent Carer Voice for their huge effort in achieving this and thanked all those who had supported the event.

National conversation on the SEND reform principle of 'early'

The live conversation with an expert panel, about the principle of helping children as early as possible, took place early in December 2025. The Ages and Stage Questionnaire (ASQ) was mentioned frequently as key to early identification and support for 2 to 2 ½ year olds. Our early

years team around a child support referral process is based both on ASQ and parents, health professional, and where applicable, a child minders knowledge of a child's needs.

Our Solihull data puts us first in the ranking of all local authorities for this aspect of early years child development as 100% Solihull children were offered an ASQ. This year the outcomes at 2 – 2 ½ years dipped slightly compared to the previous year.

2024/2025 ANNUAL ASQ data
Table 8: Annual data and validation of child development outcomes for England, regions and local authorities

Area	Communication skills (percentage)	Gross motor skills (percentage)	Fine motor skills (percentage)	Problem solving skills (percentage)	Personal-social skills (percentage)	All five areas of development (percentage)
England (aggregate value of local authorities passing Stage 1 validation)	87.6%	93.6%	93.7%	93.0%	91.8%	81.4%
West Midlands (aggregate value of local authorities passing Stage 1 validation)	85.2%	93.3%	93.3%	91.4%	90.4%	78.0%
Solihull	91.5%	95.2%	96.5%	93.6%	94.5%	85.2%

Communication remains a priority with support available in Family Hubs, on CBeebies Tiny Happy People website and for setting via [Dingley's Promise communication module](#) and the [Solihull Area SENCo interaction 'shorts'](#).

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/toddler/learning-to-talk/chatting-and-building-sentences-2-to-3-years/>

Ofsted- updated inspection guidance

Our January SENCo briefing has an inclusion focus. We invite SEND leads in settings to consider the inspector guidance, such as the toolkit, to aid self-evaluation.

SENCo Briefing Topic: Understanding the New Early Years OFSTED Inspection Framework: Implications for SEND Provision

Date: Monday 19th January 2026 Time: 1:30pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams Cost: FREE

Audience: Setting SENCOS, Setting Managers, setting practitioners

Content: This session will look at the New OFSTED inspection framework for Early Years settings, and how these updates affect children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We'll talk through what the new framework means for your SEND provision, helping you understand how it might impact your practice and what steps you can take to get ready for your next inspection.

Disability Access Fund- DAF for early years

There has been a drop in the number of schools claiming DAF additional funding for eligible children. If a child receives funded early education and is in receipt of child disability living allowance [DLA] the school or setting can claim £938 as a one-off payment for each eligible child. More information is available on the following webpage-

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/eef/disability-access-fund-daf/>

Educational Psychology Service

We've had a busy term and we'd like to send thanks to all the families and schools who support us so well. There is no waiting list for EHC assessments currently and we'll be working through the holiday period with our colleagues in the EHC team to keep up with the workflow. We're receiving bookings for the 2026 ELSA course, and we ran additional training for our current ELSA team on the Homunculi approach which was well-received. The Attachment and Trauma project continues to run across the borough and our Early Years workstream is planning some additional drop-ins for settings and families in the new year. We wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Autism and ADHD Redesign Programme

We're moving forward into the next stage of improving Autism and ADHD pathways in Solihull, and we wanted to keep you updated on what's happening.

The delivery and mobilisation plan has been signed off, which means we have clear governance and a roadmap for the changes ahead. This is an important step to make sure everyone knows what's happening and how decisions are being made.

What's next?

- Workstreams are being set up to lead the delivery of key actions, so progress can happen quickly and in a coordinated way.
- A Quality, Equality and Impact Assessment (QEIA) is underway to check the financial, workforce and quality implications of the proposed commissioning policy and access criteria. This helps us make sure changes are fair and sustainable.
- Workforce modelling data has been shared, and this will feed into demand modelling and service planning after Christmas. This is about making sure we have the right people in the right places to meet children's needs.
- Engagement with parent carers remains a top priority. Our next area of focus is the development Frequently Asked Questions about people's right to choose a provider to access an NHS funded assessment for autism or ADHD.

Thank you for your ongoing support and involvement. Your voice is central to shaping these improvements, and we'll keep sharing updates as we move forward together.

All Age Autism Support Service Directory

Looking for autism support in Birmingham & Solihull?

The All Age Autism Service Directory is a free, easy-to-use online resource designed for autistic individuals, families, caregivers, and professionals.

What you'll find:

Quick access to support

Information across education, health, and social care

Local events and activities updated regularly

Content developed with Experts by Experience to ensure accuracy, relevance, and accessibility

The Directory is continually updated, and we welcome your feedback or suggestions.

Have a service to share, or can't find what you're looking for?

Get in touch: aaa@landau.co.uk

Explore the Directory: www.aaadirectory.co.uk

Daily activities & events: <https://www.aaadirectory.co.uk/events/>

Articles for parents, carers & professionals: <https://www.aaadirectory.co.uk/articles/>

Online training for parents, carers & professionals: <https://www.aaadirectory.co.uk/events/>

Discover support that makes a difference—visit today!

Short Breaks Grants Programme

Applications are now open for the 2026-2027 round of Short Breaks grants funding.

This is an open application process for any organisations that might be interested in delivering short breaks activities for disabled children and young people in the borough of Solihull.

The factsheet and application form can be found here [Voluntary and Community Sector \(VCS\) Funding | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

The focus of this grant programme is to fund small organisations to deliver imaginative and creative projects which aim to provide children and young people with disabilities with positive,

fun, challenging, engaging and developmental group activities, whilst also allowing their parents and carers to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

Organisations interested in applying should complete the application form and return to childrenscommissioning@solihull.gov.uk by 23:59 on Tuesday 27th January 2026.

Solihull Apprenticeship and Pathways Show

To help Year 10-13 pupils learn about alternative routes to university such as apprenticeships, supported Internships and T Levels, the Solihull Apprenticeship and Pathways Show will be held on Wednesday 28 January 2026 at North Solihull Sports Centre with 2:30pm-3:30pm as quiet hour.

For more information, [please refer to the flyer.](#)

If you think other people you know would be interested in this newsletter please encourage them to [sign up on the Council website.](#)

If you have any feedback on the newsletter, or suggestions for future items please email and let us know at jand@solihull.gov.uk

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