



Department
for Education

Local authority commissioned special free schools

**An expression of interest form for local
authorities interested in commissioning a
special free school**

October 2016

Overview

Since local authorities play a key role in placing pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, it is important that they shape the range of provision in their area. Previously, proposals to establish special free schools have only been taken forward in consultation with local authorities. **We are now providing a further opportunity for local authorities themselves to identify where a new special free school would benefit their area**, inform their Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), and potentially seek proposals for the new school they want, with the Department for Education (DfE) providing capital funding and start-up grants. This is in addition to the central route for special free schools, which continues to operate.

This **expression of interest (EOI) form is for local authorities that would like a new special school**. It allows them to make a case that a special school would be beneficial in their area, including a case that it would help meet demographic growth, changing patterns of need, and cost pressures, without reducing inclusion. It provides RSCs with the initial information they need to understand what is wanted and why. If the EOI is successful, the opportunity will be advertised nationally, and if a strong proposal comes forward that both the local authority/authorities and the Secretary of State wish to take forward, the DfE will provide capital and start-up grant funding, subject to value for money assessments covering both the affordability of the site solution and the limitations on overall capital availability. Please see the accompanying guidance for further detail.

The form should be completed by a local authority representative (or representatives, if it is a joint bid) with the approval of the Director of Children's Services (DCS).

This opportunity is intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special free schools as a supplement to LA's existing resources. It **does not replace the 'presumption' process nor does it replace a local authority's duties to ensure appropriate placements for all children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**.

You should use this form to provide all the necessary information and evidence for your proposal. Please:

- email your RSC during October to say whether you are interested and give any headline facts available (email addresses are in the guidance)
- return this EOI, completed, to freeschool.special@education.gov.uk copying in your RSC, **by midday on 11 November**.

More detailed information about this process can be found in the [local authority-commissioned special free schools guidance](#).

Section A – Key facts about the school and the local authorities that want to commission it

A1: Who is putting forward this expression of interest?

If this is a joint EOI, please fill in the table below for each LA involved and state the lead LA below. The Regional Schools Commissioner’s team may need to contact these people to understand more about the EOI. **Please note that including a LA on this list means that they have committed to commissioning places.**

Name of LA	Name of person leading	Contact details
<i>London Borough of Redbridge</i>	<div style="background-color: black; width: 200px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>	<div style="background-color: black; width: 200px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 150px; height: 15px;"></div>
<i>[if applicable – name of 2nd LA.</i>	Not applicable	

A2: What type of school is wanted?

Please provide key information about the school you would like to commission:

Category of SEN provision (if more than one type, with different top-up rates, please explain)	SLCN, SEMH, Cognition and Learning, Communication and Interaction
Per-pupil revenue funding you would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain)	████ per place plus █████
Age range	2-7
Gender (boys/girls/co-educational)	Co-educational
Total number of proposed places	64 (includes Early Years provision)
Early years provision? If so, how many places?	16
16-19 provision? If so, how many places?	No
Community use/shared facilities	Joint commissioning of paediatric therapies to provide assessment and support. Community use in specified areas during out of school hours.

Please use this space to expand on any of the key information above [max. 200 words]

The Borough is committed to the principles of inclusion and the development of local infrastructure to increase the local offer for Redbridge children. The number of children and young people in Redbridge schools with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and or a Statement is on an overall upward trajectory with over 200 more children and young people with an EHCP or statement than in 2014. Approximately 1% of Redbridge children attend special schools and a shortfall of over 100 places is predicted over the next 6 years.

There is evidence to suggest the needs of children in special schools in Redbridge are becoming

more complex. There has been significant demographic growth and diversity of population within the borough with an increase in the range of complex needs due to consanguinity amongst populations.

Special schools offering primary and early years provision are operating at capacity, with no further opportunity to expand on site. Significant growth at Hatton Special School has put increased pressure on places. A new 2-7 place Special Free School will support the principles of inclusion and partnership working, complement the local landscape and help address the predicted demand for additional Special School places.

A3: Conversations with partners

Local authorities (in particular smaller ones) **must** speak to their neighbouring LAs to check whether they want to commit to commissioning places at the new school at the specified top-up rate. If they do not, LAs may put in a solo EOI. Authorities **may** speak to other partners in order to ensure that their EOI will complement the local landscape and be a close match for what families want. If you have not engaged with your Schools Forum before sending this EOI to your Regional Schools Commissioner, you will need to do so if successful.

Who?	Conversation summary (3 points max)
Your neighbouring LAs – please specify	Discussed at a cross-border meeting on 8 November with Waltham Forest, Enfield, Havering and Tower Hamlets. The provision is required to meet the predicted local demand in Redbridge.
Optional: Your Parent / Carer Forum, or other representatives of parents and young people	
Optional: Any other partners, Schools forum, existing FE colleges etc (please specify)	Group meetings with Headteachers of local maintained Special Schools.

Section B – The proposed location and site (if applicable)

Please describe where the school would be located and whether a site has been made available/identified. Making a site available on a peppercorn lease gives the greatest chance of the school opening successfully, and on time.

Please include as much detail as possible as this will help your EOI:

- *Address and postcode*
- *Size of site*
- *Current and previous uses including planning designation (if known)*
- *Estimated timescale for formal ratification that the LA will release the site for the school (if agreed)*
- *Estimated date the site would be available for works to commence*
- *Tenure upon which the site will be made available (if agreed)*
- *If applicable, whether the site is co-located with another school etc.*
- *If you do not have a site please provide information on where this school would need to be located as this will ensure the Education Funding Agency (EFA) can look at property in the area should your EOI progress.*

Potential sites to accommodate the proposed provision have been explored and are subject to detailed feasibility and formal approvals and ratification (to be confirmed in January 2017).

Please provide the name and contact details for the main LA contact about the site. The EFA may contact this person to ask questions about the site. **If you know any of these site details before submitting your EOI, please let DfE know (by emailing FreeSchools.EFACAPITAL@education.gov.uk) so we can start conversations with you.**

Please see details above for [REDACTED].

Please tick the box below to confirm that the relevant Lead Member for Corporate Property has seen this expression of interest and is content with the information provided about site (if provided).

I confirm that the Lead Member of Corporate Property at **[London Borough of Redbridge]** has seen this expression of interest and supports it.

Please tick to confirm ✓

Section C – Rationale for School

Please provide an explanation of how and why this provision is required and how it would benefit the local area. [500 words max.]

Please include:

- *How the school will fit into the broader spectrum of SEN provision in the region (including neighbouring LAs if appropriate)*

The proposed Free School will provide provision for children (boys and girls) aged 2-7 with significant special educational needs and disabilities including: social, emotional and mental health (SEMH); speech, language and communication needs (SCLN); cognition and learning and communication and interaction difficulties. The Free School would provide a specialist nursery environment and it is expected that the school would work in partnership with existing Redbridge mainstream and special schools to support inclusion and management of transition at KS2.

Children with severe and complex levels of need are almost always known about by age 2 and many from birth. There is a very effective planning process in Redbridge involving the multi-agency Pre School Liaison Group where children are discussed so that their need for places can be highlighted very early. Hatton Primary and Newbridge special schools in Redbridge are both rated outstanding by Ofsted. The schools are, however, unable to further expand on their existing sites and there is predicted to be increased pressure on reception and early years places at the schools. Redbridge does not currently have assessment nursery provision for young children with emerging complex needs and who would benefit from a period of detailed assessment to ensure educational arrangements at statutory school age maximise potential and opportunity for inclusion.

- *How it would help meet pressures on special educational provision*

Expansion projects have taken place, where possible, at existing maintained special schools offering primary provision with satellite classes for Hatton School established to provide additional places in KS2. There is no scope for further expansion on existing special school sites to accommodate the predicted increases in the number of local children who will require a special primary school place in Redbridge.

Redbridge is a net importer of children with SEN and statements or EHC plans. Based on historical trends, about half the children who move in require a place in a special school and this puts significant pressure on school places at special schools in the locality. Hatton School cohorts have grown considerably in size. For example, the cohort of reception at Hatton in 2011 was 17 and this rose to 31 by Year 4 and the cohort of 17 in reception 2012 increased to 37 by Year 3. In 2014 three additional classrooms were built which enabled 21 children to start in reception but larger cohorts moving through the school has, and will continue to, put pressure on future reception and early years places.

The proposed Free School would create additional places for children aged 2-7 and this, together with KS2 satellite provision, would reduce the local pressure on places in primary

and early years special educational provision in the Borough.

- *The potential impact on inclusion, including (where applicable) types of expert support you would expect the school to provide to mainstream schools in the area*

It is expected that the Free School would work in partnership with Redbridge mainstream and special schools and the Local Authority to support inclusion. It is also expected that the Free School would provide a local offer for assessment within its specialist nursery environment, including an EY/SEN advisory service, EP, SLT/OT.

Section D – Pupil data and existing SEN provision

The purpose of this section is to help us to understand the need for a new school in the context of how existing provision is used, and future expected growth in need. We want to approve EOIs that:

- address demographic growth
- help LAs meet what pupils and parents want
- help LAs manage within their budgetary constraints

We do not want to approve EOIs that have the side-effect of decreasing inclusion in mainstream schools, or of creating excess spare capacity in existing special schools. (eg. if several LAs each want a similar school, any one of those might make sense on its own but in aggregate there might not be enough need.) In this section you need to explain how the places in this school would be filled and where the pupils would come from (D1). You also need to explain the general demographic trends and placement trends for *all* pupils with EHC plans (D2).

D1: Pupils who would go to the new special school

Please indicate how you expect the places in this school to be filled, and the impact on inclusion. [500 words max.]

Please include:

Where the pupils will come from – what is the balance of demographic growth (eg new housing developments) vs changing patterns of need (eg which are the schools the pupils would attend if this school did not go ahead)?

The significant rise in pupil numbers in Redbridge has resulted in a corresponding increase in the number of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Redbridge is a net importer of children with SEN and statements or EHC plans, attracted by the outstanding special schools. This, together with growth from housing development; increased birth rate; higher occupancy of housing; and changing patterns of need, puts significant pressure on places at special schools in the locality.

If the school did not go ahead there would be insufficient places at existing special schools to

accommodate the predicted additional demand. The Local Authority has worked with Redbridge special and mainstream schools to develop KS2 satellite provision to existing special schools on mainstream school sites. Further satellite provision is being explored and would need to be developed, potentially through capital build projects. However, the need for a specialist multi-agency assessment provision for complex needs would not be addressed by satellite provision. There would be an increased need for commissioned outreach services in mainstream schools and nursery settings.

The impact on numbers and proportion of students with SEN at mainstream schools

Data from the January 2016 census shows that about 1.6% of children and young people in mainstream schools have statements or EHC plans. The predicted growth in mainstream schools would include a proportionate increase in the number of students in attendance at a mainstream school with EHC plans.

The predicted deficit in Special School places over the next 6 years is based on a historical pattern of approximately 1%. The proposed provision would reduce the predicted deficit of numbers in Special Schools and would not impact on the proportion of students with SEN at mainstream schools. The role of assessment places would enable more effective and sustained placements across the sector. It is expected that the school would support the vision of the Local Authority and work with the Local Authority and its partners to support inclusion.

How the school would be financially sustainable within budgetary constraints in the long term, including (if applicable) how it would help deliver wider value for money (for example in reducing transport costs).

Redbridge Borough plans to review the high needs block to operate on a traded basis for services that it currently funds centrally, at no extra cost to the schools. Along with the proposed High Needs Funding Reform it is predicted that there should be sufficient funds to fund the new provision.

The assessment nursery provision will ensure educational arrangements at statutory school age maximise potential and opportunity for inclusion. It is planned to review all placements in light of the new provision with a view to reducing high cost placements, such as out of borough.

Hatton School cohorts have grown to accept as many children moving into the area as possible, but some are maintained in their previous placement which can incur significant costs, especially transport. The Free School proposal will open up additional places at Hatton School and potentially reduce transport costs.

D2: Trends in your specialist provision for all children with EHC plans

Please use the table below to describe the recent, current and projected trends of specialist provision that caters for **children with EHC plans living in your LA(s), of the age range for**

which you want the new school (drawing upon [SEN2 Data](#)). If this is a joint bid, ie. other LAs are committed to commissioning places, either fill in the table once for the LAs together, or copy/paste the table and fill it in for each LA (please say which you have done). **The projected data for 2020 should show the pattern you expect if this EOI is successful.**

Information to be included	No. of Settings	Please indicate the no. of pupils with an EHC plan living in your LA who are placed within these settings		
		2012	2016 (as at Sep 2016)	2020
Resourced provision and units inside LA	5	94	147	230
Resourced provision and units outside LA	0	0	0	0
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	4*	413	490	581
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	27	53	65	80
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	0	0	0	0
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	27	71	84	99
Mainstream schools inside LA	72	655	707	763
Mainstream schools outside LA	22	75	53	15
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside LA				
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside LA				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside LA				
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside LA				

*The number of special schools would increase to 5 in 2020

Please provide a brief explanation of any recent trends and the rationale for future projections [200 words max.]

Please include:

anything the RSC should know about why you are expecting the changes you have described from now to 2020

The current and predicted rise in the child population of Redbridge will see a corresponding increase in the numbers of children with special education needs and disabilities requiring special school places and resource provision.

The pre-submission draft of the Local Plan dated 2016 identifies significant new housing development over the next 15 years, and shows a total of 6,848 housing units in phase 1 of the plan (2015-2020).

Redbridge is a net importer of children with SEN and statements or EHC plans and the Borough has continued to see a rise in in-year growth of primary age children which has put significant pressure on special schools offering primary provision.

any changes to capacity you are already expecting (eg. planned expansions / closures / other new schools and how this school would sit alongside those)

Feasibility work is currently being undertaken to increase satellite provision to special schools and this partnership arrangement will continue to further promote inclusion. Primary places provided through satellite provision are small in number and would not address specialist multi-agency assessment provision for complex needs and would therefore be insufficient to cater for the provision requirements in this proposal.

details of any wave 12 free school applications

The application for the expansion of the current outstanding specialist provision (Beacon Communication School), located on Beal High School site would provide additional secondary places and does not impact on this proposal.

Confirmation

I confirm that the Director of Children's Services at **[London Borough of Redbridge]** has seen this expression of interest and supports it.

Please tick to confirm ✓

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)

11th November 2016