

# Solihull Local Area SEND Self-Evaluation Framework

## Position Review Statement Spring 2026



**The joint additional needs partnership has agreed to re-write the Self Evaluation Framework document at the end of each academic year.**

**However, the SEND and AP system is dynamic, and the partnership seeks feedback throughout the year so this review seeks to provide a check point for progress and challenges so plans can be agile.**

**It especially considers the Additional needs strategy annual report which reviews the impact of the partnership plans and the upcoming requirements of the local area partnership through its response to the national SEND reforms.**

**This document provides an update on the content of the 2025/26 Self Evaluation Framework document against the SEND & AP inspection framework outcomes.**

### Headlines

- We have seen a 12% increase in EHCP numbers during 2025; reaching 2805
- We are continuing to see a slight increase in the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs educated within a mainstream school and a corresponding drop in special school placements; although demand for special schools continues to outstrip local supply
- In 2025 our 20-week EHCP data dipped slightly to 74% but still remains strong against expected national and regional comparators
- In 2025 across the primary phase, EHCP pupil outcomes were generally below their peers across statistical neighbours although SEN support pupils outperformed statistical neighbours and national averages
- In 2025, at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 both EHCP and SEN support cohorts outperformed national averages with Solihull ranking in the top quartile of local authorities across several performance measures.

## Co-production:

- Overall, co-production across the partnership continues to develop, with strong strategic commitment and established structures in place through Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) and Our Voices Heard (OVH) and lived experiences increasingly influencing both service delivery and strategic decision making. However, feedback continues to indicate that co-production is not yet consistently embedded at an operational level across all services and schools.
- The partnership recognises that strengthening consistency, improving clarity of purpose, and ensuring that stakeholders can clearly see how their views have influenced decisions are critical next steps. There is also a need to further develop system-wide mechanisms to evidence, measure and assure the impact of co-production, including strengthening feedback loops, broadening engagement to under-represented groups, and embedding co-production expectations into frontline practice.
- We have revisited the co-production of our Partnership Agreement (*“Working together to achieve together”*) to help us monitor the effectiveness of co-production practice across the system. In the meantime, parent carers still report a mixed view on how well systemic co-production is embedded across partners. A workshop for front line managers across education, health and care, facilitated by an external PCF Chair, has been arranged for the summer term to unpick this further and identify areas for action. We are also setting up an engagement group.
- We are developing a more child-friendly version of this co-production agreement through the partnerships work with Our Voices Heard and children and young people within schools.
- Our multi-agency audits hold the experiences of individual parent carers and young people at the heart of the process through so professionals can reflect on their first-hand experience when evaluating practice.
- In the last year we reduced the number of surveys seeking parents views due to reported fatigue in completing these. This included combining the partnerships strategic questions in the annual survey produced by SPCV. This saw the response rate to those questions increase from 68 to 293 which gave the partnership a much clearer picture of parental experience.

## Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish:

- Solihull Council has now undergone its CQC adult social care inspection and Ofsted children’s social care inspection. Both inspections rated the services as ‘good’ meaning that our SEND 0-25 cohort is well supported in these areas. For children’s social care in particular this judgement reflects three years of large-scale improvements. We remain prepared for our local area SEND inspection.

- Further integration of the education and children’s social care divisions under a new leadership structure has taken place; and this is planned to be strengthened further by the autumn with a joint Assistant Director for Transformation and Innovation across both areas. Stronger joint working is supporting the management of interdependencies and outcomes of the SEND reforms, Families First reforms and the Best Start in Life plan.
- All school leaders have come together to write a statement of intent for education; setting out their vision for all children and young people to belong; based upon recognising and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion and removing barriers using relational approaches and universal design for learning approaches. This will underpin schools’ own development plans and policies to improve their pupil’s presence, participation and progress.
- We have re-designed our multi-agency audit process to provide greater assurance on how the partnership shares the learning from audits and uses this to reflect on and drive practice and this new system is being rolled out.
- The closer joint working with schools on our SEND and alternative provision financial management plan has enabled schools to be more creative in the support they provide to some of their children and young people (with some joint funded projects in place) and will provide a strong foundation for creating a fully collaborative local area SEND reform plan.

**Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way:**

- Solihull Council and the Integrated Care Board have established Section 75 partnership arrangements to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Solihull. This aims to transform the education, health and social care system through the delivery of integrated, high-quality, cost-effective, evidence-based and needs-led services, delivered as close to home as possible and responsive to both individual and community needs.
- We are committed to reducing long waiting times and delays for assessment. Work is already underway to redesign the neurodevelopmental (ND), Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) services and pathways in Solihull. This redesign will be fully co-produced with families and system-wide stakeholders to ensure it reflects lived experience and delivers meaningful improvement. Our ambition is to deliver system-wide transformation ensuring that children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, in the right place.
- Our pilot of Way Forward meetings for schools and parents after a request for an EHC needs assessment was turned down saw improved relationships and an awareness of what support could be offered to children and young people through

SEND support levels. We are currently assessing capacity within our education teams to be able to embed this as part of our core offer.

- We have published a Section 19 policy setting out Solihull's statutory approach for children unable to attend school, alongside a co-produced parent carer friendly version for the Local Offer developed in partnership with SPCV; improving clarity, accessibility and transparency for families.
- We have an Education Otherwise Than In School or College (EOTIS/C) statement of intent which has been reviewed in the 2026 spring term and an internal process document to ensure consistency of approach. Requests for EOTIS/C have risen in recent years and at the current time there are 35 children and young people with an agreed package in place. To ensure good oversight and continuity of communication with families we have created a dedicated sub-team within the EHCP Team who arrange and monitor the EOTIS/C packages and ensure multidisciplinary meetings are held at least termly.
- As part of the development of a new Safer Solihull strategy the relationship between neurodivergence, the criminal justice system and community safety outcomes is helping inform multi-agency priorities for the next few years. This approach is being launched through an all-age neurodivergence and community safety conference in June 2026, with action to follow during the course of the year. It is likely to lead to investment in multi-agency training, screening tools and menus of activities and interventions to help make community safety services and settings more inclusive.
- In conjunction with SPCV we have recently refreshed our Short Breaks Statement and from Easter 2026, we have combined our Short Breaks funding with SEND Specialist Holiday Activities and Food programme funding to deliver a joined-up approach to the provision of enriching activities in the school holidays for children and young people with SEND. Grants are awarded to providers following a competitive application process, and decisions made by a multi-professional panel, which includes parent carers.
- Within Solihull, short breaks for children and young people with disabilities are available at a range of levels: universal, targeted, specialist and overnight. At the targeted level we have a main block contract that provides the bulk of after school, evening, weekend and school holiday group activities, and ensures that those with the most complex needs can have their needs met. This is complemented by a Short Breaks Grants Programme that provides funding to an additional 9 organisations to also deliver group activities after school, evenings, weekends and during the school holidays; which was introduced following consultation with families who told us they wanted more choice of provider and type of activity. Informal feedback from families is that that the current offer works well, but this will be tested out further through engagement activities.
- At the specialist level, children and young people who have been assessed by Social Care as having an eligible need can access more bespoke daytime short

breaks – this may be taken as a direct payment or through a directly commissioned service. We have a flexible contracting arrangement with five providers to deliver bespoke daytime short breaks. The intention is to re-open the tender in 2027.

- Overnight breaks are offered to children and young people and their families who have significant complex needs that cannot be met through universal and targeted services alone following an assessment by Children’s Social Care/Learning Disability Nurse Team. These are provided at Lyndon House, via a direct payment or through our recently introduced offer via Family Links to provide overnight short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. As part of ongoing service development, we continue to explore how the overnight short breaks offer can be broadened further in terms of capacity and types of provision to better meet increasing demand and provide greater choice for families.

### Children and young people receive the right help at the right time:

- We know that children and young people often have to wait too long to receive assessment and intervention. Demand for assessment for autism and ADHD has grown in recent years and we are making progress against a range of steps to address these issues. Our approach is increasingly needs-led so where potential neurodivergence is identified schools are increasingly able to put in place appropriate support. We are also working to develop a more integrated support offer which has included additional investment in Ordinary Magic (a local organisation providing holistic psychological and emotional support to children).
- University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) have taken steps to ensure that services are operating at full establishment and that resource is being used as efficiently as possible. This has resulted in reduced waiting times for ADHD and has stopped ongoing growth in waiting times for autism. Additional financial investment has been allocated to grow the autism assessment workforce which will significantly reduce the gap between demand and capacity. In addition, the new ICB cluster is working to accredit independent sector providers of autism and ADHD assessment to enable greater control over quality, ensure assessments take place locally and assist in our ability to provide clear information to parent carers and referrers about available services.
- A prioritisation framework for neurodevelopment assessments has been in development by system partners to identify and respond to children with higher levels of need, such as those we care for. Work is underway to develop communications to go out to parent carers and system partners when the framework goes live once it has been ratified in June 2026.
- Waiting times for specialist mental health are positive; with services for eating disorders, and crisis care meeting national standards. Children’s access to mental health support remains strong following assessment, however recovery plans are in

place to address the waiting times for core mental health services and Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (average waits is 26 weeks, but average long wait is 117) and a number of actions are being taken. Recovery work includes reviewing caseloads and caseload management supervision, recruiting to a new Screening and Triage team and a Matron for the core team and reviewing the appropriateness of referrals.

- Solihull has a small special school nursing service which enjoys excellent long-standing relationships with the schools it serves, and this is under review to meet new special school requirements. In line with SEND reform we expect that more children with medical needs will be educated in mainstream schools and we anticipate a continued growth in the number of children with medical needs in schools and early years settings. The ICB is keen to work with LAs across its footprint to improve long term planning and review models of care to support a sustainable approach to meeting medical needs in schools going forward.
- Following a national review of previously approved free schools, the agreement of our application for a 150 place special school was revoked after appeal at the end of May 2026. The local partnership remains committed to improving the inclusion of children and young people with SEND in their local mainstream school where possible, but also recognises some will always need access to more specialised support through a special school. We have developed plans to create specialist placements within mainstream schools and will begin rolling these out shortly.
- We are improving the way the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) information is shared and updated through procurement of an online portal so that key named professionals understand the needs of children and young people they are supporting when they are on the register. Meetings are now established for all individuals with Learning Disabilities and Autism on the DSR within Solihull who are deemed at risk of hospital admission. Providers bi-monthly meetings have now been set up to support quality improvement across Birmingham and Solihull and sharing of ideas and learning around the DSR. There are two centralised DSR Co-ordinators to enhance the quality and consistency of the DSR process who will provide training across teams and promote earlier identification and access to the DSR, supporting timely engagement and improved outcomes for individuals as well as helping with transferring from children's to adult's services.
- We have seen a positive impact from our early help arrangements, with 89 partners delivering early help services through our Family Hubs. Family Hubs host or connect with a wide range of professionals working with SEND children and act as a front door linking families into the local offer, specialist services and education support. 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 effectively together. As part of the Best Start in life Strategy, Inclusion Practitioners will be employed to operate across our Family Hubs to help identify need early and support families.

## Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes:

- 2025 saw a slight (0.1%) increase in children with EHCPs reaching a good level of development (GLD) in the early years foundation stage; to 1.2%, but there was a 6.9% increase for other children with an identified SEND need; to 26.7%. Our overall GLD of 69.8% dipped last year and places us in quartile B nationally.
- We have created a SEND transitional briefcase to support access to the post-16 offer. This provides an online folder of up-to-date information, resources and tools schools can use during transition events to support students, parent carers. This is designed to complement existing resources for parent carers and schools such as [routing for you](#) and careers hub [padlets](#).
- We have focused on improving data sharing across teams; using almost 'live' data to fast-track support for those young people identified as NEET and carrying out a 'door knocking' exercise in spring 2026 to make contact with, and offer support to, all those who are NEET. We have also set up multi agency working group for employment to better align post 16 provision/transitions and NEET support.
- We have re-launched the Solihull Apprenticeship (Pathway) Show with two events across the borough (October 2025 & February 2026) and specific quiet hours for SEN students and expanded our Labour Market Information resources to include SEND specific resources. We are also building on our Social Value development – working with more companies such as Arcadis, Vital Energi and Taylor Woodrow to offer experiences of workplace and project management experience for SEN pupils.
- We have expanded the Supported Internships offer to bring in more providers and businesses to support Solihull residents into internships and worked with Solihull College on developing a Supported Internship Qualitative Assessment Framework. We are now beginning to engage young people and their families to understand any barriers to pursuing this route.
- We have established Specialist/Targeted support meetings, which bring the EHCP, Preparing for Adulthood, Care Experienced and Youth Justice teams together to work with Employment and Skills to improve service offers and ensure timely support and information for young people.
- We have been working with schools to co-design a four-tiered child-centred model to prevent exclusions by intervening early, restoring relationships, and coordinating the right support at the right time. The approach shifts exclusion work from reactive behaviour management to proactive safeguarding and inclusion, putting the child's voice at the centre. The introduction of solution circles to better support children at risk of permanent exclusion is showing early, positive impact, with permanent exclusions reducing by 40% (from 45 to 27) when comparing Autumn and Spring 2024/25 with the same period in 2025/26.

- We have co-produced guidance with secondary schools on managed moves and offsite direction, alongside agreeing matched CAIPE funding for a Family Support Worker post to coordinate transitions, strengthen multi-agency working, and promote successful pupil integration.
- We have established weekly Family Hub drop-in sessions which provide a safe, neutral space for families to access direct support on attendance concerns, particularly where relationships with schools have broken down. This relational, non-judgemental approach is highly valued by parents and is demonstrating strong impact in improving attendance, rebuilding trust, and strengthening engagement between families and schools.
- We have led the North [Solihull] Attendance Alliance, bringing together six north Solihull secondary schools in response to attendance being 5 percentage points lower than south Solihull secondary schools, to drive a more consistent approach to expectations for parents and pupils; commissioned and delivered a research project capturing parent, pupil and staff perspectives on barriers to learning, which informed targeted school-level improvements to experience and attendance. Findings highlighted low aspirations and expectations in attending school - with key issues including transition times, the school environment, limited staff capacity to build meaningful relationships, and pupil fatigue affecting engagement. We will now work with these schools to remove barriers and share good practice across the borough.
- The new support worker role has enabled involvement from the Preparing for Adulthood Team with young people from the age 14 and improved joint working between services meaning early information can be provided and all assessments can be complete before young people turn 18; improving the continuity of support for young people, early preparation for adulthood and ensuring supported transitions when EHCPs/education ceases.

### **Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities:**

- 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. The intention is to maintain these on a new Here2Help directory that has been developed, and which is being prepared for public launch during 2026.
- We have reviewed and assessed 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, which included assessing how well marketed the buildings and their offers are to these groups. We also launched a Minecraft Parks project which has provided access to a newly created virtual version of

Malvern Park to support individuals with social challenges and autism before they visit. The work on community spaces will be continuing with learning from the buildings project being rolled out to the VCFSE sectors during 2026/27.

- We have progressed our work with schools to proactively respond to diversity within their settings by adopting Universal Design for Learning principles. A pilot group of schools has been established to test practice and learn across all phases and the outcome will be shared with all schools during the 2026/27 academic year. Additionally, one of our short-term alternative provision settings (The Canopy) has been re-designed to build resilience in primary-aged children whilst supporting schools to better consider the changes needed to design their environments and learning to include everyone.

### Alternative Provision (AP):

- We are significantly strengthening the quality and coherence of our Alternative Provision system through the implementation of a robust quality assurance framework, co-production and publication of a clear AP Strategy, and the development of a structured AP Framework. This is enabling greater consistency, improved oversight, and a planned expansion of provision to better meet the diverse, complex and earlier-stage needs of children and young people, with a stronger focus on intervention, reintegration and inclusive practice.
- We have undertaken extensive engagement with school leaders, children accessing AP and the AP provider market to inform the development of the AP Framework, including headteacher workshops shaping the AP Strategy and targeted AP market engagement activity. Alongside this, we have co-produced with health partners shared principles in the EBSA (Emotionally Based School Absence) space, which are informing the design of a more consistent, earlier and evidence-informed local EBSA support offer, focused on prevention and reintegration.

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