

Solihull SEND 0-25 Service

NEWSLETTER

December 2020

O-25 SEND Service Update

We are back!

You will be pleased to hear we will be re-establishing the termly newsletter to keep you all updated as to developments in the SEND Service.

SEND Improvement Journey

Whilst it has been interesting to join Solihull amidst the challenges this year has brought us, it has been a real pleasure to take up my post, talk too many of you and understand what our priorities should be in providing a high quality education for all children in the borough. I think it is fair to say that the 2015 SEND reforms have not managed to deliver what many of us were hoping for and that nationally we still have a way to go to ensure all children have access to local, high quality inclusive education which reflects their needs and abilities.

It has been evident from my discussions with a number of you that improving our offer for children and young people with SEND is one of those priorities. Since taking up post I have been excited to drive forward a number of things in this area which I know will make a difference and I hope the pictograms below will help explain some of these key areas. I am determined to improve outcomes for children and young people but this will not be a quick, or necessary an easy, journey. However, I know that with everyone pulling in the same direction we will get there.

Tim Browne

Assistant Director Inclusion & Additional Needs

Our Vision for Children and Young People with SEND in Solihull



Message from Charlotte Jones Head of SEND (0-25)

After 13 years working in education in Gloucestershire County Council I was very pleased to join the team here at Solihull on 24th November. Whilst working in Gloucestershire I had a number of roles; including Head of SEND and then a broader role covering the support of all children with additional needs and SEND before taking the interim Director of Education role through Covid-19. I believe that a good education is one of the most important things we can offer our children and throughout my career I have been fully committed to ensuring that all children feel safe, healthy, happy and able to learn – regardless of their needs or background.

For me, that is about creating a strong school system where leaders come together to provide high quality education for all children and for teachers to feel confident in adapting their curriculum or approaches to reflect the range of needs within their classroom, receiving support from their SENCo and a range of other professionals to help them achieve this for all children. That can only be achieved by children, young people, families, schools and agencies working collaboratively together to support all needs a child may have and recognising that everyone has their part to play.

The council has a role in leading the borough to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and whilst staff need to hold the child at the centre of all they do, the decisions they make, we cannot do this alone. I am therefore looking forward to working with all children, young people, parents and colleagues across education, care and health to ensure Solihull continues to be a positive place for children to grow up, and young adults to live. It will be great to meet you all over the coming months, but in the meantime I do hope that you manage that very important rest and relaxation over the Christmas break.

Charlotte Jones

Head of SEND Service 0-25

Specialist Inclusion Support Service (SISS) Update

It has been a very busy start to the academic year for the teams at SISS. In addition to all the changes linked to COVID-19, we have also been recruiting to various posts within the teams and have made some excellent appointments.

As many of you will be aware, Tina Partridge our Autism Team Coordinator, left us at October half term to take up a promotion with Worcester LA. We have since recruited Emma Cox to the vacant position and she will be starting with us at the beginning of January 2021. Emma knows Solihull from her time at Hazel Oak many years ago and is looking forward to returning to this LA. In the meantime Wendy Fitzmaurice is acting up as Interim Team Coordinator, whilst also keeping up her responsibilities as a Lead professional, so please bear with us at what is a very busy time, with reduced staffing.

We also have had a number of staff start with us this half term. We are welcoming another member of staff back to Solihull, Kate Whittesley. Since working as a SENCO in Solihull, Kate has worked as a SEND advisor in another LA and also as a SEND Consultant, she has joined us as a Specialist Teacher within the Autism team, alongside Laura Jones who has joined the Team taking up an Inclusion Support Practitioner (ISP) role. Within our High Needs SEMH Team we have also recruited Tina Kilgallon to an ISP post.

SISS Recovery Support

SISS has also been funded to provide specific additional support to schools following the COVID pandemic. The support is to be delivered by Sally Moorman (part-time teacher), Sharon Abbott (part-time ISP) and Ian Martin (Full-time ISP), they will be working with us this academic year to deliver the SEMH support detailed below.

SISS Communication and Learning Difficulties Team

- For 2020-21, the CLD team will offer all mainstream schools the opportunity for a 2 hour consultation with a specialist teacher to discuss/ plan the school's provision for pupils with SEND, as part of the post-lockdown recovery plan.
- This meeting could involve e.g. a review of the school's provision map, consideration of the intervention options available and practical planning strategies in terms of short and long-term support for those pupils with additional needs.

SISS SEMH Team Recovery Support

- The SISS SEMH Team are offering support to pupils who continue to experience difficulties with the transition back to school following the period of school closure due to COVID-19.
- Support can be requested for pupils who may be having difficulty adjusting to routines and expectations, re-establishing social connections and/or their attendance may be of concern. The Team has additional capacity to provide support from SEMH ISPs and SEMH Advisory Teachers.
- Accessing this support is through a 'Request for Support', the process for which varies across primary and secondary settings. This is a limited resource and will work alongside current traded and non-traded services to schools.

Training

As we come to grips with all the different virtual platforms, we are moving much of our training for schools on-line. The SENCo networks took place in November for both primary and secondary schools and so far we had a very high on-line attendance, with only a few technical difficulties, which was brilliant.

We have also been piloting the Barnardo's Cygnet training with a group of volunteer parents- the feedback for this was really positive so we are looking to build on this pilot, details will follow in 2021.

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance Pathway: Starting January 2021

From January 2021 a new pathway for supporting children at risk of or experiencing Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSN) will be offered by the Community Educational Psychology Service (CEPS) to all Solihull children (including those placed in schools out of borough).

The CEPS EBSN team is a core funded team consisting of a Community Educational Psychologist and two Assistant Psychologists.

The role of the team is to work with CYP, families, educational settings and other professionals already involved to develop a psychological formulation of the EBSN functions, which may be gained through further assessment (including observations, consultations and individual assessment work). The team will then join a Team around the Child (TAC) Meeting and develop a joint Action Plan. If agreed, this may include;

- individual work with the child/young person, by a member of the team
- further development work and support for schools
- and/or work supporting the family using strengths-based approaches (including a bespoke 4 week family support programme offered to all families of children accepted onto the EBSN pathway).

Referrals to the EBSN team will come from the school that the child or young person is on roll at. More information about this pathway, including guides for families and information for CYP experiencing EBSN can be found on the Local Offer: <https://socialsolihull.org.uk/localoffer/education/children-and-young-peoples-send-service/emotionally-based-school-non-attendance/>

Update from the StART Team

There have been a number of changes within the StART Team as we have been working to build additional capacity within the team.

The Interim StART Manager left us in November and the Interim SEND Consultant, David Graham and the Interim Head of SEND Service, Jayne Mumford have been supporting the team.

The new permanent StART Manager, Amanda Hana, starts with us on 4 January 2021. We have also been successful to recruiting to the permanent Senior Plan Coordinators roles. However, we lose Heidi Jones, who will be moving to take up a position in another Local Authority. Roslyn Cleverley, has been seconded to the Liquid Logic project which will see the introduction of a new case management system at the end of March 2021. To cover Roslyn and provide additional capacity and we have managed to secure two Interim Seniors who will be with us until at least the end of March 2021.

We have three new permanent SEN EHC Plan Coordinators, starting in January 2021, and they will benefit from a hand over and induction from the interim EHC Plan Coordinators currently covering those roles.

We have also ensured that we have a Post 16 Senior and Plan Coordinator lead, now in post as we lost this targeted support earlier on in the year.

Having built this additional capacity within the StART Team, will ensure that we are able to improve our practice moving forward. Our focus will be on ensuring that we communicate more effectively, work to improve the timeliness of EHC Plan processes along with the quality of plans and the review of pupil progress.

We are introducing an additional dedicated telephone number for the duty Plan Co-Ordinator and appreciate the challenge using the current single number for all calls to StART. The team continue to work remotely and are looking forward to a return to the office base, hopefully in the Spring and being able to more readily meet you face to face in person at reviews and other meetings.

We have attached a link to the current SEN Plan Coordinators. This is likely to change over the next few weeks as new staff join the team but we will continue to update you on a regular basis.

This has been another rollercoaster term so thank you for all you have done to support those children who most need all of our help. We hope you get a well-deserved break over the festive period and wish you a Happy Christmas and easier, more sociable, 2021.

Charlotte Jones

Head of SEND Service 0-25