



Department
for Education

Local Authority Special Free School

**Seeking proposals to establish a
Special Free School**

Halton Borough Council

March 2019

SECTION ONE: OVERVIEW

1.1 Summary

The Department for Education (DfE) is working collaboratively with selected Local Authorities to establish new schools that fit within the local authorities' strategies for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those requiring alternative provision. This opportunity is intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special and alternative provision free schools as a supplement to LAs' existing resources. If a strong proposal is received by a trust that both the Local Authority and the Secretary of State wish to take forward, DfE will provide capital funding and start-up grants subject to value for money assessments.

This document sets out the key information regarding the school that Halton Borough Council in partnership with St Helens Borough Council will be establishing alongside DfE. Trusts should use the information within this document, alongside the engagement events, to determine whether they would like to apply to open the school, and to base their application on.

1.2 Contact details and further information

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

Name: Ann McIntyre
Job title: Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision
Email: ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk
Tel: 0151 511 7332

Name: Sharon Fryer
Job title: Assistant Director SEND
Email: sharonfryer@sthelens.gov.uk
Tel: 01744671037

If you would like any further information or would like to discuss the site, please contact:

Name: Louise Risk MRICS,
Job title: Assets and Valuation Manager
Email: louise.risk@halton.gov.uk
Tel: 0151 511 6196

Please find below the contact details of the Regional Schools Commissioner:
[Include RSC details for that region]

RSC: Vicky Beer- Regional Schools Commissioner
RSC's office: Lancashire and West Yorkshire Region
Email: LWY.RSC@education.gov.uk

1.3_Halton Context and Planning

Please include here details of why the local authority is running this competition and requires this school. Should this be a joint bid, please explain how the local authorities will work together and how other local authorities are involved in commissioning places.

Halton Borough Council, in partnership with its neighbour LA St Helens, seek to open a co-educational, special free school which will offer a quality educational experience for 50 pupils with a range of social, emotional and mental health needs with associated challenging behaviours symptomatic of their SEN which have prevented them from learning within a mainstream school and which require a high level of educational and therapeutic support.

Both Councils have a very clear commitment to the inclusion of children with SEND and strong track record of education, health and care partners working together to support children and young people make the most of the opportunities in their life. As well as providing high quality teaching and learning, the free school will provide specialist expertise and advice to current mainstream and PRU provision, contributing to a range of strategies to address the growing demand for more specialist, joined up provision for children with SEMH, as set out in section 3a.

Halton and St Helens have seen an increase in the numbers of young people with SEMH needs. In Halton, 23.1% of secondary and 18.2% of primary pupils have SEMH as their primary SEN need. This is significantly higher than the national/regional picture. However, just 5.1% of Halton special school pupils show SEMH as their primary need, against the national and regional average of 12.63% and 14.8%. This is reflective of the lack of local provision.

Analysis of the current placement profile, shows that there has been a 35% increase in numbers placed in independent special schools since 2015 as demand outstrips supply and at present the 2 borough's commission 93 SEMH places external to their local maintained provision. This represents 71% of the total number of specialist placements. Of these almost half are for children looked after and 2/3rds are in KS3 and KS4. Placements for pupils of secondary age have seen the biggest growth with an increase of 50% from 2015/16 to 2017/18.

There is no secondary specialist SEMH provision in Halton, pupils with SEMH often face multiple fixed term exclusions or permanent exclusion. Many are now placed in the Pupil Referral Unit or once they have an EHCP in high cost independent SEMH provision, travelling some distance away from their families, and local communities, to access appropriate support. As a consequence, vulnerable young people are further disadvantaged as they may not benefit from wrap around support from local services which makes establishing supportive relationships that will sustain them as they make their transition through to Post 16 education, employment or training more challenging.

Halton BC have commissioned independent consultants to identify the network and support, links to other provision both mainstream and specialist as well as pathways in and out of the provision. This will support the development of appropriate transitions. It is expected that the new school will work with range of support services which will include as a core Educational Psychology, CAMHS, Early Help Teams and the Virtual Head teacher. At year 9 there will be strong focus on preparing for adulthood with relevant post 16 partners.

On current and projected growth in demand Halton and St Helens Local Authorities will have sufficient pupils requiring SEMH provision and it is therefore expected that Halton and St Helens Local Authorities will commission all 50 places.

SECTION TWO: THE SCHOOL

The tables below list key details of the school proposed. Your application must be for a school that has these key characteristics. Please note you only need to complete the relevant table depending on the type of school.	Special
Area of SEN provided for (please detail designation alongside additional information known about the cohort's needs and abilities)	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
Which local authorities are committed to commissioning places?	Halton Borough Council and St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
How many places have been commissioned and by which local authority?	Halton Borough Council will commission 25 places St Helens Borough Council will commission 25 places
Per-pupil revenue funding the local authority would expect to pay (if a range of rates, please explain and detail the rates per pupil, including estimates for how many of the cohort will be in each band)	Per place funding will include £10k per place plus top up funding of £15,000.
Age range	11-16
Gender (Boys/Girls/Co-educational)	Co-educational
Total number of proposed full time equivalent places (once school is at full capacity – this should include 16-19 places but not nursery)	50 day places
Type of placements offered (e.g. full time, short term, part time)	Full time
Number of nursery places, if applicable	NA
Number of 16-19 places, if applicable	NA

Any planned outreach, training and/or reintegration support (including details of funding that will be made available to support the school with this)	The free school will offer an outreach service to mainstream schools. We anticipate that this will be on a traded basis and will be in place in year 2 to allow the school to establish itself within the school communities and undertake market testing in year 1. This will support improved inclusive practices in mainstream schools, supporting young people to remain in or re-integrate back into mainstream education where possible.
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The table below details the number of places that the local authority proposes for each year group at the point of opening until the school is full.

	Year of opening	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
Nursery							
Reception							
Key stage 1 (Y1-2)							
Key stage 2 (Y3-6)							
Key stage 3 (Y7-9)	20	8					
Key stage 4 (Y10-11)	15	7					
16-19: commissioner referred							
Totals	35	15	0	0	0	0	50

SECTION THREE: RATIONALE AND CONTEXT FOR THE SCHOOL

This section describes the rationale and the context in which the new school will operate.

3A. Please include a brief description of the existing provision in your area, future expected growth in pupil numbers and how you expect places to be filled.

Both local areas are committed to ensuring that all children can have their needs met in high quality educational provision, in their local communities wherever possible and to the participation, voice and influence by children, young people's and their families. As the local SEMH specialist education provider, providing outstanding education in a highly specialist environment, the Free School will support young people to become independent and fulfil their potential and will complement a range of strategies to improve the quality and sufficiency of SEMH provision as described below:

- *Specialist Provision: Schools/Settings able to support children with complex SEMH with challenging behaviours:* Penkford Special School, IMN SEMH Schools, *Special Free School
- *Targeted Provision: Mainstream Schools able to support children with moderate/complex SEMH with additional support or alternative provision:* PRUs, AP, Nurture Bases, SEN Support, Psychology Services, SEMH/Behaviour Resourced Units, Behaviour Support Teams, I Thrive Risk Support, Tuition Services (school phobic, anxiety disorders), Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ADHD/Sensory/Psychological Wellbeing), * targeted outreach from special schools
- *Universal Provision: Mainstream Schools able to support children with mild/moderate SEMH needs:* Educational Psychology, Mental Health and Wellbeing Training Offer, Emotionally Healthy School Programmes, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA), Public Health Programmes

Pupil placements will be managed by Halton Borough Council as the lead commissioner, in line with the Code of Practice and statutory assessment, and decisions will be made in partnership with the free school, parents and St Helens' MBC to determine the admission of pupils. Pupils placed in the Free School will have undergone assessment and will have an EHCP and will primarily come from primary or secondary schools within Halton and St Helens. Effective relationships between schools is key to successful transition and reintegration of pupils back into mainstream provision and there is a strong ethos of collaboration between schools who are supportive of the Free School. It is anticipated that the Free School will work closely with the SEMH Primary Resource Bases in Halton, Tuition Services, Special Schools and the PRUs. It is expected that strong links will be made with local mainstream provision in addition to the special school providing a resource base, training and outreach as part of a wider team.

In the first two years' it is projected that placements will comprise the following:

- Pupils transitioning from INM SEMH schools at the end of KS2,
- Pupils returning from out of borough INMSS placements, where agreed with the family
- Placement pressures – projected increase assumed to remain at 25% per year
- Appropriately place pupils currently in Pupil Referral Units

3B Please also include details as to how these proposed new arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with special educational needs, and the outcomes for pupils, across the local authority and how you expect trusts to support this.

The Free School will contribute to our vision that all children have access to a local educational setting that is appropriate to their needs, including those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Pupils admitted will have undergone a statutory assessment which identifies SEMH difficulties significantly impacting on their ability to maintain emotional well-being in all aspects of their life and which requires specialist, long term support in relation to:

- Achieving emotional well-being
- Working towards independent self-regulation
- Building relationships with significant adults in order to address attachment needs
- Developing positive social interaction

A key focus will be for pupils to acquire skills that will lead to independent living and positive engagement in the community, with the expectation that 100% of pupils will transition into appropriate employment, training and further education at 16. The free school will provide a diverse educational offer and it is expected that the curriculum will include the development of self-esteem, personal and practical skills such as life skills, caring for self and others, building interpersonal skills, outdoor education, and developing skills for employment.

The school will work collaboratively with Halton and St Helens Council who have proven track records for pupils post 16. Where re-integration is not appropriate, school will work with local post 16 planning and provision teams and develop strong links with FE providers and employers to design appropriate pathways, with links into apprenticeships and supported internships. With person centred support and in the right setting, pupils with these difficulties can thrive and the outcomes for the new school will include:

- Improved educational outcomes with the majority of pupils expected to meet/exceed targets
- Outstanding Teaching and Learning
- Improved attendance
- Improved behaviour resulting in a reduction in the number of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- Pupils are prepared for adulthood and transition effectively
- Increase in confidence and emotional resilience with evidence of pupil voice and leadership
- Pupils re-integrated into mainstream education
- Improved outcomes for looked after children

In addition, the Local Authorities expect:

- Reduced numbers of EHE due to lack of local provision
- Improved parental engagement
- Close working relationship with mental health professionals

It will be expected that the free school work collaboratively with commissioners and schools across the boroughs to support re-integration where possible and the school will be a key partner with the continuum of provision for pupils with SEMH. Key to this will be the development of a traded offer of support from the free school, particularly to target pupils at risk of exclusion.

SECTION FOUR: THE PROPOSED LOCATION AND SITE

<p>This section describes the provisional site. Full address and full postcode</p>	<p>The proposed site is Naylor Road Widnes WA8 0BS</p>
<p>Size of site</p>	<p>Naylor Road Site area is 2.2 ha, 5.4 acres. Building size : 1775sqm and site area approx. 1.5 acre, 0.6 ha</p>
<p>Further details on site (for example, current use/your reasons for choosing it/further developments (e.g. housing) planned for area</p>	<p>Naylor Road Widnes. The location is an open site for new construction and therefore offers flexibility over design and operation of the facility.</p> <p>It may have greater potential to expand or co locate with related services and would add to an educational campus with the school and children’s centre within the location. The site is accessible by road and public transport.</p>