

# Essex Family Forum

## Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) Needs Assessment Requests



## Survey Report - February 2024



This survey was conducted between 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

We received a total of 18 valid responses.

The purpose of the survey was to understand the impact of the current delays in the EHCP Needs Assessment process and the quality of communication and information received by parent/carers during this time.

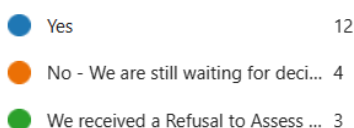
The requests for a needs assessments were made between April 2023 and November 2023.

The request for assessment was granted within statutory timescales in the majority of cases as per the diagram below:

Did you receive a decision to assess within 6 weeks of the date of the request?

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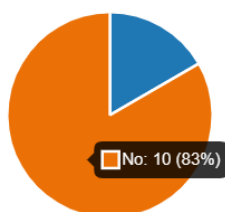


The two respondents who have had an Educational Psychologist allocated (by January 2024) had made their requests in March and April 2023. Of the remaining 10 respondents their applications had been made between April 2023 and November 2023

Have you been allocated an Educational Psychologist?

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We asked families what timescale for assessment had been communicated to them:

*4 families responded that no time frame had been indicated.*

The remaining responses ranged as follows:

- 10-16 weeks
- 3 months
- 4-6 months
- 8 months
- 9 months
- 40 weeks
- 12 months

One family was informed of their child's position in the total number waiting for assessment (i.e. 150 out of 250 waiting)

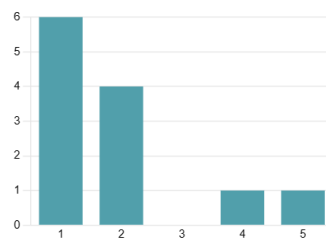
One family said they have submitted a formal complaint.

How would you describe the communication with the SEND Operations team dealing with the request

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1.92  
Average Rating



Parent/carers indicated that communication with the SEND Operations teams could be better with 6 out of the 12 responding scoring communication at 1 out 5

The recurring theme about the level of communication is frustration at the lack of contact during the waiting period, including queries made by parent/carers going unanswered. One family reported their child is currently out of school, and is not receiving any support or provision in the meantime. Two families are worried about how this will impact their child being able to start school.

There was a marked in difference in the comments by families who rated communication highly:

*The lady who rung me to inform me of all the information was wonderful, she was completely honest with me in terms of next steps and shortages, offering virtual solutions also I couldn't fault her.*

***Asked how long it would take and was informed quickly that it would be a long wait. It is frustrating that it is taking so long but at least they told me***

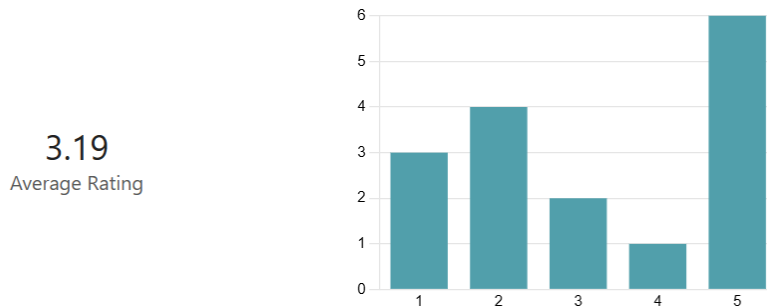
## Impact in the Educational Setting

There was some inconsistency in how well supported families felt by their child/young person's setting

How well supported is your child/young person in their setting whilst waiting for assessment?

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4 children and young people are in Early Years settings and yet to start school.

3 children are unable to attend school full-time – 1 of whom is receiving some alternative provision.

Parent/carers reported that their children/young people required a high level of support which settings are unable to provide without an EHCP or where schools are currently providing a good level of support, this is not sustainable in the long term without an EHCP.

There is particular concern where child is approaching the transition to secondary school.

## Impact on the family and home life

- Where children/young people are unable to attend school full-time, parent/carers report being unable to work, having to give up work or reduce their working hours. In one case this has led to a family putting their family home up for sale to reduce their outgoings.
- Affecting child/young person's relationship with siblings
- Affecting parent relationship with their other children (some of whom also have SEND)
- Affecting relationship with partner
- Stress and anxiety (one parent reported needing to start taking anti-depressants)
- Where needs are not being met in their setting, the child/young person becoming increasingly dysregulated at home.
- We had one parent report that the education setting is not carrying out the required personal care for their child which is affecting the physical and mental well-being of their child.
- Parent/carers report children/young developing extreme attachment issues.