



Weekly Snapshot from EFF

Week ending- 19/09/25

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:
ADHD Medication - We have been hearing that some people are still struggling to get certain ADHD medication	We are bringing this up in our meetings with the ICB's (Integrated Care Boards) To get an update of the current situation. We will share this information as soon as we get it.
Update Mid & South East Integrated Care Board (MSEICB) - wait for an autism/ADHD diagnosis. - In January Claire and Kate presented to Commissioners and Paediatricians from the MSE ICB to inform them of families experiences of waiting for an autism/ADHD diagnosis, and after diagnosis, and what families want from this service. We hear from families so much that the diagnostic service is inconsistent depending on where you live and that support pre and post diagnosis for is also inconsistent.	We have now been invited to the next step - a System Transformation Summit in October focused on exploring what a needs led approach could look like for Mid and South Essex. This will involve services across Mid & South Essex. We are really excited to be involved in this summit, which could help make diagnostic services in the MSE ICB more consistent and supportive for families as they go along the pathway.
Part-Time Timetables – We are continuing to hear from families and support services around concerns over the the use of part-time timetable especially in primary schools for reception aged children.	We have previously shared information within the 'Weekly Snapshot' regarding the official guidelines around part-time or reduced timetables (click here) this was also raised at the recent NEE SEND Joint Working Group by MAZE where it was agreed a separate meeting would be arranged to discuss this further. We will share further details reagrding this in due course, please continue to share your feedback via the graffiti wall (Feedback Wall Essex Family Forum).



Community Dental Services Essex – Information Sharing

“The Community Dental Service in Essex provides a dental service for those whose oral care needs (on-going or part of a single treatment plan) cannot be met through other NHS primary care dental contracts due to their additional needs (medical, physical or behavioural). Many children and adults with additional needs can be treated within the General Dental Service. However, if a patient’s particular needs mean that if specialist skills, equipment or facilities are required, General Dentists may refer to Community Dental Services-CIC.

Under Community Dental Services there are 7 sites across Essex for patients that cannot access typical dental clinics, there is also a possibility that allows patients to be seen at their homes for those who are unable to attend one of the sites. More information can be found here: [Essex - Clinics - Community Dental Services](#).

Referrals are made via a referral form which anyone (including parents and carers) can complete. The criteria for the service can be found here ([Community-Dental-Service-in-Essex-Referrals-and-Criteria-1.pdf](#)) and the referral form can be accessed here ([Essex-Referral-Form-Updated-27.10.22.docx](#)). It is important for the referral form to be completed properly including why access to the service is needed.

Average waiting time is 24 weeks. The team are able to prioritise referrals in certain circumstances i.e. where the dental issue is impacting on the child or young persons behaviour, eating etc. If symptoms/issues change families can phone the team and request to be re-assessed. Waiting times for treatment under general anaesthetic are still an issue but it is important to communicate this with the CDS team as they will try to limit the amount of time a child/YP in pain is waiting to receive treatment.”



Urgent Care Dental Service – North East Essex

Families in North East Essex and Suffolk can also access the Urgent Care Dental Service (UDCS) via NHS 111. People who think they need treatment from the UCDS should contact NHS 111 where they will be supported to access the most appropriate care for their needs. Patients who have had NHS dental care from a practice in Suffolk or North East Essex in the last 12 months are advised to contact that practice first to ask if an appointment is available and, if not, to then contact NHS 111.

Appointments are available seven days a week, including evenings, in Colchester, Felixstowe, Frinton, Hadleigh, Haverhill, Ipswich, Mildenhall, Newmarket, Stowmarket and Sudbury.

These appointments are for both adults and children who fall into one of two groups:

- those assessed as requiring dental care within 24 hours or as soon as possible, including those in pain and those who have infections or excessive bleeding from their gums or cheeks
- those assessed as requiring care within seven days, unless the condition worsens, including those who need fillings, have loose crowns or bridges, or those who have broken a tooth by biting on something

During these appointments, the immediate problem will be treated and patients will be given advice on how to care for their oral health. Patients may be treated by a combination of dental practice staff including dentists, dental therapists, dental hygienists and dental nurses. Some patients may also be referred to another practice for any ongoing oral health needs following the initial treatment.

As with other NHS dental care, standard charges apply. It is expected that patients will require between one and two



appointments. These will be at a total cost of £27.40. Some patients will qualify for [free NHS dental treatment or help with dental costs](#).

In other news.....

- **All Age Autism partnership** – Claire, Stacey and Katie B attended this meeting last week. We heard a good news story from an autistic adult. With support from local organisations such as Safe (<https://www.safeessex.org.uk>) He has turned his life around. He is happy living in a supported living scheme. There was a **training update from Essex social care academy** saying on-going training is being offered to staff. This is recommended but not mandatory. We had an **update from Southend, Essex and Thurrock mental health strategy**. They talked through the 5 areas of focus: Community Mental Health; Acute Mental Health; Inequalities; Prevention and Early Intervention; and future proofing. It was acknowledged that there is no direct reference to Learning disabilities and Autism in this strategy review. **VoiceAbility End of Year Report & Evaluation** – Key themes from two years included healthcare, diagnosis, employment, education, communication, and community support. Successes included strong 1:1 engagement and VoiceAbility's positive reputation, while challenges remained around system engagement, follow-up on ideas, and perceptions of co-production being the council's responsibility.
- **Spotlight on MyOTAS Cooking Sessions** – Air-fryer cooking sessions supported neurodivergent and hard-to-reach young people, with positive feedback from families and participants. The sessions were praised for inclusivity and the effort involved in creating opportunities for vulnerable groups.
- **SEND Parent monthly meet, Loughton** - Stacey attended this support group last week. This is a lovely group, who are all very supportive and knowledgeable. Main themes discussed were the wait for EHCP, including getting it refuse, and the lack of understanding and support of children's needs in school. Unfortunately, this seems to be what we hear everywhere. This group help advocate for each other and have discovers AI can be very helpful when drafting letters of complaints or even help towards applying for Needs assessments!
- **EHCP Annual Review AI Discovery** - Claire & Ange attended a project team meeting with Essex County Council on Tuesday looking at the possibility of using Intelligent Automation (AI) within the Annual Review process. The main objectives of the project are to:
 1. Redesign the EHCP Annual Review process using intelligent automation and people-centred service design



2. Reduce manual effort, improve compliance, and enhance outcomes for councils, schools, and families.
3. Provide a clear and actionable roadmap for AI adoption aligned with Essex's broader SEND transformation work.

The project team are looking for families who have been through the EHCP Annual Review process and would like to talk about their experiences, to help with mapping out the process. If anyone would like to be involved, please contact Claire claire@essexfamilyforum.org.

- **SEND Home to School Transport** – Claire met again with Essex Transport leadership to highlight the continuing issues with SEND Transport for families. If you have any feedback on your experiences, please leave your anonymous comments on our Graffiti Wall for us to feed back to the Essex Transport Team [Feedback Wall | Essex Family Forum](#)
- Sarah and Family Champion Leanne attended the MAZE coffee morning in Colchester early this week and Sarah also attend MAZE coffee morning in Harwich in order to gather feedback from families.
- Sarah and Jo attended the NEE SEND Joint Working Group Meeting where they shared updates and relevant feedback from 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.