

SEND Provision in Essex

Report of the High Needs Block Review
October 2018



Essex County Council

Executive Summary

Theme	Key Findings	Recommendations
Essex SEND Profile	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Essex level of EHCPs is high compared to statistical neighbours, and has been stable for several years, but 2017 saw the biggest single increase in the level of plans for ten years, growing 6% in a single calendar year (12% across the academic year 2016-17) 2) The profile of SEND in Essex has changed radically over the last ten years, seeing levels of MLD decrease as improvements in awareness and diagnoses of more specific needs increase. ASD, the highest single primary need, is growth is averaging 10% per year over the last 5 years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Invest in developments in data analytics to build a predictive model of changes in SEND population size and need type to manage future demand, e.g. The Essex Data Project
Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Other authorities set very clear definitions for the level of complexity of needs requiring EHCPs, using the option in the COP to go above the basic criteria laid out there. It is this that limits their levels of EHCP. Essex parameters are not seen as clear. 2) Agreement to assess continues to be variable across Essex, due to the lack of guidelines, and four separate teams making assessments differently. 3) Lack of funds in schools and council services, combined with parent's lack of confidence in SEND support is driving EHCP applications. 4) Where there is clear and obvious need, the requirements for two rounds of One Planning before applying for an EHCP causes considerable frustration. 5) On the whole, One Plans are considered poorly done in comparison with a full EHCP. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set clear and specific criteria for the level of need that will be considered for assessment 2) In conjunction with setting thresholds, remove the requirement for two rounds of One Planning before applying for EHCPs 3) Invest in more early identification/ intervention systems, including funding, that are easier to access without statutory levels of assessment 4) Review the One Planning system to strengthen how it reflects needs & aspirations

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Provision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Essex still has a high level of CYP with plans included in mainstream schools, despite the increasing demand for special school places. 2) Enhanced Provisions offer opportunities to increase specialist knowledge, outreach and training, Early Intervention, and inclusivity. 3) The sudden growth in EHCPs is going to outstrip the planned new provision in 3 to 5 years if it continues at its current rate. 4) Parents have a deep lack of satisfaction with SEND Support, and parents who have managed to secure an EHCP are much more satisfied. Parents also do not seem to be accurately aware of what sort of support they are receiving. 5) Teachers and parents have many anecdotal examples of schools discouraging applications from CYP with SEND. 6) Essex continually strives to improve SEND provision, but plans are of variable quality, effectiveness and execution. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase places at Primary School enhanced provisions beyond current levels. EPs could be leveraged as providers of specialist services 2) Review SEND Support in Essex, both actual teaching/support, and how that support is communicated to parents to increase parental confidence and reduce demand for EHCP 3) Develop a SEND inclusivity award. A key part of this should be extra support for those who achieve it so success is a victory, not a burden. This should be part of developing and enhancing SEND provision in all schools
Financial Transparency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The HNB provides approximately £13,700 per plan 2) The HNB is not geared towards funding early intervention, but early intervention is key to preventing EHCP levels increasing 3) It is impossible to determine if HNB generates value for money at this time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the HNB funding goes to schools over which ECC has no visibility of accounts • There are examples of best practice within ECC for holding those who do receive money to account • Value for money can only be judged against outcomes, and outcomes data is currently not sufficient to enable a judgement 4) The money spent on the Specialist Teacher Team is repeatedly questioned by Essex school leaders who express frustration at too many poor performers within the service; this is an issue raised multiple times and investigated in depth at the end of 2016. To date, these have not been actioned, due to restructuring at ECC. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Create a central document that lists exactly what lines for the budget contain, and includes how and when those decisions were made and or changed, 2) Restructure the STT as a matter of priority. Consider using the Enhanced Provisions as a key element in delivery of the statutory services.

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Other Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Relationships between SEND stakeholders across Essex are full of frustrations with each other, and there is a marked sense that the SEND experience is notably combative2) Consequently communications between stakeholder groups is poor, even between ECC teams, leading to delays and further eroding relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) ECC needs to ensure that all teams communicate consistently with each other and outside stakeholders to deliver the same message.2) Efforts need to be made to ensure case work is kept up to date