

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I know this submission is outside of the date for this process but I hope you will review my late email.

In the context of Northern Ireland's ongoing SEN Reform and the wider SEN transformation Programme, I feel it is important to highlight my recent experience with EA Transport as evidence that the system is still failing to meet the needs of the children and families it is designed to support.

I have twin boys aged 9 that both are autistic and non-verbal, they attend the local Special Needs School to us [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. The boys access transport via a bus provided by the EA.

Recently another parent and myself, felt the need to raise concerns following a number of incidents involving another pupil grabbing our kids while exiting the bus at school. Staff were required to intervene to get the pupil off our children when these incidents occurred.

This matter was raised in mid September and is still ongoing the other parent has submitted a formal stage 1 complaint and I myself, am currently waiting on my GDPR request for sight of the incident report involving my son, before I decide on appropriate next steps.

In this situation, the handling of my concerns was, in my view, inadequate, and it became clear that raising issues by telephone alone was ineffective, in terms of a permanent solution. Nothing was progressed and communication was lacking until I followed up in writing. This creates an unnecessary and unfair barrier for parents of children with special educational needs, who already face significant pressures in advocating for their children.

No parent should feel they must repeatedly fight simply to have their concerns acknowledged, nor should any child with special needs be made to feel that they must quietly endure poor treatment or gaps in essential services. Children with additional needs deserve to be treated with the same respect, urgency, and dignity as any other pupil/ peers, and I am disappointed that the current process leaves parents feeling that their voices are being dismissed rather than heard.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]