

Development Of Specialist Unit Provision Across Suffolk – Information For Potential Providers

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Suffolk
County Council

Developing Specialist Provision Within The Local Offer – Our Strategy

2018 SEND Sufficiency Review indicated need for significant number of new specialist placements

2018 Workshops and consultation on sufficiency findings and Policy Development Panel established

2019 SCC Cabinet agree to invest in a programme of development to establish the specialist units and new special schools needed

2022 Phase 1 of the SEND Capital Programme nearing completion, review carried out to help inform Phase 2

2022 Following the success of Phase 1, Cabinet agreed to the implementation of Phase 2. In addition, it was recommended that a Phase 3 be requested, which was agreed by Cabinet in October.

2023 Phase 3 research begins into how best to undertake the implementation of SEMH units.

Suffolk Education Framework For Children And Young People With SEND

A Tool to: Provide families and practitioners with a clear understanding of the Suffolk offer;
identify broad gaps and development needs within the local specialist offer;
Offer a consistent language to describe specialist settings in Suffolk.

Four Pathways: Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Sensory Needs

Increasing complexity of need



Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Mainstream school with quality first teaching & personalised support	Mainstream school with support from specialist outreach services and/or additional specific measures	Specialist Unit attached to mainstream school	Specialist School within local area	Highly Specialist Independent School or school outside of the local area for low incidence high complexity need

SEND Capital Programme – What Has Been Developed So Far

	Places Planned	Places opened Sept 2020 and Sept 2021	Places due to open between Sept 2022 – Sept 2024
New Units 2020	180	180	0
New Units 2021	198	174	24
Additional capacity in previous units	10	10	0
New Schools	284	40	244
Additional capacity in new units	81	24	57
MLD	24	24	0
SLD	48	48	0
TOTAL	825	500	325
Future proposals from Phase 2			
New units	54 – 72 (this will include 3 proposed units of 18-24 places each allowing for growth)		
TOTAL	879 - 897		

What Difference Has This Made?

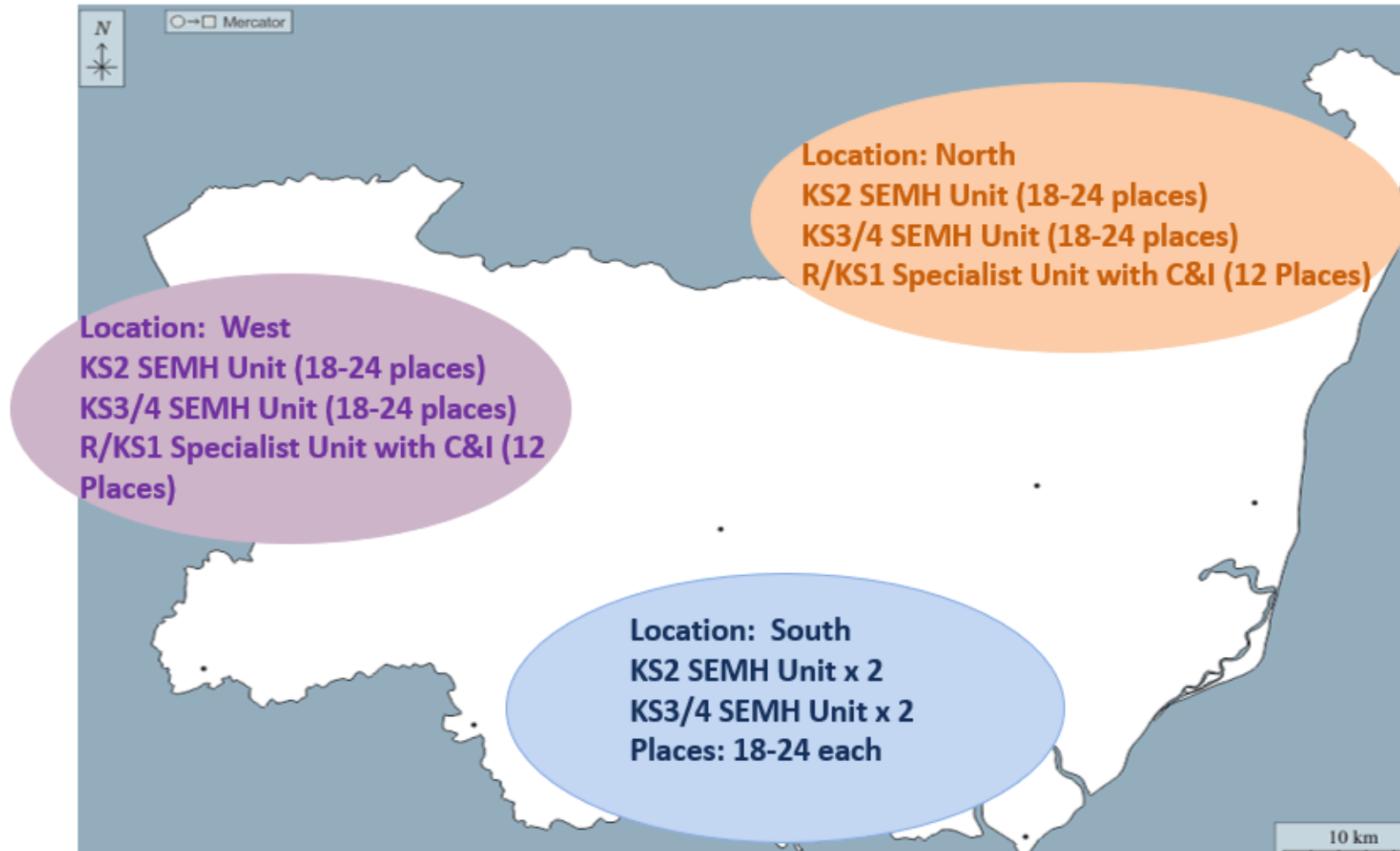


Specialist Provision prior to the SEND Capital Programme



Specialist Provision since the start of Phase 1 of the SEND Capital Programme

SEND Capital Programme – What does Phase 3 need?



What is a Reception Key Stage 1 Specialist Units with an expertise in Communication and Interaction (C&I)?

Specialist Unit –

A specialist education provision which is part of a mainstream school. **Pupils could spend over 50% of their time in the unit, but are an integral part of the school and the life of it**

Reception and Key Stage 1 Specialist Units –

Children and young people (CYP) with learning difficulties often have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock to create a complex profile requiring a personalised learning pathway. This pathway will recognise a child's unique learning patterns and the specific strategies required to engage them in learning and enable their active participation in the classroom and in the wider community.

Communication and Interaction –

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. The profile for every child with SLCN is different and their needs may change over time. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives.

Features of a specialist unit

Pupils placed in a specialist unit would:

- Be on the roll of the school and the headteacher would be responsible for their progress alongside all other pupils
- Be expected to participate fully in the life of the school, assemblies, after school clubs, drama, trips.
- Have access to all facilities of the school just like other pupils, including social areas and specialist teaching facilities such as sports hall, art and technology rooms and science labs.
- Participate in mainstream classes where they are able to – for example where a pupil has a specific strength or for a subject such as PE or art where they can participate fully alongside their peers
- Have a personalised curriculum offer and would receive a high proportion of their classes in the specialist unit
- Be taught in smaller groups averaging 8 to 12, possibly as low as 6 where pupils need extensive support

Phase 1 Experiences

Paul Fykin – Rushmere Hall Primary
School Ipswich

Reception and Key Stage 1
Specialist Unit with an expertise in
Communication and Interaction (C&I)

Things that we have learned over the years!

- **Capture the INTENT of your unit** This helps explain the decisions you have made about the provision.
- **Be REALLY EXPLICIT about the profile of the children that your unit is designed for** it is important to be clear from the start as to whether the place is correct for the particular child.
- **Set ambitious expectations for these children** The expectations of these children needs to be ambitious.
- **Its not easy to refer your own children into the unit!** The process for referring a child from your mainstream into the unit is the same as any other child. The Mainstream SENCo will need to follow the same referral processes as any other child at any other school.
- **High quality transitions are vital for successful placements** Getting this right is essential. Ensuring a smooth transition which includes the parents, the pupil and the children is very important.
- **The admin is immense** Potentially 15 children within the unit, could mean 15 ECHPs! This brings a mass of work that needs to be remembered and considered from a staffing perspective. Also 15 children within the unit without ECHPs – who need ECHPs again would create a significant amount of work!

Things that we have learned over the years!

- **Try and reap the benefits – between the mainstream school and the specialist provision** Mainstream Class teachers can benefit from the expertise of the unit teachers, children in the unit can benefit from integration with the mainstream school
- **Write your own curriculum for this group of children.** These children will need something bespoke and specific to guarantee that they will reach the end of KS1 with the skills they need.
- **Find the right people** work in the unit is rewarding but it is hard work! It is challenging and you need to flex and adapt all the time. If you find passionate, motivated, dynamic staff who want all children to be successful then you have a great starting point.
- **Get the preparation right.** Put the work in before the unit is open. Think strategically. Do the mapping and the deep thinking before the children arrive. Avoid using the school's scheme of work and tweaking it to save time. Avoid picking the favourite units of work because they are lovely to teach.
- **Do it properly from the beginning** and it will pay dividends. Design sequences of learning that are effective, deliberate in what they need the children to learn and make sure that no corners are cut.

Things that
have
learned
over the
years!

We love having a specialist unit!

Despite the challenges, the pros definitely outweigh the cons. Preparing these children for their next stage of education is significantly tougher than in mainstream... but success is even more brilliant when they are able to achieve it.

We continue to have adults come back to us at Rushmere and thank us for what we have done for them. The biggest compliment ever... is to see how our work has impacted on others and enabled them to be successful despite having a difficult start.

Mr Fykin

Feedback from the providers

“Children who have joined have made an incredible amount of progress.”

“Children's confidence has increased a huge amount and we have seen a huge development in their social skills.”

“Children who could barely read or write prior to joining, are now confident and enjoy their English lessons.”

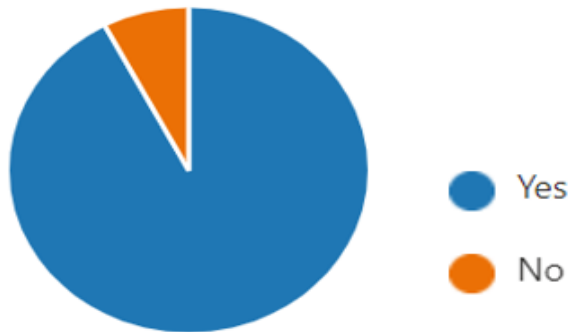
“Many parents have commented to say how sending their child to our unit has been ‘life changing’.”

“Another fantastic positive about having a SEND Hub in a mainstream school, is the expertise have been shared to support other teachers who have children with additional needs in their classroom.”

“We are on an exciting journey of discovering how to successfully integrate our pupils with mainstream and each term we are refining our approach.”

What are parents and carers saying?

Do you feel the unit is able to meet your child's needs?



During the review of phase 1 of the programme to inform phase 2 we surveyed the units, parents and pupils to identify how the units have supported pupils and families in Suffolk and to identify gaps in provision

From the questionnaire results, it is evident that most parents are pleased with the progress their child is making and feels the unit is meeting their child's needs. Parents feel the units are a unique education provision that sits comfortably between specialist schools and mainstream education. They like the fact that their child still has access to mainstream experiences.

What are parents and carers saying?

health needs
supportive to the child
Needs of child
Small class
needs and understanding
improvements within my child
happy
son
curriculum for each child
smaller **staff** school
children's needs **support**
work
mainstream side of the school
help
staff are amazing
small group
appropriate to my child

● Yes

● No



Have you made friends at school?



Do you feel comfortable with the staff at school?



Do you feel you learn new things at school?

What do you enjoy about school?

“Everyone thought I was bad at my old school, and I thought I just had big feelings until I found out I had autism. I now feel like I actually fit in.” Pupil at KS2 Unit

new friends
Picnic with my friends
Starlings for maths
maths and English Explore Time
forest school
maths or art
Maths time
play pod
Going outside
new things
new people
new children
Seeing my friends
new
new stuff
Playing with my friends
time and lunchtime
friends and the teachers

maths

Considerations for mainstream schools

A philosophy of inclusion: Pupils placed in the unit must be a part of the school community. The unit cannot be considered to be a completely separate offer with no involvement with the rest of the school.

Benefits to the wider school: Evidence indicates that having a specialist offer as part of a mainstream school benefits the whole school community. All teachers have access to specialist knowledge and skills to support them in their classroom practice and pupils gain from being part of a fully inclusive community.

Admissions: Admissions are led by the LA working in collaboration with the school staff. Admission of a child into a specialist unit will be treated in the same way as admission of a child to a special school. It will not give any admission rights to siblings of the admitted child.

Ofsted and performance tables: The new Ofsted Framework encourages schools to create an inclusive offer that meets the needs of their whole community. SCC Education and Learning Team are currently working with Ofsted and specialist unit colleagues to develop an approach to reporting outcomes for learners that supports inspectors to understand the context of a school with a unit.

Potential Capital Expenditure

For schools who successfully secure the opportunity to develop a specialist unit, capital funds will be made available for either:

Refurbishments of existing space in schools to ensure they can appropriately meet the needs of the cohort

New build Units /expansions of space in schools

Feasibility and design work undertaken by SCC to ensure accurate cost estimates and adherence to statutory guidance

Projects can be managed by SCC or by Academy Trusts

Preference will be given to projects that offer best value in terms of capital investment where other factors are equal

Refurbishments will be prioritised over new builds where other factors are equal

Space Requirements For Units

Designed for 12-24 ambulant pupils depending on complexity of need. More space needed for C&I students;

Based on Building Bulletin 104

Basic teaching: At least 1 classroom of 55 m² for up to 12 pupils

Access to practical space – technology/sport/arts/science at KS3/4

Learning Resource areas: 2/3 support spaces (group/quiet rooms – 8/10 m²)

Staff work zone: can be shared e.g. staff work zone/quiet room or therapy space), Unit staff expected to use main school staff facilities

Storage, toilets (1 for 20 students/ close to classroom for C&I students)

Dining and PE facilities – main school facilities mostly

An external area leading out from the unit, preferably offering another entrance point.

Capital Works: Critical Dates

Refurbishments (no planning required)

Autumn 2023: Commission feasibilities and design work

Autumn 2023: Sign off designs

Spring 2024: Tender and contractor appointment

Summer 2024: Works carried out

September 2024: Unit Open

New build/ extensions (planning required)

Autumn 2023: Commission feasibilities and design work

Spring 2024: Sign off designs (& agree funding if Academy are self delivering)

Spring 2024: Tender and contract appointment

Summer July 2024 – Spring 2025: Works carried out

September 2025: Unit Open

Process (Internal And External)

1. **Bidding process to secure a unit:** engagement and confirmation of preferred bidders/sites
2. **Feasibilities:** undertaken by SCC to provide cost estimates and adherence to brief
3. **Approval of programme:** SCC SEND Capital Programme Board and Capital Strategy Group
4. **Commissioning of building works:** via LA and Trusts
5. **Funding:** SCC approves funding arrangements
6. **Statutory procedures:** LA undertakes or Trusts with LA support
7. **Schools/Academies:** Classroom set up, transport arrangements, staffing, training
8. **Communications:** Stakeholders, local councillors, media releases

Revenue Funding

Places for pupils in the Specialist Units will be funded in accordance with the Suffolk High Needs Funding Policy – which is universal across all settings.

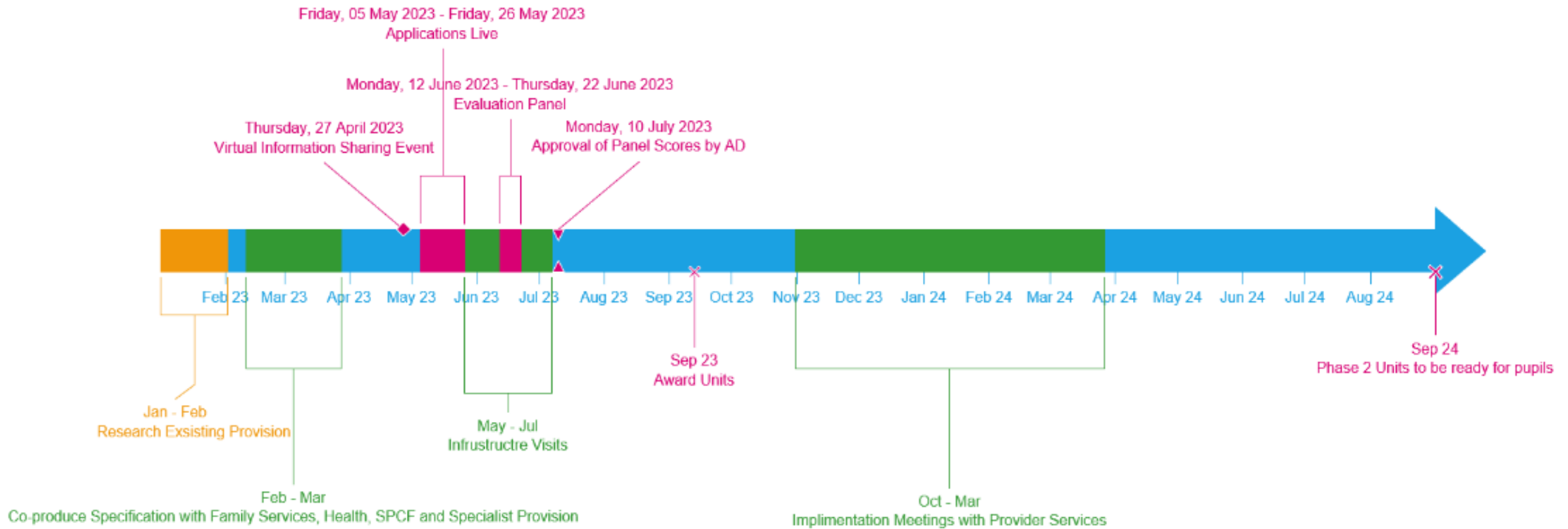
In summary:

- AWPU – basic place funding from ESFA/LA at the school's standard rate
- Additional Specialist Place Funding - £6,000 per place
- Individual top up funding – based on individual pupils needs determined through the High Needs Funding Bands A to I

Service Level Agreement – all schools providing a Specialist Unit will be requested to sign the standard Suffolk Specialist Provision SLA that is now available.

Units will be expected to open in either autumn 2023 or 2024 as agreed at the point of commissioning.

Next Steps And Timescales



Questions And Discussion

