



Southend-on-Sea City Council

Unlocking efficiencies and enhanced ways of working to support children and young people with SEND

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Laura Meynell
SEND Services Manager
Southend-on-Sea

Background:

SEND team supporting 1500 EHC plans and growing number of new requests

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team at Southend-on-Sea City Council manages all aspects of the statutory processes related to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans on behalf of the Local Authority.

Currently managing around 1500 EHC plans, the SEND team supports the special educational, health and social care needs of children and young people aged 0 – 25. The team are also supporting an increasing number of new requests for EHC needs assessments from schools and parents.

Challenge:

Ineffective case management system to support EHC Plan processes

In 2018, the SEND team recognised its existing case management system for gathering, maintaining and reviewing information about children and young people's SEN over time was limited in terms of its effectiveness and functionality. According to Laura Meynell, SEND Services Manager at Southend-on-Sea, “We needed something with a broader scope – to improve not just the process of case management of children and young people with SEN and disabilities, but enable all stakeholders – families, schools, education, health and social care professionals – to contribute more effectively to the process of assessing, identifying and meeting needs.”

Solution:

A transparent, accessible, digital portal for all stakeholders with EHC Hub

The team looked at several systems before selecting Idox's EHC Hub. EHC Hub is an innovative digital platform, developed specifically to support the engagement, contributions, and collaboration on EHC assessments, plans, and reviews. By offering complete transparency for families, professionals, and educational settings, the specialist software transforms the way local authorities work with their partners, creating greater efficiencies and productivity for SEND teams.



"We involved those who would be using the EHC Hub directly in the discussion and reviewed together with our in-house data team. What appealed about the system was the transparency it offers, the user-friendly visual style, and the customer-facing portal that we had not had before. We felt the EHC Hub would be a real benefit to parents and settings working with us – enabling us to put greater focus on co-production of an EHC plan", Laura explains.

"We identified many efficiencies in the automation and functionality that would replace manual, repetitive and time-consuming tasks associated with the creation, maintaining and issuing of multiple EHC plans. For the first time, a digital portal would enable education, health and social care professionals to provide advice for a child or young person which directly pre-populates sections of a draft EHC plan," Laura commented. "Families are able to provide their views and the views of their children in the same way. Our teams previously had to manually cut and paste content from multiple reports or documents to create a draft plan".

Idox worked closely with Southend's data team to implement the system within the Local Authority's IT infrastructure and delivered training to ensure a smooth implementation. Idox continues to provide technical support and works collaboratively with the Local Authority to gather feedback from all users to help shape future development.

Outcome:

Significant efficiencies for the SEND team, and transparency for all key stakeholders

EHC Hub has delivered benefits in two key areas. Laura explains, "EHC Hub's functionality and automation has significantly reduced administration time for repetitive tasks, increasing productivity and efficiencies for the team. It has definitely enhanced our ways of working. I don't think we can underestimate the amount of time it has saved. And importantly, the customer-facing portal has helped parents, carers and schools to access their child's records in a way that they never had access before.

"If we just take the simple process for a member of the SEND team of creating letters for each child or young person that we support, attaching them to an email, sending it, printing or posting them – the fact we can do that with one click from within that child's record is so much easier.

"Parents and schools appreciate being able to log in and see exactly what we can see. They can see when a document has been issued, and when advice has been uploaded. It supports collaborative working and we aim to encourage and further support families with EHC Hub user sessions and drop in events to provide more support to them if needed, particularly recognising the diverse nature and needs of the population in Southend.

"It has changed our ways of working – enhanced the processes we already had in place and enabled us to drive digitisation into how we manage and support our children and young people with SEND."

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out more about Idox's EHC Hub.

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