

SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Children's Services, Education & Skills Scrutiny Board
Meeting date:	3 rd November 2021
Subject/Report Title:	SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 0-25 YEARS) WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES
Report from:	Tim Browne, Interim Director of Children's Services
Report Author/Lead Contact Officer:	Charlotte Jones, Head of SEND
Wards affected:	<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Wards </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Bickenhill </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Blythe </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Castle Bromwich </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chelmsley Wood </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dorridge/Hockley Heath </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Elmdon </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Kingshurst/Fordbridge </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Knowle </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lyndon </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meriden </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Olton </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley East </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley South </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shirley West </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Silhill </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Smith's Wood </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <input type="checkbox"/> St Alphege </div> </div>
Public/Private report:	Public
Exempt by virtue of Paragraph:	N/A

1.	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update members of the Board on strategic developments and improvements to date across the council's Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) services.
1.2	To seek feedback on the proposed Solihull Additional Needs Strategy 2022-2025 co-authored by Solihull Council, Birmingham & Solihull CCG, Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Our Voice's Heard (the new children and young people's forum).

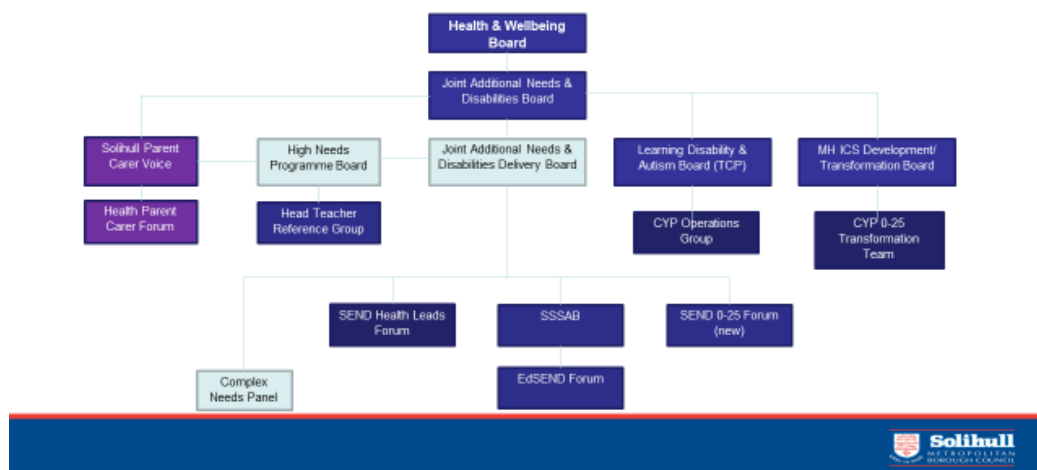
2. Background

- 2.1 Part 3 of the [Children and Families Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/section/3) requires councils to publish a local offer which details how it co-operates with its local partners (i.e. CCG as health partners and education settings) to provide the necessary education, care and health services children and young people with SEND require within that local area.
- 2.2 A local area's SEND strategic plans are scrutinised as part of the Ofsted & CQC [Local area SEND inspection: framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-framework). Whilst a new framework is expected to be implemented by the end of 2022; it is not expected that the rigour of this process, nor the requirement for clear local area direction and leadership, will diminish.
- 2.3 There is a clear requirement within the Children and Families Act for local areas to co-produce strategic, operational and individual plans with the parent carers, and children and young people, in that area.
- 2.4 Whilst the statutory requirement focuses on those children and young people who have, or may have, SEND there are clear benefits for expanding any strategic direction and leadership to consider any child or young person that may have any 'additional need' as a result of their personal circumstances, family situation, environmental factors or other needs. This provides the framework for the council, and other partner agencies, to consider the holistic needs of a child or young person and provide support how and when they need it – rather than requiring formal diagnosis, escalation to statutory SEND or safeguarding levels before support can be provided.

3. Officer Governance

- 3.1 To provide effective governance across the strategic partnership, during 2021 a number of new/revised Boards and Forums were introduced and others discontinued. This has facilitated multi-service and multi-agency working at, and between, operation and strategic levels and enables strong oversight and accountability – as indicated by the governance structure below:

Additional Needs & Disabilities Governance



<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>Officers within the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Board (strategic) and the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Delivery Board (operational) will be responsible for representing the Solihull SEND system during any future local area inspection, and operationally during the annual conversations with the Department for Education (DfE) and National Health Service England and Improvement (NHSE/I) Advisors.</p> <p>The absence of an agreed strategic direction across the wider Children's Partnership for SEND in Solihull has affected cohesion in the offer for children and young people. Whilst there have been a number of good initiatives implemented across the borough, the single-focus approach of this work has led to some misalignment, duplication and gaps in provision. These new governance arrangements seek to address that.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>SEND Improvement Journey</p>
<p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p>	<p>With the recruitment of permanent, experienced leadership for education and SEND in the Council during 2021 there has been a renewed focus on assessing and developing SEND services across Solihull.</p> <p>SEND officers have met with many parent carers, young people, schools and education settings, health providers, social care services, community providers and commissioners across the borough to understand the experiences of children and young people with SEND, and those who support them.</p> <p>In co-production with schools, parent carers and professionals across education, care and health, SEND officers have undertaken a full assessment of SEND performance across the council using the Council for Disabled Children's LA Audit Tool. The Council for Disabled Children also provide a parallel audit for health so the CCG has undertaken this piece of work too – enabling the outcomes of both to be combined to generate a clear overview of current SEND performance across the whole local area.</p> <p>Following the audit outcomes, officers from the Council and the CCG have met with stakeholders to look at the areas identified for development and have RAG rated these in order of priority according to statutory expectations, children and young people's experiences and impact on their outcomes. The main areas of focus are contained within the following themes (which have been translated into the six "I" statements within the Additional Needs Strategy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic leadership and governance; • Joint commissioning; • Transition pathways and timely decision making; • Sufficiency, quality and value for money of specialist placements; • Early help offer to support inclusive practice; • Co-production with children, young people and parent carers; • Monitoring outcome data and using to inform practice <p>Children and young people, and their parent carers, have told us that education remains their highest priority in the borough – which is understandable given it is the provision everyone in this cohort engages with regardless of their level of need. The initial focus for the council has therefore been on developing the education aspect of the SEND Improvement Plan, and the High Level Oversight Plan is attached at Appendix 1.</p>

- 4.6 This work has identified the need for some key strategies setting out the direction of travel for education within Solihull to ensure cohesion across the system. The [SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy 2021](#) was approved by Cabinet in September 2021, with other strategies at different stages of development. Further detail can be found at Appendix 2:



5. Additional Needs Strategy

- 5.1 The Additional Needs Strategy fulfils the council's requirement to publish its SEND offer; but broadens the scope of this work to ensure any child or young person who has an additional need is identified, and supported, in a timely way.
- 5.2 The strategy is a result of all partner and stakeholder feedback received during this year, the high priority areas arising from the Council for Disabled Children's audit tool and feedback from children, young people and their parent carers. As requested by children, young people and their parent carers they have written an accessible strategy with us which is easy to understand, apply and hold professionals to account for delivering.
- 5.3 The strategy has been co-constructed by all partners within Solihull and developed through the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Delivery Board, with representatives from: the council's education, children's social care, adult's social care, employment and skills, commissioning and stronger community's services, the CCG, schools, Solihull Parent Carer Voice, Our Voice's Heard, SENDIASS (SEND Information, Advice and Support Service) and the Voluntary & Community Sector.
- 5.4 Following initial feedback from stakeholders, a more detailed engagement exercise took place during July and August to test the emerging key themes for improvement. To ensure children and young people, and their parent carers had a greater voice in this work, a specific survey was designed for their completion during this time to increase the reach of those involved. The summary of results can be found [here](#).

- 5.5 The feedback received suggested a number of areas for improvements to SEND services within Solihull, but also some key ways of working which were important to children and young people, and their families. All of the feedback received has either informed the strategy itself (our vision, promised ways of working and future plans for improvement) or will sit as more operational aspects for development as part of the multi-agency SEND Improvement Journey. We have been clear to children and young people and their parent carers that both the strategic and operational responses to their feedback and experience are essential to improve outcomes across the borough.
- 5.6 The draft strategy has been approved for consultation by the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Board and is available at Appendix 3.
- 5.7 A further public consultation on the strategy will run from 22nd October – 10th November 2021. The consultation survey, for all stakeholders, is available [here](#). Given the breadth of engagement which has already taken place, this consultation will act as a checking mechanism to ensure the content effectively responds to those issues raised by children, young people, parent carers and other partners.
- 5.8 Any amendments required to the strategy as a result of consultation feedback will be overseen by the Board. The final strategy will be designed with children and young people in mind and will be available online and in hard copy. A more user friendly easy read version will be provided so those with more complex needs can also access the important elements of the document.


6. Implementation and Monitoring

- 6.1 The final proposed Additional Needs Strategy will be considered for approval by the CCG Governing Body and then Cabinet on 8th December 2021. If agreed, implementation will be from January 2022 and the 3-year strategy will run to the end of 2025.
- 6.2 The strategy sets out ways of working for any person, service or organisation whose work has an impact on children and young people with additional needs. The promotion of this new strategy, and engagement with all partners, is therefore essential to its delivery. Messaging around SEND and additional needs have already been included in the council's Staff Newsletter and the strategy promotion will follow from this.
- 6.3 The strategy sets out a number of measures which will be used to determine the success of implementation. It is essential that the lived experience of children, young people and their parent carers is central to measuring impact and therefore officers will work with Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Our Voice's Heard to develop a way of receiving and collating their views in January 2022 – this information providing benchmark data to measure future impact by.
- 6.4 In addition to feedback, services will also be required to analyse the quantitative data they currently hold to understand the current performance position. The development of Key Performance Indicators, and the monitoring of these, will be overseen by the Joint Additional Needs Management Board – and made publically available.
- The strategy itself will be subject to annual review and reporting to ensure that partners, children and young people and parent carers can see what progress is being made, and feedback whether the changes are resulting in improvements for them. This information will also feed into the council's and CCG's annual SEND conversation with the DfE & NHSE/I.

7.	Evaluation of Alternative Option(s)
7.1	The proposed document meets the legal expectations of a co-produced, holistic and child and young person focused strategy and the content responds to feedback received from all stakeholders within Solihull.
7.2	The strategy has intentionally been written directly to children and young people, and their families so it can be a document which they can use to understand how organisations and services will change to better support them. The alternative would to be produce a more ‘traditional’ strategy which may be more suited to professionals reflecting the content within their work – but a more detailed ‘professionally tailored’ action plan will sit behind the strategy document to facilitate this.
8.	Implications
8.1	<p>Delivery of the Council’s Priorities</p> <p>The options/proposals in this report will contribute to the delivery of the following Council Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy - UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2: Continue to develop and deliver pathways into employment opportunities with emphasis on jobs for Solihull residents where possible. This strategy will ensure young people with additional needs are also supported into future employment. • People & Communities - Improvements in early childhood development and school readiness in disadvantaged communities & children and adults with care and support needs are empowered to build on their strengths and be as independent as possible. This strategy will ensure children and young people with additional needs are supported throughout their life and receive the support they need to be successful, independent young adults.
8.2	<p>Policy/Strategy Implications</p> <p>Solihull’s Additional Needs Strategy will ensure a cohesive borough-wide approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and ensuring statutory policies are in place, across the local area, and aligned to the same outcomes.</p>
8.3	<p>Meeting the duty to involve</p> <p>The strategy has been co-produced with children, young people and their parent carers alongside all statutory SEND partners and services.</p>
8.4	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>Costs associated with securing the provision required by children and young people, as committed to within the strategy, already sit with the council’s statutory services (children’s and adult’s social care) and with the High Needs Block element of the DSG.</p>
8.5	<p>Legal implications</p> <p>The strategy complies with legal requirements and expectations contained within the Children and Families Act 2014.</p>

8.6	<p>Risk Implications</p> <p>The strategy, and its delivery, will improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the risk of challenge or unsatisfactory outcome of any future external scrutiny or local area inspection.</p>
8.7	<p>Statutory Equality Duty</p> <p>The proposals outlined actively seeks to actively reduce inequality and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p>
8.8	<p>Carbon Management/Environmental</p> <p>The strategic elements of increasing inclusion and local provision within Solihull will enable more children and young people to access services within their community, reducing their need to travel further afield.</p>
8.9	<p>Partner Organisations</p> <p>The strategy ensures strong leadership and collaboration with education settings, community and voluntary services, the CCG and other health providers to ensure an effective holistic approach to improving outcomes for children and young people.</p>
8.10	<p>Customer Impact</p> <p>The implementation of this strategy will improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people in Solihull and respond to areas of development requested by them, their families and others who work in their support.</p>
9.	List of Appendices Referred to
9.1	Appendix 1: SEND Improvement: High Level Oversight Plan for Education
9.2	Appendix 2: SEND Strategic Activity
9.3	Appendix 3: Draft Additional Needs Strategy

Appendix 1

SEND 5 Year Improvement Plan Oversight Plan Full Status Report	SRO: Tim Browne Charlotte Jones	Reporting Period: October 2021	Governing Board: SEND Programme (Bi-Weekly)	Version: 0.1	
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Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
STRAND 1: Improving Mainstream Inclusion						
Lead: Charlotte Jones						
Reframing Inclusion Charter to create a school owned Inclusion Strategy	Owned by Council and SSSAB (Solihull Schools' Strategic Accountability Board) Analysed good inclusive practice with all stakeholders Draft Strategy written with action plan to be developed will go to cabinet 8/12/21	Strategy considered by Cabinet 8/12/21 Action plan to be agreed and monitored through SSSAB from January 2022	Dec-21	Green	In progress	Provide better support for children in Solihull provision (reduce escalation to specialist or out of borough provision)
Review Solihull Council's Accessibility Strategy and promote to schools/settings	Strategy and action plan drafted and consulted with stakeholders	Strategy considered by Cabinet 8/12/21	Dec-21	Green	In progress	Provide better support for children in Solihull provision (reduce escalation to specialist or out of borough provision)
Support Holiday Activity Fund Programme to ensure it is accessible to children and	Workstream Group in place. Working with parents, providers & Stronger Communities Division.	Additional training and support to be piloted during	Ongoing	Green	In progress	

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
young people with SEND/Additional Needs	Will have an important impact on family support, social care needs, meals etc. and support inclusion agenda	Christmas holiday period				
Revise Graduated Approach process and guidance for easier access to more timely support	Scoping has begun with specialist staff and SENCo's to understand evidence based support available for different areas of need	Consultation with wider group of stakeholders to commence Spring 2022	Dec-22	Green	Interdependency with Inclusion Strategy which needs to be finalised first	Provide better support for children in Solihull provision (reduce escalation to specialist or out of borough provision)
STRAND 2: Increasing LA capacity						
Lead: Amanda Hana and Andrea Ashley						
Creating additional capacity to support children with additional needs through reshaping education agenda	New structure agreed and implemented. Recruitment to new vacant posts underway. Development of new systems, processes and responsibilities underway. Development of clear roles and responsibilities between teams and functions underway.	New structure in place September 2021	Jul-22	Green	Ongoing	Provide better support for children in Solihull provision (reduce escalation to specialist or out of borough provision)
Recruitment to SEND specific teams to create delivery and improvement capacity	Most posts filled with Senior staff recruitment ongoing. EHCP team working within Council House and equipment provided. Annual Review Backlog Team in place from Sept-21 with increasing staffing capacity to Dec-21.	Backlog of annual reviews to be cleared by Sept-22	Dec-22	Green	Ongoing	Will provide capacity for greater oversight on value for money of provision/services

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
Child, young person and parent carer feedback changes service delivery	<p>Use of compliment and complaint analysis in staff meetings and 1:1s.</p> <p>Regular liaison between SEND services and parent carers (through SPCV) and children and young people (through Our Voice's Heard).</p> <p>Create opportunities for collating feedback following key pieces of work and training for staff in response to any developments needed.</p>	Termly meetings to start from Nov-21	March-22	Green	Ongoing	
Successful implementation of Liquid Logic system, ensuring data is timely & accurate with a flow of high quality information	<p>Liquid Logic module for EHCP implemented.</p> <p>As a relatively new module within the Liquid Logic platform there have been some teething issues to resolve and work is continuing – with weekly oversight of areas needing to be addressed.</p>	Go live 1/4/21 (complete)	Ongoing	Amber	Some functionality needs further development, to be able to confidently report education performance data	
STRAND 3: Timely Assessment and Review Lead: Amanda Hana						
Ensure effective annual review processes are in place	<p>Process in place to ensure transfer deadlines are met.</p> <p>System in place to notify settings of annual reviews due.</p> <p>Workstream in progress to update review paperwork and processes.</p>	<p>Sept-21 (complete)</p> <p>Sept-21 (complete)</p> <p>Oct-21</p> <p>Sept-21 (complete)</p>	<p>Jan-22</p> <p>Sept-22</p>	Green		Will provide capacity for greater oversight on value for money of provision/services and to ensure appropriateness is regularly reviewed.

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
	Performance standards set and monitored. Annual review backlog team in place.					
Ensure new EHCP requests are managed effectively	New EHCP template in place. Advice requests from professionals under review. Work on quality of plans beginning with the Council for Disabled Children and DfE. Review of paperwork to be undertaken with stakeholders.	Mar-21 (complete) Started Oct-21	Sept-22	Green		
STRAND 4: Increasing Specialist Provision						
Lead: Steve Fenton						
Analyse future demand for provision and identify gaps (specialist commissioning strategy)	SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024 approved. Scoping exercise underway to better understand quantitative and qualitative intelligence around SEND demands (needs analysis deep dive and school led)	Cabinet approval 20/9/21	Jan-22	Green	Complete – approved by Cabinet Member	Will enable more children to have their needs met within Solihull – reducing the need for out of borough placements and mitigating transport costs
Expand current available resources to meet needs	8 full time equivalent place secondary SEMH provision. Mill Lodge 8 place ARP primary complex Autism provision. Special School Expansion: Hazel Oak – Additional Yr7 Class (10 places).		Sept -21	Amber	Good progress made - all provision opened by Sept 21, apart from Special School expansion at	

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
	<p>Special School Expansion: Reynalds Cross Post-16</p> <p>Special School Expansion: Merstone / Forest Oak (to be determined)</p>				Merstone/Forest Oak – alternative options being explored.	
Understanding future demand for alternative provision and identify any gaps	<p>Views being sought from stakeholders on alternative provision actions and requirements</p> <p>Strategy under development</p>		Dec-21	Green	In progress	Will enable more children to have their needs met within Solihull – reducing the need for out of borough placements and mitigating transport costs
STRAND 5: Spending money to make the most impact Lead: Steve Fenton						
Creation of High Needs 3 Year Forecasting Model	<p>Draft forecasting model created.</p> <p>Populated destination predictions for Sept 2022 for all 'Leavers' transitioning.</p> <p>Working on predictions around new entrants.</p>	Report and model ready for Cabinet 9/12/21	Dec-21	Green	In progress	Understanding future need so that adequate in borough placements available, reducing the need for out of borough and independent placements
Ensuring a wider range of post 16 options are available	<p>Ensuring a wider range of post 16 options are available to meet levels of young people's abilities</p> <p>Expand supported internship offer to increase</p>		Sept-24	Green	In progress	Offering a wider range of mainstream options for young people,

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
	access to paid work					supporting them into employment to help future economic growth
Implement system for consideration of independent placements, including quality assurance	<p>Introduced Provider Contracts and Individual Placement Agreements for children attending independent provision.</p> <p>High cost placements are being monitored.</p> <p>Engagement has started with colleges regarding contracts for post 16 placements.</p> <p>Quality assurance framework under development</p>	Develop Solihull Marketing Intelligence based on attainment and attendance	March 22	Green	In progress -In place for high needs placements, except post 16 placements with colleges.	Making sure money is being spent effectively
STRAND 6: Targeting support for children						
Lead: Michele Sadler						
Provide clear routes those children and young people who are struggling to access education	<p>Inclusion Service is established – work is underway to integrate staff into the graduated approach</p> <p>Part-time timetable guidance issued to schools and staff and families supported with attendance issues</p> <p>Work with schools underway to identify children who are likely to need more support or provision</p> <p>Reviewing impact of High Needs SEMH and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance</p>	Local Offer website updated to communicate routes to support	Jan-22	Amber	Work ongoing – this is a new service and still have several vacant posts to recruit to	May result in higher levels of provision being funded for some children

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
	pathway to ensure effectiveness of support.					
Develop an Early Years Strategy to support good quality settings meeting the needs of all children	<p>Strategy and action plan drafted with all stakeholders and services.</p> <p>New Early Years Team formed 1/9/21</p> <p>End of term first risk assessment to be carried out, will have key conversation with schools, which will be SEND led. Will be ongoing reviewing process going forward.</p>	<p>Strategy signed off by Cabinet Dec-21</p> <p>First risk assessment Dec-21</p>	Dec-21 and then ongoing work	Green	In progress – several workstreams now working on their action plans and timelines	
STRAND 7: Improving parental confidence Lead: Charlotte Jones						
Partnership agreement with Solihull Parent Carer Voice	<p>Created a Partnership Agreement and co-production charter with Solihull Parent Carer Voice & the CCG. Ensuring they are on strategic feedback forums and have feedback mechanisms.</p> <p>Set up of Our Voice's Heard to hear the voice of the Child or Young Person.</p> <p>Set up termly SEND newsletter to all stakeholders</p> <p>Establish termly meetings between parents and SEND services</p>	Complete	Apr-21	Green	Complete	
Improve information for all stakeholders available on the local offer	<p>Review of local offer content and move to new website.</p> <p>Create transitions pathways and advice.</p>	Due Apr-22	2023	Green	Links to graduated	

Outcomes and Benefits	Progress So Far	Key Milestones	Delivery Date	Delivery Rating (R/A/G)	Delivery Status Update	Impact on DSG/Finance
	Create more user friendly content and good signposting to support services (graduated approach)				approach workstream	
Creation of Engagement Plan	Work with stakeholders to ensure consistent approach to co-production. Ensure children, young people and parent carers are clear how they can work with us, and in which areas, and when.		2022	Green		
STRAND 8: Multi-Agency Leadership Lead: Charlotte Jones						
Multi-agency SEND and additional needs leadership and governance in place	Established strategic and operational Boards, ensuring links with service specific forums	Apr-21 (complete)	2021			
Develop Joint Additional Needs Strategy	Draft written and formal Consultation process to start Action plan under development	Strategy to go to Cabinet 8/12/21	Dec-21	Green	In progress	
Creating local area SEND intelligence and monitoring impact of improvements	Deep dive SEND needs assessment underway. System to capture qualitative feedback from children and young people to be established and implemented. Data dashboard to be created.	Draft due Nov-21	Apr-22	Green		

SEND STRATEGIC ACTIVITY

There are a number of strategic developments underway to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional or special educational needs and each of these is an essential component for that journey; any under-developed area could lead to an adverse impact in others:

- **Joint Additional Needs Strategy** (Cabinet approval 8th December 2021). This will provide an overarching strategy across the local area SEND partnership to provide robust leadership and governance expected in any future inspection regime. It also meets the requirement for a published SEND strategy whilst reflecting our drive to focus more on early intervention for any child with an additional needs and reduce the need for statutory intervention. This strategy will underpin any other SEND policies and activity.
- **Reshaping Education** (Implementation complete September 2021). This will provide the staffing structures and capacity required within the Learning & Skills Division to focus on our most vulnerable children, including those with SEND, and provide the ability to deliver a greater level of support to children through our revised graduated approach and early help offer.
- **Early Years Strategy** (Cabinet approval 8th December 2021). This will provide an agreed multi-agency framework to focus on early childhood development, identification and support alongside ensuring children have access to high quality and differentiated childcare and early years' education.
- **Inclusion Strategy** (Cabinet approval 8th December 2021). This will provide a commonly agreed understanding of good inclusive practice within education settings and a platform for greater school ownership and accountability of this agenda – leading to improved access and outcomes in mainstream and maintained settings for all vulnerable children.
- **Graduated Approach** (due for completion July 2022). This will provide a consistent framework for all professionals working with children with SEND to consider appropriate support and interventions; with a focus on maximising universal and targeted provision before escalation to statutory services. This will be used within education to validate the level of inclusive practice.
- **Accessibility Strategy** (Cabinet approval 8th December 2021). This will provide the LAs statutory overarching strategy for ensuring children with special needs and/or disabilities are not unfairly disadvantaged due to the education environment, facilities, equipment or resources available to them. This will inform individual school strategies to reduce discrimination for these children.
- **Specialist & Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategies** (Specialist Commissioning Strategy approved by Cabinet September 2021. Alternative Provision Strategy due for completion by the end of 2021). This will provide a greater understanding of the level of child need coming through the system in the medium-term and the type of provision (type of need, age range, level of demand) required to meet this need so all children can have access to appropriate education provision across the spectrum of mainstream to specialist; and the reliance on the independent sector can be reduced.
- **SEND Improvement Journey** (activity started in January 2021 following a stabilisation and enquiry phase. Formal plan shared with Cabinet on 8th December 2021). This will provide a 5-year action plan of all activity required (at individual, operational and strategic level) to improve outcomes for children and young people; including multi and single agency plans to bring cohesion to the system. This will enable a greater level of scrutiny and accountability to the whole improvement agenda.



“EVERY CHILD & YOUNG PERSON MATTERS, AND MATTERS EQUALLY”

SOLIHULL’S ADDITIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY

for children and young people with special educational needs or additional needs aged 0-25 years

It takes a community to raise a child.

We are proud of all our children and young people in Solihull. Most children and young people do well but we know that some need more support than others or may need help to get ready for their future life. For these children and young people, services in Solihull are committed to working in a way which helps them have the best life possible - so we have been talking to them about how we can help.

When we use the word ‘we’ in this strategy it means:

- Solihull Council (for education, social care and communities)
- Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] (for health) – this will be replaced by the Integrated Care System in April 2022
- Solihull Parent Carer Voice (parent carers)
- Our Voice’s Heard (children and young people’s forum)

and we will ask everyone else working with children and young people to support this work.

We have listened to the views of children, young people, parent carers and those who work with these families. They have also worked with us to decide what we need to change and how to do this so we could write this strategy together. Young people and their parent carers have helped us write something that is easier for everyone to read and understand – written with them and for them.

What are special educational needs or additional needs?

We know things can happen in a child’s or young person’s life which makes it harder for them to be happy, healthy, stay safe or learn.

Children or young people who have a special education need or a disability may need support throughout their life. Others may need support at any time in their life, and for any length of time, for lots of other reasons. This could be because of their family, what is happening at home, health concerns, being a young carer, or a death of friend or family member.

The most important thing is that we quickly see when a child or young person might need extra support and that the right help is provided. This means that people working with children and young people see them first, and not the needs they have.

Who is this for?

This strategy is for any child or young person, up to the age of 25 years' old who lives in Solihull and has a special educational need (SEND) or additional need.

It will tell you how people should work with you and what you should see happen. We want you to know what we are doing in Solihull – and for you to be able to question us if you don't see this happening.

If this is you, please carry on reading....

What do we want? (our Vision)

You have told us that you want to **enjoy life** in Solihull. For us all to know that everyone is **different**. For you to **feel welcome** and have **the same chances** of living your best life.

So we want children and young people to have the best life they can by holding them **at the heart** of everything we do.

How we will work together:

You have told us that you want to be able to **trust** people around you. To be **asked** what you want and then **listened to**. To know that people will **change** what they do or how they act by **understanding** how things make you feel. You want to know you can get **help when you need it**, and how to get it. Have a **choice** about what happens to you and be able to do the **same things as other children** - even if you need more support so this can happen.

Your parent carers told us they want **better communication**. To know **who to contact, what is happening and why** and **how** changes will make things better for you all. They want to be **listened to** and **trust** that services care about what is happening in your life and will **do what they say they will**.

Putting you at the heart of everything we do means that everyone needs to work better together. We can only do this if we have more trust.

So we will make these promises to you and your parent carers:

- a) When we tell you we will do something, we will do it. If we can't do something, we will explain why and let you know what we are going to do about it;
- b) We will be honest with you, listen to what you have said and show you what we are changing;

- c) We will communicate so you can understand us. We will let you know what changes we are making, how it will make things better and when you should see that;
- d) We will help you enjoy living in Solihull. To feel welcome wherever you go and whatever you do. We will find out what you are good at and what you want to do - now and in the future

Changing how we work in Solihull means everyone who supports you must think about what they do and how they do it. We want them to use these promises in their work and to check that you can see this happening.

Our plans:

We will keep working towards a future where you can say:

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

What we have done so far:

- People from education, care and health services meet every month in our Joint Additional Needs Management and Delivery Boards. We include parent carers, voluntary groups and other people in these meetings so we can all work together to make your life better;
- We have talked to people to find out what we are doing well and what we need to change so we can offer you the best support

What else you want us to do:

- Make sure **everyone** in Solihull thinks about how their work can help make things better for you. This includes sharing information and finding ways to check we are making things better;
- Help people know what support is available for you in Solihull. We will make sure this is easy to find and get support. That you can move easily between services and get advice on what is possible as you get older;
- Look for ways that staff supporting you work better together. So they include other people who can help and learn from each other. We will set out how we want those staff to behave and what they need to know. For example, staff will work together to improve what is written in your Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) if you have one.

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

What we have done so far:

- You and your parent carers have worked with the Council and the CCG to design the children's and young people mental health service in Solihull. You named this Solar. The CCG and Council both pay for Solar so we can work together to keep improving support;
- Built on our work with schools and families to include how we work with independent schools so you can have a good experience of learning, wherever you do that;
- Developed our [Local Offer](#) for support and services available to you. Looked at who plans and pays for this between the Council and the CCG so we can find better ways of joining up and seeing gaps. For example, supporting young people with learning difficulties and autism through our Key Worker Pilot;

- Worked with your parent carers and therapy services to write our [Cross Border Principles](#) so you can get support more easily and quickly. With less confusion whether you live, or go to school, in Solihull or Birmingham. We will be asking you, and your parent carers, if this has made a difference so we can look at other changes we could make

What else you want us to do:

- Agree what we want to do with families and how we will work together in the future (with the new Integrated Care System) to change things for you across Solihull and the area you live in. We will help other people supporting you to know how to get the help you need;
- Look at how we can do more joined up work between the Council and CCG to give you better support. Learning from what has worked well in the past or where we have seen problems;
- Look at how we can better plan and pay for support for you if you need help from education, social care and health at the same time

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

What we have done so far:

- Solihull Council, Birmingham and Solihull CCG and Solihull Parent Carer Voice have agreed to work together as equals. Helping us make a difference to your life and to your family [to read it click here;](#)
- Started a children and young people's group called *Our Voice's Heard* (through Solihull Parent Carer Voice) so your views can help us make changes - and see what is, and isn't, working [to find out more click here;](#)
- Produced a co-production newsletter to share what we are doing and to help families understand how they can get involved [to read it click here](#)

What else you want us to do:

- We will make sure that all the work we do, the plans we make and the services we review includes you and your parent carers from the start;
- We will write an Engagement Plan so that everyone knows what we will be doing and when. This is so you, and your parent carers, can be involved as much, or as little, as you want to. Helping us plan what we need to do and seeing if this has made a difference. We will find different ways to listen to the voices of all children and young people so we can hear what you have to say;
- We will make sure there are chances for you to be involved in the way you want to be. About the things that matter to you and at a time and place that works for you

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

What we have done so far:

- Heard what you, your parent carers, community services and groups have to say by making chances to ask for views, ideas and feedback. This includes a group focusing on parks and public open spaces;
- Improved how services across the Council work together, and with the voluntary sector, to encourage people to think about how they can make more chances for you to do things where you live. This includes more options for "Children In Need";

- Changed how the Solihull Holiday Activity & Food programme is paid for and planned so if you have special educational needs and disabilities you can be included in activities over summer;
- Provided specialist support to schools to help staff improve how they work with you – so you feel understood, welcomed and supported

What else you want us to do:

- Understand how inclusive Solihull is - the places you go and the help you get. This includes community buildings, spaces, services, groups and organisations. We will increase trust and confidence in what they offer by setting a local inclusion standard. We will agree the Accessibility Strategy and Inclusion Strategy for schools and have a dedicated inclusion youth champion within the Solihull Youth Opportunities Board (YOBS);
- Have more training, learning and development options for all people working with you (staff or volunteers). This will include voluntary, community, social enterprise, public sector and schools. This is so they can provide better support and always value what you, and your parent carers can do, and are interested in;
- Develop a Solihull promise for help, support and activities to always be available for you. This includes better support for the Short Breaks offer and Holiday Activity & Food programme so more children and young people can be included.

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 have done so far:

- Improved how we work with schools and colleges and introduced a yearly Transitions Event for you and your family;
- Improved how staff across the Council work together to support you as you get older, and put better systems in place to make sure this works;
- Reviewed our Adults project plan which looks at what we want to improve over the next year if you are between 14-25 years old. This included focus groups and workshops with young people and parent carers to understand your views and experience. The action plan will help us work together better.

What else you want us to do:

- Join up more of our processes and communication across education, health, care and the community so we work better to support you in being the best you can be. For example, we will look at our Youth Offer;
- Provide information so people supporting you (including in schools and colleges and your family) can start to talk to you about your future and what could be possible. We will do this in different ways;
- Understand Solihull's Post 16 offer and improve this. For it to be more welcoming to all young people, provide different options and help them into employment. For example, our Supported Employment Programme will help you get into a supported internship, unpaid work experience and paid work

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

What we have done so far:

- Made it easier for families to find support through our Family Information Service and the [Local Offer](#). This includes working with everyone who supports you to see how we can work better together – starting with how Health Visitors can work with families and early years' settings from when children are 2 years old;
- Put things in place so we can write better Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs), complete them more quickly and within the timescales we have to meet;
- Provided more special school and Additional Resource Provision (ARPs) places through our [SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy 2021](#) and Alternative Provision Strategy. Put extra specialist support in place for you if you have struggled in school through COVID or found it hard to go to school because of your additional needs;
- We have worked with our therapy services to understand how long you have to wait for support and are looking for ways to speed this up;
- We have put a clear process in place in children's social care for screening and assessment as part of the an EHCP request. This helps with writing the plan and makes sure that any possible safeguarding concerns can be referred into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further consideration

What else you want us to do:

- Review our way of supporting you as soon as it is needed through our Early Years Strategy and Graduated Approach. Develop how we work across services in the Council (with Reshaping Education giving us a new Inclusion Team) so schools better understand how to support you and can get extra help as soon as they need it;
- Improve the information in our Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) so people working with a you clearly know what you can do well, what you need help with and how best to support you;
- We will work with our therapy services to find ways to speed up the waiting time. We will give you more information and advice whilst you are waiting and make sure you, and your parent carers, know where to find this;
- We will improve the information within our social care assessments for EHCPs to ensure services which can support you and your family are clearly identified and signposted to;
- If we have agreed that you need social care support, we will review this every year. This information will support the annual review of your EHCP if you have one.

We know it will take us a long time to finish all of this work. But we hope that 3 years' time you, and your family, will say we are doing better in all of these areas.

How will we know if this is making a difference:

It is important we know if the changes we are making are working. You should see things getting better for you, and your family, so we will need to keep talking to you to check this is happening. We should also be able to see things changing by looking at what is happening in our services across Solihull.

We will be looking for....

- A strategy which everyone can understand; where you, and your parent carers, can see how your voice has been used and can see that the changes are making difference to you. We will hear this when we talk to you and your parent carers;
- People working together to help you. Helping you move between services and finding the best support that you say you want. We will hear this when services talk to you and your parent carers;
- You, and your parent carers, saying you feel more supported, involved and starting to have a better life. We will hear this when services talk to you and your parent carers;
- Less time for you to wait for assessments and services. We will look at the waiting times for health and social care assessments and completing or updating Education, Health & Care plans (EHCPs);
- More decisions made at the right time so you can get ready for your next steps. We will look at how transitions are made at the right time, how successful those transitions are and the number of complaints we get;
- More children and young people feeling able to take part in learning in Solihull or work. We will look at how many of you go to school regularly and who go on to work afterwards. We will hear your views when services talk to you;
- More places, groups, organisations and settings having, or working towards, a local standard of inclusion. We will look at the number of people involved in this and if they have supported more children and young people because of the work they have done. They will share the views they have received from you and your parent carers in their work;
- More volunteers and staff being able to recognise, and meet, any additional needs you may have. We will look at the number of volunteers and staff being trained. Groups, organisations and settings will share the views they have received from you and your parent carers in their work;
- More children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) feeling included in your community. We will look at the number of you who use the Short Break community activities. We will also look at the number of you who go to clubs and activities as part of Solihull's Holiday Activity & Food programme to make sure that if you can take up this offer, you do (30% of those attending). We will hear your, and your parent carers views, when we talk to you.

At the start of 2022 we will look through the information we have and talk to you, and your parent carers, to understand where we are now in all of these areas. We will share this once completed.

We will look at this information and share it every year. We will report to the Joint Additional Needs Management Board, which includes Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Our Voice's Heard, so they can help us check that this strategy is making a difference.