



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>Hampshire County Council</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
<p><i>[if applicable – name of 2nd LA. Please add rows for additional LAs who have committed to commissioning places.]</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</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)	SCN/ASD
Per-pupil revenue funding you would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain)	████ per place plus top-up funding, payable by the commissioning LA, according to the current Hampshire County Council top-up funding framework. Current funding framework recognises the characteristics of the pupils' level of needs and the characteristics (i.e. size) of the school.
Age range	4-16
Gender (boys/girls/co-educational)	Co-educational
Total number of proposed places	125
Early years provision? If so, how many places?	N/A
16-19 provision? If so, how many places?	N/A
Community use/shared facilities	N/A

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

The identified site for this new school has been assessed against BB104 and whilst slightly undersized we believe a workable building solution can be delivered whilst retaining sufficient outdoor space.

Full support for this proposal has been agreed by the Leader of the County Council and the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

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	All neighbouring LAs have been contacted and proposals shared: West Sussex, Surrey, Southampton, Portsmouth, Dorset, Wiltshire, West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Poole, Bournemouth, Wokingham, Reading, Windsor and Maidenhead, .
Optional: Your Parent / Carer Forum, or other representatives of parents and young people	I confirm that these groups have been notified.
Optional: Any other partners, Schools forum, existing FE colleges etc (please specify)	Other partners informed: All Hampshire schools, all Members, local MPs, Schools Forum and Governors Forum.

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* 1.979ha (excluding former Children's Centre site)
- *Current and previous uses including planning designation (if known)* The building and site was previously [REDACTED] which closed in July 2010. The use class is D1 non-residential institution. The school building is currently leased to [REDACTED] and a pre-school. There is a former Children's Centre on site into which the pre-school, who also offer SEN provision, will be relocated.
- *Estimated timescale for formal ratification that the LA will release the site for the school (if agreed)* Due to the fact that the site is in county council ownership this could happen as soon as this free school decision is made.
- *Estimated date the site would be available for works to commence* As soon as possible.
- *Tenure upon which the site will be made available (if agreed)* Standard 125 year lease
- *If applicable, whether the site is co-located with another school etc.* The site is not co-located but will be adjacent to a pre-school.
- *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.*

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]

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 **Hampshire County Council** 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*

Existing special schools in Hampshire have a good reputation for the quality of educational provision they make for the pupils with the most severe long term and complex special educational needs. The local authority has carefully considered the viability of expanding these existing special schools, but it has become apparent through analysis of data that the changing profile of the special school population indicates a different approach to benefit all special needs pupils is now needed. Detailed analysis of current availability of special school places for the children and young people of Hampshire shows that three new special schools will greatly benefit children accessing special places across the area.

In tandem with our own special provision, we have built effective working relationships with special schools in the independent and non maintained sector and it is our intention to further strengthen this relationship through stronger and more robust procurement routes with these providers. This will enable the local authority to maintain its access to a wide range of bespoke and highly individualised educational options for Hampshire children who require the most specialised level of provision.

To complement the current available provision, it would benefit the families of Hampshire if we were able to provide specialist provision with a different primary focus than our existing special schools. To that end we would propose that one new school is built to meet the needs of the growing number of children who are presenting with social communication needs (SCN), often but not exclusively linked to autistic spectrum disorders or conditions. Analysis of requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessments in the last two years shows a 60% increase in the number of requests where autistic spectrum disorder is cited as the primary need. This is often manifested by severe anxiety and social isolation.

The provision of a special school for children aged 4-16 exhibiting social communication difficulties would enable these vulnerable children to be able to access education in a safe and familiar environment thus alleviating levels of anxiety and enabling learning to take place. By providing an

'all through' special school, the heightened levels of anxiety caused by transition at the end of key stage 2 would be obviated for these vulnerable pupils. Currently children with this type of special educational need are attending special schools for children with learning difficulties, or mainstream schools, neither of which are ideally suited to the particular needs of this cohort of children. This will help reduce the number of children with SEN we are currently placing in independent and non-maintained schools, and also reduce the number of pupils who are currently placed, sometimes inappropriately, in mainstream schools who can find it a challenge to properly meet the children's special educational needs. Projected figures reflecting proposed housing developments and population growth indicate that the pressure on having sufficient specialist spaces available in Hampshire for these children will continue to increase.

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 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)*

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

District and Ward level forecasting of primary and secondary phase pupils with SCN/ASD has highlighted an area of growth in Hampshire, operating alongside an insufficient level of provision for

this particular type of need. Hampshire has no special schools of this type. Pupils who require a special school place attend other special schools in the county which are not meeting their primary need, and all of which are under considerable pressure. All 24 county wide places are provided in 2 secondary resourced provisions. Forecasts show a combined shortfall of 448 places in 1516 which is forecast to increase to 474 by 2021. A new all through SCN/ASD provision with 50 primary and 75 secondary places will help accommodate a large proportion of the growth over the next 5 years. The county council would envisage new provision being delivered by 2020/2021.

	Forecast		Places		Shortfall	
	1516	2021	1516	2021	1516	2021
Pri	295	306	0	0	-295	-306
Sec	177	192	24	24	-153	-168
All	472	498	24	24	-448	-474

The free special school would be financially sustainable as it is required based on forecast pupil number growth. In terms of delivering value for money, it would obviously increase the overall capacity of SEN places in Hampshire, which may result in a reduced need to send pupils to out of county independent or non-maintained special schools – which usually comes at a much higher cost. It will also reduce transport costs by providing local places for existing pupils which are currently travelling large distances to attend a suitable specialist provision.

One of the priorities for Hampshire’s SEND strategy is to ‘Strengthen Inclusion in Mainstream Settings’. The new special school would not be a mechanism to decrease inclusion in our mainstream schools. We are committed to ensuring that whenever possible and appropriate Hampshire children are enabled to attend their local school in their local community. The new school would help ease the current and projected future pressure on special school places, as highlighted in the data above. In common with our existing special schools there would be an expectation that the new school would offer outreach support to mainstream schools in order to develop the mainstream schools’ skills and widen their repertoire of interventions to ensure pupils can remain in a mainstream setting wherever possible. There would also be a focus on re-integration, so that there would be a clear articulated outcome for pupils being placed in the special school that they would be transferred into their local mainstream school as soon as this was viable, with careful and co-ordinated transition planning between the schools and the families concerned.

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.**

	ASD/SCN	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	2	61	45	50
Resourced provision and units outside LA	?	-	-	-
Special schools (either maintained or academies) inside LA	0 **	136	218	233
Special schools (either maintained or academies) outside LA	?	-	-	-
Independent / non-maintained special schools inside LA	?	-	-	-
Independent / non-maintained special schools outside LA	?	-	-	-
Mainstream schools inside LA	498	119	206	216
Mainstream schools outside LA	?	-	-	-
General FE colleges (if relevant) inside LA	N/A	-	-	-
General FE colleges (if relevant) outside LA	N/A	-	-	-
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) inside LA	N/A	-	-	-
Specialist FE providers (if relevant) outside LA	N/A	-	-	-

**Hampshire currently has no special school provision for this need type, the numbers in this row show children with the appropriate need who attend a special school with a different designation

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

Hampshire – Area Growth

	No of Households	No of 0-10 pupils
1991	444,000	165,500
2001	516,300	168,600
2011	563,600	165,600
2021	621,100	181,500

Hampshire is forecast to grow by 57,500 homes since the 2011 census, with corresponding growth in the same period in pupil numbers of 15,900 for the 0-10 age range. Primary aged child numbers in the underlying population began to grow in 2008, and are predicted to continue.

The Wave Free school application was made in September 2016. In our view this has been poorly constructed and is not supported at this stage. From the information we have the local authority does not consider that proposals are sufficiently coherent, well developed or costed to incorporate them into the local authority strategy. However, we are open to further discussions with the proposers that might offer a better fit within our overall SEN strategy.

New Provision

SCHOOL	NEED	ADDITIONAL
Osborne (secondary)	LD	0
Henry Tyndale (all through)	LD	8
Hollywater (all through)	LD	0
Baycroft (secondary)	MLD	7
Rachel Maddocks (all through)	SLD	6
Wildground (primary)	SLCN	0
Prospect (secondary)	SEMH	5
Crestwood/Quilley (secondary)	SEMH	10
Wolverdene (primary)	SEMH	6

Confirmation

I confirm that the Director of Children's Services at **Hampshire County Council** has seen this expression of interest and supports it.

Please tick to confirm ✓

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