# Oxfordshire parent raises concerns over education support for child with special needs



A parent in Oxfordshire has raised concerns regarding the support provided to her child, who has a neurodevelopmental condition and a mental health condition, following a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. The child, whose identity remains confidential, was enrolled in a mainstream primary school under an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The complaint outlines that the child experienced significant disruptions in their education and missed vital social interactions with peers due to a reduced timetable that was in place from early 2022 until mid-2023.

The local council was made aware of the child's attendance issues in late 2022. As the child was preparing to enter their final year of primary school in September 2023, the school suggested that their educational needs would be better addressed at a different institution, prompting a conversation about transferring to a specialist school. The parent indicated a preference to change schools when the child was due to start secondary education the following year, leading the council to promise that the request for a special placement would be presented to its panel for consideration in September 2024.

Despite plans for alternative learning provisions, such as home-based or off-site education, the school failed to submit the necessary arrangements to the council. Furthermore, the council did not follow up on the school's compliance with these plans. After multiple complaints from the parent, the council ultimately agreed to facilitate the child's transition to a specialist school midway through the school year in February 2024.

In response to the findings of the ombudsman’s report, Oxfordshire County Council has committed to apologising and providing compensation to the parent affected by these educational disruptions. This case is part of an ongoing investigation that covers the period from May 2023 to February 2024, with the parent having lodged additional complaints that fall outside this timeframe.

This situation is in the context of similar experiences faced by families in the region, notably another case where a family received £1,450 in compensation after their child with special educational needs missed four months of schooling. A spokesperson for Oxfordshire County Council commented that the council is dedicated to ensuring that all young people in Oxfordshire receive appropriate education and support, noting that they have agreed to a course of action in coordination with the local government ombudsman regarding this specific case. They also reported that the completion rate for Education, Health and Care Plans within the statutory 20-week timeframe had improved significantly to 57.9% in May 2024, compared to just 4% in January of the same year, while the national average stood at 50.3% in 2023.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/children-and-families/oxfordshire-send-local-offer/resolving-disputes-mediation-complaints-and-appeals/complaints> - This URL supports the process of making complaints about educational services in Oxfordshire, including those related to EHCPs and special educational needs.
* <https://www.lgo.org.uk/decisions/education/alternative-provision/22-012-000> - This URL provides details about a case where the Local Government Ombudsman investigated Oxfordshire County Council for failing to provide alternative education, which is relevant to similar complaints about educational disruptions.
* <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/education-law/394-education-news/52497-council-told-to-pay-over-7k-after-failing-to-provide-alternative-education-for-autistic-boy> - This URL corroborates the context of families in Oxfordshire facing issues with educational provision for children with special needs and the council's obligations to provide suitable education.
* <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/children-and-families/oxfordshire-send-local-offer/education-health-and-care-plans-ehcps> - This URL would provide information on EHCPs in Oxfordshire, supporting the context of children with neurodevelopmental and mental health conditions receiving educational support under these plans.
* <https://www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/what-ehc-plans-are> - This URL explains the general process and purpose of EHCPs, which is relevant to the educational support provided to children with special needs in Oxfordshire.