

**Admissions
Guidance
for**

**Specialist
Provisions in Cumbria
for children and
young people with an
Education, Health
and Care Plan**



Introduction to the admissions guidance for Specialist Provision

The guidance is intended to give a broad framework for making decisions about the setting in which the special educational needs of an individual child or young person can be met most appropriately, considering the views and preferences of parents and the young person themselves.

Where a child or young person whose special educational needs are such that they are likely to need specialist provision not ordinarily available within a mainstream school, the Local Authority may consider a special school, or a resourced provision placement attached to a mainstream school.

Requesting a specific school can be done either following the issuing of the draft EHC plan, or at the Annual Review which identifies a wish by parents to consider specialist placement. This will be taken into consideration alongside the Local Authority's identified closest suitable school and a place will be allocated to the child/young person in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015):

- The school is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude, or SEN
- The placement would be compatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom the child/young person would be educated, and
- The placement would be compatible with the efficient use of resources

Sometimes children and young people need different settings at different times of their school life. The level and type of provision required by a child or young person is considered at the point of agreeing an Education, Health and Care Plan, or at an annual review.

Admissions to special schools and resourced provisions are for the Local Authority to determine based on its consideration of all the advice received about a child or young person's special educational needs.

Admissions to special schools and resourced provisions are agreed through the agreed process of the Specialist Placement Panel.

Role of specialist provision in Cumbria

Cumbrian special schools and resourced provision in mainstream schools aim to:

- Provide high-quality education and care for pupils and demonstrate expertise in working with special educational needs pupils;
- Ensure effective partnership working between specialist provision and mainstream schools, the wider community, and health and social services, to meet the needs of children and young people and their families in a holistic way;
- Innovate in curriculum delivery and develop different ways of providing effectively for pupils with a range of special educational needs and disability;
- Have high expectations of all pupils with special educational needs and disability to raise their levels of attainment and achievement.

The specialist provision made in special schools and resourced provision in mainstream schools in Cumbria is part of a wide and diverse range of services and provision which the local authority makes for children and young people with special educational needs and disability.

Placement of children and young people

Children and young people who are thought to require specialist provision, whether this is in a special school or resourced provision in a mainstream school, will inevitably have significant and perhaps highly complex needs. The majority of children and young people with special educational needs, including those with an Education Health and Care Plan, are able to attend and have their needs met in their local mainstream school. Those children and young people requiring specialist provision, are characterised by a high level of vulnerability in an educational setting.

Cumbrian special schools and resourced provision schools aim to provide appropriate placements for children and young people with the most significant needs, who require a curriculum which is highly individualised to enable them to engage in learning at an appropriate level. To achieve this engagement in learning, smaller class sizes and high levels of staffing and expertise throughout the school are often required.

The following stages are involved when considering the placement:

Early discussions with parents

It is important that any discussions with parents about a potential request for a specialist placement take place well in advance of a request being made.

These conversations might take place following an EHC needs assessment or prior to an Annual Review but should always be approached with sensitivity. Please note for Primary Secondary transfer changes this discussion would begin in the summer term of year 5.

1. Parents should be informed of the process that needs to be followed and encouraged to visit appropriate potential specialist placements. They can also be supported in this process by the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIAS)
2. Schools should also contact the relevant area SEND Team to inform them of a proposed referral to the Specialist Placement Panel

Referral to Specialist Placement Panel

Referrals can be made as part of the consultation process following the issuing of the draft EHC plan, or Annual Review identifying a request by parents to consider a specialist placement. This is done through the completion of the specialist placement referral form including evidence from the current school and involved professionals.

There may be occasions when parents wish to make a request for specialist provision outside of the Annual Review timescales. In these circumstances the school /setting should hold an early review and follow the referral process as outlined above.

Consideration by Specialist Placement Panel

Terms of reference for Local Authority Funded Specialist Provision Placement Panel (School Age)

Purpose

- To consider the evidence for the placement of children in line with the agreed criteria to Local Authority commissioned specialist placements;
- To ensure the most effective and efficient use of Cumbria's High Needs Block funding;
- Ensure fair and equitable access to educational support for Cumbrian children and young people (5-16) having regard to the views and preferences of those children, young people and their parents and carers;
- To provide transparent and consistent evaluation of the evidence of high level and additional needs;
- Offer a multi-disciplinary decision-making forum in which best outcomes for the child along with alternative options are agreed upon. Having regard to accurate specialist information;
- To ensure the most vulnerable learners with highly complex needs have an appropriate local educational placement.

The panel has a quality assurance function that ensures that no reasonable steps that could have been taken by the local authority or existing school to ensure a successful mainstream placement have been missed.

Following a positive decision of suitability for a specialist placement and best fit, all papers will be forwarded to the recommended setting for consideration allowing 15 days for the setting to respond.

Schools/ settings should ensure that any requests for admission are signposted to the Specialist Placement Panel.

Panel dates will be published for the next academic year in July of the previous one. The panels will occur at regular intervals of four working weeks to minimise delays in decision making. With published dates this enables schools/settings, professionals, and families to plan in a timely manner.

Panel decisions will be communicated to the proposed specialist setting, current school, and parents.

The flowchart on page 7 outlines the process from the point that the current school completes the referral form. In order to ensure any decision is fully informed by evidence and that Cumbria can show equity in allocating provision, the SEND Team would require the current school to complete a referral form and submit this to the panel.

The option to seek the advice of SENDIAS is available to families at any point in the process.

Once a request for a place has been received from the Specialist Placement Panel, the panel will aim to respond with a decision within 1 month, before the next panel meeting.

The decision reached may be:

- **YES** The Specialist Placement Panel will send out the confirmation letter to the family and current setting so the transition process can be agreed
- **NO** The specialist placement panel feel that the child's needs can be met within the mainstream provision or
The provision must clearly state why they feel they are unable to meet need for the child (against the agreed admissions criteria) and any recommendations for further specialist support in current setting

The Specialist Placement Panel will send out the decision letter to the family.

Placement process

The local authority is responsible for the decision to place a child or young person in a special school or resourced provision in a mainstream school.

A provision panel with multi-professional membership considers individual children with an Education, Health and Care Plan where a specialist school placement is requested.

Children and young people are only admitted to special schools and resourced provision in mainstream schools if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The Panel

All requests for special provision are considered at the Panel. The Panel currently comprises of:

- Chair - SEND Service Manager
- SEND Education Team Managers
- Principal/Deputy/Senior Educational Psychologist
- Professional Lead Specialist Teachers as needed
- Special School Headteacher Representative
- Invited professional observers

The panel was established to ensure that fair and reasonable decisions are made.

Each case is considered against the admissions criteria and decision are made according to the particular needs and circumstances of the child.

Please note that this guidance and process will be reviewed annually.

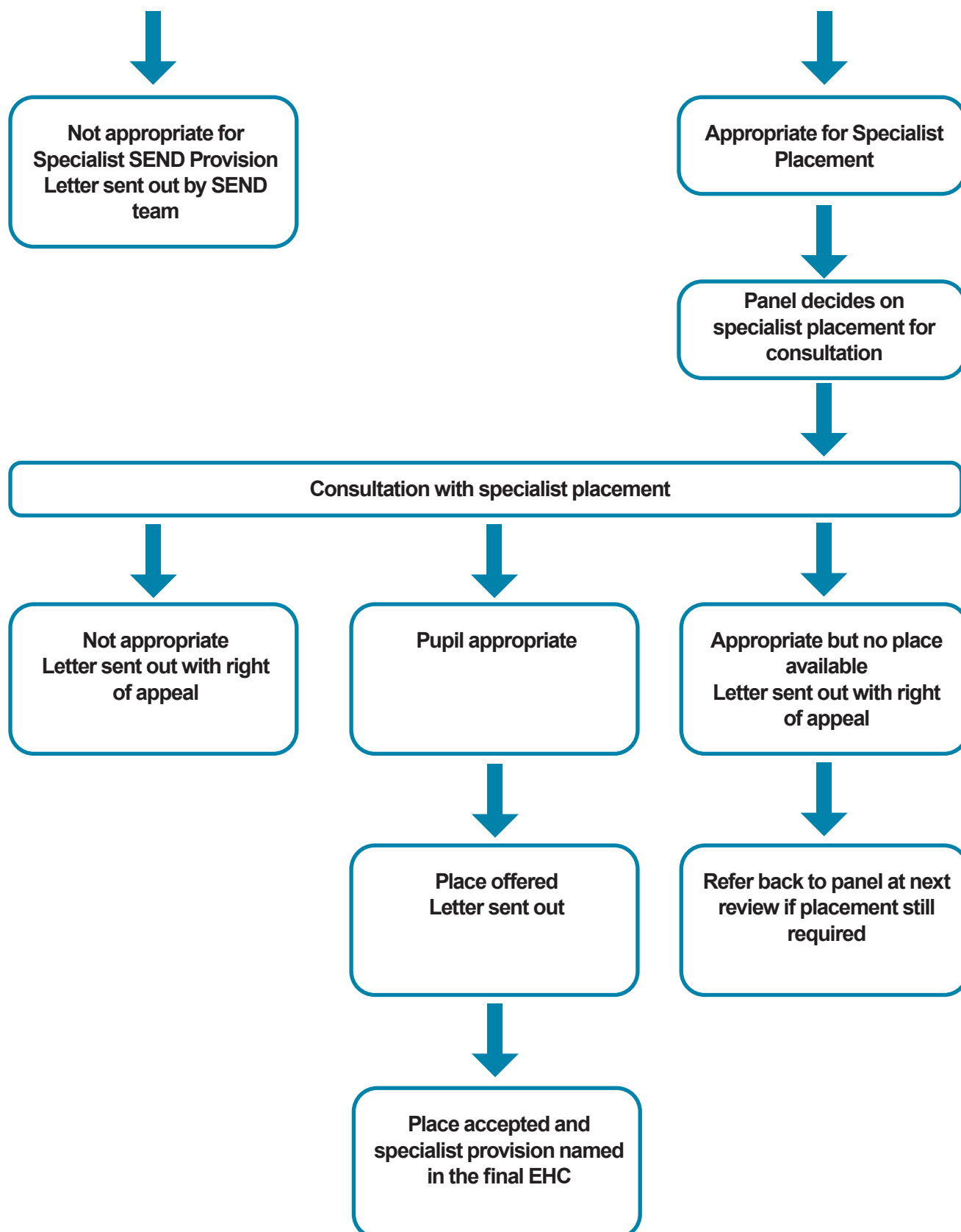
Review of placements

SPECIALIST SEND PROVISION PLACEMENT PROCESS

Current school completes referral form & ensures families have contact details for SENDIAS

Cumbria's Specialist Provision

Placement Panel



Appendix 1: Criteria for Admission to Cumbria's SEND Specialist Provision

General Criteria

1. All pupils in SEND Special Schools and Specialist Settings in Cumbria have an Education Health and Care plan
2. All Special Schools and settings provide small classes and a peer group to support both learning and social and emotional development in a nurturing environment
3. Parents have expressed a preference for the school
4. The school is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude, and special educational needs
5. Consideration will always be given to profile of current cohorts in the schools and settings
6. Admission to the school is not incompatible with the efficient education of others within the setting and efficient use of resources
7. The placement is suitable and demonstrates an efficient use of resources
8. Placement will be compatible with the safety of other students
9. Evidence from relevant professionals that needs cannot be met within a mainstream setting

The above criteria are a summary of the information the panel would consider, however decisions are based on the evidence submitted relating to the child's individual needs.

Further information is available in the **SEND handbook and Criteria**.

Specialist Placement Panel Process

Timetable 2021-2022

Deadline for referrals is the Friday prior to the date of the meetings as outlined below

Autumn Term 2021

Placement Panels will sit:

Tuesday 12th October
Tuesday 16th November
Tuesday 14th December

Spring Term 2022

Placement Panels will sit:

Tuesday 1st February
Tuesday 8th March
Tuesday 19th April

Summer Term 2022

Placement Panels will sit:

Tuesday 17th May
Tuesday 21st June
Tuesday 19th July

Special School Admissions Information:

Allerdale & Copeland

Cumbria Academy for Autism

Branthwaite Road

Workington

CA14 4SS

www.cumbriaacademyforautism.org.uk

Cumbria Autism Academy is a Special Free School. All places are commissioned by the Local County Council SEN team, the Academy cannot take direct referrals from parents. Families will need to talk with their SEN Local authority and express an interest. Parents will need to register their interest with their local council SEN team who would then request a placement. For a child to be admitted, the school must be named, by a local authority, in the child's education health and care plan ('EHCP').

Mayfield School

Red Lonning

Hensingham

Whitehaven

CA28 8UG

www.mayfield.cumbria.sch.uk

Children who are to be educated at Mayfield School must be directed to the school through the local authority. Pupils normally have severe or profound learning difficulties. In some cases, the local authority may direct a child with another category of need but this is at the discretion of the local authority.

Barrow & South Lakeland

George Hastwell School

Moor Tarn Lane

Walney

Barrow In Furness

LA14 3LW

www.georgehastwell.org.uk

Children who are to be educated at George Hastwell School are directed to the school through the Local Authority, or via parental preference with the agreement of the Local Authority. Pupils normally have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which outlines their severe or profound learning difficulties. In some cases, the local authority may direct a child with another category of need, but this is at the discretion of the local authority.

Sandgate School

Sandylands Road

Kendal

LA9 6JG

www.sandgateschool.org.uk

Children who are to be educated at Sandgate School must be directed to the school through the Local Authority. Pupils normally have a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which outlines their severe or profound learning difficulties. In some cases, the local authority may direct a child with another category of need but this is at the discretion of the local authority. In exceptional emergency cases, the LA may agree to an 'assessment place'. This is time limited and requires the agreement of parents

Sandside Lodge School

Springfield Road

Ulverston

LA12 0DZ

www.sandsidelodge.cumbria.sch.uk

Sandside Lodge is a Special School catering for students aged between two and nineteen who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Sandside Lodge School is based in Ulverston and places can be offered to students across the South Lakeland and Furness Peninsula Area. Students gain admission to Sandside Lodge School through a directed place from Cumbria Local Authority. Admissions are on the basis that the student has an EHCP which provides detail of their severe or profound learning disabilities, and other impairments of difficulties (physical disabilities, sensory impairment, communication and language difficulties, complex health and medical needs or autism). In some cases, the local authority may direct a child with another category of need, but this is at the discretion of the local authority.

Carlisle & Eden

James Rennie School

California Road

Kingstown

Carlisle

CA3 0BX

www.jamesrennie.cumbria.sch.uk

James Rennie School is a Special School catering for students aged between two and nineteen who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). James Rennie School is based in Carlisle and places can be offered to students across the Carlisle and Eden Area. Students gain admission to James Rennie School through a directed place from Cumbria Local Authority. Admissions are on the basis that the student has an EHCP which provides detail of their severe or profound learning disabilities, and other impairments of difficulties (physical disabilities, sensory impairment, communication and language difficulties, complex health and medical needs or autism). In some cases, the local authority may direct a child with another category of need, but this is at the discretion of the local authority.