



Weekly snapshot from EFF

Week ending- 06/12/2024

You said:	We did:
We hear from families that there is a lack of information regarding 'Preparing for adulthood'. What happens after education for our young people.	WEST Essex had the SEND quadrant meeting on Monday. Suzanne Davis – SEND Strategy lead for preparing for adulthood attended the meeting. She advised it is in the code of practice that schools should be thinking about this in year 8. We are organising a meeting to discuss the best way to promote this in schools, to ensure our young people and parent/carers are aware of available options and support.
Mid Essex - We are hearing from some families that they are having trouble getting a Blue Badge through the Hidden Disabilities route. If a child masks at school, the school aren't able to complete the written evidence statement, and paediatricians are apparently not on the approved list of professionals who can complete the statement. Yet the child is unsafe on roads and public areas. How do families apply for the Blue Badge to keep their children safe?	We are looking into who to contact directly about this but will also bring it up at our next quadrant meetings
South Snapshot Update - Digital Poverty	After discussion with Essex CC last month, they discussed our concerns with their digital strategy team and have responded with the following, which will also appear in the Local Offer newsletter. They are also looking to see how they can either make some resources available in



print and/or ensure that resources are in a printable format.

They said – We work in partnership with our community volunteering services across Essex who offer support in digital skills, access to devices (through our programme), support with cheaper broadband packages (social tariffs) and access to the National Databank (free SIM cards loaded with data as a stop-over for between 6 and 12 months).

These services are:

- **Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS** <https://www.bbwcvs.org.uk/>
- **Brentwood CVS** <https://www.brentwoodcvs.org.uk/>
- **Castle Point CVS** <https://www.cavsorg.uk/>
- **Rayleigh, Rochford and District CVS** <https://rravs.org.uk/>
- **South Essex Community Hub** <https://sech-uk.com/>

Connectivity – social tariffs and the national databank

- Residents in receipt of universal credits, pension credits and/or PIP can apply for social tariffs (cheaper broadband packages).
- In the South, one of our most active digital inclusion hubs is South Essex Community Hub in Southend who serve residents from all over South Essex, including Rochford District and provide a databank.

Closing the Digital Divide Programme – access to devices



	<p><i>For devices, the closing the digital divide programme can be referred into via Community Volunteering Services too. We have a limited number of laptops, tablets and mobile devices (smart and non-smart) that we can gift.</i></p> <p>Essex Digital Help Finder tool <i>This free tool houses all of the above information, triaging to local support, as well as providing access to support in developing Essential Digital Skills for life and work, available here.</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p>
<p>Learning Disability Health Check – we have heard from families that they are not always aware of the annual health check available for young people</p>	<p>We have raised this at the relevant quadrant health inequalities steering groups. It has been identified that the take up for the health checks are still quite low and we will be seeking to gather feedback from parents/carers regarding the reasons behind this to then feedback to the steering groups.</p>

In other news.....

- Claire attended the SEND Sensation Festive Fun Day at Chelmsford Athletics Centre on Sunday 1st December. It was a lovely, busy day with lots of families attending. Claire spoke to lots of families and had interesting feedback on Blue Badge applications and the Children's Learning Disability Service.
- Claire & Katie attended the Chelmsford Neighbourhood Bi-monthly face to face forum on Thursday. This forum is for any community representatives that work with children or adults. The focus this month is Neurodivergence and Claire & Katie presented about EFF, what we do and what families are telling us at the moment.



- Stacey attended the West quadrant SEND meeting on Monday, this months topic was Preparing for adulthood. The SEND strategy lead for PFA was in attendance.
- Katrina and Julia attended the Caring Communities Commission Event at Basildon Towngate to raise SEND issues as part of the project. Details can be found here [Essex Caring Communities Commission: Overview | Essex County Council](#)
- Katrina and Julia also attended the last SEND Partnership Board and updated the Board on the work of Essex Family Forum. This Board will become the SEND Accountability Board starting next year, which we will continue to attend and ensure family views are represented.
- Sarah attended the Maze coffee morning in Mistley on Monday where Monette Dormant, Paediatric Services Lead for North East Essex was also delivering a sensory awareness workshop.
- Sarah attended the Suffolk & North East Essex Learning Disabilities & Autism Health Inequalities Steering Group.

PINS Project Update

- **Kings Ford Academy** – Claire held the second parent/carer meeting on Wednesday
- **Queen Boudica Primary School** – Claire held the first parent/carer meeting on Thursday
- **Ingatestone Primary school** – Stacey held the second parent/carer meeting on Friday

Community Engagement

South Essex - Monday 9th December – 10 - 3pm, Kate will be at the *Pathways to Possibility: Building Inclusive Careers* event at The Happy Hub in Eastgate Shopping Centre, next to Asda in Basildon. There is a quiet hour available between 10-11am. Tickets can be reserved on Eventbrite [Pathways to Possibility: Building Inclusive Careers Tickets, Mon, Dec 9, 2024 at 10:00 AM | Eventbrite](#) The event will showcase the range of support and resources available to neurodivergent individuals and those with mental health conditions aged 16+.

It aims to help attendees build confidence, develop skills, and access the guidance needed to take the next steps toward meaningful employment. It serves as a foundation for future opportunities, including an upcoming event focused on connecting individuals with inclusive employers.