



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
<p><i>Lead LA: [name] (The LA in which the school would be located)</i></p> <p>London Borough of Havering</p>		
<p><i>[if applicable – name of 2nd LA. Please add rows for additional LAs who have committed to commissioning places.]</i></p>		

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)	Communication and Interaction Needs SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health)
Per-pupil revenue funding you would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain)	████ per place plus additional high needs top up as agreed as part of individual pupil EHC plan where appropriate £[x]
Age range	3-16
Gender (boys/girls/co-educational)	Co-educational
Total number of proposed places	60
Early years provision? If so, how many places?	8 places
16-19 provision? If so, how many places?	None
Community use/shared facilities	Potential use by short break providers within Havering as a base for evening week end activities including school holidays for children and young people with disabilities.

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

Havering has seen a 46% increase in the number of pupils with a statement or EHC plan over the last three years. The number of children aged 0-5 who have been referred to the 0-5 CAD (Children and Adults Disabilities) team has increased significantly over the last three years - 372 children in 2015, up from 164 in 2014 and 138 in 2013. More than 70% of all referrals to CAD 0-5 are for support with communication and interaction problems. The total number of pupils with statements or EHC plans attending mainstream primary and secondary schools is projected to increase from 639 in 2015/16 to 771 in 2020/21 (21% increase). The growth in children with complex Communication and Interaction and SEMH needs in Havering over the same period is projected to be 20%. Havering seeks to meet the needs of pupils with special needs in their local mainstream schools. For children whose needs cannot be met in their local school there are three primary and three secondary schools with Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) or targeted additional funding; each with a particular specialism - hearing impairment (x2), language difficulties (x2), and ASD (x2) . For children with more complex needs, Havering has three special schools. However these are not sufficient to meet the growing demand for pupils with Communication and Interaction, Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The new school will be a key component in ensuring that there are sufficient places to meet demographic growth as well as to enable pupils who may have previously been educated in independent and out of borough provision to have their needs met locally.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At a meeting with other North East London boroughs on 8 November 2016, the Local authority commissioned special free schools EOI was discussed. We stated the intention to submit an EOI and said that any school established through this process would be to meet the needs of Havering pupils. None of the other North East London boroughs expressed an interest in commissioning places from the Havering special school proposed through this process. An email was sent to neighbouring boroughs on 31 October 2016 stating our intention to submit an EOI and any school established through this process would be to meet the needs of Havering pupils. No one expressed an interest in commissioning places from the Havering special school proposed through this process.

Who?	Conversation summary (3 points max)
Optional: Your Parent / Carer Forum, or other representatives of parents and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have held a number of themed discussions with our parent forum and consistently they have shared concerns about the level of provision for children with complex needs especially in the area of social interaction and autism. • It is our intention to involve parents, children and young people in the discussions with potential providers to help formulate the detail of future provision.
Optional: Any other partners, Schools forum, existing FE colleges etc (please specify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special School Heads and Governors meeting agreed that an additional provision for this cohort of need was needed. • Schools and other stakeholders were consulted in the development of the SEND strategy and this identified a significant gap in provision for children with ASD and behavioural challenges.

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 :* [REDACTED]
- *Size of site :* 0.6 acres
- *Current and previous uses including planning designation (if known)*

Youth & Community functions

- *Estimated timescale for formal ratification that the LA will release the site for the school (if agreed)*

Leased to [REDACTED] on a 2year lease expiring 1/9/2018, with a Landlords break any time after 1/9/2017 with one month's notice.

- *Estimated date the site would be available for works to commence*

September 2017 depending on whether the new build for the PRS will be ready by then

- *Tenure upon which the site will be made available (if agreed)*

Peppercorn lease

- *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.*

If the [REDACTED] is not suitable or available on time the Local Authority will engage in discussion with one of our secondary schools to co-locate the new special school.

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.**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[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 Havering 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)*
- *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*

London Borough of Havering has seen a considerable increase in its population over the past ten years or so, particularly, the population of young people - an increasing proportion of whom have special educational needs and disabilities. Havering is aspirational for all of its children and young people with SEND which is set out in its pre- and post-16 SEND Strategies. The vision for all children and young people is that they will successfully transition into adulthood having maximised their potential through having clear outcomes defined in their education and a plan including work, training and realistic achievable aspirations for their futures.

As set out in section D, there is a strong case for increasing local school capacity in order to deal with the growth in the number of children and young people with SEN and complex needs, particularly the disproportionate growth in the number of pupils identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and challenging behaviours.

This increasing demand is compounded by the absence of any specialist provision for its children and young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). Historically, this has been dealt with by using out-borough placements, however, the current and predicted rates of permanent exclusions from schools suggest that additional places for this group of children and young people in both the primary and secondary sector, is a matter of priority, requiring urgent action.

We continue to develop Additionally Resourced Provisions in our mainstream schools but are struggling to meet current demand. Our three existing special schools, are at capacity and are already coping with increasingly complex levels need in their intakes, particularly in lower age groups (3 years +). Currently, many of these children and young people end up being educated out of borough at expensive independent and non-maintained provision. This is adding additional pressure on an already overstretched SEND budget.

Numerous consultations with parents, and children and young people, have told us that families would rather that there is local provision available as part of Havering's Local Offer. This echoes Havering's vision that children can grow up in, and remain, part of their local community. For this reason, we have just opened a new post-16 provision which meets a gap in current local delivery for those with moderate to severe learning difficulties and disabilities. In addition by creating local provision we would also maintain the link to local health services, often when a young person is placed out of borough the access to health support can vary, and can often be expensive further compounding the pressures on the budget.

A special school focussed on the needs of children and young people aged 3-16 years, would enable us to meet the needs of young people with a range of challenging behaviours in a safe and aspirational environment, where they can grow and develop into contributing members of their community. The new specialist school could also help mainstream schools with ARPs to develop their practice and upskill their staff in order to meet the needs of this growing population.

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. (e.g. 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)*

Havering has a vision to develop the aspirations of all its children and young people and the SEND Strategy embraces this ambitious aim. The growth in numbers of young people with SEND is already being tackled in part by the development of both additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) in mainstream schools and of a brand new provision, focussed on the four pathways to adulthood, for 16-25 year olds.

Havering is projecting an increase in the number of pupils with statements or EHC plans with Communication and Interaction needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Havering has three special schools, one designated for children with severe learning disability and two for moderate learning disability. Havering has no special school supporting pupils with Communication and Interaction and Social, Emotional and Mental Health issues.

The council currently have 78 children attending special schools out of the borough which adds pressure to the Council's High Needs Budget. The intention would be to bring some of these children back into Havering where it is appropriate to do so. Some of these children are in foster placements or residential setting due to social care issues and therefore having appropriate schooling is only part of the provision necessary to support these children. Havering wants to offer the right provision so that children can remain in, and grow up to be part of, their local community.

A new school, meeting the needs of these children, would help take the pressure off other schools and provide a specialist facility for those with higher levels of need. This would enable the new school to tailor its curriculum to meet those needs and prepare young people for moving into Havering's post-16 provision and onto a positive and inclusive adult life.

Alongside our strategy of developing more local provision we are also working to increase the number of local social care options to support these children with complex needs.

It is our view that having local provision will avoid children having to leave the borough in the future and will reduce our spend on both our social care and transport budgets.

Havering, in common with the many other London Boroughs and urban areas is currently experiencing a rising population, particularly in the younger age groups. This increase in population is due to rising birth rates in Havering and families moving into the borough from other parts of London, the UK and abroad. Between 2002 and 2015 the number of births increased in Havering by 45%. Havering also has a number of major housing regeneration schemes approved. Rainham Housing Zone is due to deliver over 3500 new homes and the Romford Framework Delivery is due to deliver over 3300 new homes. There has also been recently announced a Housing Estate regeneration scheme that will deliver circa 2000 new homes. This major housing growth coupled with Havering's continuing rising birth rate means that we expect the demand for school places – including SEN school places- to continue to increase.

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		
		2012	2016 (as at Sep 2016)	2020
Resourced provision and units inside LA	3	25	12	20
Resourced provision and units outside LA	6	6	6	0
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	3	229	253	337
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	15	18	25	20
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	0	2	0	0
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	9	42	25	10
Mainstream schools inside LA	77	280	637	750
Mainstream schools outside LA	22	44	28	20
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				

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 : **None***

Havering, like other boroughs, is seeing an increase in the number of children with complex needs and behaviours. This presents issues for education provision but also for families; and an extended support network is required to provide a consistent approach to support the child and their family.

The intention for the future special school would be to provide extended hours, outreach work into home settings where necessary, and advice and guidance to support families to enable the best outcomes for children and young people. The school would offer short term assessment places and act as a centre of excellence in the management of children with complex needs, offering advice to our other provisions, including our additionally resourced provisions in mainstream schools. The school could also offer a small overnight facility for 3-4 children which could be used to offer short breaks.

In developing the council's approach to SEND provision, significant consultation with children, young people and parents has taken place. Parents have made a clear preference for specialist provision, particularly for those children with more complex needs. They have said they want SEN-specialist staff, a personalised curriculum but with opportunities for group teaching so that children can develop friendship groups and social skills, and that specialist provision can help to keep more vulnerable children safe.

Confirmation

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

Please tick to confirm ✓

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	10/11/2016
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