

# School Organisation Consultation

## Change to the age range of The Willows Short Stay School

Retaining the Statutory primary provision and  
ending the non-statutory secondary provision

**May  
2015**



**SURREY**

## Introduction

1. This paper outlines the proposal for the future development of The Willows Short Stay School and its proposed future with effect in providing statutory Short Stay School provision across the Surrey County Council area.

## Background

2. The Willows is a Short Stay School located in Guildford for pupils aged 5 -16. The primary and secondary schools operate in separate accommodation on the same site. The Willows was rated as Good by Ofsted in November 2011.
3. The school is funded for 11 full time primary aged places for pupils who live in the South West area of Surrey. In addition there are 18 full time funded secondary places for girls only from across the county.
4. The Willows Primary offers statutory provision for pupils who have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded from a school and who live in the South West area of Surrey.
5. The Willows secondary is a girls-only, non-statutory provision. It offers places to pupils from across all Surrey quadrants. In partnership with their mainstream schools these pupils receive education via an individualised alternative learning programme.
6. The local authority has a duty to review the Short Stay provision it supports and to ensure the provision meets the statutory requirements relating to pupils that have been excluded from schools.

## Proposal

7. It is proposed that the age range of The Willows Short Stay School changes from 1 January 2016 so that the school is for primary aged pupils only. From July 2015 no further secondary aged pupils will be admitted as the all girl provision will end.
8. The senior leadership team and the governing body at the school are in agreement with the proposal to change the age range, as the viability of the secondary provision in its current format has been explored in light of the current financial climate.
9. The current provision for primary aged pupils remains appropriate in order to meet the Local Authority's statutory requirements for children that have been excluded from their mainstream schools. If the proposal to end the secondary provision goes ahead the primary provision will continue, and there will be a review of the organisational arrangements and the accommodation currently being used by the primary pupils.

## **Rationale for The Willows Short Stay School Proposal**

10. In the current financial climate, the funding is insufficient to maintain The Willows at its current level of costs, without using a disproportionate amount of funds per pupil.
11. The Willows secondary Short Stay School is accessible to females only and does not have the same statutory basis as the primary. The provision is not designed to provide education for permanently excluded girls and there is no statutory requirement for them to attend a Short Stay School.
12. Male secondary aged pupils do not have an equivalent Short Stay School offer such as The Willows. Male pupils who require an individualised programme of education as a result of permanent exclusion or are at high risk of permanent exclusion or acute social and emotional vulnerability are provided for either by their mainstream school or with the support of a Short Stay School in the area from which they live.
13. The young women who access support from The Willows remain on roll at their mainstream school and are dual registered. These pupils have personalised curriculums designed to meet their individual needs. Such curricular offers could be made via their school or other alternative educational offers, where they meet access criteria. If a pupil is not on roll at a mainstream school they are entitled to receive support via the statutory provision from the local Short Stay School in the area in which they live or via an alternative educational programme, such as the Access to Education service.
14. Pupils who have dual registration are receiving funding from two different sources. Every pupil on roll at a mainstream roll receives Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). Most pupils attend The Willows on part time programmes for no more than the equivalent of two or three days per week. From September 2015 pupils that attend The Willows would also receive place funding of £10,000 per full time equivalent together with a top up funding sum averaging £26,000 per full time equivalent pupil programme from the Local Authority. The high cost of the placement in addition to the AWPU funding raises questions about the value for money that the provision offers.
15. Most pupils who attend The Willows receive assistance with Home to School transport. The total Alternative Provision Transport budget is in excess of £350,000 across the county. By attending either a local mainstream school with a supported education programme or area based Short Stay School savings to this transport budget will be achieved.

## **Staffing and HR**

16. A number of staff will be affected by the change of age range and if the decision is made to proceed then there may be staff redundancies. This will mainly affect those members of staff who work fully, or in part, at the secondary Willows provision. Any redundancy processes and staff consultations cannot take place until a decision has been made to proceed with this proposal.
17. If a decision were taken to implement the proposal in its current form, then the earliest any staff would be made redundant would be 31 December 2015. Staff would be given contractual notice which would be up to a maximum of 12 weeks depending on their length of continuous service. Every effort will be made to redeploy existing staff in other roles around the County provided that they meet the necessary requirements.

## **Pupil Transition**

18. There are a number of pupils currently accessing provision at The Willows who are in Year 11 and will leave school in June 2015. It is proposed that no new secondary aged pupils attend The Willows from September 2015.
19. There are 16 other pupils across Key Stages 3 and 4 who are currently attending The Willows and will not be leaving in July. These young people will be supported into programmes of education, either back to school or to an alternative placement according to their individual needs. To support the transition, staff at The Willows will be working in partnership with the young people, parents and carers and pupils' schools to meet the individual needs of the pupils. This process will be fully supported by the Area Education teams, with the Area Lead for Pupil Support liaising with all parties to develop Education provision plans.

## **Finance and Resourcing**

20. Pupils that attend The Willows generate AWPU funding for their mainstream place. From September 2015 pupils that attend The Willows would also receive place funding of £10,000 per full time equivalent together with a top up funding sum averaging £26,000 per full time equivalent pupil programme from the Local Authority.
21. Following closure the Local Authority will seek to redirect any net gain in resources to support those areas of growth for specialist SEN provision, though this will be subject to DfE funding rules.

## **Capital planning and buildings**

22. As part of this proposal it is not anticipated that there will be any physical changes required to the buildings.
23. There will be a review of the accommodation currently being used by the primary pupils. This feasibility study will be to ensure that there is enough physical space to accommodate the 11 planned places.
24. The space currently used by The Willows secondary pupils may be made available to the South West Short Stay School to make provision for secondary pupils that have been or are at risk of being permanently excluded. A further feasibility study will take place to consider this option.

## **Consultations, approvals and overall timescales**

25. It is proposed that the age range of the School is changed from 1 January 2016. The proposed changes to The Willows Short Stay School are described as “prescribed alterations” and require a period of consultation, the publication of statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning if the proposal is to proceed.
26. The first stage of consultation will be informal and is proposed to run until 12 noon on 20 May 2015. During this period the Local Authority will share its proposals with the wider professional network, schools including headteachers and Chairs of Governors, with unions, Parent representatives, partner agencies and with the staff and parents of the school subject to “prescribed alterations”.
27. Following the informal consultation period it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a 4 week period. The publication of Notices is when the Local Authority formally states that it intends to implement the proposed changes. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following the consultation periods officers will summarise the feedback and will report to the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning in July 2015.

## Have your say

Surrey County Council and The Willows Short Stay School would like to know what people in the area feel about the proposal. The consultation will open on **Wednesday 6 May 2015**.

You can respond by:

a) Accessing the consultation online on the 'Surrey Says' website: [www.surreysays.co.uk](http://www.surreysays.co.uk) and searching for the school's consultation (school name or post code), or by scrolling through the list of open consultations.

b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to the address below.

Julie Beckett (The Willows Short Stay School)  
Room 326  
County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston upon Thames  
KT1 2DJ

FAO Julie Beckett (The Willows Short Stay School) to:  
[schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk)

All responses must be received by 12 noon on Wednesday 20 May 2015

## What happens next?

We will hold a public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, anyone who wishes to may attend. This meeting will be on the **Wednesday 13 May at 6pm** at The Willows Short Stay School. Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting and there is no need to pre-register your attendance.

Please come and share your views. You do not have to have a child at the school to come to the meeting.

At the end of the consultation period, we will review all of the responses received and share these with the school and publish them on the Surrey Says website.

On Thursday 21 May 2015, we intend to publish a Statutory Notice at the school, in a local newspaper and on the Surrey Says website stating our intention to change the age range of the school. There will be a 4 week statutory consultation period for further representations to be received by the council. The formal consultation period is due to end on 19 June 2015.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning in July 2015.