



Proposal to establish new units for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and Communication and Interaction (primarily ASD) needs.

Guidance Notes for Submitting an Expression of Interest

October 2018

Leicestershire County Council is inviting expressions of interest from suitable primary, secondary and special maintained schools and Academies interested in the establishment of small SEMH or Communication and Interaction Units, primarily for Autism Spectrum Disorder (Resource Bases) to be located on their school site.

Enclosed with this application pack you will find a brief overview of our strategy for the development of SEND provision in Leicestershire and a short specification outlining our requirements for an SEMH or Communication and Interaction Unit. We expect the first units to be operational from the start of Autumn Term 2019.

Expression of interest forms should be returned by email to Mhairi McDonald, Lead Officer SEN and Disability Inclusion Development via SENbids@leics.gov.uk by 12 Noon on Friday 23 November 2018.

Overview of SEND Strategy

Our vision

“Our vision in Leicestershire is for all pupils to achieve well in their education, to be cared for in safe and supportive families, participate and be involved in their communities and lead happy, safe and fulfilled lives.”

Our Priorities:

The information gathered in the development of the SEND strategy has been used to identify the following priorities for the period 2017 to 2020:

1. To improve multi-agency working and coordination of services for children with special educational needs and disabilities;
2. To improve support for and involvement of parents and carers, children young people and families and ensure they are adequately safeguarded in all settings;
3. To improve the quality and sufficiency of SEND education provision and services by:
 - a. Supporting mainstream schools and settings to develop their SEND provision:
 - b. Developing local specialist provision to ensure sufficiency of places to serve all needs/abilities and meet all demands.
4. To improve the transition to adulthood.

Rationale:

In Leicestershire we hope that all children and young people can be educated close to their home, when they need specialist provision we aim to provide this locally.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in demand for Specialist Educational placements for pupils with SEMH and Communication and Interaction needs, particularly ASD.

In order to address the above Leicestershire County Council has increased Specialist Educational Placements for pupils with Communication and Interaction needs, already developing four new ASD resource bases for September 2018. We know that more of this type of resource base will be needed in the future we also need to now urgently address the need for pupils with SEMH.

A copy of the full SEND strategy can be accessed on the [Leicestershire County Council Local Offer website](#). We would encourage you to take time to read the strategy before submitting your application.

Outline specification for new SEMH or Communication and Interaction Unit

Applications that offer an innovative curriculum to reignite the interest of each pupil and inspire enthusiasm for learning will be of interest. The curriculum should be academically challenging where appropriate for each pupil. An approach to teaching that raises pupils 'aspirations of what they can achieve' when they leave school is hoped for, alongside a holistic support package to support pupils in their learning.

You may consider your approach to the below:

Staffing

Staff running the Base will have substantial experience of successfully supporting the needs of children and young people with Communication and Interaction needs including Autism, or Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). They may have had training from the AET and be able to demonstrate their Professional Competence by using the AET Professional Competency tool. Staff working in the unit will have had additional training relevant to the needs of the young people who will be included in the base these may include training such as AET Good Autism Practice (Tier2), ELSA, pastoral support, family support work, nurture, attachment and trauma.

Facilities

The physical environment will be designed to meet the needs of children to reduce anxiety and support inclusion into school. This may include: low stimulus classrooms which include 1:1 work areas and a quiet relaxing spaces. Classrooms are arranged to meet the needs of pupils and generally will be smaller in size than main classroom areas. An outside area will be separable from the main school. It is advantageous to have access to a sensory space (room / garden), and smaller spaces for lunch and break time available – but also to mainstream site when appropriate. A small work room for counselling / therapies to take place may be useful.

Operating the base

Pupils may start their day in the Base. Time in the Base should be timetabled to meet each pupils needs and could include: 1:1 and small group work, homework support, independent work and therapies such as speech and language and occupational therapy, reflection space or relaxing space time to manage anxiety or sensory difficulties. For some pupils it may be a while before they begin accessing lessons in the main school. We would expect pupils have a bespoke educational package detailing levels of time taught in mainstream lessons and within the Base – aimed at meeting EHCP outcomes and the pupil making the best academic progress possible designed with them around their strengths and aspirations. Pupils should receive regular assessments to monitor and track progress that inform planning to meet needs; these will include academic assessments but should also consider the specific needs of the pupils. You may consider using for example Boxall profiles, SDQs, AET framework

Settings will demonstrate a strong ethos of partnership working with parents and other professionals so that there is effective coordination of education, health and care needs as well as links to the local community. A key element of the new Base will be outreach work with other

schools in the locality and the local Special School/Secondary Behaviour Partnership/Oakfield School.

Locality Focus

The units/resource bases will need to be part of a wider locality approach for pupils with SEND.

In particular, robust links with Special Schools for Communication and Interaction bases will need to be established, and for SEMH units links with Oakfield School (primary) and the Behaviour Partnerships (secondary) will need to be set out.

Inclusion

As part of the development of the unit/resource base provision, it is expected that there will be strong links to mainstream schools within the locality. The units/resource bases whilst located on mainstream sites will need to part of the local offer for pupils with SEND, so evidence of how the new provision will support this will need to be included in your expression of interest.

Evaluation of Expressions of Interest

The Local Authority will complete a detailed evaluation of all expressions of interest taking account of the criteria listed below, the first four of which are key to help determine our priorities. Each of the criteria will be allocated a weighted score to ensure that all applications are considered on a fair and equitable basis.

Where necessary LA officers may wish to visit your school and have discussions with key staff to clarify your application.

We expect the assessment process to have been concluded by the end of December so that we might be in a position to notify successful schools at the beginning of January 2019.

- School Performance

As the County Council's statutory duty is to have a strong supply of high quality school places, consideration will be taken of the current Ofsted inspection judgement for the schools concerned, and data and performance (including results of statutory tests for pupils). It is expected that in keeping with DfE guidance that only Outstanding, Good or improving schools would be considered for the development of new units.

- Evidence of working with SEND pupils

Expressions of interest are particularly welcomed from those schools having a strong and successful track record of supporting pupils with SEND and inclusive practices.

- Location of your school

We wish to ensure that there is a good geographic distribution of the new SEMH/Communication and Interaction Units to ensure coverage of all Leicestershire areas so as to have local provision and to minimise transport requirements.

- Ease and extent of adaptations needed to develop new units.

The County Council has a duty to ensure that it achieves value for money and available funding for school places are used effectively. Consideration will therefore be given to the ease of development of schools, taking account of construction requirements, planning matters including potential access and environmental issues. The amount of provision required will also be considered and recognises that some schools will already be at capacity whereas others may have some existing surplus space.

- Future Mainstream Growth and Admissions

In considering proposals account will be taken of future demands that might be placed upon your school arising from increased births or new housing growth in your locality and any potential restrictions in the admissions policy.

- Parental preference

In most cases school will need to consult widely in order to expand and develop new units. If you have evidence of parental support at this early stage we would welcome confirmation of this.

- Views of the Department for Education

In circumstances where any school is known to be under scrutiny by the DfE, or in the case of academies would be subject to approval to a significant change business case to enable expansion, then advice will be sought from the Regional Schools Commissioner.

- Status of the school

We do not consider that school status should be a barrier to the establishment of new units and welcome applications from all types of school. However, it should be noted that where land may not be owned by the Local Authority, or may require third party consents for adaptations, this could add complexity to matters.

Guidance notes for completion of expression of interest

Applicants are encouraged to answer all sections of the Expression of Interest Form as comprehensively as possible, and with particular reference to the matters outlined below. You should note that these matters are listed for your guidance only and should not be taken as an exhaustive list of items to be covered in each section, you may therefore add more information should you wish.

Applicant details

- *Self explanatory details about your organisation*

Your Proposals for the New Unit

- *How will this compliment the strategic priorities of the Council, in relation to provision for children and young people with SEND and their families?*
- *What is your education vision for the new unit, how is this vision being delivered in your existing school, and how will it apply to the new unit?*
- *What is your vision based on, what are the key principles, is there an identifiable approach or ethos?*
- *What will be your education plan and key priorities/objectives for the new unit, how will they help deliver your vision, what are the key innovations?*
- *How will you deliver a curriculum that is broad and balanced, meeting the needs of all children with SEND?*
- *What is your approach to teaching and learning?*
- *What are your systems for monitoring and tracking the progress of children, particularly how do you assess the progress of pupils with SEND?*
- *How will you work in partnership with other mainstream schools and SEND providers?*
- *How you will work with other agencies to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and systems are in place for the opening of the new unit?*
- *Your proposal should give strong, credible evidence that the new unit will raise the overall standard of education available in the local area, adding very high- quality places to the system.*
- *What are the skills and experience of your current staff in relation to meeting the needs of SEND pupils, will further recruitment be necessary*
- *What is your practice for attracting, retaining and developing the best teaching staff?*
- *What ongoing professional development and training programmes/opportunities will be provided to staff?*

- *What actions will you take to support the County Council in delivering effective early intervention services, ensuring school readiness and supporting our most vulnerable learners and families?*
- *How might you work in partnership with wider services such as social care services, health and police to keep children safe, support families and build stronger communities?*
- *How will you celebrate and promote equality and diversity?*

Your Capacity, including Leadership and Management, Evidence of Strong Governance Structures, and Good Financial Management

- *Your leadership team; who is the headteacher/chief executive/leader of your school? What is their background, qualifications and experience with SEND? Do they hold any accreditations for example as a National Leader for Education?*
- *Who makes up the other members of the leadership team is your SENCO a member?*
- *What is the current governance structure of your school?*
- *What will be your arrangements/procedures to ensure strong financial management for the new provision?*
- *Please enclose a brief viable and sustainable finance plan (can be an appendix not included in the word count) showing the proposed operational costs associated with the establishment of a new provision. This should be based on realistic assumptions about income and expenditure, and demonstrate that allowance has been made for unforeseen contingencies.*

Location of the new unit

- *The Local Authority will consider all applications irrespective of whether they relate to using surplus capacity in your existing buildings, the refurbishment of redundant space/rooms or new build facilities. The ease of development of the facilities and the capital cost for this will naturally form a key factor in giving approval to proposals*

Inclusion and Outreach

- *Please describe how you would like your inclusion and outreach functions to work, giving evidence and examples of any work interventions you are currently delivering.*
- *You may wish to also provide information about how you will support shared teaching and learning in mainstream classes, your nurture philosophy and partnership work.*

Placement of pupils and funding arrangements for Units / Resource Bases

Pupils will be placed in the new unit/resource base via the Special Educational Needs Assessment Service (SENA).

It is expected that all placed pupils will have an EHCP, at consultation stage a 'funding band' will be agreed with the school. This band is a sum of money provided to the school for them to operate the new provision so that this meets the needs of the pupils and enables them to make progress towards and achieve outcomes set out in the EHC Plan.

Units are funded as special schools, as such successful maintained schools would receive £10,000 per place, plus an agreed funding band per pupil (based on current rates) of between £6,000 and £15,000.

Successful Special schools also would receive £10,000 place fee which includes element 1 and 2 funding plus an agreed funding band per pupil (based on current rates) of between £6,000 and £15,000.

Funding agreements will be kept open to review to ensure a consistent approach across Leicestershire provision.

Contact Details and further Information

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss your application, please contact either:

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