



Weekly Snapshot from EFF

Week ending- 23/5/25

Essex Family Forum receives many comments through our online Graffiti Wall, at events and through our Family Champions. Although we are not able to address all of these through this snapshot, please be assured that all feedback is raised with services and issues that are shared repeatedly are being highlighted.

You said:	We did:
<p>*UPDATE* Lack of Support Year 7 We are hearing from many parents of children in Year 7 especially, undiagnosed but on a pathway, who are not receiving any support or understanding in school.</p>	<p>We had a meeting with the Lead for Autism in the SEND strategy team at ECC. Who gave us an update on the STAY project, which is designed to help Secondary schools link in with their feeder schools and work on ensuring children's needs are being met. They work on delivering all kinds of training for all staff. Please see link for more information on STAY project. https://essexcc.pagetiger.com/autismupdatesum24/1</p> <p>They are taking on more schools this next academic year. If you know of a secondary school you feel would benefit from this, please let us know on our Graffiti Wall, or contact the school directly. There will be a leaflet coming soon that we can share with families.</p>
<p>* UPDATE* NVR Training (Non-Violent Resistance)</p> <p>Feedback from the Graffiti Wall, roadshows, and support groups highlights growing concerns from parent carers facing child-on-parent aggression and violence. Many families struggling with EBSA (emotionally based school avoidance) recognise underlying issues but feel lost in how to support their young person. Parents and carers express frustration, exhaustion, and sadness—unable to help their child while also struggling with the impact of the behaviour on their own wellbeing.</p>	<p>There are three NVR groups currently running across Essex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basildon Parents4Parents – basildon.parent4parent@outlook.com (Basildon area) • Extra Support – admin@extrasupportforfamilies.co.uk (Tendring area) • Kids Inspire – kamila@kidsinspire.org.uk (Central Essex, potential for virtual sessions) <p>For more information on NVR and how it supports parents, visit Connective Family. Support is also available without NVR training through your School Nursing Team or by requesting help via PEGS charity, which offers guidance on child-to-parent abuse.</p>



	<p>If you experience any issues accessing these services, please let us know. You can also share your feedback on our Graffiti Wall.</p>
<p>*UPDATE* Annexe A Forms</p> <p>Parents are unable to access a medical professional/GPs are unwilling to complete paperwork. This is leading to delays in alternative education arrangements being made.</p>	<p>The Education Access Team has replied to our email. To summarise, if parents are unable to access a professional, referrals to Education Access can still be made without the Annex A form being signed. While professional advice is preferred, schools should include any relevant information in the referral and, where possible, seek input from the school nurse. Decisions are made solely based on the referral details to ensure pupils are well enough for education. If a GP or medical practitioner refuses to sign the form, this should be noted in the submission, as referrals cannot be delayed or refused purely due to missing specific paperwork.</p> <p>Please continue to share any issues you encounter when accessing this service via our Graffiti Wall.</p>
<p>Ceased EHCP Support for 16+</p> <p>Parents in the South have shared concerns about ceasing their child's EHCP without fully understanding the support it could have provided up to age 25, particularly if their college placement has broken down. Many are now unsure what to do next, as they no longer have an EHCP and their young person needs support, either due to a failed placement or transitioning into employment. Additionally, some parents have been informed that SEND Ops has ceased their child's plan without prior notification.</p>	<p>Kate recently spoke with South Quadrant Manager Kerry, who advised that parents should contact SEND Ops if their child's placement has broken down or if an EHCP is needed to determine the next steps.</p> <p>If a significant amount of time has passed since cessation, a new EHCP needs assessment may be required. Parents whose college has informed them that their child's plan has been ceased—without their prior knowledge—should urgently contact SEND Ops to verify, as there have been cases where this information was incorrect and plans remained active.</p> <p>Kerry advised that SEND Ops typically responds within five days. If you haven't heard back in that timeframe, continue reaching out. If you haven't heard back within this timeframe, continue reaching out. If you've contacted SEND Ops multiple times, allowing five days for a response each time, and still haven't received a reply, please use the complaints form, which you can find here Complaints and compliments - Essex County Council</p> <p>For help and advice on reinstating plans, reach out to your previous SEND Ops contact or email the South</p>



	<p>SEND Ops Team (Cathy, Paula, or Kerry). You can find their details, and the cluster list for further contact information here Quadrant contacts: South Quadrant structure and contact information Essex Schools Infolink</p>
<p>Support from GP's/Post Diagnostic Support – ASD/ADHD</p> <p>Parents/carers have reported a lack of support from GP's, specifically following a diagnosis.</p>	<p>We continue to feedback to the relevant areas regarding the lack of information and support families receive pre and post diagnosis, so ask that you continue to share this information with us via the graffiti wall.</p> <p>You can find out about support available in Essex for children and young people aged between 0 to 25, with Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND) via the Local Offer website (click here)</p> <p>The 'Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child' resource pack is a useful point of reference whether your child or young person has a diagnosis or not. You can access this via our website, under the 'neurodiversity' tab or by clicking here. The resource pack is available in both digital and hard copy format.</p> <p>Autism Central is another useful resource for families "Autism Central is a peer education programme, commissioned by NHS England. It aims to build knowledge and understanding of autism and empower families and carers to advocate for autistic people they support. Local support helps families to get the right understanding and adjustments in place across the services they use." You can find out more about Autism Central here</p>
<p>*UPDATE* Apprenticeships for Young People Without an EHCP or GCSE Passes in English and Maths</p> <p>Parents have raised concerns about young people being exploited during trial periods for potential apprenticeship placements. Additionally, they are worried about the limited apprenticeship opportunities available to those</p>	<p>At a recent Healthier Habits Hub event in Laindon, Kate spoke with the ACL team about apprenticeship opportunities. They confirmed their ability to help set up apprenticeships, including cases where young people find their own employer—which may ensure they aren't exploited for free labour.</p> <p>ACL can also support students who haven't passed English and Maths. Depending on the employer, these qualifications may not need to be prioritised until later in the apprenticeship, typically after a year—though this varies.</p>



<p>without GCSE passes in English and Maths.</p>	<p>This could be a valuable option for young people disengaged from education or those who've struggled with repeated resits at college. If your young person is exploring pathways into work, contact ACL to discuss available opportunities. Home - ACL Essex</p>
<p>*Update* ADHD Medication for NHS Patients Transitioning to Adult Services</p> <p>Parents and young people have raised concerns about accessing ADHD medication after turning 18 and moving from child services into adult mental health care. Many have experienced difficulties with continuity of care, delays in prescriptions, and uncertainty around ongoing support.</p>	<p>If your GP is no longer prescribing and you're struggling to access medication, the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board has provided guidance. You can find more information here ADHD prescribing - Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System</p> <p>As always, please continue sharing your experiences with us—especially for this age group—as we recognise this continues to be a challenging situation Graffiti Wall</p>
<p>Breakdown of College Placement for Those with an EHCP</p> <p>Feedback from events and support groups has highlighted that many parents feel unprepared when their child's college placement breaks down. They are experiencing pressure from SEND Ops to quickly present a plan and next steps within a short timeframe.</p> <p>Parents have expressed uncertainty about where to access information on alternative options for their young person. Some also fear that their child's EHCP may be removed if they cannot meet the deadline set by SEND Ops, as they have been informed this could be a possibility.</p>	<p>Kate met with Kerry, South Quadrant Manager, to discuss concerns about the pressures parents face when their child's college placement breaks down. Kate raised the issue that parents are expected to respond within short timeframes without adequate support or guidance. Kerry acknowledged that this expectation is unfair and highlighted the importance of ensuring families have access to the right information.</p> <p>Kerry advised that parents should contact the college as soon as possible if a placement is at risk of breaking down to understand what support is in place and explore additional options. Parents can also request an emergency annual review to bring together a team around the young person and discuss next steps, including alternative education pathways.</p> <p>The SEND Careers Advice Service (formerly the Preparing for Adulthood Team) should be contacted for guidance on training and education opportunities. Along with SEND Ops, they are best placed to provide information on available alternatives. To find your local Careers Advisor, visit SEND Careers Advice Service Essex Local Offer.</p> <p>For support with emergency annual reviews or alternative education options, contact your SEND Ops</p>



	<p>representative. Their details can be found in the cluster list here.</p> <p>Parents can also seek advice from SENDIASS. More information is available at Essex SEND - Information, Advice and Support Service.</p>
<p>Educational Psychologist (EP) Visits: Parental Consent and Involvement</p> <p>Feedback received shows that parents are often unaware of when and why an educational psychologist is visiting their child. Many are uncertain about their role in the process and whether they should receive a copy of any resulting report.</p> <p>Some parents have also raised concerns that consent does not appear to be sought before an educational psychologist assesses their child.</p>	<p>Kate met with Kerry to discuss concerns around EP visits and consent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal school requests: If a school seeks general advice on supporting a child, consent is not required, and either a general document is produced or no report at all. • Formal assessments: If an EP is assessing a child to produce a report, parental consent should be obtained, with an explanation of the purpose. Consent for EP involvement is typically given during the EHC Needs Assessment process. <p>Kerry emphasised that good practice includes schools informing parents of EP visits, EPs ensuring parents are aware before assessing a child, and direct communication between EPs and parents. She also noted that some schools employ their own EPs, which differ from those within the SEND Ops team. If parents have concerns about an EP visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-employed EPs: Contact the school to clarify the purpose of the assessment, whether a report exists, and if consent was obtained. • SEND Ops EPs: Reach out to Carina Embeita (Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist) or Kerry Howard (South Quadrant Manager). Their contact details are available here Quadrant contacts: South Quadrant structure and contact information Essex Schools Infolink
<p>Accessible Changing Facilities</p> <p>Parents have raised concerns about the lack of clear information on accessible changing facilities. It is difficult to locate suitable amenities, particularly in community toilets.</p>	<p>Essex Short Breaks have shared a map of Changing Places facilities across the county. You can find it here - www.changing-places.org</p> <p>Please note that the map only includes fully accessible Changing Places toilets and does not cover standard disabled loos without full accessibility features.</p>



In other news...

- Stacey attended the Healthier Habits hub in Hatfield Heath last week. Some local Uttlesford providers attended the event promoting well-being, including SOSA – A Dance/fitness group which we had the pleasure of seeing a demonstration from. Representatives from Essex child and family wellbeing services also attended.
- Stacey and Kevin met with Hollie the new DCO (Designated Clinical Officer) Which is a first for West Essex. Hollie was keen to hear what families are saying about our health services, and what improvements can be made, and ensures us that she can help to make some positive changes. Hollie also hopes to meet families in person, so she can hear first-hand what the challenges are, and what works well.
- Kate met with Kerry Howard, South Quadrant Manager, last week to discuss issues raised on our Graffiti Wall. Several of these concerns were also shared at the South Joint Working Group the following day, where they were raised with staff from various organisations supporting children and young people with SEND across South Essex.
- Kate met with Sam Ball from MSE South East Essex Alliance this week to explore how Essex Family Forum could contribute to the Babies, Children and Young Peoples (BCYP) Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) in South East Essex, particularly in relation to mental health and neurodiversity. They also discussed potential involvement in adult INTs, sharing key information and insights.
- Claire and Kate met with the MyCareBridge Forum for an update on recent changes to the portal and associated apps. They continue to relay feedback from families across Mid and South Essex, ensuring concerns are addressed and promised improvements are made.
- Sarah attended a coffee morning at Lexden Springs school in Colchester this week. It was good opportunity to meet with members of staff as well as parents/carers and gain valuable feedback from them about particular challenges/themes that affect them and their families/the families they support.
- Sarah met with Designated Clinical Officer Jack Walker, Uma Ravindran from the Community Dental Service team and Julia Smith from the NHS Dental Team to discuss the feedback we have received about the lack of access to dental services and treatment for SEND children and young people. We will be sharing further information about referrals through the CDS in the next issue of the 'Weekly Snapshot'.



- Claire attended the Healthier Habits hub in South Woodham Ferrers this week. Representatives from Chelmsford Council, The Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service and the Mid Essex Recovery College were also in attendance.
- Claire & Kate attended the Growing Well Programme Board for the Mid & South Essex ICB. They heard presentations on health matters from different organisations including the Early Years Oral Health Programme, which has a SEND specific focus, and the Mid Term Plan for adults and children with learning disabilities.
- Sarah attended the Joint SEND Working Group meeting for NEE.

Please note: The Graffiti Wall and Snapshot is designed to give anonymised feedback and cannot be used to answer individual queries.

All EFF staff are part time and work on a flexible basis. If there are weeks when a quadrant does not appear represented in this snapshot, we are still working hard. Please bear this in mind.