

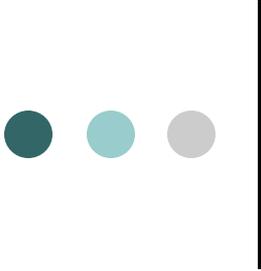
# Developing a Strategy for SEND in Essex

Essex Family Forum Parent Feedback  
from the  
Parent Engagement Workshops



July 2019



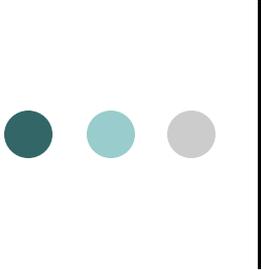


# Introduction

Essex Family Forum were proud to be commissioned by Essex County Council to host 17 Parental Engagement Workshops across Essex.

The workshops were run in conjunction with Essex County Council's consultation "Developing a Strategy for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) in Essex".





# Workshops

The workshops were designed to enable Parent/Carers of children/young people with SEND age 0-25 to share their experiences of service and support received primarily surrounding; Education, Health and Social Care.

The Forum held 17 workshops across all 4 Quadrants of Essex.

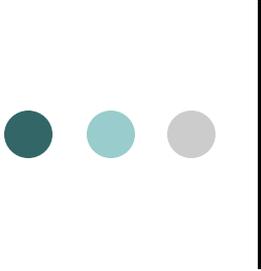
The workshops were held both during the day and in the evening to enable Parent/Carers to attend in conjunction with work and family commitments, such as child care.



# Graffiti Wall

Every participant was given the opportunity to share their experiences of SEND support and services through our Graffiti Wall. These experiences will be shared with Essex County Council as part of the feedback of these workshops





# Workshops

Once Parents/Carers had shared their experiences, we encouraged them to “draw a line in the sand” and think about how they would like to see SEND services developed to ensure they shape the future of our young people.

Participants were asked to share their vision for SEND, through 2 of the 3 strands as outlined by Essex County Council through the "Developing a Strategy for SEND in Essex" document:

1. Developing School led SEND
2. Growing the Specialist SEND Provision

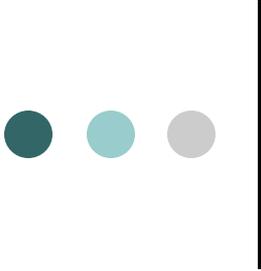


# Workshops

Whilst Essex Family Forum advised the participants that the workshops were not specifically requesting feedback on the 3<sup>rd</sup> strand “A re-design and new approach for the Essex County SEND teams”, many participants voiced their opinions on this, both in discussion and through the comments they provided.

The overriding feeling was that parents are concerned how the effect of the re-design will impact on the service and, ultimately the effect that this will have on their children/young people and families.





# Attendance

Just over 200 participants accepted invitations to the events in advance by booking through Eventbrite.

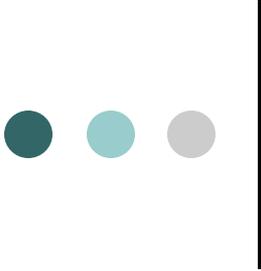
Approximately half of those booked attended on the day.

During the workshops, Essex Family Forum enquired as to how participants had been made aware of the workshops. Most attendees had become aware via social media.

Very few schools had distributed the necessary information to parents which is extremely disappointing.

Interestingly, the survey running in conjunction with these workshops had often been shared, just not the details of the workshops.





## Statistics

Over 1000 comments were received which were split between the Graffiti Wall, School Led SEND and Growing Specialist Provision categories.

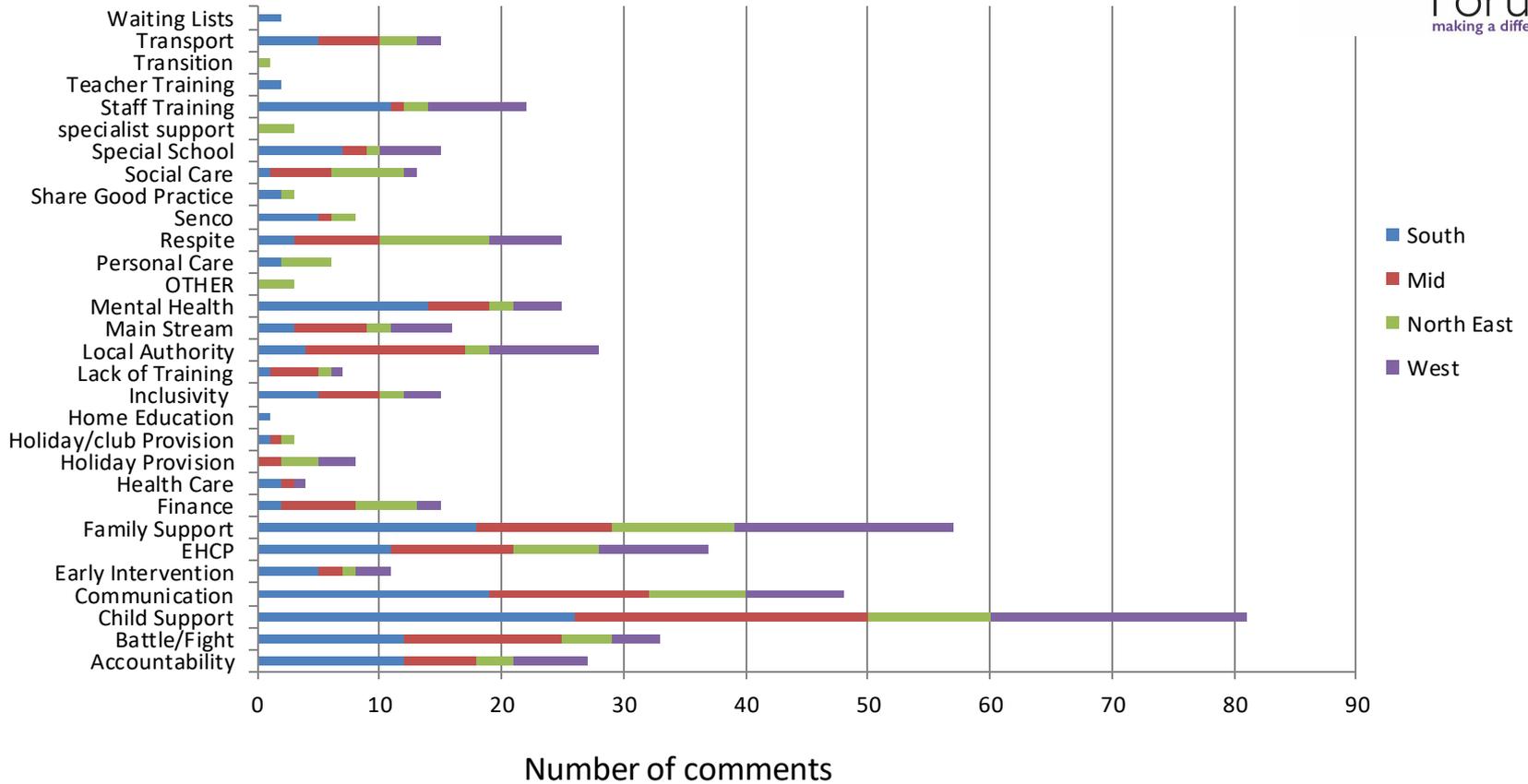


During our analysis we discovered approximately 30 themes ranging from categories as diverse as the length of diagnostic waiting lists to a lack of both child and family support. From concerns around accountability to negativity around the Local Authority.

The following pages provide some useful information on common themes. These are illustrated by the use of graphs along with a selection of some of the key comments.

The data has been colour coded to show the results for each quadrant which is vital to show the lack of consistency across the county

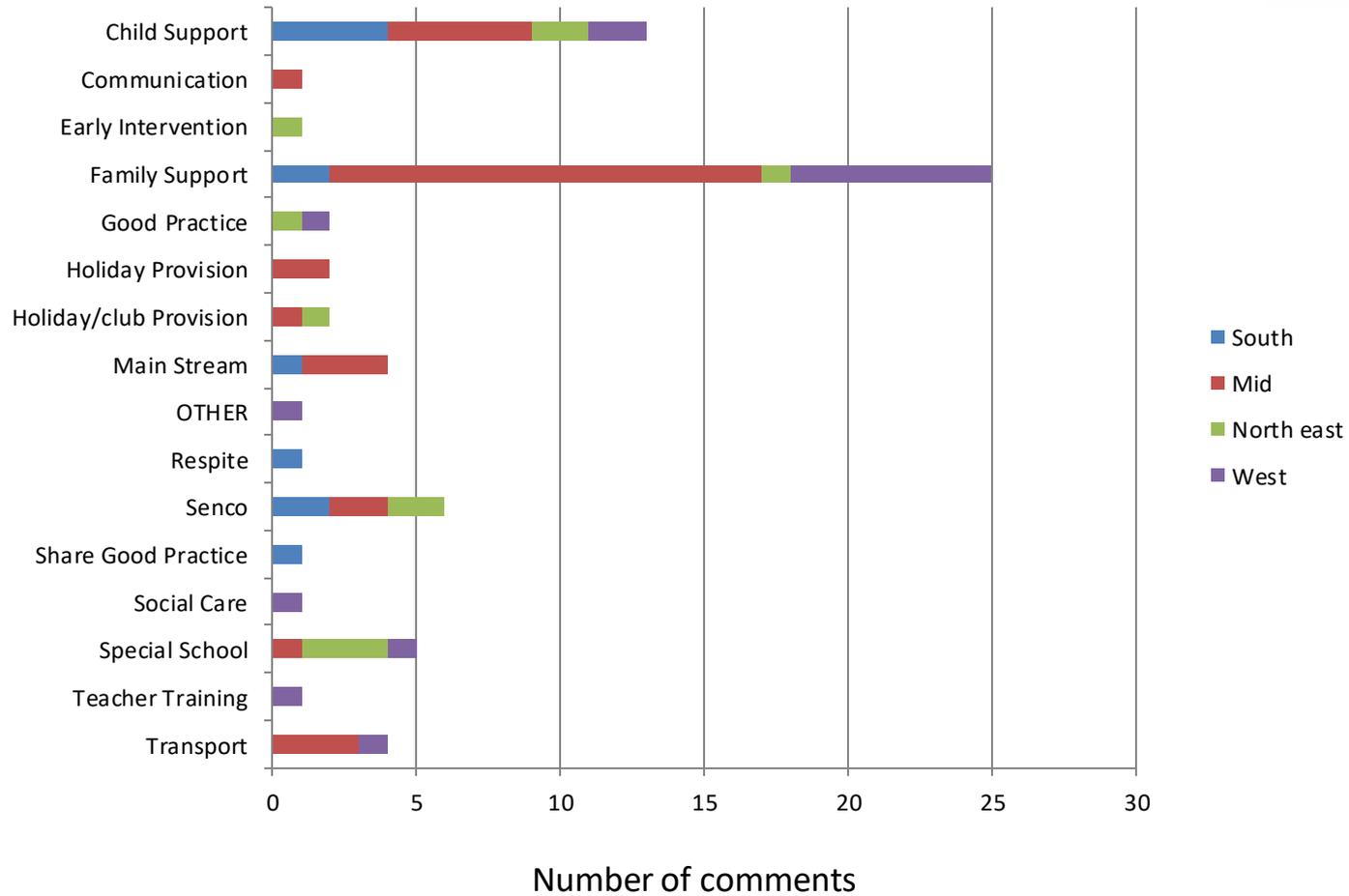
# Graffiti Wall – Areas of Concern



# Graffiti Wall – Areas of Concern

Category	Key Comments
Child Support	<p>More specialist hubs, alternative settings, smaller classrooms needed</p> <p>Drop off SEND register on transition to senior school</p> <p>No access to speech and language or occupational therapy</p> <p>More support needed into employment post 19</p>
Family Support	<p>No adult support, delays in transitions to adult Social Care</p> <p>Lack of supported housing for 18-25 year olds</p> <p>Better information should be given to parents/carers. More Workshops and parent support groups would be beneficial</p>
Communication	<p>Parents need to be listened to by schools/LA and to work with parents</p> <p>Lack of home/school communication</p> <p>Needs clear/joint working with Health/Education/Social Care</p> <p>Should be a knowledgeable key worker/coordinator who is a point of contact for parents</p>
EHCP	<p>Reluctance of schools to seek EHCPs for pupils with SEND</p> <p>EHCP should include Mental Health as a provision</p> <p>ECHPs shouldn't be the only way parents can ensure that support/provision is put in place</p> <p>EHCP process should not be so stressful or too complex. There is often no guidance provided</p>
Battle/Fight	<p>Constantly fighting for support with health, social care and education</p> <p>Huge impact on families. It's a constant fight to get what is needed, even the basics</p>

# Graffiti Wall – Areas Working Well

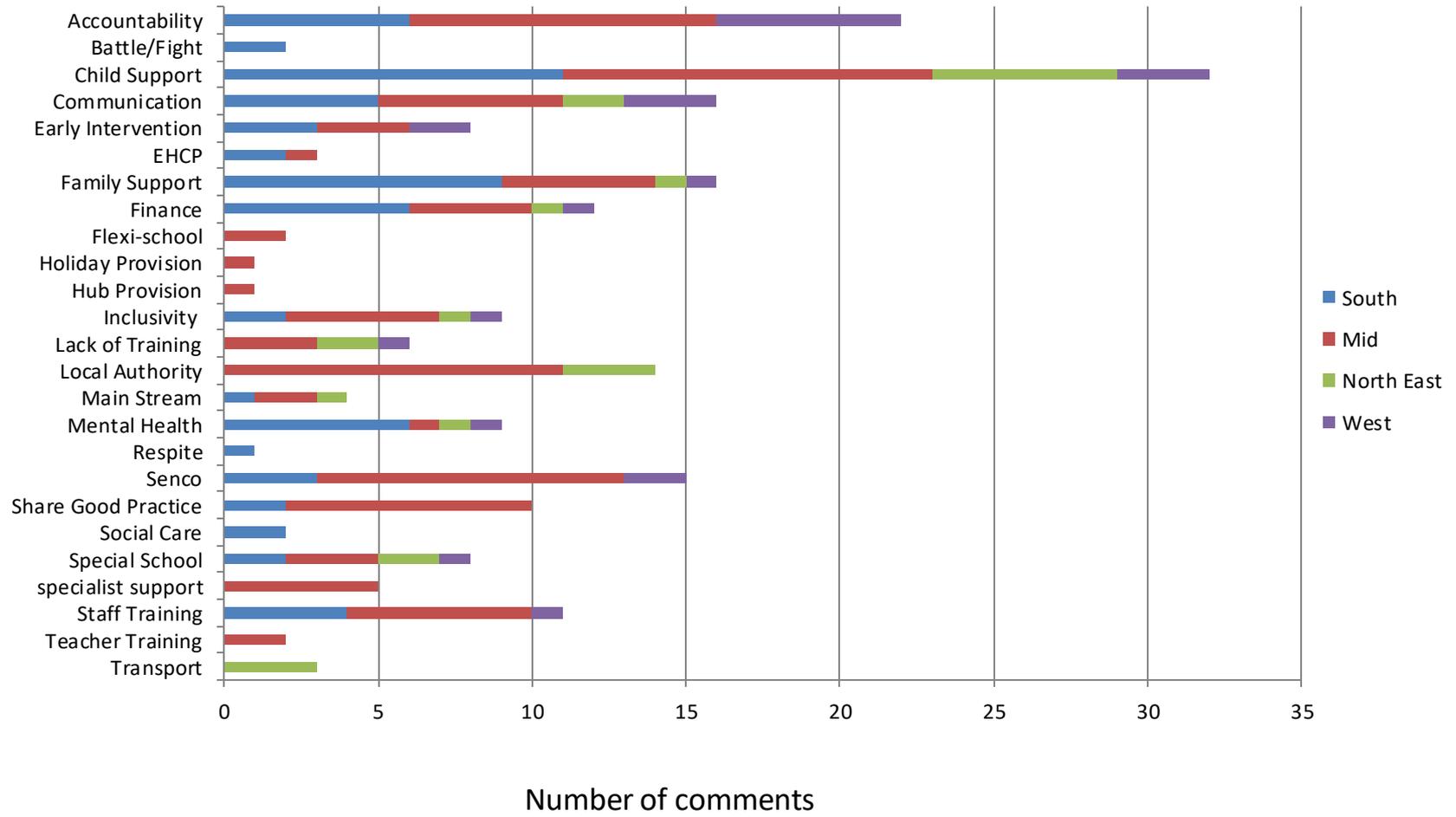


# Graffiti Wall – Areas Working Well



Category	Key Comments
Family Support	<p>Charities/Social enterprises such as MAZE, Families in Focus, Essex Young Carers, Provide and Interact very supportive</p> <p>Parent support groups (including Facebook groups) really useful for advice and support</p> <p>SENDIASS works really well</p> <p>Essex Short Breaks Services working really well</p>
Child Support	<p>Superb specialist teaching team</p> <p>The staff are amazing, supportive and experienced</p> <p>LSA has been trained in Physio/OT needs</p> <p>School gives lots of sensory breaks and meets my child's needs well</p> <p>Children with special needs, with the right support can achieve. It can work!</p>

# School Led SEND



# School Led SEND 1

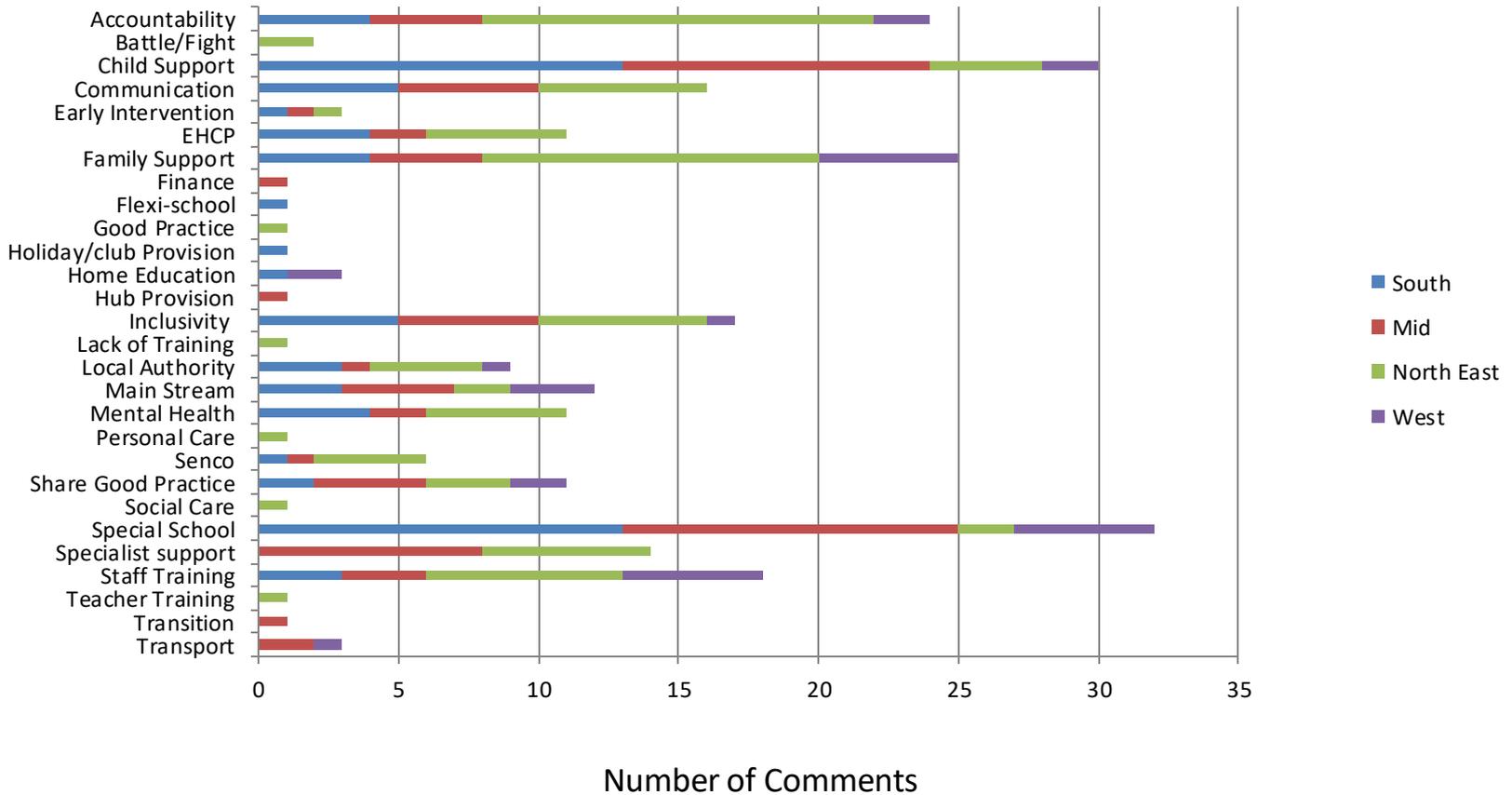
Category	Key Comments
Child Support	<p>Less school refusal would be a measure of success</p> <p>Some mainstream schools are not following what has been agreed in EHCP</p> <p>Support without EHCP is not guaranteed</p> <p>More support needed with transitions</p> <p>More specialist professional support needed going into schools</p> <p>Access to services in house, eg. Play therapy, sensory breaks, mental health</p> <p>Need to hear children's voices</p>
Accountability	<p>There should be minimum standards of SEND cover</p> <p>Ofsted need to look at SEND (in schools) to ensure it is at a consistent level</p> <p>Schools to be more accountable as to how they are spending SEND budget</p> <p>Lack of accountability for schools, particularly Academies</p>
Family Support	<p>Families feel let down. How are you going to build trust?</p> <p>Should be compulsory family support</p> <p>More Workshops for parents</p> <p>Liaison with support groups and charities</p> <p>There should be safeguarding parent support</p> <p>Increase awareness of post 16 options among parent population</p>

# School Led SEND 2



Category	Key Comments
Communication	<p>Consistent communication tool to effectively share issues at home/school Schools should be in partnership with parents. Trust in their knowledge All services health/social care/education working together as they are required to according to EHCP</p>
SENCO	<p>Need Specialist teacher and SENCO for independence Schools need to employ a full time SENCO (who is not also a teacher) Ensure SENCOs are up to date with their training and can drive good practice Need minimum standard for SENCOs. Need regular collaboration across SENCOs/Headteachers to share info and ensure uniformity of approach</p>
Local Authority	<p>Each school to be allocated how many SEND kids they can accommodate per year. Don't overload one school Public acknowledgement to schools who perform well with SEND Incentivise schools to offer good SEND provision Local Authority should investigate why a SEND child has left a school How will LA challenge head teachers/staff who are not implementing these ideas</p>

# Growing Specialist Provision

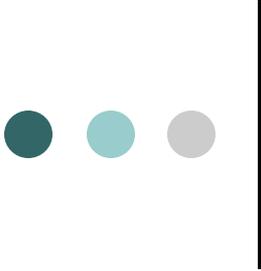


# Growing Specialist Provision 1

Category	Key Comments
Special Schools	<p>Insufficient ASD hub places</p> <p>Specialist teacher team should be available to secondary schools and colleges up to 25</p> <p>More MLD schools</p> <p>Gaps between specialist schools in each area, based on learning ability or behaviours</p> <p>Some children do not fit in special school or mainstream</p> <p>Appropriate hubs to meet the needs of the children in the area, eg. SALT, hearing impairment, autism, sensory integration</p>
Child Support	<p>Require smaller class sizes, quiet areas for lunch and learning</p> <p>More flexible schooling. Allow children to drop subjects</p> <p>More TA support for social and emotional issues</p> <p>Better recognition required for physical disability compared to cognitive disability or behavioural/social issues. They all get lumped into one category</p> <p>Massive gaps in SEN provision 16-18</p>
Family Support	<p>A parent should be assigned a support worker to give advice and support</p> <p>Specialist schools should provide practical parent workshops</p> <p>More professional input/attendance needed at EHCP reviews meetings</p> <p>Need SEND parent coffee mornings</p> <p>Parents should be treated as equal to professionals</p> <p>Preparing kids/young adults for life after school/employment</p>

# Growing Specialist Provision 2

Category	Key Comments
Accountability	<p>Specialist teachers jobs diminishing. How is early intervention going to work? Who will take responsibility?</p> <p>No measure of SEN progress</p> <p>Ofsted need to be valuing soft outcomes</p> <p>Schools not held accountable for not following SEND policy/supporting children in schools</p> <p>We need accountability for Academy schools</p>
Staff Training	<p>Staff training should be compulsory</p> <p>Need better training in specialist areas or employing the right skills</p> <p>Educate staff and other pupils about disabilities to help understanding</p> <p>Teachers need support</p> <p>More specialist teachers and pre-school keyworkers needed</p>
Inclusivity	<p>Consider adapting current schools to include children with mobility constraints, eg. Lifts, ground floor provision, disabled changing facilities</p> <p>Opportunities to access alternative provision in mainstream schools</p> <p>All areas in Essex should have schools with specialist provision support on site available to those that need it</p> <p>Every school should be consistent in their approach to SEN and inclusivity</p> <p>Provision post 19 – many sectors should provide teaching/training centres, eg. retail, catering, hospitality</p>



# Next Steps



In view of the diversity of issues raised during the workshops, Essex Family Forum highly recommend that this document is shared at The SEND Strategic Governance Meeting to ensure all agencies are engaged.

Essex Family Forum will be issuing a more comprehensive report to Parents/Carers in the autumn term which will also be shared with Essex County Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Social Care.

It is understood that Essex County Council will be reporting back to families starting in the autumn. It is likely that a 'We heard you; how do we make the vision achievable' approach is taken.

Essex Family Forum hope to be involved and wish to continue to work with Essex County Council on their vision going forward and will work co-productively with the necessary agencies to achieve the goals that are set.