**How applications are progressed**

This document has been written to inform members of the Local Authority and providers who are part of the application process as to how applications for the development of new specialist education placements are evaluated and progressed.

* Expression of interest via MS Form from 5th of May till the 26th of May.
* Panel Presentations will be held between the 12th to 22nd of June.
* Infrastructure visits to schools will be able to take place from the 26th of May till the 7th of July.
* Successful providers will be informed by the end of the Summer term.

**Application for completion**

All potential providers will have access to a Microsoft form which will direct them through to an online application process:

Here, the providers will be requested to submit information which, along with basic information on themselves as an organisation, includes the following:

* Ofsted rating
* Current capacity
* Attendance percentages
* Exclusion data
* Unit(s) the provider is interested in applying for
* Anticipated availability for when the provider can open their unit(s)
* Anticipated space available in order to open the unit(s)

Several options that the providers select at this stage have a numerical figure attached to them; the results will then be collected and measured and will offer information on the suitability of each provider. In addition, we have asked the provider to send an annotated plan of their proposed site at the point of application. For those providers applying for more than one unit, a final score will be generated for each unit being applied for at the end of the application.

Suffolk County Council require providers to send in a presentation to the Provider Services inbox – ProviderServices@suffolk.gov,uk after they submit their online expression of interest. These presentations will be used should the provider be successful in getting through to the next stage and should cover how they propose to meet the **specific criteria** which is outlined below.

**Suitability Stage**

Applicants who receive the highest scores for each required unit will then be invited in to meet with members of the Local Authority in order to share their presentation and answer questions regarding their ability to host a unit. Suffolk Parent Carer Forum will also review the presentations and the scores.

Should the number of applicants exceed our abilities to view all potential providers within the two weeks identified,there will be further dates offered for opportunities to present. Those who have indicated that they can offer the required unit from September 2024 will be prioritised.

Following this process, we reserve the right to seek additional providers in order to meet the demand for the requested units, should all units not be successfully allocated.

The panel members will be made up of a selection of colleagues from the Inclusion service, Schools infrastructure, Specialist Education Services and the Suffolk Parent Carer Forum.

At the suitability stage, providers will have 1 hour to deliver a presentation and answer questions relating to their presentation and ability to host the requested unit. The presentation will need to describe their vision and plans for the delivery of the unit(s) they are applying for. Through their presentation, they will need to outline and demonstrate how they meet the criteria specified below in the delivery of the unit:

**Criteria that Providers are required to evidence and propose within the presentation:**

1. Evidence how you have a strong understanding and experience of the cohort of pupils within the group(s) being requested.
2. Evidence that pupils have access to high quality teaching and learning experiences by fully trained staff and how this will be expanded to meet the needs of the unit(s).
3. Evidence of a broad and targeted curriculum on offer currently and how this will be tailored specifically to the profile of unit(s) being applied for.
4. Evidence a proven track record of creating tailored packages of education specific to the needs of individual pupils, as detailed within their EHCP, linked to the profile of need you are applying for.
5. Evidence how learning opportunities allow for high engagement from pupils, resulting in progress in learning in line with their age, ability and prior achievement for pupils with or without an EHCP.
6. Evidence that there are and will continue to be opportunities for pupils to develop wider skills such as independence and resilience, in order to allow pupils to positively thrive within their community.
7. Evidence that during their time at the setting, pupils are supported through transition stages. Propose how you would help to increase pupils’ ability to successfully access the new unit and prepare for transition to their next placement. Propose how pupils in the unit will access some elements of the mainstream school.
8. Prepare a detailed proposal on how the unit will be staffed within the budget agreed, with a sufficient staff to pupil ratio in place which is tailored to the profile of the unit.
9. Evidence how the premises can and will facilitate the learning of all pupils in attendance, increasing access to learning opportunities that are on offer and to aid with their progression.
10. Evidence in depth knowledge and a clear understanding of the importance of safeguarding children in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
11. Evidence that there is a robust process in place to deal with issues related to poor attendance so that opportunities for learning are maximised.
12. Evidence that there are holistic working practices in place, which include collaboration with partner agencies, pupils and their families that ensure best outcomes for the pupils on roll.
13. Propose how you will cater for the fluctuation in demand within Suffolk and evidence how to continually meet the needs of the service.
14. For the **Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) Units** propose how you could offer outreach to local schools in your area who do not have a specialist unit attached. This must compliment but not mirror the offer from SES and be available for children with out EHCPs.

The contents of the presentation and the responses from the provider form part of the scoring system which will assist with the evaluation of each provider. Each of the criteria described above will be scored through the following mechanism:

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| **Score Awarded** | **Meaning** |
| 4 | Outstanding responseExceptional demonstration by the provider of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the service. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response. |
| 3 | Good responseAbove average demonstration by the provider of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the service. Response identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with evidence to support the response. |
| 2 | Less than satisfactory responseSome reservations of the providers relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the service, with little or no evidence to support the response. |
| 1 | Poor responseDoes not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that the provider has the ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to provide the supplies / services, with no evidence to support the response. |

Throughout the presentation, panel members will score providers individually against each of the criteria described above. After all applicants have been seen, the panel will then reflect on the scores that they have awarded for each of the criteria. Scores for each provider from each panel member will be combined and an average gained.

Those providers with the highest scores will be offered the specialist units that they have applied for. In the event that providers receive the same final score after the presentation – the provider who scored the highest in the application process will be awarded the group.

**Prior to the final decision being made, and at any point throughout the process once an application has been submitted, providers may be visited by members of the Provider Services team and Infrastructure Team to gather further information.**