



## Weekly Snapshot from EFF

### Week ending- 12/09/25

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:
<b>*UPDATE* Transport Waivers</b> - Families feel pressured to sign transport waivers when a school is considered 'parent preference', even when it's clearly the most suitable setting for the child. Concerns include lack of choice, financial impact, and limited understanding of transport options before signing.	We've followed up with SEND Ops to explore whether clearer information on Transport can be shared with families earlier in the EHCP process, and in advance of being asked to sign waivers.
<b>SEND Home to School Transport</b> - We are hearing from many families that it's been a difficult start to the school year with Transport, with buses not arriving, lack of communication from the providers and not everyone getting a meet & greet before the term starts, amongst other issues	<p>We have been having regular meetings and updates with the Essex Transport Mobilisation team during the summer holidays and have been giving feedback on where improvements can be made to the process.</p> <p><i>What has your experience of Home to School Transport been so far? Please leave your anonymous comments on our Graffiti Wall for us to feed back to the Essex Transport Team <a href="#">Feedback Wall   Essex Family Forum</a></i></p>
<b>MyCareBridge &amp; One Planning</b> - Last week, some schools in Mid & South Essex said they had received a letter through MyCareBridge. The letter suggested that children and young people under 18 would need to go through three rounds of "One Planning" before being referred for an ADHD or autism (ASD) assessment.	<p>We immediately raised this with both Health and Education teams. This is not in line with national guidance and would place extra, unnecessary pressure on schools. We also know that not every child or young person who needs a diagnosis will be in school or have a formal support plan.</p> <p>It has now been confirmed that the letter was sent out in error. There will be no changes to the current referral process for ADHD or autism assessments.</p>



<p><b>Lack of support in education settings</b> - We receive a lot of feedback relating to education settings not adhering to One plans, not offering Reasonable adjustments, and generally not supporting our young people's needs.</p>	<p>There is a framework which all mainstream educational settings should use. This is the Ordinary Available (OA). It explains what support is available in Early Years settings, primary and secondary schools in Essex.</p> <p>This framework should be used as part of the schools focus on inclusion. It covers the expectations for provision and practice in all early years settings and mainstream schools. See link below for more information:</p> <p><a href="https://schools.essex.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-services-and-support/send-advice-and-2">https://schools.essex.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-services-and-support/send-advice-and-2</a></p> <p>There will be some official communication coming out to parents to explain what this is in more detail.</p>
<p><b>*UPDATE* 18+ ADHD Shared Care Agreement</b> - There is currently no process in place for young people transitioning from children's services to adult mental health services to receive an annual medication review. Even when they have been accepted onto the adult service waiting list, which can be two to three years long. This gap prevents GPs from entering into shared care agreements, meaning prescriptions cannot be continued. Despite this being a move between NHS services, there is no continuity of care.</p> <p>Families are deeply concerned that this breakdown could have serious consequences at a critical time, especially as many in this age group are preparing for employment, apprenticeships or further education.</p>	<p>We've followed up with services to request an update on the current situation, as previous communications suggested a solution was being developed. We'll continue to follow this up and will share any updates as soon as we're able.</p>
<p><b>The Balance System</b> - During the SET Therapies meeting this week it was acknowledged that there is a lack of understanding around the Balance System and what it is both within schools and parent/carers.</p>	<p>EFF have been asked to be a part of the process to review the suggested comms being put together with parent/carers in mind.</p>



## In other news.....

- **Learning Disabilities Annual Health Check Forum** - Claire and Kate attended last week's forum where plans were shared to merge groups into a single Essex-wide network. Key topics included coding consistency in GP records and upcoming reports to Health & Wellbeing Boards.
- **Summer SEND Festival** – Claire attended the festival at Marsh Farm in South Woodham Ferrers last week. This was a free day organised by Independence Project and Stories about Autism, created especially for children and young people with SEND, and their families. It was an amazing day, with something for everyone: animals, Meet the Dinosaurs, The Beast inflatable, Train rides, a Dance Barn and a Foam Party Tent, and much more! Claire met lots of families and listened to their SEND journey stories whilst providing a shelter against the rain showers that occurred during the day!
- **SEND Fun day, Waltham Abbey** – Stacey attended this event in the summer holidays. Hosted by Essex child and family wellbeing service. 172 children, young people and their families came along. They had a lot of activities to join in with, and services to speak to, which families really appreciated. It was a lovely day.
- **Voluntary sector forum event, Harlow water gardens** – Stacey attended this event in the summer holidays. Healthy Habit Hub team was also there, along with voluntary services in Harlow. It is lovely to see how much support is there for our community. We had a steady flow of people throughout the day.
- **Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), West Essex** – Kevin and Stacey met with MHST, who work with 52 schools across West Essex and Hertfordshire to support students' mental health and wellbeing. We talked about creating resources for families, such as a signposting leaflet, and ways to make accessing services easier. We're also putting together a short survey for parents and carers to share your experiences of mental health support and the help received through school. Your feedback will be really valuable in shaping the support that is offered.
- **MyCareBridge Forum** - Claire and Kate attended this week's MyCareBridge Forum and sought confirmation that previously raised issues had been resolved. An apology was given for referral communications sent in error, with confirmation that these have been removed from the portal. Concerns were raised about rising referral numbers and delays for those in urgent need. We flagged technical issues between the app and web versions and requested clearer parent guidance—including support for families with limited internet access, help for those less confident with technology, visibility of accessibility features, and links to local support. We also asked when support videos will be available for neurodivergent users and those with learning needs.



- **NEE Meetings** - Last week Sarah attended both the Suffolk and North East Essex Learning Disabilities and Autism Health Inequalities Steering Group meeting and the North East Essex Carers Group meeting. These meetings provide an opportunity to share any relevant feedback EFF receive in relation to these areas, if you have any feedback please share via the graffiti wall ([Feedback Wall | Essex Family Forum](#)).
- **MAZE Coffee Morning** - Sarah attended the MAZE coffee morning in Clacton this week. Full details of all of the upcoming MAZE coffee morning can be found here ([Coffee Mornings | SEND Parents Support - The MAZE Group](#)).
- **Community Health and Wellbeing Event** – Sarah and EFF Family Champion Leanne attended the third Community Health and Wellbeing event in Harwich this week. The event was well attended and we shared copies of our ‘Supporting your Neurodivergent Child’ resource pack, signposted families to relevant support and gathered feedback/themes from families about current challenges they are facing along with what is working.
- **SET Therapies** – Sarah attended the ‘SET Therapies Transformation Delivery Partnership’ meeting this week. Lack of awareness and information about the Balance System was discussed both for schools and parents and carers. EFF will be part of a meeting looking at the comms being developed for parents and carers.
- **SEND Sensations** – Sarah attended the SEND Sensations ‘Parent Voices’ group meeting this week which provides an opportunity to feedback on their current offer and help shape future groups and activities for children and young people. Please feedback via the graffiti wall if you have and feedback or suggestions which we can raise at future sessions. For more information about SEND Sensations visit their website here ([Send Sensation | Local. Accessible. Positive.](#))
- **SEND Accountability Board** - Katrina & Claire attended the SEND Accountability Board on Thursday which is attended by senior leaders from Education, Health & Social care from across Essex. The Board is chaired by Clare Kershaw, Director of Education. Claire highlighted the recurrent problems that families face with SEND Home to School Transport, especially at the beginning of the school year and gave examples of how the issues have been impacting on the children's school day, and family life. Clare Kershaw is looking at the transport problems with Essex Transport and is hoping to meet with some of the bigger contractors in the near future.

***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.***