

SEND School Placement Sufficiency – update December 2019

Since publication of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, creation of new school places locally has helped to mitigate increased demand for specialist provision. However, new places created have not kept pace with overall demand, leading to the continued increase in independent sector placements over the last year.

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2017-20 identified the need to increase the availability of placements locally, specifically in three key areas of primary pupil need:

- Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Speech, Language & Communication Need (SLCN)

Since publication, a number of schemes have been delivered in accordance with the strategy to enable the local placement of more pupils. These include:

- An additional (up to) 20 places to be provided by Abbey Special Academy using local authority space within Horizon Community College
- 10 places for pupils aged 14+ with primarily SEMH needs at Barnsley College
- A further 10 places for pupils in key stage 1 with SEMH needs utilising the installation of a portable unit at Springwell Special Academy

In addition, some existing provision has been reconfigured to ensure we can meet the needs of as many pupils as possible. For example, the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision at Penistone Grammar School, provided by Springwell for predominantly anxious and phobic pupils, has historically been under-utilised. In response to this, the provision has been redesigned to increase the support available for up to 16 pupils with multiple vulnerabilities and relocated to a dedicated unit within Kirk Balk Academy.

Developments using local authority space within our secondary schools and academies ensure that pupils get the specialist support they need while also enjoying the benefits of access to broader mainstream school facilities and peer groups, where appropriate.

Negotiations are also underway with a number of other schools in Barnsley, both primary and secondary, to increase the number of resourced provision / specialist unit places within mainstream provision. Wherever possible, this seeks to utilise the availability of local authority spaces and assets in or close to mainstream school sites. This approach also supports pupils to remain close to their communities and mainstream peers.

Barnsley commissioners continue to support the development of Special Free Schools in neighbouring boroughs. Negotiations are underway to commission places from two free schools due to open in Sheffield in 20/21 and 21/22.

These developments are in response to a growing trend towards pupils with a complexity of need, together with those who require more specialist provision with a view to reducing and preventing demand for out of authority, independent sector provision.

New placement and / or improvement schemes requiring capital investment are detailed in the attached updated spreadsheet.

The new draft SEND Placement Sufficiency Strategy (2020-23) , detailing how we will seek to best meet placement requirements locally in future, will be published for consultation January – March 2020.