

Specialist provision for children with social, emotional and mental health difficulties

Children's Services Department
SEN Service

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Introduction

These criteria have been produced for school, local authority staff and other professionals in Hampshire, in order to establish a shared understanding of the level and nature of need likely to require placement in a special school or mainstream school with resourced provision, for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH).

Specialist provision for pupils with SEMH is part of a continuum. Alongside the provision made by mainstream schools at the different levels of intervention outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015), pupils with SEMH may also be supported by outreach staff from specialist provision, behaviour support teams, and Education Centres. It is expected that all Hampshire children with SEMH will, with a few exceptions, be catered for effectively in maintained schools.

The majority of children identified as presenting significant social, emotional and mental health difficulties are educated in mainstream schools. To meet their needs, schools will take reasonable steps and make reasonable adjustments, in consultation with the pupil and his/her parents/carers and, where appropriate, with the advice and support of other professionals in the Children's Services and other services.

Section 33 of the Children and Families 2014 states that the local authority must secure that the EHC plan provides for the child or young person to be educated in a maintained nursery school, mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institution, unless that is incompatible with:

- (a) the wishes of the child's parent or the young person, or
- (b) the provision of efficient education for others.

These are the only reasons why mainstream education can be refused.

Local authorities and maintained schools can only deny mainstream education for a pupil with a EHC plan against parental wishes, on the grounds that it would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children. A local authority will only be able to rely on this if there are no reasonable steps it, or a school, could take to prevent the incompatibility in a particular school or across its mainstream schools.

Admissions criteria

A pupil being considered for placement in specialist provision for SEMH (**special school or resourced mainstream provision**) will normally:

1. Meet Hampshire County Council's criteria for statutory assessment of children with SEMH.
2. Have SEMH as their prime presenting area of difficulty in the school setting.
3. Present significant difficulties in one or more of:
 - emotional behaviour
 - learning behaviour

These difficulties, despite the interventions which have been implemented over time at School Support, and if agreed with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan,

have not improved or have increased and are having a seriously detrimental effect on the pupil and his/her learning/progress. Assessment and intervention that has taken account of the needs of the pupil, the support available from parents/carers, and the pupil's wider family and environment (Plan, do, review) has taken place over time.

4. Require a structured, differentiated curriculum delivered in an adapted learning environment with carefully managed or controlled contact with other pupils and support for limited concentration/attention.
5. Require an explicit individual programme, delivered and reinforced daily, for the development of social skills.
6. Require frequent access to learning programmes that address emotional and/or social needs.
7. Be likely to have identified additional or associated learning needs (eg specific or general learning difficulties; social communication difficulties) and/or related medical diagnoses (eg Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD); Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome (PDAS); Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)) and requires access to qualified therapeutic/psychiatric support. (Children with severe challenging behaviour arising from or associated with severe learning difficulties will not normally be placed in specialist SEMH provision.)
8. Be considered likely over time to respond to individual programmes of intervention and reasonable adjustments that are in addition to those normally available in a mainstream school.

Children placed in a **resourced provision within a mainstream school** will also normally show some evidence of:

9. Ability to access all or part of the curriculum of the mainstream school, differentiated as appropriate.
10. Potential to interact positively with other pupils in the mainstream school, with support where necessary.
11. A pattern of behaviour that is not expected to require constant close and long-term one-to-one adult supervision.

Hampshire currently has five mainstream schools which are specially resourced to make provision for pupils with SEMH. These are listed in the document *Provision in Hampshire for children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans* available at <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-provision-in-hampshire.pdf>. Each resourced provision is an integral part of a mainstream school. The aim of each provision is to allow identified pupils to access a mainstream curriculum in a supportive environment where their needs are met by staff that have relevant skills and knowledge and understand their difficulties.

Identified pupils will have the general ability to access an appropriately differentiated mainstream curriculum, and a statement of special educational needs indicating their prime area of need to be SEMH. They are placed in the provisions by the local authority

and come from a wider geographical area than the schools' catchment area. The decision regarding placement rests with the local authority.

Admissions procedures

Admission to specialist provision for SEMH is via Hampshire County Council SEN Service, following recommendation from the County Moderation Group (CMG) and then SEMH panel. Admission is not arranged through approaches by individuals directly to the school.

1. On completion of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment and issuing of an EHC plan or on receipt of an annual review report, the SEN Service may arrange for the pupil's provision or placement to be discussed by County Moderation Group and then if agreed to be discussed at the SEMH panel.
2. CMG and then SEMH panel will consider the pupil's assessed special educational needs, having particular regard to the criteria listed in this document.
3. Where placement at specialist provision is considered appropriate, having taken account of the pupil's needs and having been agreed at CMG the SEN Service will refer papers to the nearest special school and resource provision'
4. The headteacher, on behalf of the Chair of Governors, will respond within fifteen working days, either saying that they believe that they can meet SEN or that the school has concerns about the placement. All placements in special or resourced provision are recommended by the SEMH panel and signed off by the Education Officer with SEMH lead.
5. The SEN Service will confirm any offer of a place to the parents/carers and issue the final EHC plan or amended final EHC plan as appropriate.
6. In exceptional cases, pupils may be admitted to specialist provision on an assessment basis, prior to completion of statutory assessment. This will however be via the SEMH panel.
7. The continuing need for specialist places will be reviewed as part of each annual review.

Specialist provision for pupils with SEMH

Special and mainstream schools making specialist provision for pupils with SEMH will:

1. Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which encompasses the National Curriculum and takes account of the age and individual needs of each pupil; to ensure and enable appropriate progress and attainment.
2. Deliver the curriculum, taking account of pupils' difficulties in social functioning and other learning needs, and provide opportunities for individual and group teaching, counselling and guidance.
3. Provide a behaviour management structure, with individual behaviour management plans (IBMP) where appropriate.

4. Provide access to learning programmes that address emotional needs (eg anger, self-control, relationships) and the development of positive social and interactional skills.
5. Provide pupils with frequent and detailed feedback and encouragement about their behaviour.
6. Value pupils for themselves, as well as what they are capable of achieving, and maintain a level of care and offer positive experiences even in the context of potentially challenging behaviour.
7. Have staff with experience and training in work with challenging behaviour, who offer consistent strategies and boundaries to support change at a high level of intensity and detail. This may include physical intervention.
8. Offer a high level of home-school liaison and partnership with parents/carers, supported by the attached social worker.
9. Enable close working with psychiatric/therapeutic and other support services.

Additionally, a mainstream school with resourced provision for SEMH will:

10. Provide regular opportunities for inclusion in mainstream school and class activities.

Integration/exit procedures

Mainstream schools with resourced provision aim to include pupils in mainstream classes for as much time as possible, compatible with the pupil's needs, and over time to return pupils to full-time mainstream provision. Special schools will offer integration and inclusion opportunities through links with local mainstream schools and dual roll where appropriate.

All schools offering specialist provision have a responsibility to ensure that places are not being filled by pupils who no longer need the specialist resources of the school and whose needs can be met within a mainstream school. The local authority expects each annual review to consider whether the pupil continues to require specialist provision and whether he/she would benefit from opportunities to be included within a mainstream school.

In most cases children are likely to retain their EHC plan which will be amended to specify a level of support on their exit from a specialist provision.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate for a child in a resourced provision to transfer to a special school.

When a child exits a specialist provision, particularly in the case of a transfer to secondary school, it is the responsibility of the specialist provision to ensure that a transition plan is in place and agreed with the parents and the receiving school.

In the case of young people transferring from a secondary school to further education the specialist provision will work with the SEN Service and the receiving college to ensure a smooth transition.

When a child transfers from primary specialist provision to secondary specialist provision, the two schools will collaborate to implement an effective transition programme.

If a child is to remain in a specialist provision, Hampshire County Council will expect to see evidence in the annual review report that the child continues to need the place.

Further information

List of specialist provision in Hampshire for children with SEMH

- Please refer to the document *Provision in Hampshire for children and young people with EHC plans* available online at <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-provision-in-hampshire.pdf>

or go to the Local Offer at <https://fish.hants.gov.uk/localoffer>

Hampshire County Council SEN Criteria documents are available at www.hants.gov.uk/sencriteria

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years, DfE, 2015 available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Schools: guide to the 0 to 25 years SEND Code of Practice, DfE, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-schools-and-alternativeprovision-settings

If you would like more information please contact the SEN Service, email enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk.

Appendix 1 - Guidelines for residential placement in Hampshire's SEMH special schools

Introduction: general principles

Residential places are normally only available for children on the roll of the school. Exceptionally, a pupil may remain resident whilst being reintegrated into another local school provided that he/she is on roll at the SEMH school with residential provision and is still supported on a structured programme from the school.

Exceptionally, requests for short term residential placement for an existing day pupil may be considered by the headteacher and governing body, in consultation with the local authority, where places are available. Where vacant residential places exist, a short term emergency placement may be agreed. If such a placement requires longer term (more than one term) residential provision, the case should be referred back to the SEN Service to consider through the County Assessment and Placement Advisory Group (CAPAG) whether the circumstances fall within the agreed admission criteria for residential placement.

In addition to formal placement within residential provision, a SEMH school may wish to ensure that all children have the opportunity of some residential experience as part of their curriculum entitlement. The residential admissions criteria do not normally apply to these short term (eg maximum fortnight) placements.

Residential placements are **not**:

- made simply because they are requested by a parent/carer or another agency
- negotiated by a school or an individual who has been asked to provide a report for statutory assessment
- an alternative respite facility (unless this is agreed and negotiated with Social Care officers)
- an alternative for families who are unwilling to work with Social Care
- a permanent arrangement, but are regularly reviewed.

The aims of special needs provision

The criteria for placement in SEMH schools should be read in the context of the County Council guidelines for residential placement in special schools.

Placements of children with EHC plans are determined by the Education Officer (SEN), taking account of advice from the County Moderation Group (CMG), SEMH panel, County Placement Group (CPG) or the Joint Placement Group (JPG). All placements and decisions should be taken in the context of the County Council's policy on special educational needs. This provides that:

- children should receive an appropriate education where possible in mainstream schools
- children should be educated in schools as close to home as possible

- the variety of children's needs should be recognised and met through a flexible and varied provision
- parents/carers should be able to work in partnership with the Children's Services.

Admissions criteria

All children placed in SEMH residential placements should satisfy at least one of the following criteria. When the number of referrals exceeds places available, places will be allocated in the priority order of these criteria.

1. Children for whom the length of time of home-school travel to an appropriate special school is considered excessive and detrimental to the child and to the achievement of his/her education objectives.
2. Children whose learning, social and emotional needs require a consistent educational environment, providing a structured and predictable regime throughout their waking hours (and usually for up to four nights in each week in term time), in order for the child to effectively access a suitable educational curriculum and to make sufficient progress in achieving the outcomes objectives set out sections E and F of the EHC plan.
3. Children for whom a combination of day care facilities (educational, health, therapeutic and care) cannot fully meet the child's needs to the extent that barriers to satisfactory educational progress and to the child's access to those facilities would exist unless a continuous educational and care regime is provided. In such cases, it is expected that a co-ordinated plan, jointly agreed and funded between at least two of the three participating services (ie education, social care and health) requires a residential placement to improve measurably a child's educational progress and achievements.

For some children who are in foster care, a planned, short term placement in their school's residential provision may be identified as being beneficial to the child and his/her family and may be agreed by the participating services.

Reviews

All SEMH residential placements should be kept under review to ensure that they are still required in order to ensure that the child's educational and/or care needs are sufficiently met. Consideration should be given to the use of other services (eg School Home Integrated Programmes (SHIPs), family support; short breaks) where these may assist a family in providing the necessary care and support at home.

A formal review of the placement should take place at least annually. This will normally be included in the annual review of the child's statement of SEN.