

Healthwatch Solihull's response to the SEND review consultation

Healthwatch Solihull welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation on Additional Needs Strategy. Our key role is to make sure that patients, the public, service users, and carers are at the heart of service improvement in health and social care. In line with our role, we have focused our comments on:

- Patient and Public Involvement.
- The extent to which the proposed plans address the needs of Solihull citizens, particularly people who live in Solihull and have a special educational need (SEND).

What key factors should be considered, when developing national standards to ensure they deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND and their families? This includes how this applies across education, health and care in a 0-25 system.

Healthwatch Solihull are pleased to see that the consultation has been available to respond to for several weeks, giving the public a long time to consider the proposals and respond. There is not a phone number or postal address to allow anyone without digital access to respond. This seems to be the case with the initial survey that was used to create this draft strategy.

We are interested in how many responses receive to this consultation. Therefore, we are disappointed to note that the documents have only been available online.

The responses to this consultation need to be assessed to see if they are representative of citizens in this borough, as well as the demographic of children or young people, up to the age of 25 years' old and has a special educational need (SEND) or additional need, and those not currently choosing to access services. If the responses are not representative, then further engagement work needs to be held on this strategy. This could include targeted engagement for certain populations and would require materials to be produced that are much easier to read and understand.

Healthwatch Solihull would like to urge you to not only listen to people's views but also demonstrate how these views have affected the final strategy. This will ensure that people feel part of the decision-making process not just rubber-stamping decisions that may have already been made.

Healthwatch Solihull would like to see an emphasis on using the insight, experience and involvement of people who use additional services, to drive service design and continuous improvement through the life of this strategy. As such it should be clearly noted who will be responsible for ensuring this feedback is collected and the process for considering the feedback, improving service design and feeding back to the public the changes their feedback has made.

How should we develop the proposal for new local SEND partnerships to oversee the effective development of local inclusion plans whilst avoiding placing unnecessary burdens or duplicating current partnerships?

A clearer understanding of the next steps for this strategy would help people to understand in more detail how this will actually affect them and the people they know. This could be more detail on the framework for action and the timescales for next stages. An impact assessment would also more clearly outline who will be most affected by any changes, and what needs to be in place to ensure this is done fairly and equitably.

How can parents and local authorities most effectively work together to produce a tailored list of placements that is appropriate for their child, and gives parents confidence in the EHCP process?

There needs to be a continuous cycle of feedback and engagement with the public now as the strategy moves forward. It needs to be made clear what improvements a service user can expect to see when accessing services, as a direct result of this strategy.

Yours Sincerely,



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Project Officer



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