



Mid overall Brief Summary

Overall Summary of the FIS MID Survey Report

The report summarises feedback from **152 participants** across the Mid Essex area (Braintree, Chelmsford, Maldon) regarding their experiences with **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)** services, covering education, health, social care, EHCP processes, communication, and transitions.

Demographics & Needs

- Respondents were mostly from Braintree and Chelmsford, with a fairly even gender split.
 - The largest age group represented was **5–10 years**.
 - The most common primary needs identified were **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD, SEMH, and Speech, Language & Communication Needs**.
 - A majority of children were either on **EHCPs (72)** or SEN Support (40), with additional children progressing through assessment.
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Education Settings

- Most children attended **mainstream primary or secondary schools**, though a significant number were in **special schools**, alternative provision, or received education other than at school.
 - Experiences across settings varied, but mainstream settings often struggled with understanding or meeting needs compared to specialist settings.
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Identifying and Understanding Needs

- Views being taken into account during needs identification varied widely across health, education, and SEND teams.
 - Many parents felt **education settings were more understanding** than external health or social care services.
 - CAMHS, community paediatrics, and other health teams received notably lower satisfaction scores, with many respondents reporting difficulty accessing support or long delays.
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EHCP Process & Annual Reviews

- Experiences of EHCP needs assessments were mixed, with a **large proportion expressing dissatisfaction**, particularly around:
 - **Delays (some waiting over a year)**
 - **Poor communication**
 - **Struggles to secure assessments**

- Delivery of EHCP provision was inconsistent, with many reporting plans **not being fully implemented**.
 - Annual Review processes with SEND Operations also saw **low satisfaction**, often due to missed deadlines, incomplete reviews, or lack of attendance from professionals.
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Meeting Needs Across Services

- Education settings were viewed as meeting needs more often than health or social care.
 - Health services, particularly **CAMHS**, OT, paediatrics, and continence teams, were frequently reported as **difficult to access or unresponsive**.
 - Social care was similarly inconsistent, with some families unable to access Children with Disabilities teams despite meeting criteria.
 - Many families described **long waits**, limited therapy provision, and having to “fight” for support.
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Communication & Access to Information

- Satisfaction with communication from SEND teams was generally low.
 - Only a minority found it easy to access information about services or navigate the Local Offer website.
 - The preferred communication method was overwhelmingly **email (77%)**.
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Transport & Transitions

- Transport experiences varied significantly. Some families praised individual drivers, while others faced:
 - Frequent changes of staff
 - Missed pickups
 - Poor communication from transport providers
 - Confidence in preparing for adulthood was low, with many families feeling **uninformed or unsupported**, particularly regarding future education or adult social care pathways.
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Qualitative Comments

Positive experiences included:

- Strong support from **schools, SENCOs, teaching assistants, educational psychologists**, and certain charities.
- Individual professionals—particularly within SEND Operations, GPs, or specialist staff—were highlighted for exceptional support.

Negative experiences heavily outnumbered positive ones and centred on:

- **CAMHS**, community paediatrics, and social care delays
 - Lack of communication across health, social care, and SEND teams
 - Long waits for diagnosis or EHCP decisions
 - Families feeling ignored, gaslighted, or forced into appeals/tribunals
 - Inconsistent support in mainstream schools
 - Lack of local services in some Mid Essex areas (especially Braintree and Maldon)
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Overall Conclusion

The survey reveals a **significant level of frustration** among families in Mid Essex navigating the SEND system. While many education settings and individual professionals are providing strong support, the system as a whole is perceived as **slow, inconsistent, difficult to navigate**, and often unresponsive—particularly within health services and EHCP processes. Communication issues, delays, and unmet needs are recurring themes, indicating a need for **greater coordination, clearer processes, and more timely support** across all sectors.