

Solihull SEND Newsletter

March 2026

#SENDSpotlight

Over 100 parent carers and professionals in Solihull came together on 4 March for the SEND Community Event. As always it was a fantastic opportunity to share views and work better together.

National news

SEND Reforms

Following the release of the school's white paper and SEND reform consultation last month we have taken some time to understand what the proposals may mean for children and families, services and our whole SEND community. We have published some information on our local offer [SEND Strategic Activity](#) pages which we hope will help. This includes:

- A summary of the proposed changes and the work that is now required of local areas by the DfE
- A short summary for parents on what the reforms mean for them

On 9th March LAs received a letter from the DfE asking them to write a plan detailing how the local area is proposing to meet the expectations set out in the SEND reform consultation paper.

This plan must be written by mid-May and submitted to the DfE in June and include what actions we will take in Solihull to ensure we have a clear universal offer across all schools in the borough (leading to the National Inclusion Standards), how we will create an Experts at Hand service to provide whole school and group based support and advice to schools (including EPs, speech and language and occupational therapy and special school and AP outreach), how we will set-up new inclusion specialist bases in mainstream schools to support pupils with EHCPs and how we will ensure the right governance is in place; including the new local school SEND groups.

This is a significant piece of work for our local area and it is vital the LA, ICB, schools, health providers, children and young people and their parent carers work closely together to create a plan that works for us in Solihull. We will initially co-produce our plans through our current SEND

governance arrangements but will be taking additional steps to hear more voices from our school leaders, parent carers and children and young people.

SEND Reforms consultation

Please also remember that the SEND reforms are subject to formal public consultation until 18th May 2026. You are able to respond to the consultation on the DfE website [SEND reform: putting children and young people first - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

Supporting children and young people with medical conditions and allergy consultation

The DfE have also launched a separate consultation which proposes an update to the statutory guidance on medical conditions, which was first issued in 2015 and makes proposals to strengthen how children and young people with medical conditions and allergy are supported and kept.

The draft guidance is open for consultation until 1st May on the DfE website:

You can find the consultation here: [Proposal on support for pupils with medical conditions at school](#).

You can view the draft statutory guidance and submit your response here: [Medical conditions at school: statutory guidance - Citizen Space](#).

Additional Needs Board

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

- The Board discussed the information provided by the DfE in relation to the SEND reforms. Whilst it was proposing some big changes to how children and young people with SEND are supported, members acknowledged that no legislation would be changing until 2029 which gave local areas time to change their systems and offer. Members were reassured that any plans in Solihull would be co-produced across the partnership.
- Members heard about the work planned with children and young people through Our Voices Heard to develop a charter on partnership working specifically for them and how a 'you said, we did' feedback loop was being established so children and young people could clearly see the impact of their voices.

- The Board agreed a focus of a future meeting would include the activities available for children and young people with SEND, including short breaks, to help families make best use of the offer available to them..

HAF and Short Breaks Update

Solihull children, young people, and families with special educational needs and disabilities will soon have access to an even wider range of SEND specialist short break activities. This is thanks to continued funding from Solihull Council and new support from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. These include sessions after school, in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. More information - [More Specialist Activities Coming for Children and Young People with SEND in Solihull | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

Early Years

As many of you are aware, the local authority has an early years target for 2028. We have been directed to ensure 79.5% of Solihull's 5-year-olds achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD). A complementary target is that 63.9% of children in receipt of free school meals (FSM) achieve a GLD. We hope that all children who can, will achieve these outcomes. This represents an almost 10% percentage increase (almost 11% for FSM). This is a challenge.

To support this we are looking at how early years practitioners can support children, and their families, to best support [School Readiness](#). For example, children sometimes need time to learn to confidently hop and skip. These are key skills at early learning goal (ELG) for physical development. We know [Movement Matters](#) for the whole curriculum and a child's well-being. Hopping and skipping require balance, strength in leg muscles, co-ordination amongst others. Access to mini-trampolines, flamingo-stands, galloping, developing bilateral skills are all things we can do to support GLD skills. This also helps concentration, core body strength etc. How can you help support every child's core physical skills and give movement opportunities?

Speech and language therapy, health visitors, SISS and the early years team all came together for our community speech, language and communication events this month. The focus was our [Solihull speech and language pathway](#) Here are some of the resources in our 'toolkit for SLCN' that practitioners had not previously used.....

Solihull therapies website – <https://childrenscommunitytherapies.uhb.nhs.uk/speech-and-language-therapy/resources-for-everyone/>

Education Endowment Foundation -EY Evidence Store-
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/evidence-store>

Solihull Start for Life – <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/children-and-families/solihull-family-hubs/start-life-offer>

SENCo 'shorts' - <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/send-training-support/the-graduated-approach/>



Childminders have also accessed a recorded version of the SLCN training. Childminders found the following elements helpful....

Learning about the process of referral and the steps to take beforehand.

Some resources I hadn't seen - so glad I can now make use of them on certain websites.

Understanding the need for speech and language delay to be picked up before a child reaches age 5 and how if left, it can impact their future as they reach adulthood.

I found this very useful.

Communication and workforce support are strong threads in our Best Start in Life (BSIL) high level plan. We have a stakeholder event planned for April to look at actions we need to take in more detail.



Every child achieving and thriving *for a* best start in life

Early years themes within Best Start In Life (BSIL) and White Paper/ SEND reform consultation include additional inclusion fund, national training, a strengthened approach to transitions into school and additional support available through Family Hubs and 'experts at hand'. We are looking at support for parents and home-learning, best use of data to target to need, and working in partnership to support children and families within our community.

Solgrid early years and childcare website

We have added a [useful document](#) to our Solgrid webpages titled '[Supporting children with medical needs into early years provision](https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/examples-of-send-paperwork/)' <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/examples-of-send-paperwork/> Providers may want to consider the DfE consultation on [supporting pupils with medical conditions](#).

Free support for employment, education and training

Are you out of work and school, and unsure about your next step? Solihull Council's Employment and Skills Team are here to help your plan into work, education and training. The team offer free one-to-one support at a pace you're comfortable with. We may even be able to support you with travel, lunch and work wear. Find out more from the [webpage](#) or complete a [short form](#) to get in touch.



Looking for Autism Support in Birmingham & Solihull?

The All Age Autism Support Service (AAASS) Directory by Landau makes it easy to find local support for autistic individuals, families and professionals.

Explore the directory to find:

Local events and activities

Support groups

Helpful newsletters & articles

Podcasts and resources

Visit: www.aadirectory.co.uk

Join Our Volunteer Team!

Have 1–2 hours a week to spare? Volunteers of all ages connected to autism are welcome!

As a volunteer you can:

- Learn how to update an online directory
- Gain new skills
- Meet new people
- Help educate and inspire others

Interested in volunteering or have suggestions?

We'd love to hear from you!

Email: aaa@landau.co.uk

The directory is always growing, get in touch if you can't find what you need or want to feature an organisation.

Update from Solihull Parent Carer Voice. (SPCV)

We continue to hold our regular coffee mornings for any parents and carers of children and young people with SEND up to age 25. Our dates of events can be found on our Facebook page and we have lots of useful resources on our website [Solihull Parent Carer Voice SPCV | Inspiring Positive Change](#)

Earlier this month we held our annual SEND conference which brought together Solihull Parent Carers and Professionals from schools and services in the borough. Just over 100 attended and it was a great opportunity for all of us to learn about the key changes proposed in the SEND reforms and then Catrina Lowri from Neuroteachers was our key note speaker talking about how to support our SEND young people with reasonable adjustments.

As a Parent Carer Forum we (**SPCV**) will be responding to the SEND Reforms White Paper consultations. If you want to let us know your thoughts, please do contact us at enquiries@spcv.org.uk with SEND REFORM THOUGHTS in the title of your email. Don't forget that you are also able to submit your feedback to the white paper directly to the link here.

[SEND reform - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

SEND mental health support sessions

SEND mental health support sessions at Riverside Family Hub – booking now open

For more information and to book - [Carer Events | Solihull SEND Support Group](#)

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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StayConnected



SEND