

# Essex schools accessibility strategy 2015 to 2018

Supporting accessibility in Essex schools



Essex County Council



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# Essex County Council – our inclusion vision

Our inclusion vision is:

**To ensure that all children and young people with SEND have a full range of support and opportunities available to them and are provided with opportunities to maximise their life chances, goals and aspirations.**

Our strategy intends to achieve this vision by improving access to education and educational achievement for these children and young people, and empowering them in their families, schools and communities.

This vision is articulated in our priorities that can be found in our policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability, 2014-19, these priorities are:

**Ensure every child with SEND can go to a good or outstanding school or education setting.**

**Commission and deliver a range of high quality provision for all children and young people with SEND.**

**Ensure a smooth progression to adulthood for all young people with SEND.**

**Improve the assessment and identification of SEND across agencies.**

We believe that parents, carers, schools, the local authority, and partners should work together to ensure opportunities for every child and young person to strive for the highest aspirations.

We believe that we must all work towards removing any barriers that may exist to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude child and young people with SEND.

Our three key aims will turn our vision into reality, these aims are:

- 1. To increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum.**
- 2. To improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education.**
- 3. To improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils and their parents/carers through the Essex Local Offer.**

We will realise our vision, priorities and aims by engaging in efficient, appropriate and timely ways with a wide range of groups, agencies and individuals to bring together the best outcomes for children and young people in Essex. This engagement will allow us to best match the needs and requirements with available provision and services. Our engagement will be with parents, carers, schools and children and young people across Essex. A full list of the teams, groups and boards through which our engagement has taken place can be found in the Engagement section of this strategy.

## What inclusion means to you

We asked children and young people about inclusion, equality and the importance of being part of a community. The following is a small sample of the discussions that took place.

### What does inclusion mean to you?

**“Being treated like everyone else and being part of a team, it is a great feeling.”**



**“The teachers will ensure that everyone is participating in class and provide support to those who need it.”**

### What does equality mean to you, and can you think of any examples?

**“When you’re treated right you don’t feel like you have a disability.”**



**“Everyone needs to feel comfortable around other people instead of hiding themselves.”**

**What makes you feel included in school, and in your community?**



**“Without support I would not reach my potential, and we would never discover our talents.”**



**“When I first started swimming in international competitions I was really nervous, so my coach arranged for the whole team to talk about deaf awareness.”**



**“When people play with me I am really happy, I have good friends here and we all play together.”**

# Schools Accessibility Strategy 2015–18

## National background

Improving access to education and educational achievement for disabled pupils is essential to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation in society, access to employment opportunities and inclusion within mainstream education.

The SEN and Disability Act 2001 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 by introducing new duties on local authorities (LA) and schools in relation to disabled pupils and prospective pupils. From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply.

The main duties are not to treat disabled pupils less favourably and to take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Additional provision under the Equality Act 2010 was introduced in September 2012, and relates to the requirement for schools to provide Auxiliary Aids for disabled pupils subject to the Reasonable Adjustment duty.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 introduced the duty to promote disability equality from December 2006. This duty applies to schools and LAs, who have a planning duty to prepare and publish access plans and accessibility strategies in order to increase over time the accessibility of buildings, and access to education and information for disabled pupils. Schools' Access Plans should also consider access to after school activities and extended school activities if they are based on their school site. There is a requirement for maintained schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), academies and free schools to produce an Accessibility Plan.

There is no requirement on an LA to have an accessibility strategy for early years settings (other than in relation to schools maintained by them), and no requirement on early years settings (other than those constituted as schools) to have a published plan to increase access for young disabled children. However, Essex PVI (private, voluntary or independent) settings in Essex are required to have a trained Equality Named Coordinator (ENCo), who uses the Pre-School Learning Alliance 2009 All Together Now scheme. This role leads on meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010; tasks include completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), and supporting access audits.

## The General Duty

This duty requires schools, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010;
- Eliminate harassment of disabled pupils that is related to their disability;
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

The General Duty applies across schools' duties, and applies to disabled pupils, staff and parents/carers, along with other users of the school.

## The Specific Duty

In addition to the General Duty, there is a Specific Duty for schools to demonstrate how they are meeting the General Duty. The main requirement is for schools to prepare and publish a disability equality scheme, involving disabled people in the development of this scheme, and to implement the scheme and report on it. In effect, the General Duty sets out what schools do, with the Specific Duty setting out how schools have to do it and what they need to record as evidence of what they have done.

## Reasonable Adjustment Duty

The Equality Act requires schools and LAs to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage. Reasonable adjustments meet the statutory when they act to prevent disabled pupils being placed at a substantial disadvantage, and when they enable pupils to participate in education and associated services.

When deciding if a reasonable adjustment is necessary, schools need to consider potential impact on disabled pupils in terms of time and effort, inconvenience, indignity and discomfort, loss of opportunity and diminished progress.

## Duties placed on schools

The Equality Act 2010 requires schools to develop and publish an Accessibility Plan that outlines how they will improve the access to education for disabled pupils over time. Further information can be found in Appendix Two.

There are a number of resources available on the Local Offer Website to support schools in making reasonable adjustments:

### **Social and emotional difficulties:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/social-and-emotional-difficulties>

### **Physical and neurological impairment:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/reasonable-adjustments-pni>

### **Visual impairment:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/reasonable-adjustments-visual-impairment-%E2%80%93-advice-education-settings>

### **Learning difficulties and disabilities:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/reasonable-adjustments-learning-difficulties-and-disabilities>

### **Speech, language and communication needs:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/reasonable-adjustments-slc>

### **Autism and social communication difficulties:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/reasonable-adjustments-ascd>

### **Hearing impairment:**

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/advice-education-settings-hi>

## Key documents

### Children and Families Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

### Equality Act 2010

<https://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### Essex policy for Children and Young People with SEND 2014-19

<http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/strategies>

### Essex Diversity & Equalities Strategy 2012-15

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Your-Council/Strategies-Policies/Equality-diversity/Documents/Diversity%20and%20Equality%20Strategy.pdf>

### Special educational needs and disability: a guide for parents and carers:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/344424/Special\\_educational\\_needs\\_and\\_disabilities\\_guide\\_for\\_parents\\_and\\_carers.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/344424/Special_educational_needs_and_disabilities_guide_for_parents_and_carers.pdf)

### SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

## Essex context

In Essex we believe that every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential and that children are best supported to grow and achieve within their own families. Taking into account significant changes in national policy, there is now a focus on collaborative working between schools, partner agencies and the LA through such developments as the Children and Families Act 2014.

Identifying and removing barriers to access and participation must take into account extended services, new ways of working and new approaches to curriculum delivery in and around partnerships of schools, both mainstream and special. Early identification and response to issues arising is paramount, and it is the function of this document to provide an overview of the provision that will ensure that this inclusive strategy is championed throughout our services for children and young people.

In Essex we recognise that early intervention is vital in ensuring positive outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities; this is why we work closely with early years providers and the childcare sector. Each early years setting in Essex must have an appointed SENCO (special educational needs coordinator), and our new 0 to 25 SEND Code of Practice sets out a more individualised response to supporting children throughout this age range. Further information can be found on our Early Years and Childcare website: [dnn.essex.gov.uk/eypc/home.aspx](http://dnn.essex.gov.uk/eypc/home.aspx).

As one of the largest counties in England, Essex supports far more pupils than most localities:

- In Essex we support 28,815 pupils who require additional and specialist support\*
- Our 17 special schools have 2,265 pupils on roll\*
- 26,394 pupils with SEND are supported in mainstream settings\*
- By 2020 Essex will support more than 3,000 pupils with SEN

\*source: School Census 2014

## Access to curriculum

Ensuring access to the curriculum is vital in providing equal opportunities to children and young people with SEND. Considerable progress has been made to improve the accessibility of the curriculum, covering both teaching and learning, as well as Early Years, trips and visits, after school activities and extended school activities.

Schools and educational settings (including Early Years) are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils and play a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for all pupils. Therefore schools are required to have in place an 'Accessibility Plan' that demonstrates what actions the school is taking to increase access to the curriculum, particularly for those pupils with SEND.

The following is considered good practice:

- **Develop effective classroom partnerships** by differentiating the learning objectives and outcomes, ensuring all staff are fully briefed and can adjust the lesson to meet the needs of individual pupils. This partnership should be underpinned by encouraging independence amongst pupils.
- **Develop a whole school approach** that raises the capability of all school staff to assist in the teaching of pupils with SEND in mainstream settings. In particular this approach should focus on ensuring school staff can provide care and support for vulnerable pupils, and know who to speak to find out more.
- **Make SEND a priority** by ensuring there is a member of the governing body, or a sub-committee, with specific oversight arrangements for SEN and disability. This should include regular reviews between the headteacher, SENCO and the governing body on how resources are being allocated and the impact of this allocation.

The Local Authority will assist schools, wherever possible, to establish the above good practice and will provide advice, support and specialist provision to ensure all pupils can access the curriculum.

## Access to environment

Reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure equal access to the environment, including the creation of safe spaces, calming areas, and individual workstations. Since September 2012 there has also been a requirement for educational settings to provide auxiliary aids for disabled pupils subject to the Reasonable Adjustment Duty.

Support services from health, social care and education services are available to advise educational settings about suitable and reasonable adaptations to the inside and outside environment to help include pupils with SEND (specifically those with sensory integration needs).

This advice and guidance includes the following topics:

- Issues of physical space and how to reduce distractions.
- Opportunities to present information visually.
- Providing organisational strategies to complete activities.
- Using visual structures to help with organisation, increase clarity and provide instruction.

The following sections represent a summary of available LA support for each category of environmental access, and what is expected of the school.

### Communication and Interaction

Available local authority support:

- Supporting transition arrangements for children as they move between different phases of education.
- Carrying out specialist assessments and monitoring children's progress.
- Provide on-going advice on how to meet the needs of individual children.
- Provide specialist services to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils attending a mainstream school (see Appendix Three).

Expectations of schools:

- Support pupils' understanding of the spoken word by using visual clues, gestures, illustrations, diagrams and the written word.
- Modify adult language in terms of complexity, vocabulary, utterance, and speed.
- Repeat instructions, and modify the instruction if required.
- Teach strategies to pupils that support self-learning and self-help.
- Identify key vocabulary of the curriculum and teach definitions and cueing sentences.
- Support the organisation of language through visual imagery.
- Provide written information in a straightforward style.
- Ensure that details of homework are given in sufficient time to allow for understanding.
- Support the development of conversational skills and other aspects of social communication.

There are specific responsibilities and support available for pupils with Autistic Spectrum and Communication Disorder, these can be found here <http://www.autism.org.uk/> and here [http://www.deni.gov.uk/asd\\_classroom\\_practice.pdf](http://www.deni.gov.uk/asd_classroom_practice.pdf).

## Learning and development (including behaviour, social and emotional needs)

Available local authority support:

- Assess, monitor and support progress of children as identified as having high needs.
- Provide telephone advice and guidance for schools and parents (see Appendix Three).
- Provide specialist services to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils attending a mainstream school (see Appendix Three).

Expectations of schools:

- When addressing communication needs, avoid asking pupils to read in public unless they are comfortable to do so, instead find an area of strength for them to demonstrate publicly.
- Use a multi-sensory approach during lessons to maximise learning channels.
- Carefully consider presentation of work sheets.
- Provide pupils photocopies of key text to allow for highlighting.
- Regularly place the child in a group where they can contribute knowledge.
- Ensure the work/materials suit the child's mental age, as well as reading age. Learning Support Assistants may be required.
- Ensure adequate reinforcement/consolidation of reading and writing skills to the level of automaticity.
- Use colour and visual clues to support reinforcement.
- Help the pupil organise themselves by developing visual timetables, prompts and structures to support their memory and routines.
- Use alternative methods for recording content, specifically methods that support revision.
- Use positive feedback when marking work, and focus on marking content rather than accuracy, neatness or quantity.

## Sensory/physical

Available local authority support:

- Facilitate peer support for schools and parents to encourage support networks between schools, parents and voluntary agencies.
- Facilitate multi-agency work including health and social care professionals, early intervention teams, sensory specialists and school staff.
- Provide specialist equipment to support learning.

Expectations of schools:

- Ensure that all pupil coat pegs, drawers and furniture are at appropriate heights.
- Sinks, taps and play equipment to be at a suitable height and suitable for pupils with poor motor skills.
- Playground markings to promote appropriate motor planning games and route planning.
- Handrails to be placed adjacent to steps.
- Adjustable height furniture in science and technology rooms.
- Alternative means of access determined to avoid difficult steps.
- Doorways to be wheelchair accessible.

- Fire doors to be suitable and accessible for physically impaired pupils.
- Liaise with health authority staff when considering the height of any toilet aids and equipment that may be required.
- Ensure that any adaptations to toilet areas allow space for a changing bench and suitable storage areas.
- All uneven surfaces on the premises to be monitored and repaired.
- Any obstacles, steps or uneven surfaces that cannot be removed to be clearly marked.
- The tread and riser of steps to be clearly marked with a contrasting colour.

## Visual

Available local authority support:

- The Access Audit is available to schools to advise on how safe it's buildings and general environment are for a pupil with a visual impairment.
- Facilitate peer support for schools and parents to encourage support networks between schools, parents and voluntary agencies.
- Facilitate multi-agency work including health and social care professionals, early intervention teams, sensory specialists and school staff.
- Provide specialist equipment to support learning.

Expectations of schools:

- Improvements can be achieved by increasing the contrast of one object to another, and by ensuring good lighting throughout the school.
- Ensure clear areas of movement throughout the building, including ensuring doors are kept fully open or shut – not ajar.
- Lighting should be kept consistent throughout and without shadow, particularly in corridors.
- All appropriate and uneven surfaces to be supported by handrails.
- Equipment to be stored consistently in the same location, including the pupils' coat peg, drawer and/or locker.

## Hearing

Available local authority support:

- Facilitate peer support for schools and parents to encourage support networks between schools, parents and voluntary agencies.
- Facilitate multi-agency work including health and social care professionals, early intervention teams, sensory specialists and school staff.
- Provide specialist equipment to support learning.

Expectations of schools:

- Appropriate use of soft furnishings, such as curtains, blinds and drapes, can reduce sound reverberation.
- A quiet area to be provided for pupils.
- Staff to use a radio aid or micro-link if appropriate.

- Hearing impaired pupils to sit centrally in order to maximise opportunities for lip reading.
- Absorptive treatment on walls and ceilings of gyms and classrooms.

## Admissions

Available local authority support:

- The LA will ensure all admission arrangements comply with the DfE School Admissions Code.
- The LA will coordinate applications for places at infant, junior, primary and secondary schools as part of the normal admissions rounds.
- Provide clear information to both schools and parents/carers in relation to admissions and pupils with SEND.

Expectations of schools:

- The governing body/academy trust to ensure compliance with admissions law, including determining admission policies and consideration of parental applications.
- To admit every child who is awarded a place, and make suitable arrangements for that child, regardless of that child's needs or support requirements.

## Transport

Available local authority support:

- The LA will provide home to school transport to children who are entitled to it under the law and council policy.
- The LA will work with schools and parents/carers when conducting assessments, and will inform them of the outcomes.
- Children can be referred to the LA for 'travel training' so that they can learn to travel independently.

Expectations of schools:

- To support the LA and parents/carers in the management of pupil behaviour whilst that pupil is on home to school transport.

## Access to information

Essex County Council collects information about the numbers of children and young people in Essex with different types of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as part of the annual school census. This data is used, along with data held by statutory SEN service, to help with planning, and to study trends and monitor the effectiveness of initiatives and interventions for these children and young people.

## Evaluation and review

This Strategy covers the period 2015-18 and will be regularly reviewed by the contributors and revised/updated as required within this time period.

The overall responsibility for this evaluation and review will rest with the Director for Commissioning: Education and Lifelong Learning, with oversight provided by the Head of Equality and Diversity.

School effectiveness visits will include a question regarding the school's accessibility policy and their implementation of the Equality Act 2010.

Ofsted inspectors will discuss with each school how it is meeting statutory requirements and evaluate and report on the impact of the school's actions. This may include a school's accessibility plan as part of the evidence – [Inspecting Equalities: briefing for Section 5 inspection, September 2012, number 090197](#).

This Strategy will be published on the Essex Local Offer website ([www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk)).



## Appendix One: Action Plan 2015-2018

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous discrimination law and provides a single piece of legislation covering all types of discrimination that are unlawful. This plan seeks to address the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to further the aims of our vision statement, and will be delivered alongside the Essex Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2014-19.

### 1. Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the curriculum

This covers teaching and learning and the wider curriculum of the school such as participation in after school clubs, leisure and cultural activities or school visits. It also covers the provision of specialist or auxiliary aids and equipment which may assist these pupils in accessing the curriculum.

Key Aim	Action	Success Criteria	Measure
1	LA will champion access to the curriculum to improve participation and ensure schools provide high quality personalised education where appropriate.	A high level of satisfaction amongst Essex schools (at least 80%) that they receive the advice and support they need from LA practitioners.	This will be collected by feedback from mainstream schools.
2	LA will facilitate the exchange of good practice between special and mainstream schools.	A majority of mainstream schools and special schools (at least 80%) feel that LA activity has facilitated the exchange of good practice.	This will be collected by feedback from mainstream schools and self-evaluation forms by special schools.
3	LA will further develop and maintain the skills of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and appropriate personnel within schools to encourage inclusion.	Information to be received by SIPs and personnel in timely and efficient ways, and this information to support SIPs and personnel to challenge school performance.	Information easily accessible via the Local Offer website and Essex Schools Infolink, and feedback from SIPs and school personnel.
		Reductions on exclusion rates for SEND pupils and attendance rates to improve for SEND pupils.	Data collected by ECC and schools to demonstrate improvements in both categories.

## 2. Improve the physical environment of schools to increase the extent to which disabled pupils can take advantage of education

This covers improvements to the physical environment of the school and physical aids to access education eg enhanced fire alarms systems for pupils with sensory impairment, disabled and allocated parking spaces.

Key Aim	Action	Success Criteria	Measure
1	LA to develop effective and appropriate provision to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people with SEND.	Increased percentage of children and young people with SEND are educated in-county and secure their first choice of mainstream school.	Data collected by the LA and schools to demonstrate improvements on first choice and in-county school admissions.
2	LA to maximise use of funding streams to improve access in mainstream settings for pupils with disabilities.	Increased percentage of pupils with disabilities to be educated in mainstream settings and receiving appropriate support to access these settings.	Data collected by the LA and schools to demonstrate improvements in numbers of pupils with disabilities attending mainstream settings.
3	Individual adaptations are undertaken where appropriate and delivered in a timely and efficient manner.	A high level of satisfaction amongst mainstream settings (80%) that adaptations are made in a timely and efficient manner.	Feedback will be collected from mainstream schools via existing channels.

## 3. Improve the delivery of information to disabled pupils and their parents/carers through the Local Offer and schools

This could include hand-outs, timetables, textbooks, information about the school and school events. This information should be available in various preferred formats within a reasonable timeframe and be provided by individual schools.

Key Aim	Action	Success Criteria	Measure
1	The Local Offer to contain support arrangements, expertise and procedures for providing information in alternative formats.	A process is in place to determine the appropriate use of alternative formats and the information to support this is available on the Local Offer website.	Feedback from schools, parents/carers and practitioners state the arrangements can be easily found and understood on the Local Offer website.
2	LA to seek feedback from children and young people with disabilities and their families on whether information in alternative formats is effective.	A process is in place to ensure gathering of feedback and there is evidence that the LA is acting upon this feedback.	Feedback from stakeholders to indicate that the LA is acting upon feedback and they are aware of the process to submit feedback.
3	LA to be proactive in sharing good practice across educational settings regarding effective alternative formats.	A process is in place for easily capturing and sharing good practice and is used on a regular basis (at least once a term).	Feedback from educational settings to indicate good practice is shared at least month a month.

## Appendix Two: School Accessibility Plan

This section provides an overview of the statutory duty of schools to develop and publish an Accessibility Plan that outlines how the school will improve access to education for disabled pupils over time.

The school's Governing Body holds responsibility for publishing the Accessibility Plan, and as part of a regular review process, schools will need to have regard to the need of providing adequate resources for implementing this plan, and reviewing this plan.

An Accessibility Plan will be deemed satisfactory when:

- It is in writing.
- It covers the following three strands of increasing access over time:
  - Increased access to the curriculum for disabled pupils;
  - Improvements to the physical environment to increase access to education and associated services at the school; and
  - Improvements in the provision of information for disabled pupils where it is provided in writing for pupils who are not disabled.

In addition, an Accessibility Plan should be:

- Adequately resourced;
- Implemented;
- Reviewed regularly;
- Revised as necessary (e.g.: when accommodation improvements or repair and maintenance work are being planned);
- Revised, if necessary, during a three year period and ensure information is reported to parents/ carers annually;
- A free standing document or part of the school development plan; and
- Published in the context of the Equality Act 2010, which can be interpreted as making the school's Accessibility Plan widely and easily available.

Regarding the final point, it is suggested that the school's Accessibility Plan is published on the school website, and hard copies can be provided upon request. The school should be prepared to make available versions of the plan in other, accessible formats to meet the needs of those requesting it, i.e.: parents with English as a foreign language.

## Appendix Three: Supporting Schools and Parents

This section provides an overview of how the local authority and others can support schools and parents in ensuring that all children and young people can access education equally in Essex.

### The Essex Local Offer

Essex County Council and local partners in health, social care, education, the third sector and parents, carers and young people have co-produced a new online resource containing all of the provision and support services available in Essex to children and young people with SEND, their parents and carers, and practitioners and professionals.

Our Local Offer can be found at: [www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk).

### Assessing Individual Need

Adaptations required for individual pupils are established by specialist teachers and other professionals, including health and social care workers if a child has a One Plan or an Education, Health and Care Plan of Special Educational Needs.

Essex County Council has access to a range of specialist advice and support, available to schools and parents. The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service can help provide impartial and confidential support over the telephone, or in person, via telephone on 0333 013 8913 or by email [send.iass@essex.gov.uk](mailto:send.iass@essex.gov.uk).

### Available support

There are a range of advice and guidance services available to schools and parents that may have questions or would like additional advice and support. The following are but a handful, for more please visit the Essex Local Offer website.

In addition further guidance can be found at: <http://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/sen/Provision%20Guidance/Pages/default.aspx>

### Autism and social communication difficulties

**Autism Anglia** provides a range of services to enable people with autism to live as independently as possible.

[www.autism-anglia.org.uk](http://www.autism-anglia.org.uk) / 01206 577678

**The National Autistic Society** has a wealth of knowledge and support on a variety of topics.

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk) / 020 7833 2299

### Speech, language and communication needs

**Every Child a Talker** is part of the Foundation Years support service, offering advice on how to ensure the best start in life for children.

[www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk) / 020 7512 2100

**Talking Point** acts a first stop for information on children's communication for ages 0-17.

[www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk) / 0845 225 4071

## Learning difficulties and disabilities

**Special Needs and Parents** offers a helpline to parents of a child with special educational needs or disability.

[www.snapcharity.org](http://www.snapcharity.org) / 01277 211300

**British Dyslexia Association** provides advice and support to parents, employers, educators and those with dyslexia.

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk) / 0333 405 4555

**Down's Syndrome Association** provides advice and support to those caring for, or living with, down's syndrome.

[www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk) / 0333 1212 300

## Physical and neurological impairments

**Contact a Family** offers information, advice and support for families caring for disabled children.

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk) / 0808 808 3555

**Special Needs and Parents** offers a helpline to parents of a child with special educational needs or disability.

[www.snapcharity.org](http://www.snapcharity.org) / 01277 211300

## Sensory needs

**The National Deaf Children's Society** provides advice and support, as well as facilitating peer support.

[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk) / 0808 800 8880

**Action for Blind People** provides information and advice, as well as offering a roaming club for children of all abilities to take part in.

[www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk) / 0303 123 9999

## Behaviour, social and emotional needs

**Accuro Parenting Project** supports parents of children with a range of disabilities in West Essex.

[www.accuro.org.uk](http://www.accuro.org.uk) / 01279 433117

**Special Needs and Parents** offers a helpline to parents of a child with special educational needs or disability.

[www.snapcharity.org](http://www.snapcharity.org) / 01277 211300

## Cannot find what you're looking for?

If you're unsure where to go, or are seeking general advice and support, you can contact one of the below organisations.

**SEND Information, Advice and Support Service** provided by Essex County Council.

[www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/send-information-advice-and-support-service](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/send-information-advice-and-support-service) / 0333 013 8913

**Education Psychology Service** provided by Essex County Council.

[www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) / 01245 433293

**Education Welfare Service** provided by Essex County Council.

[www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk) / 0845 603 2200

**Specialist Teaching and Preschool Service** provided by Essex County Council.

[www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/send-information-advice-and-support-service](http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/content/send-information-advice-and-support-service)

**Council for Disabled Children** provide a range of support, information, advice and contacts.

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk) / 0207 843 1900

**Families InFocus (Essex)** provide independent advice and support, including mediation and crisis support services.

[www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk](http://www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk) / 01245 353575

This information is issued by  
**Essex County Council, Education and Lifelong Learning.**  
You can contact us in the following ways:

By email:  
**[send.iass@essex.gov.uk](mailto:send.iass@essex.gov.uk)**

Visit our website:  
**[www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Special-Education-Needs/Pages/Parent-Partnership-Service.aspx](http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Special-Education-Needs/Pages/Parent-Partnership-Service.aspx)**

By telephone:  
**0845 743 0430**

By post:  
**Essex County Council, SEND Information, Advice and Support Service,  
PO Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH**

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