OUTCOMES MATTER CONSULTING

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL 2023

OVERVIEW

Suffolk County Council had developed their Analysis of Additional Needs Tool (AANT) into a successful SEND tool. Outcomes Matter helped turn growing national interest from Educational Psychologists into an online community where they could connect, learn, and strengthen practice.

How Outcomes Matter Helped Suffolk Turn their AANT into a National EP Community, Building a Collaborative Space for Learning and Sharing

CHALLENGE

As AANT use grew, EPs across local authorities were adapting the tool in different ways, with no shared space to exchange learning or build consistency. Valuable insight was being developed locally but wasn't easily shared beyond individual areas.

At the same time, Suffolk wanted to explore AI and emerging technologies in SEND in a safe, ethical way. The council needed a scalable model that could bring EPs together nationally, build confidence, and support collaborative learning without adding burden to stretched teams.

THE SOLUTION

Over several months, we worked closely with council teams and EPs to:

- **Define the community –** workshops and research identified EP needs: clear content, opportunities to connect and share practice, and thematic support on areas such as Looked After Children and Early Years. The model was designed to scale across multiple local authorities.

- **Design and piloting the platform –** Viva Engage was tested with 11 professionals, focusing on collaboration features, discussion formats, resource sharing, and weekly prompts. AI use cases were explored to support, not replace, professional judgement.

- **Build engagement –** peer discussions, virtual case sessions, and regular prompts encouraged participation, helping EPs reflect on and share how AANT was applied in practice.

- **Prepare for rollout –** welcome materials, FAQs, user guides, thematic schedules, a champion network, and engagement tools created a clear roadmap for scaling the community nationally.

As the community matured, EPs began actively sharing practical experiences and tips from their local contexts, helping peers adapt AANT more effectively.

This peer-to-peer learning not only increased confidence in using the tool but also encouraged experimentation with emerging digital tools and AI, showing how technology could enhance practice while keeping professional judgement central.

The combination of structured guidance and hands-on collaboration helped the community grow quickly, setting the stage for a scalable national model.

THE IMPACT

The Suffolk-led community is already transforming EP practice:

01 **Growing national network –** membership steadily increased, showing clear demand for collaboration.

02 **Stronger professional practice –** EPs gained confidence, broadened perspectives, and faster peer learning.

03 **Early culture change –** professionals are collaborating more, reducing duplication, and building collective capability.

04 **Innovation and AI awareness –** teams developed a clearer understanding of how technology can support SEND practice.

05 **Foundation for scale –** the community is ready to onboard more local authorities and expand platform capabilities.