

Essex Education Task Force – FAQs

The [Essex Education Task Force](#) is funded by Essex County Council, but independently chaired by Roy Blatchford CBE (former HMI, the founding CEO of the National Education Trust and of www.netacademies.net and the founder of www.blinks.education). It includes members from ECC, Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools, Further Education and the Voluntary and Youth sectors. Schools are represented by their appropriate associations ASHE, EPHA and ESSET and ECC by Clare Kershaw. It was [recently announced that the Task Force will invest £1.5 million](#) in reading and children's mental health, to support children and young people affected by the loss of learning and missed opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Regular updates about the work of the task force will be published here and further information is available on the Task Force website here: <https://www.essexeducationtaskforce.org.uk/>

What is the purpose?

The task force has been established to work with settings, providers and stakeholders, to oversee and address both the short- and long-term impact of Covid-19 on children and young people's education and emotional wellbeing.

What is the budget?

Essex County Council has allocated from its reserves an initial budget of £1.5 million to support recovery and resurgence in the education sector.

How is the budget broken down?

£50K: Pre-school language – professional development.

£75K: Transition coaches: vulnerable students at 16+, moving into FE Colleges.

£100K: to voluntary sector to provide summer and future holiday outdoor learning/residential for most vulnerable students and those with SEND.

£100K: Transition coaches for vulnerable children and those with SEND in Year 6, moving from primary to secondary school. Work is currently being done to refine this activity, more detailed info to be provided

£100K: Leaders and their coaching/well-being.

£160K: Teenage mental health and well-being.

£1 million investment in reading, with a focus on the primary/secondary transition years: Years 6/7. Links to Essex Year of Reading 2022.

£140K: Education Policy Institute research, evaluation, surveys and round-tables over 3 years.

What COVID concerns are identified in education?

- The impact on loss of learning and knowledge, especially with language development
- The widening education divide between those with technology and support, and those without
- The impact on loss of sport, extra-curricular activities and cultural experiences
- The impact on emotional wellbeing, mental and physical health
- The impact on social skills and social connectivity
- The impact of missing out on rites of passage
- The impact on young people's pathways into post 16 and post 18 education, training and employment
- The significant inequity across the education system, magnified for those deemed vulnerable.

What are the aims?

- (i) to minimise the impact of the pandemic on all children and young people as quickly as possible, but with a three to five-year overview of phases of regeneration;
- (ii) to capture and promote current innovation and best practice across the education system in Essex;
- (iii) to question current national approaches to education and system orthodoxies, shaping and demonstrating new 'ways of doing'.

What is the approach?

The Task Force adopts a forward-looking optimism, rooted in hope for young people's futures and a deep belief in education leaders' outstanding achievements over the past twelve months:

<https://blinks.education/royBlatchfordsColumn.php>

https://blinks.education/downloads/Column/2021_03_01.pdf

How does it link with ECC aims?

The task force is funded by but independent of ECC, however, it aims to "capture and promote current innovation and best practice across the education system in Essex." ECC education directorate is represented on the task force by Clare Kershaw

How does it engage with schools?

Primary, secondary and special schools are represented by an elected representative from EPHA, ASHE and ESSET.

How will progress to date be reported?

There are various stakeholders to consider in progress reporting. Roy Blatchford reports quarterly to the Leader of the Council and the Education Policy Institute had been commissioned to evaluate and report on progress over the next 3 years.

The Education Directorate will be kept up to date with progress through the Education Strategic Change Board which currently takes place fortnightly.

ASHE, EPHA , ESSET and FEDEC will use their own networks to ensure progress are being reported regularly T

Members of the Task Force and the sector they represent.

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How can schools engage with the task force?

Schools should engage with the task force through EPHA, ASHE and ESSET. The contacts are as provided in the table above:

EPHA

ASHE

ESSET.

FEDEC

What opportunities are there to challenge the task force decisions?

The task force is independent of ECC so it is free to make its own decisions. ECC will have an opportunity to steer these decisions through Clare Kershaw

Each sector are encouraged to approach their representative with comments and ideas.

How will the impact be gauged?

The Education Policy Institute have been contracted to conduct research, evaluation, surveys and round-tables over the 3 years to inform and gauge impact.