

Solihull Maternity and Early Years Strategy 2022-2025

Context

Conception to age 5 are very important as the early experiences are what shape a baby's development.

These experiences and the relationships they have with parents and caregivers can have a lifelong impact on that baby's mental and emotional health.



Investing in very early childhood is one of the most important ways of reducing extreme poverty and inequalities. It is everybody's responsibility to shape a child's development.

We need to support children to achieve the five essentials in their earliest years for the best beginnings:

- Loving, nurturing relationships with parents and carers
- A safe home free from stress and adversity
- The right help to develop good language and cognitive skills
- Support to manage behaviour and regulate emotions
- Good physical and mental health and access to healthcare

Why we need a strategy

The council has a duty to improve outcomes for children under 5, reduce inequalities and ensure there is enough high quality early education and care for parents.

In Solihull only 76.2% of all children reach a good level of development in the early years.

Solihull is ranked 2nd nationally for take up of early education places for 3 and 4yr olds and 14th nationally for take up of early education places for 2yr olds.

It has been shown that the early years is critical to brain development with a massive impact on children's learning and development, if we want to close the gap that continues throughout school, we must start early.

What we are going to do

We need to improve how services communicate and work together to ensure children and families are supported effectively to have the best early experiences. These experiences can help them to grow and develop and achieve the best start in life.

Ensure the services needed by families from birth are put in place and promoted so that families know where to go for support.

Have a targeted approach to support children under 5 who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged by promoting positive outcomes and reducing inequalities to improve attainment in the early years.

Share information between services to support early identification of families who are struggling and need additional support.

Map the services available that are needed by families to ensure there are no gaps or duplication.

How we are going to support parents

- Support antenatal parenting particularly for vulnerable and/or isolated women.
- Provide specialist infant feeding support
- Support families through the creation of family hubs where you can access support and advice in the community and online
- Increase our parenting support programme to reach more families
- Improve perinatal mental health to ensure services work together to support families at risk of mental health issues
- Provide specialist services to improve infant mental health.

What the strategy aims to do

The strategy will bring together partners from a range of agencies working with our youngest children and families to plan, provide support, learn and make changes where needed.

The strategy group will be working on 6 priorities these are:

- **Data** – action planning to meet the needs of families and evaluating what works.
- **Communication** – ensuring families have access to the information and advice they need
- **Workforce** – to build a workforce that have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to support young children and families
- **Transitions and life course** – to provide seamless services and support for families and young children including Family Hubs
- **Early Years SEND** – to have high aspirations for all children and a clear vision for the education of children with special educational needs.
- **Speech, language and communication** – to support all children to develop effective communication skills.

What we want to achieve

- Increase parental confidence in services by ensuring we are all working together.
- Parents will feel connected to the place they live, the parent community and to services that support families.
- Parents feel informed about the services they can access
- Increase parental confidence
- Increase happiness and quality of life for parents and children.
- Support Voluntary sector services to be able to provide appropriate help to parents with children aged 5 and under.
- Support Community groups, clubs and activities to provide contact and meeting points for parents with children aged 5 and under.

How we will know we have achieved our aims

- An action plan has been created to work on targets in the strategy priority areas.
- Each priority group will feed back to the main strategy group progress against their targets so that this can be monitored regularly
- We will evaluate services that are put into place with parents and families and take comments and ideas back to the strategy group
- We will feed back our achievements to parents regularly via the Five to Thrive webpages as well as through our local communication channels.

Teams and Services involved in delivering the strategy

- Solihull MBC
 - Early Years Team
 - Family Information Service
 - Parenting Team
 - Community Development Team
 - Educational Psychology Team
 - Specialist Inclusion Support Service
 - Public Health
 - Virtual School
- Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub and Children's Services
- South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust
 - Health Visiting Service
- Solihull Children's Community Therapies
 - Speech and Language Therapy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Occupational Therapy
- Midwifery Service

Action Plan

A lead has been agreed for each priority area and an action plan agreed with progress being fed back into the main strategy group.

Our vision: Transforming life chances by holding children and young people at the heart of everything we do. Solihull Council Plan priority: 2020-2025- Improvements in early childhood development and school readiness, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Data	Communications	SEND	Speech, Language and Communication	Transitions and life course	Workforce
To put the data to work to best support early years children where it is needed most.	Develop, embed and communicate an integrated approach to early years support and service delivery.	To develop a community approach to intervention at the earliest opportunity to support potential SEND needs.	In Solihull we believe that if children's speech, language and communication develop well they can communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas, be understood, build relationships and interact with others. Children learn to talk and talk to live and learn.	Develop and embed a cross-sector and community approach to early intervention, which can identify and engage with children and parents at the earliest opportunity and point of potential need;	To build a local authority field force and education-based workforce that have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to together support young children [pre-birth to five y/o] and families at the earliest opportunity and point of potential need.
Develop a shared outcomes framework - tartan rug.	'Big Change Starts Small'- Raising awareness of the extraordinary impact of the early years.	Review access to support and timely intervention for children with emerging SEND and high needs	Create a shared pathway to show universal, targeted and specialist services supporting SLCN in Solihull.	Ensure parenting and community support delivers a robust 'Start Strong Stay Strong' offer - child development and responsive parenting.	Developing more integrated working and a shared understanding of the importance of early years and early support.
Joint analysis and shared problem-solving actions by stakeholders.	Creating communities of support – ensure accessibility of our communication of the support available to Solihull children and families.	Closer agency working to develop integrated working – promote ASQ [integrated check], shared pathways, joint training, joint commissioning.	Promote serve and return interactions for healthy development – workforce training through LA and external training.	Build a mentally healthier and more nurturing society-focus on parent and infant mental health training.	Strengthening the early years workforce-ensure a shared understanding of child development in the prime areas.
Targeted evidence-based interventions and joint working for priority needs.	Shared messages across services - combined and consistent communications.	Evidenced based approaches to support need and to evaluate the impact on families/ children	Make sure that information about early childhood development reaches all to support home learning- DfE and Solihull websites+	Support transition to parenthood and through into school years - practical and emotional support for those raising our under fives	Use mapping overlay of data and support available to promote Solihull intelligence of need and support available for effective signposting
Information sharing agreements for holistic support for families.	Relational approach to provision of service and celebratory service feedback – partnership working.	Training for settings - Dingley's Promise 5-year Comic Relief funded support and DfE programme (PSE and well-being, speech, language, communication, inclusive settings, etc).	Use the available data and new data sources [such as ELIM] to identify and address needs across the support field force. Use EYFS reform priorities to reinforce messages for effective interaction.	Develop transition arrangements between services and settings - Evaluate practice through family engagement.	Parent support pre-birth to 5y and looking at whole families/ whole child... what people can do that makes a difference and what works to deliver better outcomes.

Key steps to reach the next progress level – Early Intervention Foundation (July 2021)

1. **PARTNERSHIP** Develop terms of reference for the partnership group and establish clear governance procedures, prioritising the involvement of maternity services.
2. **STRATEGY** Ahead of developing a strategy, ensure that there are strong building blocks in place upon which to develop a good understanding of the needs of Solihull's population, including population needs assessment, mapping existing maternity and early years services and the experience of the parenting journey.
3. **WORKFORCE PLANNING** The first step beyond delivering training towards more systemic workforce planning is mapping workforce needs across the early years and maternity workforce and focussing on staff capacity, skills, performance, satisfaction and retention.
4. **ENGAGEMENT** Further develop engagement by including parents and community members in governance arrangements and decisions about resources and opportunities for peer support and community involvement in the delivery of services.