



Weekly Snapshot from EFF

Week ending- 22/11/2024

You said:	We did:
Mid Essex – at a Home Start SEND session in Halstead for families of children under 5, families reported not being able to find support in their area, other than the Home Start groups	<i>We are raising this with the Family Hubs to see what they have on offer in this area or surrounding areas</i>
Would like to be more informed of what support is available in schools, and what our rights are.	Working on sourcing information and putting together a guide for parent/carers of what support is available in schools.
In North East Essex it was reported that parents and carers for whom English is not their first language can have difficulties understanding and completing forms.	Raised at the NEE SEND Joint Working group for consideration going forward.
Digital Poverty (South Essex) - <u>Snapshot Update</u>	<p>We raised at South Essex SEND group and is on the agenda for the next meeting. Kate has created a quick reference document that she will share with her Family Champions that details the places in South Essex that provide free data via the Databank, and the places that offer Digital Inclusion Hubs. You can find information on all the hubs across Essex here Find Local Digital Inclusion Support Good Things Foundation</p> <p>Please keep us informed via the Graffiti Wall about what families are experiencing around digital poverty and access to information Feedback Wall Essex Family Forum</p>
MyCareBridge ND Portal (Mid & South Essex) - <u>Snapshot Update</u>	We met with the project's Communication Lead to discuss when parent and carer



	<p>communication for the portal will be available to review and then share with families. They discussed various forms of communications that parents and carers might be able to access to help them use the portal and any feedback received so far was given. Provide are looking for feedback on the portal and produce something for us to share with families on their behalf.</p> <p>Please keep us informed of your MyCareBridge experiences, both good and bad, via the Graffiti Wall Feedback Wall Essex Family Forum</p>
<p>Restricted access to SENCO / Schools discouraging applications for SEND students & Restricted access to viewing Special Schools - <u>Snapshot Update</u></p>	<p>We raised this issue with the South Essex SEND group, where it was acknowledged as a countywide issue. EFF can confirm that we have raised the issue in both local and county wide meetings and are working with our education associates to improve the access / experience.</p> <p>We would welcome feedback on your experiences via the Graffiti Wall Feedback Wall Essex Family Forum</p>
<p>Information on Neurodevelopment Pathways on the local offer and provider websites is confusing and lacks details of what the process will look like and how long the waits will be and what support can be accessed.</p>	<p>We know this is an issue families have raised with us many times. Unfortunately, due to the accessibility criteria on our Local Offer and the pressures on the system, we haven't yet been able to make all the improvements families have told us they want.</p> <p>The good news is that there's now renewed interest in improving the information available for families. We've started early discussions and are hopeful that families can get involved in reviewing the current information and helping us make it better.</p>

In other news.....

- Claire attended a coffee afternoon at Mildmay Primary school in Chelmsford – this was an information event for parents/carers to understand the Ordinarily Available offer and the SEND Funding structure



- Claire attended a Home Start SEND Session in Halstead for families of SEND children under 5
- Stacey attended a SEND parent coffee morning at Harlow Playhouse. Hosted by Siobhan Sillett who has set up a support group. 12 parents attended, along with representatives from ACL and Epping Forest inclusion project. Main themes coming through are still parent/carers are not feeling supported or informed of what help they are entitled to.
- Sarah attended the monthly Maze coffee mornings in both Colchester and Harwich this week.

PINS Project Update

- **Stambridge Primary School** – Kate is hosting their second coffee morning on Monday 25th November, meeting at 8.30 in the hall for a 9am start. She is looking forward to seeing those who attended last time and hopes to welcome some new parents too.
- **Margaretting CofE School** – Kate held the second parent/carer coffee morning this week.
- **Highfields Primary School** – Sarah held the first parent/carer coffee morning this week.

EFF Engagement – ARU

Tori presented as a guest lecturer to second-year Nursing students at Anglia Ruskin University this week. This is something that has been done with ARU since 2020 and following overwhelmingly positive feedback from students, Tori has continued to be invited to do ever since. The presentation involves sharing very honest lived experiences as a SEND parent carer to those starting out in their careers in healthcare; it involves challenging stereotypes, assumptions, experiences navigating the health and education systems, suggesting good practices, and things to avoid.

Keyworker Service

The Keyworker Service, currently run by HCRG, is being reviewed, and the contract is up for renewal. This means HCRG and other health providers will need to apply again to run the service. We're happy to share that feedback from our recent Transforming Care events will help Essex Family Forum play an important role in reviewing the bids for the new contract. It's going to be a busy few weeks for us, but we're excited to be involved! We hope to share details of the new contract with you in the New Year

You can read more about the current service here:

<https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/services/set-keyworker-service/>



Regional & National News

Our Education and Health Leads, Julia and Jo, have both attended national workshops on the Future of the SEND system. The purpose of the workshops is to explore possible further reform to the SEND system and work towards agreement on what the priorities should be.

The National Network of Parent Carer Forums recently held their virtual conference, which members of our team attended. We particularly enjoyed listening to Stephen Morgan, the newly appointed and first-ever Early Years Minister, who highlighted the importance of early years education. Catherine McLeod MBE, from Dingley's Promise, also delivered an inspiring session, sharing the charity's commitment to equity and inclusion, as well as their dedicated training programs in the early years to support children with special educational needs.

Family Impact Survey Report – Update

We have now completed the report on our survey results for Home to School SEND Transport. This will be available on our website [Family Impact Surveys | Essex Family Forum](#). We have already requested a meeting with relevant teams at ECC to discuss this and other transport feedback we have received during 2024. We will keep you updated on our progress.