

COMPOSITE MINUTES OF THE 2024 SPRING TERM AREA MEETINGS OF THE LA AND ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION

West	Wednesday 28 February 2024	Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth
South	Thursday 29 February 2024	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
North East	Wednesday 6 March 2024	Colchester Football Stadium
Mid	Thursday 7 March 2024	The Lion Inn, Boreham

1. WELCOME, THANK YOU AND NOTICES

- a) Clare Kershaw, Director for Education, and the Area Chairs, welcomed those present, extending a particular **welcome** to the new (or new in post) headteachers in each area, who are:

West

Joanne Willcox	Lambourne Primary (Interim headteacher)
Sherlyn Ramsay	Newport Primary (Interim headteacher)

South

Lorna Hebden	Hadleigh Juniors (Head of School)
Caroline Hunt	Felmore Primary (Head of School)
Nina Kemp	Felmore Primary (Executive Head)
Gill Marrion	St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary (Interim headteacher)
Jennifer Milner	Rayleigh Primary
Victoria Townsend	Kelvedon Hatch Primary
Janine Travi	Hilltop Infants
Lyndsey Wood	Down Hall Primary

North East

Samantha Golding	St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Harwich
Lucie Levett	Montgomery Infant and Nursery
Becky Maguire	St Teresa's Catholic Primary, Colchester

Mid

Ruth Wright	St Cedd's CE Primary
Emma Speller	Heybridge Primary
Tracy North	St Joseph's and St Francis Catholic Primaries
Teresa Gage	St John the Baptist, Pebmarsh (Interim Headteacher)

- b) **Thank you and farewell** to those headteachers who are retiring or leaving their current post this term:

South

Phil Andrews	Rettendon Primary
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2. LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Helen Lincoln, Executive Director for Children, Families and Education (South, North East and Mid meetings)

Clare Kershaw, Director of Education (West, South and Mid meetings)

Nicola Woolf and Ashley Milum (West meeting)

Lisa Fergus and Maz Norman (South meeting)

Philippa Holliday and Stephen Chynoweth (North East meeting)

Catherine Hutley and Caroline Gibson (Mid meeting)

a) **DIRECTOR'S WELCOME**

Clare welcomed the headteachers to the meetings.

Helen Lincoln, Executive Director for Children, Families and Education, attended the South, North East and Mid meetings. She thanked headteachers for managing their schools incredibly effectively, and for what they do for children and their families. She acknowledged that education is often badly portrayed in the press and children's voices are poorly heard by Government. Budgets for both schools and the Local Authority are in a difficult place – schools budgets are where they were in 2010, with increased pressures to take account of, and the Local Authority budget has reduced by 42% since then. Helen stressed that she campaigns on our behalf at a national level, particularly as a member of the Association of Directors of Children's Services. ECC is, thankfully, solvent, unlike many Local Authorities, and is committed to education, as demonstrated by the investment in the Year of Reading and the Year of Numbers.

Helen said that she empathises with the challenge and pressure of Ofsted inspection; Essex Children's Services were inspected in June, and she had two weeks of sleepless nights during the process, but thankfully it culminated in an outstanding judgment, one of very few LAs to have successive outstanding outcomes for children's services. Helen recognises the impact of Covid; the pandemic and social media have changed the contract between families and schools (for example, the increased absence figures since the pandemic, which have not yet recovered) and she hopes that at some point there will be a reflection of the impact on children, and particularly babies who lost critical years of social development.

Helen said that she is inspired by and in awe of the imagination and creativity of headteachers; she stressed that we have an incredible group of schools, headteachers, staff and volunteers, who go the extra mile for their children and families; they are having an amazing impact on the lives of young people in Essex.

b) CURRENT OFSTED OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS JUDGEMENTS IN ESSEX

90.9% of all schools are judged to be "good" or "outstanding."

The slides outlined the changes to the Ofsted handbook made in January 2024. These include:

1. Enhanced clarity on inspectors' conduct
2. Involving leaders and governance in inspections, including involving the CEO in team meetings.
3. Update on deferral requests and inspection planning
4. Preparatory calls and educationally focused conversations.
5. Clarification regarding meetings with staff, pupils and parents.
6. Clarification on Ofsted's "pausing" policy.
7. Streamlining the reporting process.

c) ATTENDANCE UPDATE AND FOCUS

Clare noted that the DfE and LA continues to focus on the decline in school attendance since the end of the pandemic. The following key messages were given:

- Strong start to the year
- Parallel attendance patterns to national picture
- Increased decline in attendance in late November
- Essex matched national averages across the county in the last 3 data releases

Mid Team (incl. Chelmsford, Braintree, Maldon) - midattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk
0333 032 2968 - option 2

North East Team (incl. Clacton, Colchester, Harwich) - neattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk
0333 032 2968 - option 1

South Team (incl. Brentwood, Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford) -
southattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk 0333 032 2968 - option 3

West Team (incl. Harlow, Saffron Walden, Waltham Abbey, Ongar) - westattendanceteam@essex.gov.uk 0333 032 2968 - option 4

The DfE has just published an update to the Working Together to Improve School Attendance, to come into force in September 2024. There are some significant changes including the introduction of a national framework for the use of penalty notices, and an increase in the amount that parents will be fined if they take their child out of school for an extended, unauthorised period.

The new guidance is available at

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance-applies-from-19-august-2024.pdf>

d) **REDUCED TIMETABLES**

Essex County Council must be able to report on children who are of statutory school age and who are not in receipt of full-time school education.

In September 23, the reporting system was changed, and schools are now asked to complete a half termly form sharing data for the previous half term.

There is no longer any requirement to update a pupil's timetable outside of the reporting period.

The first reporting period ended on 10th January. With 26% of Essex schools sharing their data. The LA asks all schools to familiarise themselves with the new process and to ensure they send the data return as requested.

The data will be used to more fully understand the pressures on schools and to ensure appropriate support is targeted effectively.

Reporting periods for 2023/24

Essex term	Completed return due between
Autumn, term 1	Monday 23 October 2023 to Friday 10 November 2023
Autumn, term 2	Thursday 4 January 2024 to Friday 26 January 2024
Spring, term 3	Monday 26 February 2024 to Friday 15 March 2024
Spring, term 4	Monday 15 April 2024 to Friday 3 May 2024
Summer, term 5	Monday 3 June 2024 to Friday 21 June 2024
Summer, term 6	Monday 2 September 2024 to Friday 20 September 2024

Further information can be found on ESI:

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Education_Access/Pages/Provision.aspx

The Professional Officer reminded headteachers that the LA has a policy on reduced timetables, which includes a risk assessment template.

e) **ADMISSIONS DEFERRAL AND DELAY**

Clare noted that this issue had been discussed at the EPHA Executive meeting in January. The advice from the LA around deferral requests is as follows:

Requests from parents of a summer born child for a school to agree their child can be considered for admission into Reception a year later than what would be their normal start date:

e.g. child born 04/05/2020 – would normally start primary school from September 2024. But the parent requests that their child starts in September 2025 in Reception. In such a case, the school needs to consider the parent's request and decide, based on what is considered to be in the child's best interests, whether to consider an application for Reception admission in September 2025. If the parent is adamant that they want their child to start school after he or she has turned 5, it begs the question how could it possibly be in the child's best interests to miss the whole of Reception? Therefore, a school receiving such a request may want to agree it but make clear to the parent this does not equate to a guarantee of a place, but that the school will consider an application made in the admission round under its admissions arrangements.

So, in the example above, the response letter to the parent would simply need to say 'yes, the school will consider an application for a Reception place for September 2025, and you need to make an application through the Local Authority in the Reception 2025 admission round by following the process in the 'Primary Education in Essex booklet which is on the website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions'.

Parents of summer born children with SEND going through the EHCP assessment process making similar requests as that above – those parents have the same right to make such a request and it should be considered, but making clear that all the school can agree is whether the child can start in Reception after he or she turns 5 i.e. a year later than his or her normal age group start date. However, whether a place will be actually offered at the school is subject to whether the child actually gets an EHCP naming that school.

Parents of summer born children with SEND with no EHCP or no EHC needs assessment taking place – requests to be considered as per numbered point 1 above.

If a child is born in the autumn or spring term they must start school in the term after they reach the age of 5. If a parent decides to keep their child out of school at this point, they must then make the decision to electively home educate their child, and risk not having an available place when/if they apply to a school.

f) SLCN (SPEECH, LANGUAGE COMMUNICATION NEEDS) UPDATE

Lisa Gridley was welcomed to the meeting. She shared information about the various levelling up projects that are taking place in Canvey, Basildon, Tendring, Colchester and Harlow. It was confirmed that these projects are not yet available to schools outside these areas, but the team is hoping to do a roll out of this work to other schools in time.

Core training for all schools is offered through the Education Essex booking site. The offer includes:

- SLC awareness for Early Years
- ELKLAN training – 0-3, 3-5, 5-11, 11-16
- Talk Boost – Early Years, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2
- SLCN linked with SEMH

This is new training, based in quadrants, acknowledging the link with social, emotional and mental health. Headteachers were advised to contact their Inclusion Partner in the first instance.

There is a new portal for SLCN on the Infolink

https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Speech_and_Language_Portal/Pages/default.aspx

g) EARLY YEARS TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The presentation included information about the EY Making it Real cohort, and the EY Speech Club.

The Local Authority employs four Early Years Early Identification Partners (EYEIPs). The EYEIPs role is to work with settings in supporting them with children delayed in an area of learning and / or children who find certain aspects of learning more difficult than their peers. Their role is to support the setting with strategies for those children who may not be meeting developmental milestones.

Initially their work has been directed from the Early Years Resource Panel, but going forward they will be doing more research-based pieces of work to gather insight for us and help us to think about how we can join up the system more effectively.

They are: Carol Rowe, Cynthia Morgan, Lisa Perry and Zanya Sesay.

The presentation included information about early language intervention programmes. Resource document link: <https://essexcc.pagetiger.com/EssexSLCN/1>

In addition, the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) is tasked with the role of supporting early childhood development, particularly through the two-year old check.

h) SEND SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY

Clare Kershaw (West meeting)

Ralph Holloway (South, North East and Mid meetings)

The challenges are well known in Essex (and nationally):

- Continued and significant increases in the number of new Education Health Care Plans issued in Essex
- The profile of SEND in Essex has changed considerably over the last ten years
- ASD as a primary need has grown year on year
- Reliance on the independent special school sector – now costing over £40 m a year
- Pressures on all of our special schools with regard to numbers and admissions
- Budget pressures across individual school budgets
- A growth in the overall school population with new housing continuing at pace across the County
- Rising levels of permanent exclusions;
- Recruitment and retention
- Parental confidence in our health, social care and education services' offer
- A sharp rise in the number of SEND tribunal cases
- An under-developed post-16 and 19- 25 offer across the local area

To address the challenges, the Local Authority has developed a series of immediate and longer-term initiatives in train to address the challenges of increased volume of need and requests for support, alongside the limited ability to increase capacity in specialist provision:

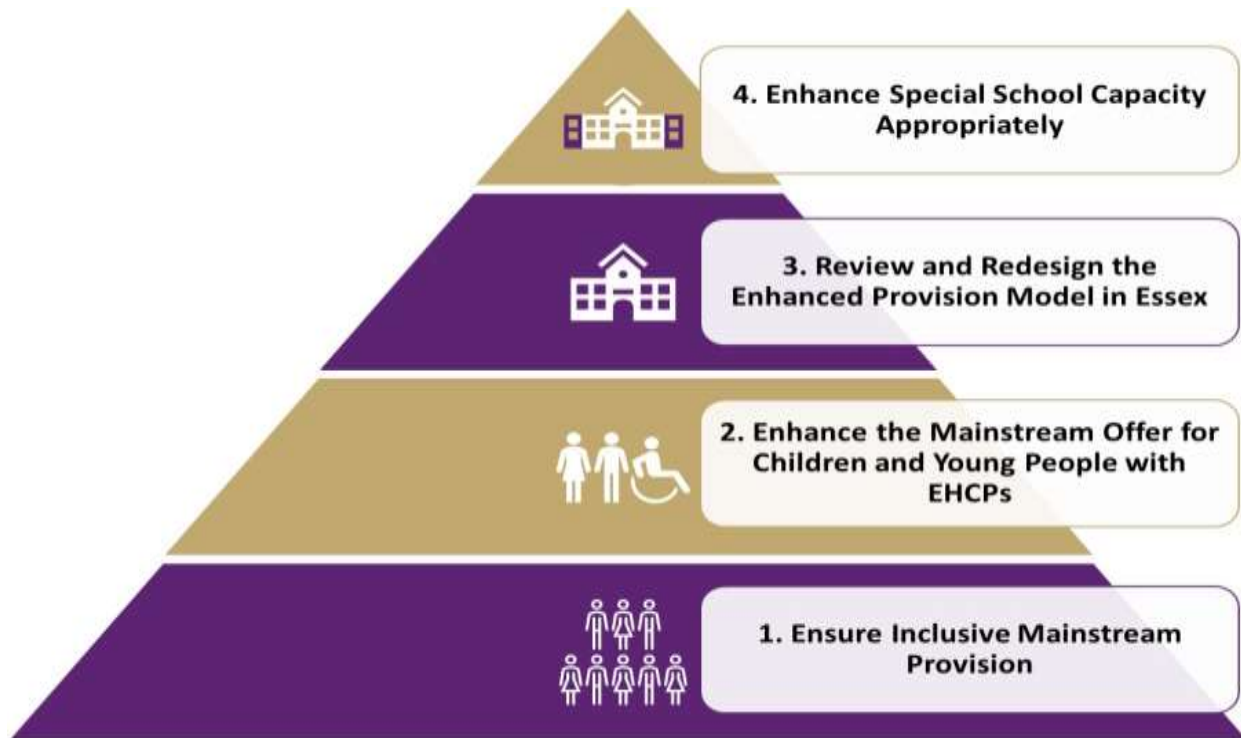
Funding and operational capacity - Investing in increased top-up funding for schools, back-dated support for those assessments that take longer than 20-weeks and permanent additional capacity in the LA SEND operational teams.

SEND Sufficiency Plan – Over the course of this academic year, the LA has launched the new plan, including the review of the Enhanced Provision model in Essex, and continues the work on the new SEND top-up arrangements.

Continuous improvement - A new approach to Annual Reviews; update resources and support around One Planning and increase the workforce development offer

The process of the SEND Sufficiency Plan:

- Drafted over the last academic year
 - Endorsed internally
 - Shared internally and externally for engagement
 - Finalised following engagement
 - Delivery phase
 - Projects continue throughout this process, including previous capital programme
- To better meet the forecast needs of children and young people with SEND in Essex, there are four key intentions:



1 Ensure inclusive mainstream provision

Implementation of the agreed Ordinarily Available Provision across all Essex mainstream schools, at universal and targeted levels will enable high quality inclusive teaching for all pupils.

The Essex Ordinarily Available sets out the agreed expectations about the provision and practice in all Early Years settings, mainstream schools and Post 16 providers for all children and young people, including those with SEND. It is what a young person, parent/carer or family can expect to be “ordinarily” available to their child without the need for involving specialist support.

Delivery of early intervention through the Inclusion Support Offer, including the Inclusion Framework, Inclusion Reviews, outreach, Continual Professional Development, access to evidence informed advice and guidance and proactive support from Inclusion Partners and Educational Psychologists are key in enabling schools to meet this challenge.

2 Enhance the mainstream offer for children and young people with EHCPs

Effective implementation of the provision specified in high quality EHCPs, through:

- Development of a comprehensive SEND workforce development offer;
- Development of an Essex outreach model to support inclusion and SEND provision through collaboration between mainstream and specialist settings and partners;
- Sustainable funding of EHCPs;
- Investing in increased capacity/ spaces/ resources for mainstream schools that enable

- effective SEND provision;
- Sensory specialist teacher service support.

Support for mainstream schools with children for whom special school has been deemed appropriate but where there is insufficient capacity at present to source a special school place

3 Review and redesign the Enhance Provision Model in Essex

- Develop new and reclassify existing enhanced provisions appropriate to the needs of Essex children and young people e.g. provision for children/young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties;
- Ensure that pupils are placed appropriately in Enhanced Provisions across Essex, in relation to their needs, banding and postcode;
- Ensure that pupils who attend Enhanced Provisions in Essex have measurable value added to their educational and wider outcomes;
- Develop Service Level Agreements to ensure quality and accountability.

4 Enhance Special School Capacity appropriately

- Re-modelling and re-classification of current specialist provision to better match need, for example more provision for Severe Learning Difficulties and less special school provision for Moderate Learning Difficulties where that need can be met in mainstream schools.
- Support special schools to be more flexible in the needs they are able to meet. Satellite provisions of special schools on mainstream sites.
- Seizing opportunities where council owned buildings become vacant.
- Free school applications – we have both supported and led 5 special free school applications in Essex since 2014.
- Determine what post 16 provision is needed to ensure sufficient, high quality opportunities for young people.

To achieve these intentions, we will need to



Headteachers were asked to give feedback on the SEND Sufficiency Plan. It was suggested that there was little or no mention of the role that parents play within the system, and it was agreed that their understanding of the system is critical.

Ralph discussed the expansion of special school places across the county, noting that the LA will continue to make free school special school applications when possible; in the last DfE funding round Essex was unsuccessful in their application.

There is some expansion of places, particularly in the South quadrant. A consultation has just been launched in relation to a planned new Special School in Rochford. This will be an all-through school, which should help the pressure on KS1 and KS2. In addition, Glenwood School is being expanded by 40 places, using Section 106 funding. A primary school has identified a potential block of space, which may be used to increase capacity there.

The Inclusion Strategy includes the availability of the Inclusion framework funding for mainstream projects, and Inclusion Reviews are being rolled out across the county. Unfortunately the shortage of EPs both locally and nationally continues.

Headteachers expressed their concerns about the delays in communications from the SENDOps team, which results in a lot of extra work chasing decisions and being updated on the progress of cases. Ralph accepted that communications are not always working effectively; the number of assessments has doubled and the teams are under extreme pressure. The Local Authority is looking at ways in which communication can be improved.

At the South meeting, the Chair suggested that many families don't understand the assessment and EHCP process, and a simple guide for parents would be helpful to both schools and the LA, ensuring that realistic and consistent information is being given. It was agreed that this would be helpful. A headteacher also mentioned the need for Health professionals, including paediatricians, to understand the system and the limitations on what schools are able to provide.

There was a discussion at the South meeting about how schools that are not as inclusive as others can be held to account. Ralph noted that there is no legislation in place, but there is a collective responsibility to share the challenges of children and young people with additional needs in the system. Inclusion reviews can be helpful to highlight the practice in schools, and both Ralph and Clare Kershaw regularly talk to the DfE and Ofsted about the need for all schools to be inclusive. Ralph noted that the recently published Trust descriptors include effective inclusion as an expectation.

i) CHILDCARE REFORMS

Clare Kershaw (West and South meetings)

Carolyn Terry (North East and Mid meetings)

In March 2023 the Chancellor announced a significant package of reforms to the childcare sector with the primary purpose of enabling more women to work.



FEEE2W

15 Funded Early Education Entitlement hours available for eligible working parents for children from the term after their second birthday. Available from April 2024.



Funding for local authorities to be used to establish wrap around childcare at the beginning and end of the school day for all schools by September 2026



FEEE1W

15 funded early education entitlement hours available for eligible working parents for children from the term after they turn 9 months. Available from September 2024.



Piloting of a scheme to provide incentive payments to encourage people to sign up as childminders (£600 per childminder or £1,200 if signing up via a childminder agency)



30 hours

The 15 hours for eligible FEEE1W & FEEE2W children will extend to 30 from September 2025.



Revision to Universal Credit childcare payments so that these are paid upfront.

From 2 January 2024, eligible working parents of 2- year-olds are able to apply for a code for 15 hours of funded childcare, starting from 1 April 2024 – not all 2 year olds will be eligible to access a funded place

The new entitlement is for the term after a child is 2 years old.

We recommend that if you receive queries from parents regarding their eligibility, you direct them to <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> in the first instance. This is the parent-facing website which helps parents understand what entitlements they may be able to receive. Parent can apply for the entitlements via the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

Please remind and inform parents that they must only apply for the 15 hours funded childcare through the Essex Education Portal for the 2-year-old funding for disadvantaged families (FEEE2).

Essex do not check eligibility for the Working Families entitlements, this is a process dealt with by HMRC and any eligibility queries need to be dealt with by them.

We have added a Childcare Reforms tab to the EYCC website where information and updated comms will be added so please use this as a source of information. Funding (essex.gov.uk)

The national wraparound programme formed part of these announcements. The government's ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it, will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8 am-6 pm, so that parents can access employment.

The Government's ambition is that: -

- starting in September 2024 and by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time, Ofsted- registered, wraparound childcare in their local area, from 8 am-6 pm to support working patterns
- the wraparound care will be school-centred, with provision delivered by a variety of childcare models through: -
 - provision on a school site either run by the school or a private childcare provider,
 - the school supporting signposting parents to alternative local provision, for example PVIs and childminders.

This programme will only focus on: -

- primary school-aged children from reception to year 6
- creating places that are available Monday to Friday, term time 8 am-6 pm (unless data shows that local demand is for different hours)

The DfE are providing funding to Local Authorities to fund new and expanded wraparound provision to meet current demand and to start to create capacity to meet future demand. Funding will only be available to create new places or expanded places and will not cover ongoing revenue costs to support running costs

The Essex Early Years team has undertaken an audit on current wrap around childcare provision and has consulted with parents to understand the expected level of need

The ECC Early Years team will be offering bespoke support to all schools, private voluntary and independent childcare providers and childminders interested in creating new wraparound childcare places. This support will consist of: -

- Wraparound briefing sessions, that will start to be run in the coming weeks

- Information packs, including the data on needed places and registering with Ofsted
- Business support to create new wraparound places and to apply for available funding
- Facilitation of creating local partnership wraparound childcare models between schools, PVI and / or childminders

Wraparound guidance for schools and trusts

- [Guidance for schools and trusts](#) was published **8 February**. We developed the guidance following conversations with schools, LAs, stakeholders and policy teams across government.
- The guidance is non-statutory and builds on information in the programme handbook to LAs. It provides more detail on the **role of schools and our expectations of them**, and focuses on the **practicalities of setting up wraparound**.
- We sent a **fact sheet to LAs on 8 February** to help when talking to schools about the programme.

The role of schools in the wraparound programme:

With support from LAs, the government expects all schools that educate primary school-aged pupils to:

- Work with LAs to **support parents to access wraparound childcare**
- Have school or PVI provider (including childminder) run **wraparound childcare on the school site** (unless there is a reasonable justification not to).
- If unable, schools are expected to work collaboratively with LAs to **ensure parents are signposted to appropriate provision**.
- Schools will **promote and support government subsidies** such as Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit Childcare
- Support LAs to **understand parental demand**.
- Adhere to the **right to request guidance**.

Reasonable justifications for not having wraparound childcare on school site include:

- no space available having tested options
- unsuitable space that cannot reasonably be adapted, or ongoing building or maintenance work
- insufficient demand so that the provision would not be viable
- no other local providers or schools to form partnership
- similar provision already operates locally that meets demand (and does not require parents to pick up/ drop off their children)

There are 447 primary schools in Essex. School census date from 2023 shows that:

- 212 offer breakfast and afterschool clubs
- 111 offer breakfast club only
- 9 offer afterschool club only
- 115 schools have no wraparound offer

Parent questionnaire results

We provided all primary schools and early years settings with a parent questionnaire and asked them to distribute.

The results have identified the following:

8120 responses

78.5% of schools responded (351 of 447)

3678 places identified as being needed:

- 205 requiring breakfast club only
- 821 requiring afterschool club only
- 2652 requiring both breakfast and afterschool club

At several of the meetings there was a discussion about the challenges that this might pose, in particular in relation to children with special educational needs. Some parts of the DfE guidance are unclear, particularly in relation to SEND, and also transport. Parents may expect to have the same SEND support in a childcare setting as they are entitled to in school, and this is unlikely to be available, and is certainly not funded. Headteachers are concerned about safeguarding (including in the settings and when transporting children) and funding of appropriate provision.

The LA is using sufficiency data already gathered, as well as results from the parent survey to create a sufficiency map across the county. They will be listing each schools postcode in one of 3 priority groups.

Priority group one - Areas identified as having no provision either before or after school

and parents are in need (these figures are coming from the parents survey)

Priority group two - Areas where there is some provision but not enough covering both breakfast and afterschool times (high number of requests from parents)

Priority group three - Breakfast and afterschool provision are both in place, but there may be a need to extend the offer until 6 pm or increase the number of places available in the area.

Some funding will be available from May 2024 for schools, PVI providers and childminders to create these additional wraparound childcare places.

The funding will be released depending on the need identified through ECC's extensive sufficiency data analysis and forecasts within the vicinity of primary schools.

Expression of Interest forms closed on Friday 9th February, but there will be further opportunities to bid for funding..

By September 2024 the national roll out of the Wraparound Programme will begin, with it due to end in March 2026.

Whichever capital or revenue funding you are applying for you will need to evidence your business is sustainable. We have designed a business plan and cashflow so you can test your anticipated income and expenditure levels for wraparound.

There will be no ongoing funding for wraparound and therefore you must show a sustainable business model by Year 2.

Parents are expected to pay for wraparound childcare, there is no government funding to subsidise places.

If you are applying for both Wraparound and Early years expansion capital funding you will need to provide the relevant business plan and cashflow that show your business is sustainable.

Useful Links



OFSTED - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guides-for-parents-how-early-years-settings-are-inspected/how-ofsted-inspects-before-and-after-school-care-and-holiday-provision-out-of-school-settings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif/early-years-inspection-handbook-for-ofsted-registered-provision-for-september-2023#part-3>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework-2>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-join-the-childcare-register-cr1>

DFE Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/653a3aa280884d0013f71b8e/National_wraparound_childcare_programme_handbook_a_guide_for_local_authorities.pdf

Tax-free childcare - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-up-to-tax-free-childcare-if-youre-a-childcare-provider>

Any further questions or queries please email: wraparound.childcare@essex.gov.uk



Tax Free Childcare

Offering Tax Free Childcare could result in a 20% saving to parents and carers on their childcare costs. Any Ofsted registered childcare provider can sign up via the government website to create a provider account.

To sign up you should be the main Ofsted contact for your business or school.

A 'delegate' can then manage your account for you during the process. Once you have your 11-digit user ID from your invitation letter you can set up your online account.

3. **ESSEX ACTIVATE**

Members of Active Essex were welcomed to the meetings.

Essex ActivAte is the name for the government/council funded holiday programmes run by Active Essex. During school half term and holidays, we work with a network of locally trusted organisations across the county to deliver free activities and support to eligible young people and families.

Our activity clubs support school aged children (4-16yrs) who are eligible for benefits based free school meals, or from 'low-income' working families, also a small number of other eligible groups.

The name Essex ActivAte sums up the key elements of the programme – provision of activities and nutritious food for children and young people in Essex, aiming to support their physical, mental and social wellbeing through engagement in a wide variety of free activities.

Holiday Activity and Food programme (HAF)

Funded by the DfE, the HAF programme runs during the school holidays, offering physical enrichment and food activities, a nutritious meal and family support. The HAF programme is primarily aimed at children who are eligible for benefit based free school meals and 85% of club spaces are allocated to support young people across Essex and Thurrock. 15% of club spaces are allocated to children who are from low-income working families, who may be vulnerable and/or experience inactivity and social isolation without access to this free support.

ECC's half term programme

Essex County Council recognised a gap in the offer, for those that are on the cusp of being eligible for benefit based free school meals, and decided to fund clubs during the half term holidays. These clubs run in February, May and October. Clubs offer sessions for 2-3 days on average, and spaces are provided for those most in need.

Holiday programmes – if a child is eligible, parents/guardians will be emailed a HolidayActivities voucher code from the school they attend, to book on to a local club. Limited spaces are available for children who are not eligible for benefits-based free school meals; to book on, those families will not receive a voucher code automatically, and they will need to contact a local club directly from the Essex Activate website to book a space.

Half term programme – to book on to a half term club, families will not automatically receive a voucher. They need to book on through the Essex Activate website, a few weeks in advance of each half term. Parents will need to select their area, find what clubs are available, and book a place for their child through the link provided.

<https://www.activeessex.org/children-young-people/essex-activate/>

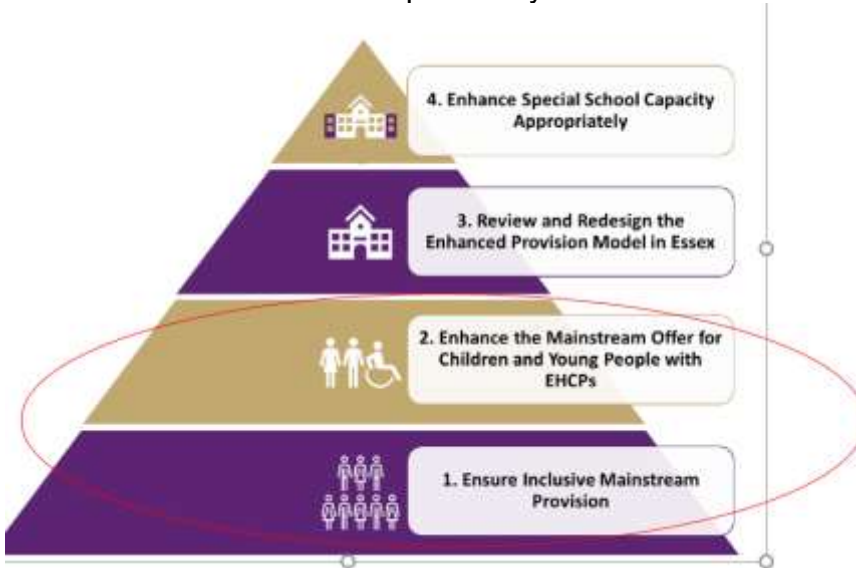
4. ESSET OUTREACH PROGRAMME UPDATE

Emily Welton, ESSET Professional Officer, was welcomed to the meeting. She noted that she had presented to primary headteachers on several occasions, but was pleased to be able to give a positive update about the progress of the ESSET outreach proposal, first discussed in September 2022.

So far, Emily outlined the following actions:

- * Formal ESSET Offer shared with LA October 2023
- * Funding Agreed By LA/Schools Forum
- * ESSET presentation to LA leaders in early December 2023
- * Outreach offer piloted in North East quadrant
- * Outreach included in Send Sufficiency Plan - January 2024

The ESSET outreach offer specifically enhances mainstream inclusion.



Work so far includes:

Development of draft process documents, including Service level Agreements etc designed by ESSET. Draft quality assurance documents and impact criteria also developed.

Last presented to the EPHA Executive in January 2024

ESSET/LA working group meeting on 1 March 2024

There have been a number of challenges, which Emily acknowledged:

- Concerns about the length of time taken to roll-out outreach plan
- Number of other priorities/work streams impact on progress
- No clear process for funding to be transferred to ESSET schools to enable wider roll-out of outreach work
- Numbers of people needing to be involved leading to delays
- Inconsistent roll-out of the special school admission panel
- Ongoing challenging circumstances (staffing etc) in individual special schools

Emily and Ralph Holloway met to discuss concerns on 23 January 2024 and agreed next steps and the need for a clear timeline

- In a follow up email - concerns re: timelines raised at LA SLT meeting w/c 5 February 2024
- A rescheduled meeting is taking place with ralph, strategic leads and quadrant managers on 1 March 2024

- In addition, individual meetings are taking place in March with LA representatives from all 4 quadrants to arrange roll-out in each quadrant
- Follow up re: roll-out of Special School Admission Panel- now rolled out in three of the four quadrants
- Job descriptions and person specifications drafted

Next steps

- Meeting between ESSET and LA working group members on 1 March 2024
- Job adverts to be agreed by ECC and go live
- Meetings with all 4 quadrant reps to agree roll-out process and timeline in their individual areas- March 2024
 - Meeting with EPHA working group reps to finalise quality assurance documents and impact criteria. The four primary headteachers representing colleagues are: Colin Raraty - West quadrant
 - Heidi Blakeley – South quadrant
 - Jinnie Nichols – Mid quadrant
 - Nicky Patrick – North East quadrant
- County-wide roll-out

5. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

West EPHA – Manor Suite, Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Wednesday 12 June 2024

Wednesday 6 November 2024

Wednesday 5 March 2025

Wednesday 18 June 2025

South EPHA – Greenwoods Hotel and Spa, Stock

Thursday 13 June 2024

Thursday 14 November 2024

Thursday 6 March 2025

Thursday 12 June 2025

North East EPHA – Colchester United Football Stadium

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Wednesday 13 November 2024

Wednesday 12 March 2025

Wednesday 11 June 2025

Mid EPHA – The Lion Inn, Boreham

Thursday 20 June 2024

Thursday 7 November 2024

Thursday 13 March 2025

Thursday 19 June 2025

EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 22 March 2024 Chelmsford City Race Course

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 11 October 2024 Colchester Football Stadium

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