

Two Proposed New SEMH Designated Special Free Schools in the North and South-East of Surrey

Did you use the EIA Screening Tool?

Yes

1. Explaining the matter being assessed

This is a:

- New service or function

Summarise the strategy, policy, service(s), or function(s) being assessed. Describe current status followed by any changes that stakeholders would experience.

Describe the change being assessed in plain English. Give your rationale for writing the EIA. Identify the key stakeholders affected by this change, including residents and staff. Consider what evidence you have gathered on the impact of your proposals.

The proposed change is to open two new coeducational Special Free Schools for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH); one in the north of the county and one in the south east of the county. This is part of a large programme of planned measures to significantly increase the number of places for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across Surrey to meet growing demand.

As with any new school, the proposed new special schools would be state maintained Free Schools which are run by Academy Trusts, approved by the Secretary of State for Education. Pupils aged 11-19 years with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and SEMH needs who require a specialist school placement would be placed at the schools and funded by Surrey County Council.

The Capital programme to increase the number of specialist school places is to ensure that children and young people with SEND that require a specialist school placement can have their educational needs met close to home and within state maintained provision wherever possible. This is so that all children can grow, develop and stay close to their community. New state maintained specialist school places actively reduce reliance on the independent sector. It is also an opportunity for schools to strengthen their inclusion offer to all children and young people, therefore being of benefit to local communities, school populations and the local authority.

To ensure that this aim is achieved, it is important to regularly assess the potential equalities impacts as the programme progresses. The proposed new coeducational special schools should have a direct positive impact on children with SEMH and their families by helping to ensure they can access a local school place that can best meet their needs, and significantly reducing journey times between home and school.

Surrey County Council Equality Impact Assessment

The proposed new schools would also create new job opportunities in the local areas for teachers, support staff and ancillary staff. Existing SEMH designated special schools would not be adversely affected as the forecast growth in demand for specialist places to 2030/31 for pupils aged 11-19 years with SEMH needs is well beyond the capacity of current provision in Surrey.

How does your service proposal support the outcomes in [the Community Vision for Surrey 2030](#)?

The SEND Capital Programme is aligned with Surrey's Community Vision 2030, which seeks to realise the local area's ambition that:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident
- Everyone benefits from education, skills and employment that help them to succeed in life
- Everyone lives healthy, active and fulfilling lives and makes good choices about their wellbeing
- Everyone gets the health and social care support and information they need at the right time and place
- Communities are welcoming and supporting especially of those most in need and people feel able to contribute to community life
- Journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer
- Well-connected communities with effective infrastructure that grow sustainably

Are there any specific geographies in Surrey where this will make an impact?

- County-wide

Whilst the schools are proposed to predominately serve the north and south east of the county, it is expected that there will be benefits for those living in other areas as well. In Surrey, as is the case nationally, specialist school provision does not just meet the needs of learners in the immediate surrounding district or borough. As such, special schools have a far wider intake than most mainstream schools.

Surrey County Council Equality Impact Assessment

2. Service Users / Residents

Who may be affected by this activity?

There are 9 protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) to consider in your proposal. These are:

1. Age including younger and older people
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
6. Religion or belief including lack of belief
7. Sex
8. Sexual orientation
9. Marriage/civil partnerships

Though not included in the Equality Act 2010, Surrey County Council recognises that there are other vulnerable groups which significantly contribute to inequality across the county and therefore they should also be considered within EIAs. If relevant, you will need to include information on the following vulnerable groups (Please refer to the EIA guidance if you are unclear as to what this is).

- Members/Ex members of armed forces
- Adult and young carers*
- Those experiencing digital exclusion*
- Those experiencing domestic abuse*
- Those with education/training (literacy) needs
- Those experiencing homelessness*
- Looked after children/Care leavers*
- Those living in rural/urban areas
- Those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage*
- Out of work young people*
- Adults with learning disabilities and/or autism*
- People with drug or alcohol use issues*
- People on probation
- People in prison
- Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers
- Sex workers
- Children with Special educational needs and disabilities*
- Adults with long term health conditions, disabilities (including SMI) and/or sensory impairment(s)*
- Older People in care homes*
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities*
- Other (describe below)

(*as identified in the Surrey COVID Community Impact Assessment and the Surrey Health and Well-being Strategy)

Disability

This proposal would directly affect families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Equality Impact Assessment

Age (Younger People)

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

Children and young people between the ages of 11 and 19 will be able to access places at the new schools, which will cater for boys and girls. SCC want to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit from the proposed new schools whilst ensuring that others aren't adversely affected.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

The foremost mitigation as mentioned above is to make the schools open to pupils of as wide an age range as possible and where there is the greatest demand. Admissions will be managed in line with the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice, January 2015](#)

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

The proposed new schools are part of a wider capital programme to increase the number of state maintained specialist school places in Surrey from approximately 3,700 to 6,000 by 2030/31. These new places will meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who have variety of needs and are educated in SEN units in mainstream primary and secondary schools and special schools. More than 800 new places have already been provided and the proposed new schools will play a significant part in ensuring that the remaining demand is met.

There are no dependencies that decision-makers need to be aware of.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

There are no identified negative impacts.

Equality Impact Assessment

3. Staff

Describe here the considerations and concerns in relation to the programme/policy for the selected group.

When the proposed new schools are in full operation, there will be approximately 66-70 staff per school, of whom around 5% will be part-time. The new schools will generate increased employment opportunities and work with local businesses.

Describe here suggested mitigations to inform the actions needed to reduce inequalities.

There is no mitigation required.

What other changes is the council planning/already in place that may affect the same groups of residents? Are there any dependencies decision makers need to be aware of?

The proposed new schools are part of a wider capital programme to provide up to 6,000 state maintained specialist school places across Surrey by 2030/31. There are no dependencies that decision-makers need to be aware of.

Any negative impacts that cannot be mitigated?

There are no such negative effects identified.

4. Recommendation

Based your assessment, please indicate which course of action you are recommending to decision makers. You should explain your recommendation below.

- **Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required. This EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or negative impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been undertaken**
- **Outcome Two: Adjust the policy/service/function to remove barriers identified by the EIA or better advance equality. Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers you identified?**
- **Outcome Three: Continue the policy/service/function despite potential for negative impact or missed opportunities to advance equality identified. You will need to make sure the EIA clearly sets out the justifications for continuing with it. You need to consider whether there are:**
 - Sufficient plans to stop or minimise the negative impact
 - Mitigating actions for any remaining negative impacts plans to monitor the actual impact.
- **Outcome Four: Stop and rethink the policy when the EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. (For guidance on what is unlawful discrimination, refer to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance and Codes of Practice on the Equality Act](#) concerning employment, goods and services and equal pay).**

Equality Impact Assessment

Recommended outcome:

Outcome One: No major change to the policy/service/function required

Explanation:

This is a new service that will positively benefit children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and specifically individuals with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs aged 11-19 years who require a specialist school placement. No group will be disadvantaged.

Equality Impact Assessment

5. Action plan and monitoring arrangements

Insert your action plan here, based on the mitigations recommended.

Involve your Assessment Team in monitoring progress against the actions above.

Item	Initiation Date	Action/Item	Person Actioning	Target Completion Date	Update/Notes	Open/Closed
1		No mitigations required				
2						
3						

6a. Version control

Version Number	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1	Proposed New SEMH Designated Special Free Schools	Peter Speers	19/08/2022
2	Proposed New SEMH Designated Special Free Schools	Peter Speers	02/09/2022

The above provides historical data about each update made to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Please include the name of the author, date and notes about changes made – so that you can refer to what changes have been made throughout this iterative process.

For further information, please see the EIA Guidance document on version control.

Equality Impact Assessment

6b. Approval

Secure approval from the appropriate level of management based on nature of issue and scale of change being assessed.

Approved by	Date approved
Head of Service	Liz Mills/Emily George
Executive Director	Rachael Wardell
Cabinet Member	Cllr Clare Curran
Directorate Equality Group	Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Publish:

All EIAs are published on Surrey County Council's website.

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