

Solihull SEND Newsletter

February 2026

#SENDSpotlight

Over 60 children and young people have enjoyed afternoon tea with the Mayor in celebration of their achievements which led to them being nominated for last year's SEND awards. *"Our children were enthralled by the whole experience and it has given them all a real boost"*

National news

Yesterday saw the long-awaited release of the education white paper and SEND reforms. Both are very detailed and lengthy documents and it will take some analysis over the coming weeks to understand what the changes mean for children and young people and their families; and those working in the system to support them.

These outline a significant reform for the whole of the SEND sector so we will be using our SEND partnership arrangements to discuss our response to the plans and will share more information about what this means for Solihull as it becomes available.

In the meantime, you may find the following links helpful:

- The full schools white paper - [Every child achieving and thriving](#)
 - The full SEND reform plan - [SEND reform: putting children and young people first](#)
 - Key information on the white paper and SEND reform plan for families and practitioners - [Every child achieving and thriving and SEND consultation supporting information](#)
 - SEND reform consultation (open until 18 May 2026) - [SEND reform: putting children and young people first - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)
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Additional Needs Board

The last joint additional needs board meeting took place on 2 February 2026. The key messages were:

- The Board undertook a deep dive into the recent school permanent exclusions of children with an EHCP. The learning around school processes and practice was shared to help the partnership consider where support can be strengthened to improve the

experience and outcome for children in the future and enable schools to find alternative approaches which do not result in an exclusion.

- The Board discussed the pending education white paper and SEND reforms and the request from the Department for Education that local SEND partnerships begin work to understand the maturity of their system, so they are in a good place to respond to these. Members reflected upon work already undertaken by the partnership and how this could be strengthened.
- Members heard about the early plans to improve the visibility and tracking of children under 5 years old identified by health partners as having SEND needs. Greater understanding of need across the borough will support better joint planning for these children.

Education Strategic Plan

This plan brings together many projects which are aimed at improving the lives and education of all children and young people in Solihull. You can read what progress is being made in our January 2026 update available on Your Voice Solihull - [Education Strategic Plan](#)

Multi-agency audits

We have carried out another round of audits during February and are extremely grateful to the parent carers of those six children and young people for agreeing to participate in the process and for those who were able to share their views and experiences. These audits are vital to help us understand the lived experience of our children and young people and their families – helping us to identify areas which are working well and where further development is needed so we continue to improve our support. Key actions from these audits will be shared in a future newsletter.

EHCP Service

The EHCP and SEND drop in event which took place in January 2026 was very successful with our highest number of appointments. We have a diverse range of professionals attending these events which make them a great opportunity for parents/carers to meet and ask questions to different professionals in one place. The next event will take place on 19 June 2026 at the Council House in Solihull so please put the date in your diaries.

Early Years SEND Conference – Elmwood Family Hub April 2026

This event is designed for Solihull parents of children under 5 with any form of SEND, as well as professionals working with young children in Solihull—including those in nurseries, schools, or working as childminders.

Drop in for a chance to speak with Solihull's professional teams, ask questions, and receive face-to-face advice. You can also attend a series of workshops covering key early years SEND topics and make use of the Family Hub facilities. There is further information [in the attached flyer](#).

Dingley's Promise- reminder [ends June 2026]

I have looked at the massive number of practitioners in Solihull who have completed and started Dingley's Promise Inclusion modules. The access to this training ends soon. Dingley's have now reached 30,000 learners (over 700 learners for Solihull) and we want to make the most of the access to this free inclusion training before it ends in June. If you are signed up to a module you can complete it after the end date, so sign up now.

I noticed many settings, including childminders, who appeared to be eligible for a [Mark of Achievement](#) – why not join Damson Wood Woodies and the 15 settings with the Mark. To have the chance to display this achievement, complete the excel (listing learners and modules completed), and send it in to training@dingley.org.uk <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/training/training-from-other-providers/> -excel and further information

I would be very grateful, if you have completed any Dingley's modules, if you were able to give me feedback. What has been the impact on your confidence to include SEND learners? What adaptations have supported learners? How have your practitioners found the training – have any modules been especially helpful? This will help in our report-back as we exit the Comic Relief training. The organisation has been advising the DfE ahead of the SEND white paper- really making sure that early years is strong in Government policy.

lmorris@solihull.gov.uk – Lisa Morris Early Years Team Manager

If a child has Disability Living Allowance their setting can access £938 Disability Access Funding. Not all [DAF funding](#) has been claimed- the gap between the grant and applications for funding means that the Local Authority is able to consider use of the funding to support the needs of pre-school children with SEND. We are hoping to support access to the Dingley's Promise training and our speech, language and communication (SLC) 'Natter Matters' community events and training. We aim for a communication champion from every setting to access the training focussed on our SLC pathway.

[Supporting inclusive early education: A good practice guide | Local Government Association - Solihull contribution](#)

In autumn 2025, the LGA worked alongside early years experts to hold six roundtable discussions with 14 early years staff from LAs achieving higher-than-expected take-up. Solihull LA were invited to take part in this review. The discussions explored new challenges created by the expansion of entitlements for working families and the overlap in eligibility, and the review team sought further insights about “what works” to support take-up among disadvantaged children.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/supporting-inclusive-early-education-good-practice-guide>

This guide brings together LAs' experiences and practical ideas so early education and childcare teams can learn from each other's approaches to:



Describing cognition and learning needs

The latest version of Solihull Council's document which describes the nuances of learning needs and how they can be supported in line with the graduated pathway is available for schools to access on the education extranet. Social care staff and health colleagues who have already registered to access the site can also follow the link below.

- [Describing cognition and learning needs - Solihull Council](#)

Speech and Language Therapy Services

Solihull Parent Carer Voice representatives, education colleagues, health partners and commissioners recently met to discuss the current challenges and opportunities within Solihull's speech and language therapy services. The group reflected on growing demand, waiting times, and the need for clearer pathways and more consistent support for families, particularly for early years children and those with SEND.

Partners agreed to take forward a set of practical steps aimed at strengthening support for children and families, enhancing confidence and capability across early years settings, making better use of community-based opportunities, and improving the collective understanding of local needs to inform future planning.

Longer-term, partners will work together to design a more integrated, holistic, and evidence-led offer — exploring a multidisciplinary approach to strengthen early intervention and ensure children receive the right support at the right time.

Further updates will follow as this work progresses.

SENDIAS

We are pleased to announce that, following a competitive tender process, the contract for Solihull's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) service has been awarded to Family Action. The evaluation panel included representatives from Solihull Parent Carer Voice, health partners, and the Council.

Family Action, as the existing provider, already has a strong and established presence in Solihull. This means children, young people and families can expect a smooth and seamless transition into the new contract period. Continuity of support remains our priority, and no disruption to the service is anticipated.

New Sensory Sport Session on Saturday 21st February

A new Sensory Sport session launches on Saturday 21st February taking place at Auckland Hall, 25 Sunbeam Close, B36 9JR. The session is designed specifically for children aged 5–11 with complex needs. The sessions provide a safe, supportive and accessible way for children to enjoy activities.

Here is [the promotional poster](#), which includes a booking QR code.

Please note that there are only eight family spaces available for this session.

The term “complex needs” refers to situations in which an individual has two or more co existing, significant conditions such as learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism, or sensory impairments that substantially affect daily life and require a higher level of support.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Matthew at matthew.rickard@sense.org.uk or call 07884 494831.

All Age Autism Support Service (AAASS) Directory — Supporting Families and Professionals in Solihull

If you're looking for autism support in Solihull, whether as a family member or a professional, the AAASS Directory is here to help.

This free, easy-to-use online resource brings together trusted information, local services, and practical support in one place for autistic people, their families, and those who work with them.

Through the Directory, you can access:

Clear pathways to local support for children, young people, and adults

Reliable information across education, health, and social care

Regularly updated events and activities for families and practitioners

Content developed with Experts by Experience to ensure it is relevant, accessible, and informed by real lived experience

The Directory is continually updated, and your feedback is valued. If you have a service to share, or can't find what you're looking for, please get in touch.

Contact: aaa@landau.co.uk

Explore and connect with support here:

Directory: www.aadirectory.co.uk

Events and activities: www.aadirectory.co.uk/events/

Articles for families and professionals: www.aadirectory.co.uk/articles/

Online training for parents, carers, and professionals: www.aadirectory.co.uk/events/

Discover support that makes a difference

Gain work experience and structured training with Supported Internship

A Supported Internship is a structured study programme for young people aged 16 and over with an EHCP to get ready for work. It combines work experience and formal training over an academic year. A dedicated job coach will support the intern to adapt to the workplace. 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. Find out more from [this webpage](#).

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

Charlotte Jones

Head of Strategy - SEND & Additional Needs



StayConnected



SEND