



Weekly Snapshot from EFF

Week ending- 20/6/25

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** Peaceful Pony</p> <p><i>Families have shared ongoing concerns around the closure of Peaceful Pony, particularly the way it was handled and the impact this has had on the children and young people who benefited from its support.</i></p>	<p>We met with Kate Martin to ask what has been put in place to support those affected. In response, it was confirmed that capacity has been increased with the following equine providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach Equine • Circles Farm • Equine Assisted Qualifications (EAQ) <p>We recognise that this does not replace what Peaceful Pony offered, and that for many families, this remains a difficult and unresolved issue. Conversations are continuing around the way the closure was managed and the lasting effects on young people.</p>
<p>Therapies and Transitions</p> <p><i>Parents are concerned about the sudden loss of healthcare support, including physiotherapy, when young people move into further education with an EHCP. Many struggle to access alternatives, facing delays and no clear resolution despite ongoing escalation. Families question why provision stops at 16 or 18, even for those still in education.</i></p>	<p>We met with Kate Martin at MSE to discuss the challenges parents face in securing consistent therapy provision. She explained that the therapies service is willing to work with colleges to support young people who require therapies as part of their EHCP. However, wording such as ‘30 minutes of physio’ can create expectations of direct physiotherapy provision, whereas in schools, LSAs are often trained by physiotherapists to deliver this support instead.</p> <p>Colleges operate differently due to part-time schedules and staffing structures, and some have safeguarding policies requiring two staff members for certain types of support, which can affect how therapy is delivered. Kate</p>



	<p>emphasised that while efforts are made to ensure continuity of care, the availability of support depends on the college's capacity and approach.</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to have early discussions with colleges as part of transition planning—before naming a setting—to understand what therapy support is available and work with the therapies service to explore options for continuity of care.</p> <p>Please continue to share your experiences on our Graffiti Wall Feedback Wall Essex Family Forum</p>
<p>Communication of Employment Events</p> <p><i>Families are frustrated by the lack of clear communication around employment events for young people with additional needs. Information is often shared late—or not at all—leaving families unaware or wasting valuable time. There is a need for better coordination and planning from services meant to support young people's pathways into work.</i></p>	<p>We shared this feedback with the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) Team, who are reviewing how information about these events is being communicated. They welcomed the input, and it will be part of their discussions over the summer. Their aim is to improve how families are kept informed, and we'll share updates as we hear more.</p>
<p>**UPDATE** SEND Ops Contact Centre - Communication & Response Times</p> <p><i>Parents are struggling to get in touch with the SEND Ops Team or receive timely responses, even with the new communications centre in place. Time-sensitive matters are often left unanswered, leaving families feeling frustrated.</i></p>	<p>We met with Kerry Howard to discuss this issue. Kerry acknowledged the difficulties with getting in touch with the SEND Ops Team and receiving timely responses continues to be a challenge for many parents and carers. She says whilst in the South Teams there is a 3-5 day response expectation, if you haven't heard back within this timeframe, please continue to try making contact a couple more times, if time allows.</p> <p>If you've made multiple attempts to contact them and still haven't received a reply, she encourages you to share your experience and issue using this complaints form: Complaints and compliments - Essex County Council.</p>



	<p>By sharing your experience this helps ensure issues are recorded, allowing managers to see where concerns are arising and how best to direct support within their team. Having concerns formally logged is an important step in identifying patterns and improving communication. Complaints made to Essex County Council are generally responded to within 10 working days.</p>
<p><u>18+ ADHD Medication Disruption</u></p> <p><i>There's currently no process in place for young people moving from children's to adult services to receive an annual medication review that would allow GPs to enter into shared care agreements. Families are concerned that this gap could seriously affect continuity of care at a critical time, particularly as many in this age group are preparing for employment, apprenticeships, or further education.</i></p>	<p>At the MyCareBridge Forum, we took the opportunity to raise this important area of concern with Sharon Hall. She confirmed that Mid & South Essex (MSE) Trust is aware of the issue and that work is underway to find a solution. In the meantime, Sharon encouraged parents, carers and young people to share their experiences directly with MSE by using this link Babies, children and young people engagement and feedback page MSE Virtual Views</p> <p>If you'd like your feedback to help strengthen the collective parent carer voice, copy us into your ICB email using hello@essexfamilyforum.org</p>
<p><u>Occupational therapy availability on an EOTIS package</u></p> <p><i>Families of children on an EOTIS package with Occupational therapy included in the EHCP Provisions are struggling to get any therapy sessions and are having to look at private therapists</i></p>	<p>This will be raised at the next SET Therapies Transformation Delivery Partnership meeting to see how Occupational Therapy provision is included in the Balanced System rollout and how that will include those on EOTIS packages.</p>

In other news.....

Local Area SEND inspection deferral.

EFF were recently informed that the local area SEND inspection carried out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted has been deferred. The local area partnership has addressed the reasons why in a letter to parent carers. EFF is extremely disappointed by this and have written a response (see below for details on where you can read our response).



It is also concerning that the CQC and Ofsted have agreed to this deferral and EFF have contacted them regarding this.

You can find all the information/documents on this link [News | Essex Family Forum](#)

- Basildon & Brentwood Recovery and Wellbeing College - Kate recently attended the MSE Recovery & Wellbeing College public engagement event at Trustlinks Basildon, where she met with college staff and local service providers to discuss plans for the new college, which will serve Basildon and Brentwood, supporting those aged 18+. It will expand provision alongside existing recovery colleges in Castle Point & Rochford (REACH Recovery) and Mid Essex (Mid Essex Recovery Provide CIC). The event was a valuable opportunity to share feedback we receive on service gaps, particularly for young people who have left education with mental health challenges or struggling to engage with learning or public spaces. Discussions covered access, travel, and course options, while also allowing for important connections with local services and current wellbeing college users. To find out more about Recovery and Wellbeing Colleges, visit; Castle Point & Rochford - [REACH Recovery College - Trust Links](#) ,Mid Essex - [Mid Essex Recovery College](#)
- Claire attended the SEND4All Parents Support Groups in Burnham on Monday and Maldon on Wednesday and listened to parents' feedback on a range of issues such as lack of support for children unable to attend secondary school, accessing social care support and waits for EHCP Needs Assessments.
- Claire attended the Mid Essex SEND Roadshow at POP Essex on Tuesday. It was really well attended and was lovely to see POP Essex's venue and the wonderful facilities and clubs they have available for SEND children, young people and their families. Claire received a lot of really interesting feedback on a range of subjects including lack of support for those children with an EHCP but unable to attend school.
- Stacey attended the PACT Cuppa & Connect session in Epping this week. Received a lot of useful feedback. Unfortunately, timescales are still a big issue. It was good to hear some positive experiences with some counselling services, and the Preparing for adulthood team. We had a good discussion around ADHD medication and the effect of different brands, it was useful having an adult in the group who is on medication, and tried a few, so was able to tell us how it affects him. Our children are not always able to articulate this to us, so was very interesting hearing this.
- Sarah attended the Healthier Habit Hub in Jaywick this week.

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.