



**County Hall  
Hertford, SG13 8DF**

**Tel: 0300 123 4043**

**My ref: School Planning**

**Date: 02 October 2017**

Dear Consultee,

**Consultation on a proposal to reconfigure existing services to schools to support them to meet the needs of primary aged children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) by 31 August 2018.**

The vast majority of students identified with SpLD in Hertfordshire currently have their needs met in their local mainstream schools with outreach support from a number of bases across the county. A review has identified that an enhanced service can be provided in a different way. Technically that will require the closure of the bases.

**What is the proposal?**

To reconfigure staffing into four teams as part of the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Special Advice and Support Service under the overall line management of the County Lead for Specialist Advice and Support. This will enhance the current offer with additional expertise from within the central service which includes staff with higher levels of SpLD training and expertise.

**To do this it will be necessary to close the SpLD Outreach Bases located in the following schools on 31 August 2018 and to provide support for students from staff working out of the 4 Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) areas.**

<b>School</b>	<b>Address</b>
Applecroft Primary	14 Applecroft Rd, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6LA
Bonneygrove Primary	Dark Ln, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross EN7 5ED
Grange Junior	Sparhawke, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4PY
Laurance Haines Primary	Vicarage Rd, Hertfordshire, Watford WD18 0DD

Maple Grove Primary	St Agnells Ln, Hemel Hempstead HP2 7BG
Parkside Primary	Aycliffe Rd, Borehamwood WD6 4EP
The Leys Primary	207 Ripon Rd, Stevenage SG1 4LR
The Thomas Coram Junior	Swing Gate Ln, Berkhamsted HP4 2RP
Thorley Hill Primary	Park La, Bishop's Stortford CM23 3NH
Windemere Primary	Windemere Ave, St Albans AL1 5QP

### **Why is it proposed to close the SpLD bases?**

SpLD Bases were established 20 years ago to provide services to local schools with the aim of supporting schools in their localities to better meet SpLD needs. They provide a broad range of outreach services including universal early intervention support, specialist, and targeted support for students with complex needs.

Over time schools have increased their capacity to identify and meet the needs of young people. This has gone hand in hand with a recognition of the high incidence of SPLD within each school and an increased expectation on all schools that they will meet the needs of children with SPLD from within their own resources.

An internal review carried out in 2015 by the Educational Psychology Service identified that services were being delivered differently across the County. It concluded that support could be enhanced by reconfiguring the way it was organised. That process started within the secondary sector, and the two secondary bases were closed in August 2016. This proposal concentrates on the primary sector.

### **How will the needs of primary aged students with Specific Learning Difficulties continue to be met?**

The vast majority of students identified with SpLD in Hertfordshire currently have their needs met in their local mainstream schools. Currently one student in the county accesses Exceptional Needs Funding (ENF) to support their specific learning difficulties. A further 97 students have an Education Health and Care Plan identifying SpLD as their primary need, the majority of these children are now in post 16 provision. As from September 2017 there will be 10 children with EHC plans naming SpLD as a primary need in primary schools and 41 in secondary schools, and 13 of the 41 being educated in a special school.

Individually allocated pupil-led funding provided to schools will continue to be available for the students with higher level (exceptional) needs requiring support over and above a school's ordinarily available provision.

The County will continue to provide outreach services, increasingly targeting resources to support complex needs where it would not be expected that a school might have the necessary level of expertise.

To ensure that services are provided effectively and consistently it is proposed to close the bases and reconfigure staffing into four teams as part of the SEND Specialist Advice and Support Service under the overall line management of the County Lead for Complex Needs. This will enhance the current offer with additional expertise from within the central service which includes staff with higher levels of SPLD training and expertise.

### **What would this mean for students and staff?**

Those children who have received targeted input from the newly configured local outreach service will continue to have their needs planned, monitored and reviewed by their school and will have access to an outreach service.

Each base is currently staffed by teaching and admin staff, some of whom are currently on fixed-term contracts. The proposal is to transfer a number of those staff to the Central SEND Specialist Advice and Support Service and to create a single Lead Practitioner county-wide role to support and oversee and ensure high quality continuing professional development for Service staff.

The SpLD advisory teachers would become part of the Specialist Advice and Support Service. They would spend the majority of their time visiting and providing services to schools and targeted and specialist work with children. They would have the benefit of being part of the four local ISL teams. Initially SpLD teachers will be allocated across the county using model indicator data to ensure fair and equitable distribution of resources.

The service will further develop the principles of outreach in line with the Specialist Advisory Teacher model delivered by Integrated Services for Learning (ISL).

Reasonable steps will be taken to avoid compulsory redundancies should this be necessary. Where compulsory redundancy cannot be avoided individuals would be identified from a relevant pool of staff following the application of selection criteria confirmed during consultation with employee representatives (trade unions/professional associations).

Existing libraries of resources are proposed to be available on short term loans to local settings, as are other special needs resources in localities.

### **What educational improvement does this offer for students with specific learning difficulties?**

Networks of groups and workshops have developed over time to share expertise on effective resources and assistive technology to increase confidence in local schools to identify and assess need and in turn to assist with planning effective programmes of support. This approach is endorsed through the Code of Practice (2015) assess, plan, do, review framework.

SpLD provision operates to build capacity in local schools to meet the needs of Hertfordshire students locally. The decline in the numbers of requests for SpLD support from schools is indicative of needs being met within local schools.

Staff in local schools are equipped to recognise and identify special educational needs, and put early intervention strategies into place. These strategies, alongside a regular process of review and evaluation will further enable young people to receive early and effective support in their local school alongside their peers. Where more specialised input is required, educational settings will continue to have access to Advisory teaching support that will be co-ordinated monitored and delivered alongside other Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) Specialist services.

### **Have your say**

This formal consultation process will run for seven weeks and, if agreed, proposed changes would be implemented from September 2018.

We would like to hear your views on the proposal to close the Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Bases from 31 August 2018. You have until **20 November 2017** to let us know your views. The easiest way you can do this is by completing the online form on our website at: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/consultations). You can tell us if you agree or disagree with the proposal and leave your comments.

If you do not have access to the internet you can visit your local library where free access is available to all Hertfordshire residents. Should you wish to request a hard copy of the response form, you can email [hertsdirect@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:hertsdirect@hertfordshire.gov.uk) or alternatively you can call us on **0300 123 4043**. If you need help to understand this information, please contact the customer service centre on **0300 123 4043**. An interpreting service is available for those who need it.

Your comments must be received by **date 20 November 2017**. We will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to your comments but they will be taken into account, as explained below.

### **How the decision will be taken**

This is a consultation and no decision has been made yet. All comments received will be made available to elected members who make the final decision. All responses may be made available in public reports, although personal details will be removed to respect individual privacy. The following timetable outlines the decision-making process. Please note that meetings marked with \* will be open to the public. Although it will not be possible to inform everyone individually of the decisions made, you will be able to access this information throughout the process at: <https://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings.aspx>

<b>Process</b>	<b>Date</b>
Consultation period	2 October – 20 November 2017
Education, Libraries and Localism Panel* to consider outcome of consultation	6 February 2018
Cabinet* decision to publish stat notices	19 February 2018
Statutory Notice period	1 – 29 March 2018
Cabinet* final decision	23 April 2018
New service delivery in place and delivering	1 September 2018

Yours faithfully



**Simon Newland**  
**Operations Director, Education**