



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:

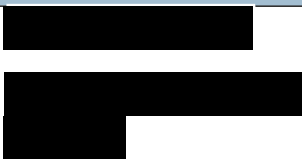
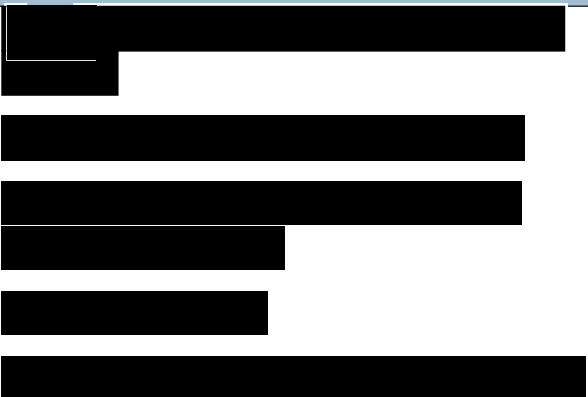
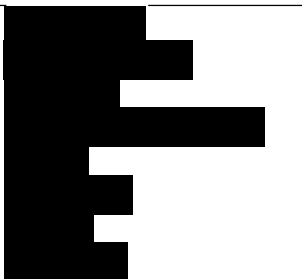
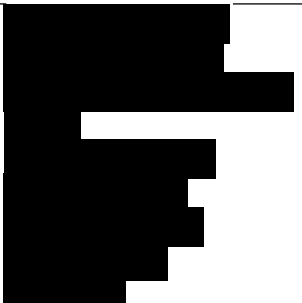
- email your RSC during October to say whether you are interested and give any headline facts available (email addresses are in the guidance)
- return this EOI, completed, to [freeschool.special@education.gov.uk](mailto:freeschool.special@education.gov.uk) copying in your RSC, **by midday on 11 November**.

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
<b>City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council</b>		
Calderdale		Calderdale have expressed an interest formally in commissioning places though unsure about exact numbers at this stage, possibly around 5 residential placements.
Kirklees		Kirklees have formally expressed an interest in commissioning places, They are keen to commission a minimum of 10 and up to 20. They have expressed a desire to work alongside Bradford to support the success of the proposal.

## A2: What type of school is wanted?

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

<b>Category of SEN provision (if more than one type, with different top-up rates, please explain)</b>	Complex High Needs Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
<b>Per-pupil revenue funding you would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain)</b>	<p>█ per place plus top up possibly to range 6 -7 (Bradford's highest need bands)</p> <p>Additional funding will be provided by partners to meet the cost of care and therapeutic services</p>
<b>Age range</b>	10-19 years
<b>Gender (boys/girls/co-educational)</b>	Co Educational
<b>Total number of proposed places</b>	72 school places Of these 12 places would be residential
<b>Early years provision? If so, how many places?</b>	NA
<b>16-19 provision? If so, how many places?</b>	16
<b>Community use/shared facilities</b>	High Needs SEMH Assessment Centre and Practitioner's Regional Centre of Excellence and small Modular Residential Units for 15 children with a capacity to scale-up to deliver in-Patient Services jointly operated by Health and Children's and Adults Social Care and Education.

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

Working with major partners in the district, Bradford Council is keen to develop a new SEMH facility offering holistic whole life services based around excellent education, family care and work-life support with residential facilities.

The aim is to create a flexible, centralised facility which acts as an assessment centre with co-located specialised education, health and care services.

Education, Children and Adult Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) are supportive of the proposal and are willing to reallocate existing resources to support its development and ensure on-going sustainability.

By creating a caring, secure, stimulating and flexible learning environment tailored to the needs of every child we will promote success and achievement, health and well-being, safety and engagement.

Providing personalised therapeutic support will enable children and young people to build the confidence and emotional resilience they need to manage their everyday lives and develop the language, literacy and communication skills necessary to realise their potential in all areas.

The school will prepare young people for adulthood through the teaching of skills and attitudes, enabling them to participate fully and have a meaningful role in society with the foundations to become independent and lifelong learners.

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The school will prepare young people for adulthood through the teaching of skills and attitudes, enabling them to participate fully and have a meaningful role in society with the foundations to become independent and lifelong learners.

## 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	<p>SEMH - Kirklees are keen to commission SEMH day and residential places in Bradford. Calderdale and Barnsley may be interested in commissioning some day places. Leeds is interested in residential provision as their current plans are designed to meet the need for day places only.</p> <p>Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Barnsley are proposing complex high needs through age ASD and are willing to work with neighbouring authorities to locate and operate the facility. Bradford is interested in commissioning more ASD places.</p> <p>Generic SEN – Leeds are interested in creating more generic SEN provision but other Authorities seemed to have less need for this and Bradford operates with generic provision, but does need more places due to growth in demand.</p>
Optional: Your Parent / Carer Forum, or other representatives of parents and young people	<p>The majority of missing persons in Bradford are young people running away from residential facilities so it's vital to engage them in the design and development of facilities they will use.</p> <p>We have excellent links with our Parents Forum and also have a contract with Barnardo's which we will use to engage with parents/carers and children young people to co-produce the design, plan and curriculum for the school.</p> <p>Our SEND and Behaviour Strategic Groups have recently been aligned to form one forum. The group is made up of education, health, care, private and voluntary sector, community groups and the police and have a revised brief which will be highly focused on the strategic delivery of joint services to support children and young people with Education Health and Care (ECH) plans and their families. They will have a prominent role in the development of the SEND strategy in Bradford of which the Free School will be part.</p>

Who?	Conversation summary (3 points max)
<p>Optional: Any other partners, Schools forum, existing FE colleges etc (please specify)</p>	<p>We are currently undertaking a SEND Review across the District. Our data of and gaps in our generic and SEMH provision have been analysed and shared with schools and partner agencies.</p> <p>We have a number of MATs and schools who we understand will bid to set up provision for SEMH though we are not aware of any that will propose a residential school for high tariff children and young people who are at the extreme end of the continuum.</p> <p>The Schools Forum is kept up to date on the need for places and funding around the High Needs Block (HNB). Members of the forum recently allocated revenue to fund 360 additional specialist places over the next 3 years. They are pushing for the Council to ensure best value for money and efficient use of resources in meeting the needs of all SEN pupils and particularly for Children &amp; Young People (C&amp;YP) with low incidence needs that currently have education and care delivered outside of the Bradford District.</p>



## 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:*

- [REDACTED]
- The site is approximately 1.263 Hectares with existing buildings and extensive grounds with mature planting.
- [REDACTED]
- The Local Authority is currently working with EFA property team to acquire this site. Option to purchase agreed in principle with the Red Book valuation awaited subject to confirmation of commissioning places.
- The site could become available from the spring of 2017 with potential works commencing on site before the end of 2017
- The tenure of the site will be based on the standard conditions of the EFA where sites are bought on behalf of a new Free School.
- At this stage there are no plans to co-locate the intended facility with an existing establishment, but the site is large enough to include additional services at a future date.
- The site is located just north of the city centre in the district of Manningham and has good transport link by road and within easy reach of Frizinghall Railway station. The site is very secluded despite sitting within an area of high population.
- [REDACTED]
- The Local Authority has a strong schools capital team with sufficient capacity and experience to deliver this project. With successful delivery experience of BSF, TBN and PSBP the team can quickly liaise with various departments within the Authority and external agents to ensure the project is delivered on time and on budget.

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](mailto:FreeSchools.EFACAPITAL@education.gov.uk)) so we can start conversations with you.**

.....

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 **[INSERT LA NAME]** has seen this expression of interest and supports it. **Not applicable**

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

Under Part 1 of Bradford's SEND Review that commenced in July 2016: 'Ensuring the sufficiency of specialist places in the Bradford District for children and young people with SEND – current and future need', schools, in partnership with the Local Authority, have mapped current provision for SEMH across the District and identified that a gap exists at the far end of the continuum for complex and challenging SEMH children and young people (C&YP)

- The review and data associated with it has highlighted a real need for the expansion of existing provision in the District.
- In May 2016 of the 2,424 statements/EHC plans issued, 409 (17%) of these are for SEMH.
- The number of statements/EHC plans for SEMH has risen by 21% from May 2015 to May 2016, 338 to 409. The highest increase across all our SEND types.
- The percentage of C&YP with statements/EHC plans for SEMH in Bradford are 1.1% higher than the national average and 2.1% higher than our regional neighbours in Yorkshire and Humberside.
- The percentage of C&YP identified at SEN Support for SEMH in Bradford is 19.6% of our school population and equates to 2,784 C&YP. This is 2.3% above the national average.
- Bradford has a graduated continuum of provision (please refer to Appendix 1 for a visualisation of provision) to meet the needs of C&YP with SEMH both at SEN Support and for statemented/EHC plans.
- Bradford Council have a track record of establishing high quality provision and all of the Local Authority's behaviour provision in PRUs (3) and SEMH Special school (1) are judged by Ofsted to be at least good and one PRU is outstanding. We are confident that we have the capacity and expertise to offer support to this exciting venture.
- Bradford Council is nationally recognised for its partnership working with schools. The Behaviour and Achievement Collaboratives (BACs) have a collective responsibility for all C&YP across the District and actively engage with the Council and partners to support the needs of our SEMH population. They recognise the need to extend our provision and will work in partnership to ensure the highest quality of education for vulnerable young people.
- Our partners are clear that sometimes we can provide effective education and sometimes effective care, but it is difficult to consistently achieve both at the same time. Education, health and care are inter-related and inter-dependent and all three must be met to provide the best outcomes for C&YP. Our aim is to combine these consistently in one facility.
- This would be a new model of care designed around a close-working multi agency campus creating a Centre of Excellence for practitioners who will train school staff, parents and other practitioners across the region. Ideally this will be jointly operated by Education, Social Care and Health all year round allowing full use of the facilities and services developed with and for the SEN pupils and families.
- The new facility would offer In-Patient services in Bradford. Our C&YP currently have to travel to York, Sheffield and occasionally further afield.
- By providing a nurturing provision with respite care and an emphasis on preventing family breakdown, we will work with families and pupils to build resilience, life long learning and independence. This is an invest to save initiative to help to avoid unnecessary cost to the public in the future e.g preventing children becoming looked after, reducing dependency on health or sometimes becoming an unnecessarily burden to the police e.g. missing persons escaping residential units who then become involved in crime and antisocial behaviour that could be prevented.
- Within West Yorkshire a facility and service model like this does not exist. Leeds is currently constructing three day-place SEMH facilities which are expected to be filled locally but they would be interested in commissioning residential SEMH places. Kirklees have SEMH pressure on both day and residential places and expressed an interest in commissioning places. Calderdale have a more pressing ASD need but have committed to commission some SEMH places with Bradford. Barnsley are proposing a new ASD facility which Bradford would be interested in commissioning places in. The Local Councils all seem to have a demand for more complex high need places.

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## 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 impact on numbers and proportion of students with SEN at mainstream schools*
- *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)*

- Pupils attending the proposed free school would be those who, due to a lack of provision within District, have to be educated outside of the LA. In addition the school would provide for the needs of pupils who are not placed due to a lack of joint education, health and care placements nationally and those who are in receipt of tuition as they are unable to access the specialist provision Bradford currently provides.
- Bradford has the youngest population in the country and the SEN population in the district is expected to rise by 10% per year for the next 3 years.
- The target SEMH pupils are at the extreme of the continuum and although they may have been in mainstream schools at some point they will now be in specialist SEN or PRU provision.
- Bradford currently have 3 SEMH pupils who are educated in maintained or academy special schools outside of the LA and a further 41 pupils who are educated at independent/non-maintained schools outside of the LA .
- The school will develop post 16 provision to prepare very vulnerable young people to make the transition into adulthood. Bradford's current NEET figures for SEND young people is 251, 19 of whom have SEMH. Currently we have up to 10 post-16 young people placed in secure and independent hospital provision for severe mental health conditions.
- The current cost of out of district placements varies between [REDACTED] per pupil. Actual costs are dependent on individual pupil need.
- The current annual cost of providing out of district placements for SEMH is around [REDACTED] for education alone with additional costs for transport and costs in staff time and travel to monitor and review placements and plans.
- The budget for the education aspect of the provision will come from the High Needs Block, and is that which currently funds out of authority places. It is anticipated that the cost of education will reduce over time.
- Our vision for the free school is that it develops as a hub of excellence and is able to offer consultation, access to therapy and support to our existing specialist provision and mainstream schools to enable them to intervene early to meet the needs of pupils beginning to exhibit SEMH and to promote to the wider inclusion of this group of pupils within mainstream schools across the district.
- Bradford has a relatively small number of pupils with increasingly complex needs who are placed outside of the Authority for residential care and education e.g. three pupils are currently placed in Birmingham at a cost of [REDACTED] per year. Ideally we would like to return these C&YP to their home district which benefits the pupils and families as well as make significant cost savings for the Council.
- Parents and C&YP's preference is for placements in the district. This enables more focused family support and better longer-term outcomes for the C&YP.
- We expect the cost of the placements to be close to Bradford's highest needs band 7, which would attract an additional [REDACTED] per year.
- The cost of places will be met by partners through agreement at the Joint Resources Panel (co-chaired by Education, Health and Social Care, which meets weekly). We expect around 40% of costs to be therapeutic, which will be funded by health, and the residential element by social care.
- Of the 360 places needed over the next 3 years the new facility will draw some C&YP from existing SEN provision and PRU placements to free up some places within existing facilities. As many as possible out of district placements will be returned to the District.
- The cost of transport for C&YP, families, staff and professionals visiting C&YP out of District will reduce significantly.

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- The current cost of out of district placements varies between £23k and £100k per pupil. Actual costs are dependent on individual pupil need.
- The current annual cost of providing out of district placements for SEMH is around £2.5m for education alone with additional costs for transport and costs in staff time and travel to monitor and review placements and plans.
- The budget for the education aspect of the provision will come from the High Needs Block, and is that which currently funds out of authority places. It is anticipated that the cost of education will reduce over time.
- Our vision for the free school is that it develops as a hub of excellence and is able to offer consultation, access to therapy and support to our existing specialist provision and mainstream schools to enable them to intervene early to meet the needs of pupils beginning to exhibit SEMH and to promote to the wider inclusion of this group of pupils within mainstream schools across the district.
- Bradford has a relatively small number of pupils with increasingly complex needs who are placed outside of the Authority for residential care and education e.g. three pupils are currently placed in Birmingham at a cost of £1.5million per year. Ideally we would like to return these C&YP to their home district which benefits the pupils and families as well as make significant cost savings for the Council.
- Parents and C&YP's preference is for placements in the district. This enables more focused family support and better longer-term outcomes for the C&YP.
- We expect the cost of the placements to be close to Bradford's highest needs band 7, which would attract an additional £22k per year.
- The cost of places will be met by partners through agreement at the Joint Resources Panel (co-chaired by Education, Health and Social Care, which meets weekly). We expect around 40% of costs to be therapeutic, which will be funded by health, and the residential element by social care.
- Of the 360 places needed over the next 3 years the new facility will draw some C&YP from existing SEN provision and PRU placements to free up some places within existing facilities. As many as possible out of district placements will be returned to the District.
- The cost of transport for C&YP, families, staff and professionals visiting C&YP out of District will reduce significantly.



## 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.**

	No. of Settings	Please indicate the no. of pupils with an EHC plan living in your LA who are placed within these settings (SEMh)		
		2012	2016 (as at Sep 2016)	2020 (forecast)
Resourced provision and units inside LA	15	0	0	20
Resourced provision and units outside LA	0	0	0	0
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	8	0	84	200
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	9	2	3	7
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	1	0	0	0
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	27	24	41	12
Mainstream schools inside LA	216	162	269	300
Mainstream schools outside LA	33	17	6	10
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside LA	2	14	36	39
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside LA	12	6	19	20
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside LA	0	0	0	0
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside LA	10	1	3	3

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
- any changes to capacity you are already expecting (eg. planned expansions / closures / other new schools and how this school would sit alongside those)
- details of any wave 12 free school applications

The Authority has an approved Core Strategy proposal that includes up to 42,000 new homes to be built within the District over the next 15 years. This will inevitably result in additional demand for places due to population growth from the additional homes. In addition Bradford District is also experiencing a net increase in population growth through inward migration much of which includes English as a second language.

All the Council's existing SEN schools are currently at capacity. Some have taken additional pupils to help meet some of the pressure on places. So far increases have been accommodated within existing facilities without the need for capital work, but this is not sustainable and further investment is needed.

The most recent round of free schools approvals provided for 2 new 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges and a new secondary school. There were no SEN facilities approved and we are not aware of any new SEN free school proposals.

The Council is undertaking a major SEND review and the information in our proposal comes directly from this piece of work, which is almost complete.

## Confirmation

I confirm that the Director of Children's Services at **City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council** has seen this expression of interest and supports it. ✓

Please tick to confirm

Date 10.11.16	
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