

Partnership agreement



*Working together
for children and
young people with
Additional Needs*

March 2021

*Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC),
NHS Birmingham & Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG),
Solihull Parent Carer Voice*

FORMAL AGREEMENT

Working as equal partners we are committed to making a difference to the lives and outcomes of children and young people with additional needs and their parent carers.

A revised improvement journey is being defined and co-production is at the heart of these plans.



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Parent Carer Voice

Date: 19/03/2021

Our partnership vision is that all children, young people and their parents and carers have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them at individual, operational and strategic levels - developing the skills and knowledge required to be decision-makers in their own lives.

Foreword

This agreement seeks to provide a framework across Solihull for all key strategic partners to work in collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. It is set within the context and principles laid out in the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in recognition that all children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is enshrined in law via Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice and the Care Act 2015.

We acknowledge that good participation does not just mean listening to children and young people and their parent carers, but also acting on their input and giving them good feedback about the decisions we make.

In order to ensure that all voices are heard, we will make sure that appropriate and accessible participation opportunities are available, providing the support that parent carers, children and young people need to take part in a way that works for them.

Good participation will be embedded as standard across services, and considered from the very earliest stages of the commissioning cycle and throughout (from assessing needs, looking at best practice, service design and transformation, ensuring capacity meets demand to monitoring service provision).

Roles & Responsibilities

Statutory services

Children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities often receive a number of different services. These could be provided by nurseries, schools or colleges and specialist therapists, as well as professionals in education, health and social care.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the government placed new duties on the local health, social and education services that provide for these children and young people. In particular, the local area health, social and education services need to work together to:

- › publish a 'local offer' setting out the support and provision in the area for children and young adults with special educational needs or disabilities (or both)
- › provide accessible information to children and young people, as well as parents and carers, about the services and support available in the local area
- › work with children and young people, their parents and carers, and service providers to make sure that any special needs or disabilities (or both) are identified as early as possible
- › assess (in co-operation with children and young people and their parents and carers) the needs of children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (or both) who may need an education, health and social care plan (EHCP)
- › produce an EHCP for all children and young people who are assessed as needing one (all relevant agencies should cooperate to do this and involve the children and young people and their parents and carers)
- › provide children and young people with the support agreed in their EHCP, and regularly review their plans

Parent Carer Forum

Recognising the importance of parent carer involvement at a strategic level alongside health, care and education services, the Department for Education provides a grant to facilitate Parent Carer Forums in every local area.

In Solihull, Parent Carer Voice is the established forum and the strategic partner of Solihull MBC and NHS Birmingham & Solihull CCG.

Parent Carer Voice is a group of parents and carers of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their aim is to make sure the services in the area meet the needs of disabled children and their families.

They do this by gathering the views of local families and then working in partnership with health, care and education to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or challenge when changes or improvements need to be made.

Parent Carer Voice will represent parent carers in Solihull at all strategic SEND and Additional Needs forums within the borough – providing an insight into the lived experience of children, young people and families across the borough and working across the partnership to facilitate improvements. They are an equal partner in this arrangement and will provide effective support and challenge to services.

Parent Carer Voice will provide the recognised communication route with parent carers; raising collective parent carer views, sharing information and collating parent carer feedback.

The partnership will also jointly consider how best to increase participation of children and young people so they also have an equal voice in the services designed to support them.

Priorities for 2021

The partnership has agreed joint priorities for strategic focus over the coming year; the work of which will be co-produced and delivered during 2021 and reviewed at the end of the year for impact.



1. Mental health and school trauma

Ensuring there is a shared understanding of children and young people's needs and all have appropriate access to the right level of mental health support where necessary



2. EHCP Quality

Ensuring that legally compliant, good quality EHCPs with specified health, education and care provision are issued within expected timescales and reviewed annually



3. School refusal/school avoidance

Raising awareness of children and young people's difficulties in school attendance with parent carers and schools and ensuring a child centred plan is in place to identify needs and appropriate support



4. Social care

Ensuring personalisation, choice and control are at the centre of assessments and support for children and young people (from 0-25 years)



5. Inclusion

Embedding the schools Inclusion Charter into every day practice through the creation of an Inclusion Strategy which supports early identification and intervention within a multi-agency graduated approach



6. Health

Improving the understanding of all health services in communicating with children and young people with SEND and ensuring equality of access to timely health assessments and therapeutic support regardless of geography

The strategic partnership is brought together by the Joint Additional Needs & Disabilities Board which meets quarterly to monitor activity across all agencies and oversee outcomes for children and young people with additional needs. This board is held to account by the Health & Wellbeing Board.

The outcome of the partnership's work will be shared with all stakeholders on a regular basis through each agencies usual communication routes and will be evaluated to inform the Partnership Agreement for 2022 onwards.

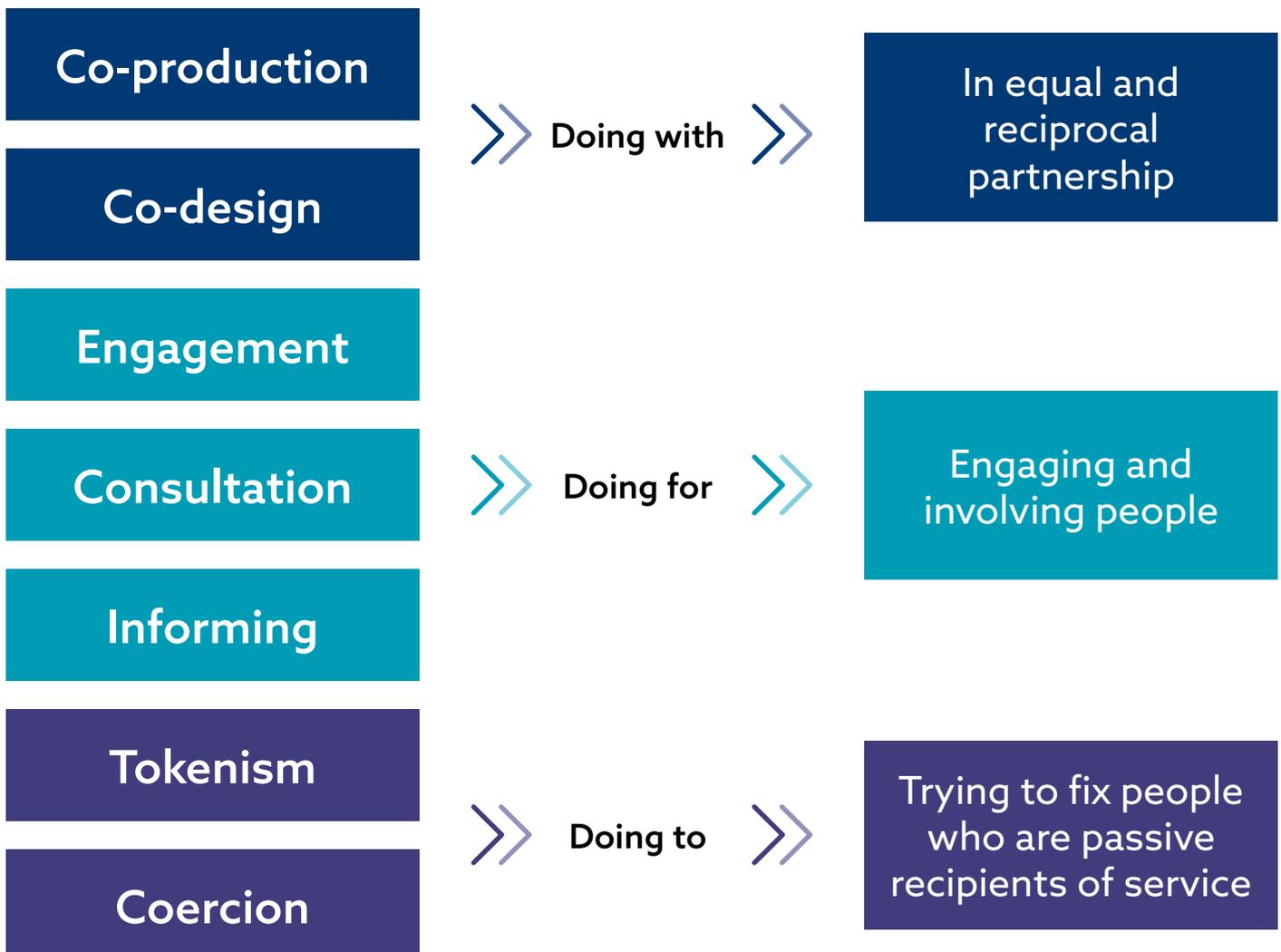
All partnership work will be undertaken following our Co-production Charter, on the following pages.

Co-Production Charter

What is Co-production?

Co-production is not just a word, it is not just a concept, it is a meeting of minds coming together to find shared solutions. In practice, Co-production involves people who use services being consulted, involved and working together from the start to the end of any project that affects them. When Co-production works best, people who use services and carers are valued by organisations as equal partners, can share power and have influence over decisions made.

National Co-production Advisory Group.



Our Co-production Principles

We will:

- › Be welcoming and caring.
- › Treat everyone equally and with respect.
- › Communicate clearly and honestly.
- › Work in partnership and be inclusive.
- › Agree upfront the level of co-production on any activity.
- › Use a co-production logo on published documents.
- › We will develop and cultivate our working relationships in order to achieve trust.

We, as people in Solihull who access services, families, carers, Council Officers, decision makers, and partner organisations are committed to ensuring that we work together to ensure that the principles of effective Co-production underpin the shaping and improving of services.

The process of Co-production

To ensure that genuine co-production happens in Solihull we will:

- › Be clear about the nature of the work to be undertaken and the level of co-production needed to get the best outcome.
- › From the start consider "who do we need to involve?" and make contact at the first possible opportunity. We will always ask "who have we missed?"
- › Directly involve children with SEND, their parent/carers along with other participants to ensure our way of working together is built on trust, transparency and open communication.
- › Consider when, where and how any meetings will take place to make sure that they are accessible to all.
- › Come to the table with a blank agenda and build it together with the people that access a service, their families and carers. We will monitor the agenda and how it progresses to ensure it is clear how all views have shaped the direction.
- › Give equal value to every participants contribution.
- › Ensure that everyone gets the same information, at the same time, in a way that they can access it.
- › Maintain confidentiality as agreed for every project.
- › Facilitate discussion and actively listen.
- › Always provide feedback so that people can see what happens as a result of their participation.
- › Understand that the final outcome may be a compromise, however we will ensure that all voices have been heard in reaching a compromise.

Always remember: Who, Where, When, What, Why and How.

- › **Who** are we engaging?
- › **Where** are we meeting? Make sure this is a setting where everyone feels comfortable and can access it. Can it be a virtual meeting?
- › **When** are we meeting? Remember school run times and working parents. Make sure everyone is given enough notice.
- › **What** method of engaging will suit the purpose best?
- › **Why** are we co-producing and what is the outcome we are looking for?
- › **How** will we co-produce this piece of work?

How we will know if it is working

We will know that true co-production is working in Solihull when all parties can agree with the following statements:

- › I am an equal partner and am listened to and valued.
- › I am able to be a part of the process and am able to participate in all stages.
- › My views and experiences are represented.
- › I receive clear information, timely information in a format that is accessible to me.
- › I know that policies, processes and services have been co-produced.

We will also monitor and evaluate to ensure that effective co-production is happening:

EVIDENCE

- › All partners who have engaged in co-production should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken. This includes detailing the contributions in service specifications, policies and procedures.

EVALUATE

- › We will gather feedback to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard and that they have been able to make a difference.

AUDIT

- › All services and teams working with children, young people and young adults with SEND will complete an annual participation audit with a focus on improving participation.

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