

DfE SEND Free School (Wave 3) Engagement Event

SEMH Free School for Wiltshire Council

Agenda

- Introductions
- Context
- SEMH commissioning requirements
- The proposal
- The proposed site(s)
- The Free School application process
- Create Schools offer
- Questions and feedback

Introductions

- Helean Hughes, Director of Education and Skills
- Melissa Hardwell, Head of Special School Transformation
- Charlotte Reece, Create Schools advisor

Context

Wiltshire Council recognise the need to develop further specialist provision to meet the needs of children and young people with EHCPs ... and divert children from geographically distant and expensive independent provision.

Wiltshire SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023 Priority Area 4, 'Improving the Range and Quality of Provision' ambition to 'ensure that all the services and support for CYP with SEND are **brilliant** and are there at the right time and in a way that meets their needs', i.e. **sufficiency** (right number of places in right locations) and **quality** (childrens' needs and aspirations are being met).

Wiltshire Parent Carer Council sums up requirement best:

*'The limited [SEMH] provision we do have in Wiltshire has demonstrated **significant benefits through their application of therapeutic and trauma-informed practice**. This is helping to give children and young people the confidence and skills they need to integrate into their communities, improve their quality of family life, de-escalate family crisis, and **set a path to establishing positive life chances**; and*

*Having increased SEMH capacity and provision would also help Wiltshire's System of Excellence aspiration, through **in-reach and outreach work**, to support community and mainstream settings to be **more confident and skilled in their inclusion** of children and young people with SEND'*

Context – SEMH provision in Wiltshire

- No primary SEMH school in Wiltshire at the present time, although a smaller primary SEMH offer in West Wiltshire is in development
- We have an 11-16 maintained secondary SEMH special school at Downland (90 places, which is typically full). Salisbury Academy of Inspirational Learning will offer some SEMH provision from 2023/24
- Full time SEMH school provision is available in the independent sector, mainly sitting outside Wiltshire e.g. in neighbouring counties, leading to lengthy journey times and high cost provision
- Within the independent sector not all schools will take Reception and KS1 learners
- There is strong desire to support learners with SEMH in mainstream, which is why in-reach and outreach offer is key component

Commissioning Intent

- High Needs Place Planning identifies a significant deficit of special school places now and in the future.
- At October 2022, there are 62 children awaiting a special school place - with a further 396 children having their needs met in ISS in May 2023.
- Wiltshire is experiencing population growth, as well as net transfers into Wiltshire. Place planning forecasts demand for Special School places growing by 68-76 places per year for the next 5 years (or 7.2%-7.8% annual growth).
- Due to the rising demand for special school places in Wiltshire - combined with the shortfall in SEMH designated provision - circa 96% of places at the proposed school will be commissioned by Wiltshire Council for local families.
- What do we mean by SEMH? Introvert, more fragile? Or mixed profile?
- Mutual recoupment currently stands at 15% - neighbouring authorities include BANES and Somerset (preferred site), plus South Glos and Bristol also possible
- There is confidence the school will be fully commissioned by year 2

Commissioning Intent - the numbers

130 full time places in total comprising of: 76 places in first year, 117 by second year + 13 places by agreement.

Commissioner	Year of operation	Number of EY places	Number of KS1 places	Number of KS2 places	Number of KS3 places	Number of KS4 places	Number of 16-19 places
Wiltshire Council	First year of opening	4	10	20	20	8	8
	Second year of opening	6	16	34	26	15	10

Commissioner	Year of operation	Number of EY places	Number of KS1 places	Number of KS2 places	Number of KS3 places	Number of KS4 places	Number of 16-19 places
Mutual recoupment from neighbouring LAs in 2021/22. Recoupment currently at 15%, therefore 5-10% is conservative estimate.	First year of opening	0	1	0	3	1	1
	Second year of opening	1	2	2	2	2	1

Commissioning Intent - in reach and outreach

Post 16 offer:

Where possible, we want Post 16 learners to attend local colleges to develop independence and access to a broader curriculum offer. However a Post 16 Skills Centre or Plus Programme will be designed to provide up to 12 young people (at any one time) with the necessary **support on their journey to independence, including pathways to support learners acquiring appropriate qualifications and vocational skills**, that will enable them to start their career journey with success. Short term placements promote independence, resilience and the confidence to access mainstream education and training opportunities.

In reach/outreach requirement:

We believe an increased SEMH capacity and provision would help Wiltshire's System of Excellence aspiration, through **in-reach and outreach work across all age groups**, to support community and mainstream settings to be **more confident and skilled in their inclusion** of children and young people with SEND.

Commissioning Intent - the Finances

£10,000 per place (base funding) plus £15,627 per pupil top-up funding (budgeted 2023/24 funding rates of pupils with SEMH designation, based on average maintained/academy rates in Wiltshire).

Average total funding rate = £25,627 per pupil (2023/24)

Wiltshire is experiencing a growth in the complexity of SEND learners, so top up rates are expected to rise.

In addition to place funding and top up, Wiltshire Council expect to reimburse the provider for consultancy, in-reach and outreach services to support mainstream inclusion activities.

Location – preferred site

LAND AT GAS HOUSE FARM, BITHAM PARK, WESTBURY



Gas House Farm is the preferred location due to its proximity to a concentration of students with SEMH designation in West Wiltshire, as well as good transport links and green space. The **DfE also favour the Gas House Farm site** due to the development opportunities and more straightforward planning considerations.

It is anticipated the Council will need to meet costs of new road provision (to provide access to the site), ecological provision (to re-locate trees and hedgerow) and utility provision (relocation of the electrical power lines that straddle the site).

The Free School Process

SEND Wave 3

Create: Schools Support



About Create: Schools



- Wholly-owned division of PAG
- Established in April 2022
- DfE sole supplier of advice to Free School Proposers
- Access to a range of partners with expertise in key areas such as project management, capital, finance and legal

The Application



- The DfE has approved 33 special free school applications in the first stage of SEND wave 3
- Through Stage 2, trusts and other applicants will be able to apply to run the new special schools
- This a central free school programme; schools will be delivered and funded as such

Application Process



Pre-registration window 9th May – 16th June 2023

Application forms will be sent to you once you have completed the pre-registration.

1

Application window opens

9th May 2023

You must have registered your interest to be sent the application form.

2

Application window closes

31st August 2023

Submit your completed application via email to fs.applications@education.gov.uk by 12pm.

3

4

Autumn 2023

Applications will be assessed and interviews will begin

5

January 2024

Successful applicants will be announced, and the school will enter its preopening phase.



In-depth bid review and feedback at all stages of the application process

Webinars and masterclasses

Access to expert partners

Support we offer

Expert advice & guidance for DfE interviews

Mock interviews and preparation for pre-opening

Resources to support you in all aspects of planning your school and completing your application

Sections A and B



Section A – Tell us who you are

All applicant groups must complete this section in full. There are no assessment criteria for this section. In this section, you must provide basic information about your applicant group and your academy trust.

Section B – Outline of the school

When defining details about the school in this section, you should refer to the specification of the local authority you are applying to, available online at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). It is important to be aware that the DfE will not accept applications which are a 'hybrid' of AP and special, all students attending the new school will be children or young people with an EHCP

Special free schools may have a religious ethos; however, they **cannot** be designated as having a religious character.

The responsibility for identifying a site lies with the local authority, however if you have a suitable site, you should outline this in section B.

Section C: Vision



Applicants must demonstrate a compelling vision for the school that will attract parents and pupils, raise standards and support pupils to prepare for adulthood, independent living and employment. Your vision should be evidence-based and consistent with the rest of your application, such as the curriculum approach.

This should include:

- How your vision for the school will meet the key features of the specification
- How the school will contribute to the delivery of the local authority's SEND strategy
- How your proposed school will collaborate with other SEND provision
- Your trust growth strategy

Section D: Education Plan



Applications must set out the plan to deliver your educational vision. We are looking for an ambitious and deliverable education plan that is consistent with your vision and pupil intake. It must be affordable, sustainable and consistent with financial planning.

Section D will consist of 4 parts:

D1 – Curriculum plan – 2,500 word count

D2 – Measuring pupil performance/ setting challenging expectations – 2,300 words

D3 – Staffing – 1,000 word count

D4 – Integration and community cohesion – 1,000 word count

Section E: Capacity and Capability



Applications must demonstrate the capacity and capability to deliver a financially viable school that provides a high-quality and inclusive education.

Part E1: This section is to be completed by those who currently run schools. All groups who currently run or lead schools will need to have a strong educational track record to be approved to open a free school.

Part E2: Applicants must display they have necessary experience and credentials to deliver the school. This includes providing information on the pre-opening group, a skills gap analysis and timelines for recruiting a headteacher designate (2,000 word count).

Part E3: Applicants should demonstrate an effective governance structure here.

Section F: Financial Viability



You must demonstrate that your school will be financially viable and sustainable. You must have robust and credible plans to attract good pupil numbers that take account of our minimum expected sizes for new free schools.

Your trust should implement effective resource planning to ensure every pound is used efficiently to improve children's education standards and have maximum impact on the pupils and the school.

The Pre-Opening Process



In this phase, the academy trust will need to develop detailed plans and turn them into a school ready for opening. The pre-opening process includes:

- Trusts will regularly engage with the department
- Agree on your provisional opening date for the school.
- A project development grant to cover essential non-capital costs up to the point at which the school opens
- For some projects, progressing to the pre-opening phase is subject to precise and stringent conditions, which are set out in the approval letter
- Where a project fails to make sufficient progress in pre-opening, the opening of the school may be delayed or even cancelled

Next Steps



- Submit your application by midday on 31st August 2023 via email to fs.applications@education.gov.uk
- Access support through Create: Schools by emailing hello@createschools.co.uk



Questions?