

MAY 2023

# CHILDREN MISSING OR UNABLE TO ATTEND FULL TIME EDUCATION

Joint report by  
Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC)  
and Dorset Special Educational Needs  
and Disabilities Information Advice &  
Support Service (SENDIASS).



# P 1

## **Joint Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) and Dorset SENDIASS report on children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are not currently receiving full time education.**

Following a recent themed meeting, where the high number of children and young people with SEND missing education was raised with the Local Authority, the Director of Education requested a fact-finding exercise by DPCC and Dorset SENDIASS Service to learn more about families' experiences where children and young people are out of education or are only accessing learning part-time.

It has become apparent over recent months that a growing number of parents, carers, children and young people are experiencing various issues and great difficulties with the child or young person's right to access an education (Articles 28 and 29 UNICEF).

In order to produce this report, we ran a short survey over 4 weeks from February 24 to March 24 to gather views and experiences. The survey contained over 20 questions for families, asking about their children's ages, diagnoses and whether or not they had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or were supported by the graduated response in schools, and whether they were accessing appropriate educational provision. The survey asked the families about the impact of the child or young person not having a settled full time education. We also asked what, if anything, could be done to improve their situation.

The survey was held online and was advertised widely by both organisations via social media, DPCC membership, via SEN Provision Leads and other Dorset Council teams as well as through a range of Dorset support group networks.

93 families responded and completed the survey – the results of which are shared below.

# P 2

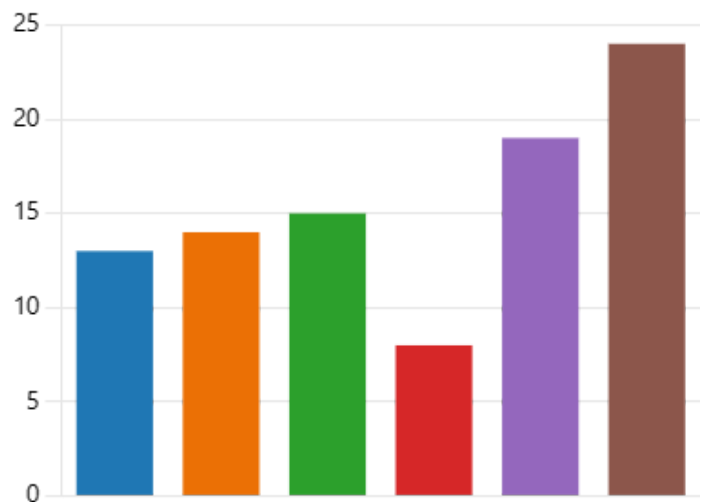
## 1. WHAT AGE IS YOUR CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON?

● 5-7 (KEY STAGE 1)	9
● 8-11 (KEY STAGE 2)	22
● 12-14 (KEY STAGE 3)	38
● 15-16 (KEY STAGE 4)	24

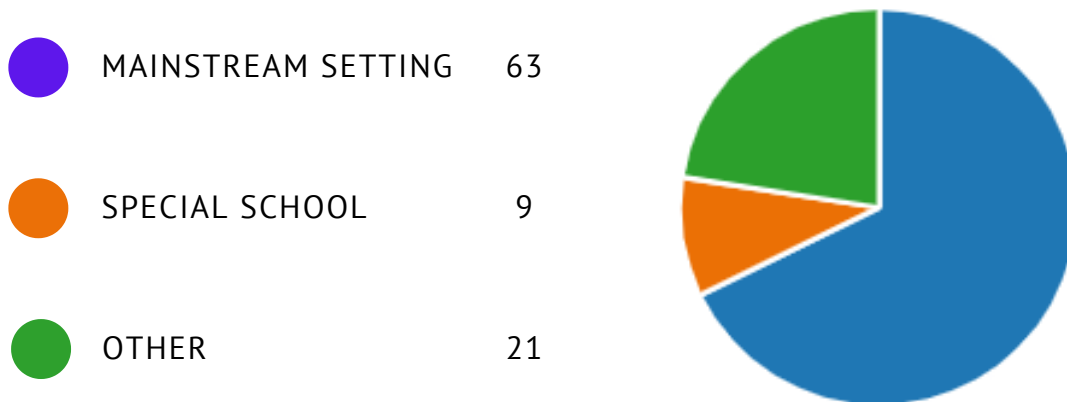


## 2. WHICH LOCALITY DO YOU LIVE IN?

● DORCHESTER	13
● EAST	14
● NORTH	15
● PURBECK	8
● WEST	19
● WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	24



### 3. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION SETTING IS YOUR CHILD ON ROLE WITH?



### 4. RESPONSES TO 'OTHER' IN QUESTION 2

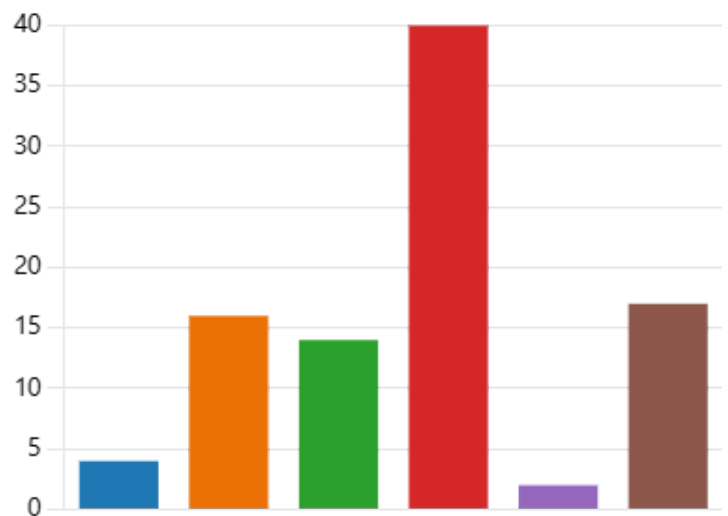
Dual Registration (School and Alternative Provision (AP),  
 Alternative Provision,  
 Home Tutors,  
 Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS),  
 Complex Communication Base in a mainstream school,  
 Elective Home Educated (EHE),  
 Private College for Autism,  
 Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

A total of 6 respondents reported no suitable school place or awaiting school place.

# P 4

## 5. IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN IDENTIFIED SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED OR DIAGNOSED DISABILITY, HOW DID YOU OBTAIN THE ASSESSMENT?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Dorset Development & Behaviour Pathway	4
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	CAMHS	16
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	private assessment	14
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Paediatrician	40
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	Prefer not to say	2
<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	Other	17



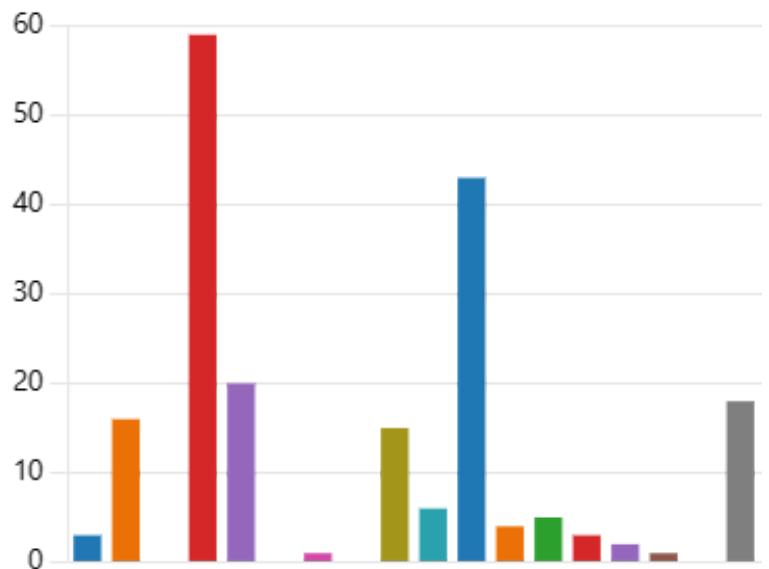
## 6. RESPONSES TO 'OTHER' IN QUESTION 4

Social Care, Local Authority (LA) Statutory Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team, School, Speech and Language, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and Dorset Hospital were all instrumental in the family obtaining an assessment.

2 families reported that they have been waiting 18 and 20 months respectively for an assessment, 3 are on a pathway, but have made no progress, and one respondent said no-one had helped.

## 7. WHAT IS/ARE YOUR CHILD'S DIAGNOSES?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span> diagnosis not sought	3
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> on waiting list for assessment	16
<span style="color: green;">●</span> assessed no diagnosis given	0
<span style="color: red;">●</span> autism	59
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> ADHD	20
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> dyspraxia	1
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> dyscalculia	0
<span style="color: olive;">●</span> sensory processing disorder	15
<span style="color: cyan;">●</span> physical health condition	6
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> anxiety	43
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> mobility impairment	4
<span style="color: green;">●</span> obsessive compulsive disorder	5
<span style="color: red;">●</span> eating disorder	3
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> profound & multiple learning disability	2
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> global development delay	1
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> prefer not to say	0
<span style="color: grey;">●</span> other	18

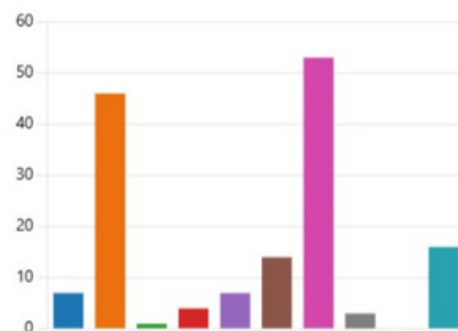


## 8. RESPONSES TO 'OTHER' IN QUESTION 6

'Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Mental Health (MH), Attachment Disorder, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), Selective Mutism, Trauma, Speech and Language Processing Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder and Intellectual Disability

## 9. WHY DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR CHILD IS NOT RECEIVING A FULL TIME EDUCATION?






<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	my child does not have a school place	7
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	my child cannot attend school because school cannot/are not meeting needs.	46
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	I removed my child from school entirely but am unable to provide home education myself	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	my child has a place at a mainstream school - a special school place has been agreed but we are waiting for a space.	4
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	my child is at a special school but is on a part time timetable	7
<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	my child is at a mainstream school but is on a part-time timetable	14
<span style="color: pink;">●</span>	my child cannot attend because of their anxiety levels	53
<span style="color: grey;">●</span>	my child cannot attend because of issues involving school transport	3
<span style="color: olive;">●</span>	prefer not to say	0
<span style="color: cyan;">●</span>	other	16



## 10. RESPONSES TO 'OTHER' IN QUESTION 8

Respondents reported the following as other reasons why their child is not in full time education:  
 Medical Condition, Anxiety and Trauma, Mental Health, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), Elective Home Education (EHE), Dorset Council 'restriction' and no suitable educational place.

## 11. DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE AN EDUCATION HEALTH & CARE PLAN?

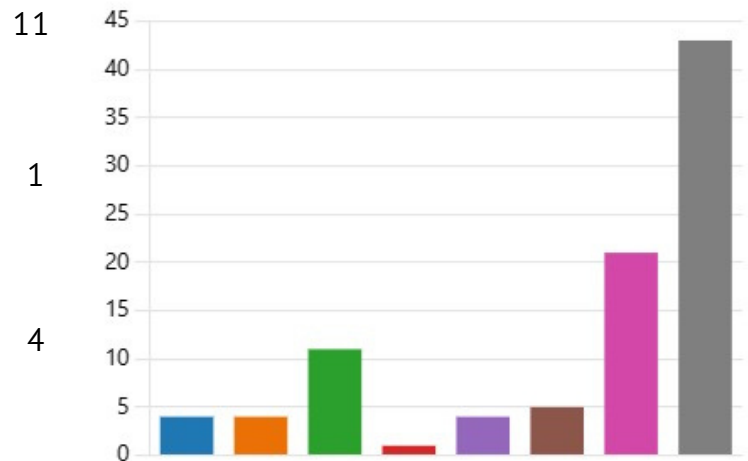
	Yes	47
	No I/school have never applied for a needs assessment	24
	No I/school have applied for a needs assessment which is in progress	14
	No I/school applied for a needs assessment but the application was declined.	7
	Prefer not to say	1





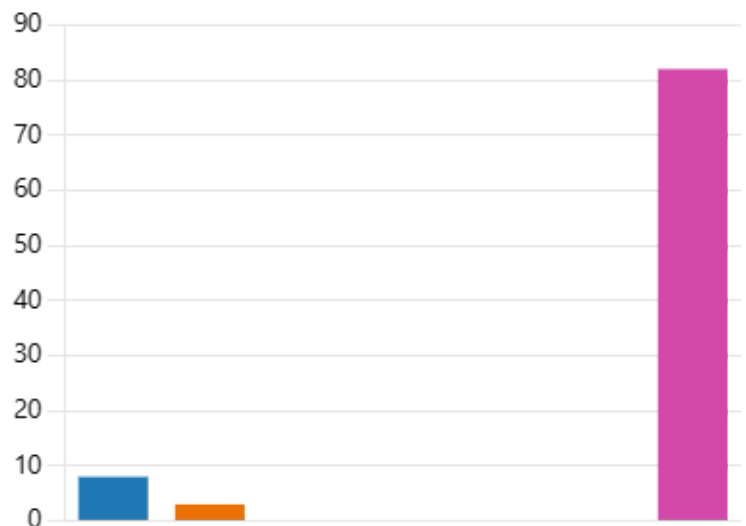
**12. IF YOUR CHILD HAS AN EDUCATION HEALTH & CARE PLAN, HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK IS THE SETTING NAMED IN SECTION 'I' OR THE LOCAL AUTHORITY PROVIDING EDUCATION TO YOUR CHILD?**

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	1 - 5 HOURS	4
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	6 - 10 HOURS	4
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	11 - 15 HOURS	11
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	16 - 20 HOURS	1
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	21 - 25 HOURS	4
<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	26 - 30 HOURS	5
<span style="color: pink;">●</span>	None	21
<span style="color: grey;">●</span>	My child does not have an EHC Plan	43



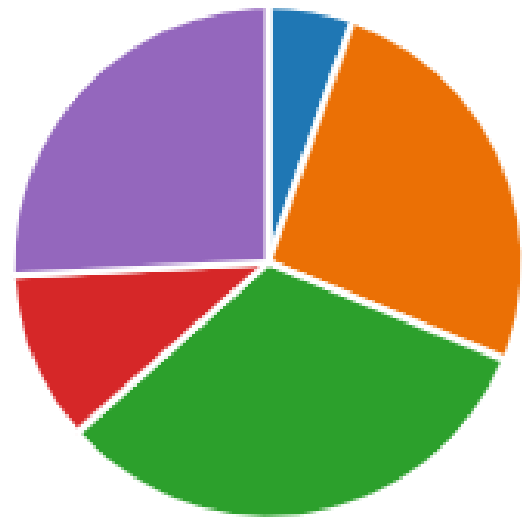
**13. IF YOUR CHILD IS IN A MAINSTREAM SCHOOL AWAITING A SPECIAL SCHOOL PLACE (WITH AN EHC PLAN) HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR CHILD IS ENGAGED IN LEARNING - AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLY BEING SUPERVISED/KEPT SAFE?**

● 1 - 5 HOURS	8
● 6 - 10 HOURS	3
● 11 - 15 HOURS	0
● 16 - 20 HOURS	0
● 21 - 25 HOURS	0
● 26 - 30 HOURS	0
● Not applicable	82



### 14. HOW LONG DO YOU CONSIDER THAT YOUR CHILD HAS NOT RECEIVED A FULL TIME EDUCATION?

● 0 - 1 month	5
● 2 - 6 months	24
● 7 - 18 months	30
● 19 - 24 months	10
● 2 years plus	24



### 15. DO YOU YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY YOUR CHILD'S CURRENT SETTING?

● Yes	24
● NO	38
● mixed experience	31



## 16. RESPONSES TO 'MIXED EXPERIENCE' IN QUESTION 14

Those who selected **mixed experience** in question 13 stated 'great support from AP and their allocated Family Worker' 'some excellent support from some school staff'.

However there were a number of respondents who said they encountered inexperienced and untrained staff who they felt had not provided effective support in some school settings. Comments indicated that some SENCo support is good in schools, but some SEND Leads are not always supportive; some schools give intermittent support and contact; some schools were not in contact at all, even after a child's 4-month absence; one school was trying to be supportive, but said that the setting could not meet needs anymore without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). A very mixed and inconsistent picture overall.

## 17. DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY THE DORSET COUNCIL?

	Yes	8
	No	56
	Mixed experience	29



## 18. RESPONSES TO 'MIXED EXPERIENCE' IN QUESTION 16

Variety of responses to mixed experience in question 16 – good experience with Family Workers, Social Care, Children who are Disabled team (CWAD), but several experiences included difficulty navigating Local Authority processes and procedures to do with special educational needs or disabilities, including Alternative Provision, budgeting and assessments.

Too long time scales for responses and emails from the Local Authority cited and sometimes no response, despite many phone calls etc. Some respondents reported agreement on actions to be made by Local Authority, even at Team Around the Family meetings or mediation were not then implemented, with sometimes no action at all. Leaving families, children/young people feeling left 'high and dry'. Some of the interaction between Local Authority and schools was perceived as oppositional, with the family in the middle trying to mediate.

Locality Teams seem stretched. One respondent felt that the whole SEND landscape was difficult to navigate, and was left feeling deflated, with conflicting opinions often presented to parents or carers.

Overall, SENDIASS was cited as a good support, helping families to understand the landscape and explaining actions and choices to be made.

### 19. WHAT LEVEL OF IMPACT HAS NOT RECEIVING A FULL TIME EDUCATION HAD ON YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

● Minor	6
● Moderate	15
● Significant	68
● Prefer not to say	4



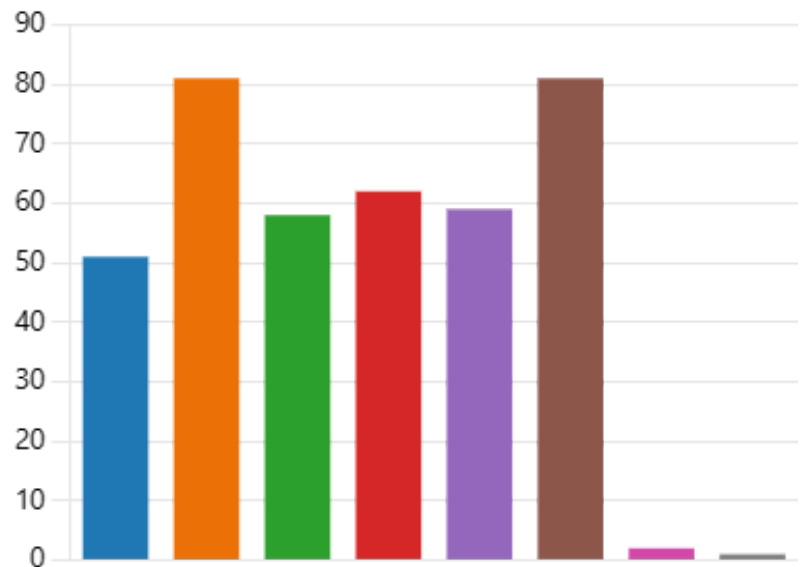
### 20. WHAT LEVEL OF IMPACT HAS NOT RECEIVING A FULL TIME EDUCATION HAD ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ?

● Minor	4
● Moderate	13
● Significant	74
● Prefer not to say	2



## 21. WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOUR CHILD NOT RECEIVING A FULL TIME EDUCATION HAS SIGNIFICANTLY AND NEGATIVELY IMPACTED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS FOR YOU?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Physical health	51
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Mental Health	81
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Relationships	58
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Career	62
<span style="color: purple;">●</span>	Finances	59
<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	General wellbeing	81
<span style="color: pink;">●</span>	prefer not to say	2
<span style="color: grey;">●</span>	Other	1



work and finances husband and dad expertise and threats  
 private education mental health MH pressure suicide  
 parent blaming time mental lot of pressure  
 pressure of school son mental distress options  
 cancer threats of punishment lack massive strain

## 22. IF YOUR CHILD HAS SIBLINGS WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAS BEEN THE IMPACT ON THEM?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Minor	16
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	Moderate	24
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	Significant	41
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Prefer not to say	4



## 23. WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE SITUATION FOR YOUR CHILD?

<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	A mainstream school place where my child's need are met	21
<span style="color: orange;">●</span>	A special school place where my child's need are met	39
<span style="color: green;">●</span>	An appropriate EOTAS (Education Other than at School) package.	45
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Other	14





## 24. FOR THOSE THAT ANSWERED 'OTHER' BELOW ARE SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS PROVIDED:

A school that can meet my child's needs and consistently deliver the EHCP

Consistency across school in delivering the EHCP and more resources to do it

More Alternative Provision that includes choice for young people including Forestry etc.

Transition to Secondary School to be smoother and in a more timely way

Urgent action by the Local Authority around assessment and placement – prompt implementation of amended EHCP after meeting/agreement to change

Apprenticeships/supported internships

Security in placement and just feeling safe

More home tutoring – promptly delivered

A Therapeutic Setting

Intense support at educational placement breakdown

Setting that understands female presentation of Autism

More CAMHS

More Trauma Therapy

More Dorset well-being and socialisation support

A Parent Information site that has FAQs and support tools

A couple of the responses stated – 'Help!' and 'Any education at all'

## A SNAPSHOT OF RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS, CONCERNS AND DESIRES

I am grateful my child is supported through an EOTAS/PB package. It is working brilliantly and allows flexibility to meet fluctuating medical need. Being able to source our own tutor and manage the budget has facilitated consistent day-to-day delivery of their education.

It's involved a huge amount of time and effort by the family to get things put in place.

...some individuals we felt really let down by while others couldn't have been more supportive and done any more for us!

Communication is largely very poor and statutory deadlines are routinely ignored.

...declined access to MH services due to his ASC diagnosis. I am having to regularly convey information between professionals. My Family Worker is amazing but her access to resources is limited and is not a mental health care professional and as such is unsupported in her role.

...my designated LA person has been wonderful with advice and help but I feel like it's a battle between them and the school... and sometimes I feel like the mediator.

Lots of emails going back and forth but not much action.

We felt the mainstream school did an awful lot to try and support but without fully understanding and being trained in the right areas to support we didn't always receive what was needed

School is supportive but intermittent

Desire is...  
For need to be met and assessment treated as urgent and essential, as these children are the adults of the world in 20 years' time

Son hasn't been in school for 4 months and in this time I have received no communication

The school she attends and her teachers and TA are great but they do not have enough resources to help educate my daughter. She spends most of the time in the hall and doesn't engage in class or access the curriculum, and only attends on a reduced timetable. The SEN team at school have been helpful but I feel that sometimes it is not enough and they should have known the process before we went to appeal that outreach should have been contacted.

Fines or worse should not be something we have to worry about when our children cannot go to school due to unmet needs.

Only support has been our Family Worker

To everyone who took time  
to contribute and share  
their views,

*Thank  
You*

