



## **Solihull SENDIASS: Partnership working with the local Parent Carer Forum**

### **The context**

Solihull has had some difficulty retaining and growing the membership of a SEND parent carer forum for a number of years. Since the SEND reforms of 2014, there have been numerous attempts by groups of parents to set up and establish a PCF, but all have failed within a short timeframe.

### **The issue**

In 2020 the last PCF folded & parents were apathetic towards establishing a new forum; parents told Solihull SENDIASS that they distrusted the LA and other official bodies and had no interest in creating a PCF as a tick box exercise. Solihull SENDIASS were concerned that without a PCF in place, coproduction with parents would not be as effective across the borough. SENDIASS decided to speak to Contact about setting up a new PCF, who acknowledged that they had also tried to set up a new PCF but had failed to get parents interested.

### **How SENDIASS and PCF have worked together**

Solihull SENDIASS generated positivity amongst parents and an appetite for forming a new PCF by reaching out to service users and discussing (at length) the benefits that having a PCF would bring to all parents. Parents agreed to hear what establishing a new PCF would entail at a series of meetings with Contact but they wanted Solihull SENDIASS to also attend due to their impartiality and as a service that can be trusted. A lot of hours were spent talking to and reassuring parents about what a difference they could all make collectively. Parents discussed creating a new PCF in groups and on social media and a group of parents, not all known to Solihull SENDIASS, with support from Contact did establish a PCF – Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV).

### **The difference made**

SPCV is now a strong PCF with a growing membership, who are inundated with requests from LA, CCG and other bodies to coproduce and represent parent's voices.

Solihull SENDIASS and SPCV work closely together and respect and support each other. By working together they can ensure that both SPCV and Solihull SENDIASS have a strategic voice by:

- Ensuring parents voices are heard across the Solihull region and nationally
- Developing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between SENDIASS and SPCV. (The MoU has been shared with PCF's & SENDIASS services across the West Midlands as an example of good practise.)
- Promoting each other's service and signposting families to each other as appropriate.
- Coproducing a parent survey with Birmingham & Solihull PCFs as part of a research project into hospital visits for SEND CYP for NHS improvement, the research was jointly delivered by Solihull & Birmingham SENDIASS.
- Attending 2 PCF virtual drop ins, attended by approximately 15 parents
- Attending 2 PCF 'in person' coffee & chats, attended by approximately 45 parents

- Presenting at 2 PCF Transition events (on 5.10.21) where over 100 parents are expected to attend.
- SPCV sharing Solihull SENDIASS's leaflet and information leaflets (EHCP's & Annual Reviews, etc.) on their website, making them easily accessible to more families.
- SPCV sharing Solihull SENDIASS's information on their Facebook page which has had a reach of 84,706 in the last quarter.

By working together with the PCF, Solihull SENDIASS's reach has increased and its resources are shared with many families.

## Feedback from SPCV

*SPCV and Solihull SENDIASS have a working MOU in place, we signpost parents and families to each other on a regular basis.*

*SPCV hold regular coffee mornings for families which SENDIASS attend to offer their services. We also share information regularly on each other's social media, information shared on SPCV Facebook page in the last quarter had a reach of 84706. SPCV also share Solihull SENDIASS information on our website.*

*Tomorrow we are holding 2 transition events for approximately 100 families which SENDIASS are also attending to give a presentation.*

*Heather Delaney*

*Chair and Director*

*Solihull Parent Carer Voice C.I.C.*

### **Contact details**

Hazel Clarke

Solihull SENDIAS Manager

[Hazel.clarke@family-action.org.uk](mailto:Hazel.clarke@family-action.org.uk)

### **Appendix 1: Copy of partnership agreement**

# Partnership Agreement between Solihull Parent Carer Voice (SPCV) and Solihull SENDIAS

## Section 1: The principles of our partnership

This is an agreement setting out how we will work together as individuals and organisations. The key principles which underlie the agreement are mutual respect for, and acknowledgement of, each other's respective roles and responsibilities, along with a commitment to working together to support and empower parents and carers of children and young people with SEND to be their own voice.

## Section 2: Each organisation's specific

### vision and aims Solihull Parent Carer

#### Voice (SPCV) vision

*We are independent parent carers working together to raise awareness and improve outcomes for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).*

*We work with organisations that provide services for our families.*

#### SPCV Aims:

1. To collect and collate the **views** of parents and carers and to bring this **voice** to commissioners, and service providers.
2. To ensure that the voice of parents and carers is used to **co-produce** services.
3. To grow and maintain a wide **membership**
4. To ensure the **participation** of a wide range of parents and carers.
5. To ensure that there is **active communication** between service providers and parents.
6. To offer **constructive challenge** about current services and input to the planning of future service provision.

#### Solihull SENDIAS vision

*The vision for Solihull SENDIAS is that children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers, will be more aware of their entitlement and the options*

*available, and will be able to make informed decisions. Our aim is to empower and support families to work in partnership with schools and the local authority to ensure that children's needs are met.*

## **Solihull SENDIAS aims:**

1. To provide impartial information, advice and support to children and young people up to the age of 25 with SEND
2. To provide information, advice and support to the parents/carers of children and young people up to the age of 25 with SEND
3. To provide impartial advice about matters relating to SEND, including issues relating to education, health and social care
4. To offer support to parents/carers and children and young people with SEND in participating in decisions made about the child/young person's education, health and social care.

Solihull SENDIAS works with local partners, including parent/carer and young people forums to inform and influence policy and practice in the local area. The service also offers training to children, young people, parents and local education, health and social care professionals, to increase knowledge of SEND law and guidance, local policies and issues and to increase participation.

## **Section 3: Our agreed common Code of Conduct is to:**

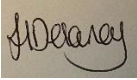
- Behave with **respect** and **professionalism** towards each other
- Communicate in an **open, constructive and honest** way
- Be **solution-focussed** in our approach to challenges
- Be **reflective, share learning** and put this into practice


## **Section 4: Our shared aims are:**

- to work together towards **agreed outcomes** that make a positive difference
- to work together to **plan events and co-production activities** that
  - are timely and positive for parent carers and
  - all parent/carers feel involved in appropriately, respectfully and meaningfully
- to actively **signpost** parent/carers to each other's service
- to **meet at least 3 times per year** so that we can understand each other's work, capacity, priorities and plans and so that we can co-ordinate effectively
- to nominate someone within each organisation to be the **main link person** with the other organisation
- to ensure representation by SPCV on Solihull SENDIAS' advisory group, which meets 3 times per year.

This document was agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

This document is due for review by 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022

Signed by  Heather Delaney on behalf of Solihull Parent Carer

VoiceSigned by  Hazel Clarke on behalf of Solihull SENDIAS service

