

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE NEWSLETTER

September 2022

ABOUT SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE

We are independent parents/carers, working together to raise awareness and improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (0-25). We work with organisations that provide services such as education, health, and social care. We are completely independent of the Local Authority. Our aims are to raise the views of parents and carers to work together to improve services - we raise experiences, ideas, and challenge services to effect positive change. We are strategic partners of both the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Let your voice be heard.



This means that we work with them on plans for services, we challenge where their views do not match those of families, we raise with them where things are going wrong and work with them to improve these areas.

As the strategic partners we will raise the collective voices of all families who live in Solihull or access Solihull services.

Our steering group is made up of parents/carers from across Solihull, from different backgrounds and with children and young people of different ages and with different special educational needs and disabilities.

SPCV is funded by the Department for Education.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER

VOICE THE TEAM

Heather - Director and Chair

I have 2 children with SEND, they have a wide variety of needs including neurodiversity, specific learning difficulties, mental health difficulties, physical difficulties and health difficulties.

I previously worked for Solihull Sendias and also have been an IPSEA Advice line volunteer.

I am a part of SPCV because I am passionate about helping families in Solihull and working to make sure that services improve so that our children and young people have better outcomes and that the journey for families through the SEND system is better.

Stephanie - Director

I have 4 children, all of whom either are diagnosed with SEND or are on the pathway, I have children in nursery, primary, secondary and college!

I know first-hand, being a disabled Mom, the challenges that come to us in our journey's, and feeling like your child has been failed. This is what drives my passion to ensure that no child is left behind. I am passionate about ensuring that children's needs are identified early, and that interventions and support are put in place at the right time.

Samantha - Director

I have 3 children, including a daughter who is autistic and has anxiety.

As a family we have had both positive and negative experiences with SEN services.

I am passionate about ensuring that the child or young person's voice is heard and makes a difference. It is important for all services to remember that we are working with children and young people not files or cases!



Fozia- Steering Group member

I have 2 children; my son has additional needs and is in a mainstream school with an EHCP.

I have been through the process, which can be extremely challenging at times and requires a lot of resilience. I am focused on supporting other parent carers who face the same issues, and on working to help improve services in Solihull so that they meet our children and young people's needs as they go through their journey in life.

Kate- Steering Group member

I have 3 children, who all have additional needs, including chromosomal deletions, visual impairment and autism.

As well as being a Mum, my background is in nursing, both in acute care and in public health.

I have a particular passion about reducing health inequalities and improving access to healthcare.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER

VOICE THE TEAM

Chris- Steering Group member

I have a child in secondary school with additional needs.

I also have professional experience working in public health, alongside care experienced young people, running a children's forum and gathering the views of children and young people. Like Samantha, I am passionate about making sure services put the thoughts, feelings and wishes of children and young people at the centre of everything they do.

Gina- Steering Group member

I have a child with additional needs, and like many we have had a tumultuous journey through education and the SEND system so far.

I have experience of mental health difficulties and autism and am passionate about making sure that we work together to ensure that there is access to the right services and support at the right time.

Tracy- Steering Group member

I have 2 children. I have experience in Down Syndrome and am also an experienced user of alternative communication methods including Makaton.

I have experience of working with children and adults with disabilities and an understanding of different school environments.

Pete- Steering Group member

I have a daughter who has Down Syndrome, visual impairment and extreme sensory needs. She has an EHCP and attends a specialist school. In the early days after our daughter was born, my wife and I found it extremely challenging to even to begin to understand the support mechanisms that



are available. Through local groups and charities, we were given guidance and managed to wind our way through the processes and get the support that our daughter needs.

I strongly feel that it shouldn't be like this, and through my role in SPCV I want to contribute to the great work we do and bring change to the system, as well as provide support to parents who have found themselves in a similar situation.

Su- Parent Representative

I have a young person in college, so I am aware of the challenges surrounding transitions at post 16 and the huge differences between having a young person in school and a young person in college.

I have worked with parent carer forums previously so have lots of experience and am passionate at working to achieve better outcomes for children and young people in Solihull and for improving the experiences of families.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER

VOICE THE TEAM

Amy- Parent Representative

I am a hairdresser and have two little girls, Matilda and Minnie. Minnie has ASD, SPD, hypermobility and SEMH needs. The reason I joined SPCV is because I have had to fight every step of the way to get support for my daughter and to access the correct services for her.

I feel passionate that changes need to be made in the SEND world and SPCV are working hard to support families and their children and to push for more support for them. SPCV have helped me so much with my daughter and I would like to give something back and help others.

Zoe- Parent Representative

I am a parent carer living in North Solihull. I have one child who has a diagnosis of ASD and Tourettes.

I have joined SPCV to help support others and make positive changes.

One person's experience will vary from the next so for this reason we need a collective voice.

Through the years we have personally faced many challenges and hurdles that we struggled to overcome. I am passionate about raising awareness and ensuring all voices are heard. I look forward to working with SPCV and families in our community to get the outcomes we all strive for. Together we are stronger.

Keeley- Parent Representative

I am a mum to a 22 year old and a 13 year old who has ASD, Type 1 Diabetes, Epilepsy and brain damage and memory issues connected to her seizures. Despite obvious educational and medical needs, I still spent years fighting not only



the LA, but my daughters headteacher in order to get her what she was entitled to for her education. Thanks to my determination and help and support from SPCV I was able to win both battles, both morally and financially.

The system fails our children continuously and the only way to make a change is by sticking together. SPCV are the people to do that, which is why I jumped at the chance to help them be the catalyst for change.

I am very sociable so if you need a sounding board or someone to chat to over a coffee please do get in touch.

If you would like to join our growing team, please

email us at

solihullpcv@outlook.com

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE IMPACT

OUR RESPONSE TO PARENT CARERS VIEWS:

Parent carers have told us that they would like more transparency from the local authority.

We arranged a meeting for parent carers with Nick Page (Chief Executive) Tim Browne (Interim Director of Childrens Services) and Iona Payne (Assistant Director- social care) this allowed parent carers to talk directly to those in charge and ask them questions!

As part of the strive for transparency a representative from SPCV will start to sit to observe EHC panels (with permission for each case) this already successfully happens in many authorities and is making a positive difference.

Parent carers have told us they would like a meeting in the North of the borough.

We have arranged a meeting with Tim Browne, Charlotte Jones and Iona Payne in the North of the borough on the 25th January 2023, 10.30-12.00, please keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.



Parent carers have told us they want better engagement with their schools.

We are working with schools to set up Parent Engagement Groups in schools that we will be supporting, so far, we have interest from 14 schools.

Parent carers have told us that access to hospitals can be challenging.

We are working with Birmingham Women's and Children's Trust to look at improving accessibility. We are going to visit Birmingham Children's Hospital soon, along with a parent carer from Solihull who accesses the hospital on a regular basis, and we hope to spread this work to University Hospitals Birmingham.

 **We're
Listening** 

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER

VOICE IMPACT

OUR RESPONSE TO PARENT CARERS VIEWS:

Parent carers told us that the forms for an EHC Needs assessment are too complicated and there are too many.

We know that parents don't have to send forms- they can just send a one-line email asking for an assessment, however the LA do have to collect information to make their decision, and therefore we wanted to make the paperwork easier. Working with the LA, Sendias, Health, Social Care and schools, the 4 forms have now been collated into one and are simpler, to understand whilst ensuring that they ask for the information the LA need to make a decision.

Parent carers told us that there is not enough short breaks provision in Solihull.

We have worked with the Local Authority to look at this. SoLO have now received funding to provide short breaks in Solihull, and there is also a grant system for organisations to apply for funding to create new and different short breaks provisions in Solihull.



Parent carers have told us that the waiting times for SOLAR are too long, and they don't always feel that their children and young people are getting the support they need, when they need it.

We meet regularly with the Children and Young People's Mental Health Board and raise this issue with them frequently. Whilst we appreciate that there is a nationwide shortage of children and young people's mental health workers, it is vital that our children and young people receive the support that they need and deserve. We have put out a survey to ask parent carers for more feedback and will be taking this to Solar and to the Integrated Care System, we have also raised families difficulties with Solar with Councillors in Solihull.

 **We're
Listening** 

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS

Autism in Schools.

This project is funded by NHSE, we have received 2nd year funding to carry on this work. There are two parts to this project: a coproduced training package around Children and Young People's understanding of their own autistic identity. School staff have been trained in the package which is now being delivered to pupils. The second part of the project was for parent carer forums to work with parents and schools to set up parent engagement groups. In Solihull the Autism in Schools project is currently being delivered in Light Hall and Alderbrook and in our second year we are looking at developing this program to a primary school offer and will be working with 2 primary schools in Solihull.

Parent Engagement Groups.

Partly to do with the Autism in Schools work, but also due to the Inclusion work we are also working with other schools to set up Parent Engagement Groups. We currently have interest from 14 schools and are excited to help improvement the engagement between parents and schools.

Children's Services, Education and Skills Scrutiny.

SPCV sit as a Co-opted member on this board, working with Councillors to scrutinise the work of all children's services in Solihull.



BSol Service Review Reference Group.

This group looks at reviewing health services and how to improve them. The first service that is being reviewed is the Special Schools Nursing Team, this review is now starting so if your child/young person attends a special school in Solihull please do keep an eye out for more information regarding this. We and the Integrated Care System will be looking for YOUR voices and views about special school nursing.

Family Hubs.

Solihull has been awarded funding to create family hubs. We are continuing to work as part of a multi-agency team across Solihull to look at where these will be, what support they will offer and how they will work.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

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Local Offer.

We are working with the LA to improve the local offer- the look, functionality, and the information on this.

SEND Community Organisations Roundtable.

We have created this roundtable to bring together 3rd sector organisations, support groups, voluntary sector groups so we can all work together. So far, this group includes 23 organisations in Solihull. The roundtable is open to ANY community organisation that works with or supports children and young people with SEND and/or their families in Solihull. We come together to network, support each other, and share views and knowledge.

Situational Mutism.

We have worked with partners across Birmingham and Solihull to create a robust resource pack for both parents and professionals. This has now been published in Birmingham and Solihull and shared with GP's schools and other agencies.

Short Breaks.

Short breaks have been retendered, SoLO have been commissioned to provide short breaks, and there is also a grant system for organisations to apply for funding to offer new and innovative short breaks in Solihull



Equal Treatment, Challenging Racism and Health Inequalities in Solihull.

As part of our work to reduce inequalities in health we have been working (Supported by Learning Disability England) to look at ethnic inequalities. We are also expanding this to look at all inequalities. We have published a rdocument regarding this which can be found here on our website- www.spcv.org.uk

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF)

We work with SMBC to ensure that the providers for this programme are receiving SEND training and support to ensure that they have a good awareness of the needs of those children and young people with SEND that they support and that they are able to ensure that all eligible children and young people are able to access activities.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS

Children and Young People's Mental Health Board.

This board looks at the mental health offer in its entirety; the mental health in schools' teams (MHST) the commissioned offer from Solar including the partner services Barnardo's and Autism West Midlands.

This is a multi-agency board including health, public health, schools, educational psychology, SISS, VCSE and more.

Learning Disability and/or Autism Keyworker Project.

This is a pilot project funded by NHSE and has been running since September 2021. This project provides children and young people aged 14-25 with a learning disability and/or autism who are currently on the Dynamic Support Register, a keyworker. The DSR is for those who need intensive support from crisis teams through Solar, Forward Thinking Birmingham or Adult support hubs, or those who are inpatients. The keyworker's work with the young person, their family and the services to help navigate services and ensure services are working together to best support the young person. This project is going into year 2 and is expanding to offer more support to more young people.



All Age Autism Support Service.

This is a Birmingham and Solihull Service that we offer pre and post diagnosis support, to all ages. The service has been coproduced and will be run by Landau. The service will aim to signpost individuals to the right support, and where there are gaps in support help organisations fill these gaps. Organisations can bid for grants to build capacity, upskill staff, develop new streams of work and build on work that they are already doing. Grants will be awarded based on a panel decision with the panel including Parent Carer Forum reps and Experts by Experience. Currently 8 grants have been awarded across Birmingham and Solihull and their projects will be up and running soon. The service is also creating a Directory of support services that are available in Birmingham and Solihull.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS

Inclusion Programme Board.

We have had a seat on this board since its inception, this board is working to improve inclusion in Solihull, not just for SEND but for all. The Strategy for Inclusive Education in Solihull is now live and can be found on the Local Offer. As part of this work, we are working with schools to set up Parent Engagement Groups in schools.

Graduated Approach.

As part of the work around inclusion and improving SEND support in schools, we are working on the Graduated Approach, this is the approach that schools should take to support children and young people, including making reasonable adjustments, putting in place interventions and seeking support from outside agencies such as the Solihull Inclusion Support Service and the Educational Psychology Service. Information will be coproduced and will be available for both professionals and families and will be published on the local offer.

Early Years Speech, Language and Communication.

We are working with partners to look at the speech, language and communication needs offer in Solihull. We know that since Covid there has been an increase in referrals to Speech and Language Therapy so we are looking at how we can ensure there is a better and wider offer in Solihull, also involving the whole community.



Joint Additional Needs Board.

This board has two arms, the JAND Board and the JAND Delivery board and SPCV sit on both. They are both multi-agency boards looking at additional needs for those aged 0-25 and how we can improve services across Solihull and therefore experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

The Additional Needs Strategy was launched in December 2021 and from this an action plan and workstreams have been developed. There will shortly be a survey asking for parent carers views on any progress made in the last year.

Dingley's Promise.

This project is offering training to early years settings, looking at improving early interventions, the SEND offer and improve knowledge about SEND and early identification. 10 Local Authorities were selected to be a part of this project including Solihull. There is also a parent rep project team as part of this.

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

PROJECTS AND WORKSTREAMS

Birmingham and Solihull Health Forum.

This is a strategic health forum where Birmingham Parent Carer Forum, Solihull Parent Carer Voice and Health partners work together to improve health services.

Children and Families Prevention and Early Intervention Board.

This board aims to bring together multi-agency partners to promote partnership working. Enabling partners to work together more effectively, in collaboration with local communities, to ensure a more cohesive approach to service delivery across agencies



FACTS AND FIGURES

July-Sept 2022

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Facebook reach: | 134546 |
| Direct Contacts with Parents: | 3186 |
| Social Media Followers: | 2576 |
| Number of meetings: | 94 |
| Hours 'worked': | 1524 |

SPCV membership:

Covers all wards of Solihull, generally in line with population data although there is an over-representation in Chelmsley Wood, Lyndon and Olton and an under-representation in Smiths Wood, Knowle, St.Alphege and Silhill.

SPCV membership is 22% BAME, against a Solihull population figure of approx 15% (2019)



SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE WORKSTREAMS

OTHER AREAS OF WORK

OUR VOICES HEARD:

Solihull Parent Carer Voice are funded to host the children and young people's forum for Solihull, called Our Voices Heard. This forum is run by a project lead and a youth support worker and focuses on gathering the voices of children and young people in Solihull and ensuring those voices are heard by services and informs and influences the design of services as well as making sure that the views of children and young people are at the heart of everything.



AUTISM SUPPORT GROUPS:

We have been awarded grant funding from the All-Age Autism Support Service, to create two specific support groups in Solihull.

One a group for autistic adults aged 18+ and the second a group for parent carers and family members of autistic individuals. These groups will offer support and will invite in professionals to offer information and advice. They will also offer social events and activities.



We are delighted to have recruited a fantastic member of staff to lead this project who will be starting with us shortly, and we hope the groups will be starting by the end of November.



AAA

All Age Autism Support Service



Landau
changing lives creating futures

SOLIHULL PARENT CARER VOICE EVENTS

EVENTS:

CAREERS FAIR

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH SEND.



Solihull Parent
Carer Voice



This Careers Fair is specifically tailored for young people aged 14+ with special educational needs and/or disabilities and/or their parent carers.

In attendance will be colleges, support services and employers.

If you would like to attend please register using the below QR or email us at solihullpcv@outlook.com

10th November
3pm - 7 pm

Cranmore Events and Conference Centre,
Cranmore Avenue, Shirley



CONTACT US:

solihullpcv@outlook.com

www.spcv.org.uk

Facebook: Solihull Parent Carer
Voice

Twitter: @solihullpcv

You can also join us as a parent representative and help work with us to make a difference for children, young people and families in Solihull.

