



Central Bedfordshire

Specialist School Place Plan

2022 - 2030



SEND | Together is better

A great place to live and work.

FOREWORD

We believe SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is everyone's business. The Specialist School Place Plan is a key part of the new SEND Strategy 2022 – 2025 which sets out our vision for children and young people:

'In Central Bedfordshire, we will strive for every child and young person with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to have the best possible start in life, and a childhood where they feel included and valued for their individuality both at home and within their community. Our ambition is for every child and young person to do well in education, and to fulfil their aspirations as they move into adulthood so that they can take their place in society as healthy, engaging and contributing members of the community. We commit to a local area with an inclusive culture where professionals and services feel valued, enabling them to build meaningful relationships with families where they can make a difference. Our services will make a difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND by being available and accessible to them at the right time and in the right place.'

Our Specialist School Place Plan sets out how we will create more of the right school places for the future which will meet children's need, based on feedback from parents and carers and our forecast of need.

Working with and alongside the SEND community, our Plan will be reviewed annually to make sure we are responding to the changing needs of our children and young people until 2030 and beyond.

Sarah-Jane Smedmor

Director of Children's Services,
Central Bedfordshire Council

Cllr Sue Clark

Executive Member for Children and Families

Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) is committed to delivering the best for our children and young people. Improving SEND services and increasing the number of specialist school places for children and young people with SEND is a priority, working alongside our parent/carer community, with schools, early years settings and other partners including Health.

CBC has statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who are assessed to require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This includes the requirement for CBC to keep under review the educational provision and training provision made in its area for children and young people with SEND and outside of its area for children and young people with special educational needs for whom it is responsible, and children and young people in its area who have a disability. CBC is required to consider the extent to which this provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs of these children and young people. CBC has a statutory duty to secure that sufficient school places are available in the area.

This plan is a key element of the SEND Strategy which says we will deliver suitable educational provision.

Suitable educational provision

We want children and young people, where possible to attend school as close to where they live as possible. If a child or young person requires specialist provision, we want to be able to identify this quickly and secure places that allow for them to move quickly into this provision. We will work closely with our special schools to continue to provide high quality provision as follows:

- Increased specialist educational places in the local area so that children can stay in their local community when appropriate
- Inclusive mainstream education with the right resources and training to support children at the point at which needs are identified
- Regular and high-quality reviews of plans for children and young people to ensure educational provision is based on their needs and aspirations as they change over time

CBC, like many other councils across the country, is experiencing an increase in the number of children with EHCPs. We've seen a 70% increase in EHCPs between January 2018 and January 2022 and this is subsequently leading to increasing demand for specialist education provision.

The number of pupils with an EHCP maintained by CBC is forecast to increase significantly during the 2020s, from approximately 2100 in autumn 2021 (Reception to Year 14) to over 3000 by January 2025 and over 3400 by January 2030. This is being driven by a combination of population growth and rising incidence of SEND.

The majority of children and young people with EHCPs are educated within mainstream schools/colleges with in-school support. Appropriate mainstream provision is being planned and delivered through the council's Schools for the Future programme.

This plan sets out how CBC will meet the demand for special schools (with provision for approximately 43% of EHCP pupils) and Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) within mainstream schools (approximately 10-15% of EHCP pupils).

This plan covers Reception to Year 14. It does not include provision for 19- to 25-year-olds. Providing new school places will require either existing schools to expand or new schools to be built. CBC has no legal powers to propose or determine changes to academies, which includes two of the four special schools situated in Central Bedfordshire. Collaborative working is essential as part of a common commitment to inclusion and increasing the access to specialist places that meet the needs of all pupils.

The latest pupil data will be used to update our forecasts and this plan annually.

This plan currently adds 200 ARP places (nearly trebling capacity) and nearly 500 special school places by 2030.

Parent feedback

The public consultation on the future of Special Schools and Additional Resource Provisions in 2021 was the most extensive listening exercise the Council has ever undertaken into the provision of specialist school places.

The proposals in the consultation were well supported and are being delivered. However, there was strong feedback that the number of places we were forecasting to provide would not be enough. The council committed to revising its forecasts based on the latest data available and using this alongside parent feedback from the consultation to develop a longer-term plan.

From the consultation respondents emphasized the importance of more provision, local provision and the right provision – children have a variety of different needs.

Below is the conclusion of the consultation feedback this can be found here: [Have your say in our SEND consultation — Schools for the future](#)

Overall there is support for the principles of the project. Comments identified the shortfall in places currently, with children being without suitable provision. They also identified the importance of local provision, along with ensuring the right provision is available.

Forecasting

Questions were raised about the forecasting in terms of how numbers were arrived at (and who is included in them), as respondents feel that if the forecasting is based on current EHCP numbers, the forecast will be incorrect as some EHCPs have been determined as unlawful and some children are being denied EHCPs that should be entitled to them. As a result, a considerable number of respondents suggested that the number of current children that need specialist places had not been fully identified, and queried whether the forecasting was as accurate as it needs to be

Mainstream

There were high levels of support for the vision for mainstream inclusion with comments around the need for experienced staff to make it worthwhile. Ultimately it needs to be the right provision for the child. There were also comments identifying the need to make sure schools are funded correctly to be able to provide mainstream inclusion, as well as needing support from SEND schools.

Meeting children's needs through the right provision

CBC has a statutory duty to conduct an Education, Health and Care needs assessments for a child or young person who has or may have special educational needs and for whom it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHCP, in order to determine whether an EHCP is required. For children and young people with EHCPs, CBC is required to secure special educational provision which meets their special educational needs and to secure a placement at an appropriate school or other institution. We have a statutory duty to make sure there are sufficient school places, including special educational provision, for the local community.

Within these statutory duties, there are choices for CBC regarding how it provides the special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of children and young people – for example, regarding the number of places in Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) compared to special schools.

Nationally as well as in CBC most pupils with EHCPs are educated within mainstream schools/colleges. This document focuses upon the designated specialist provision through Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) within mainstream schools or through special schools. This document is a school organisation/place planning document.

It is important to note:

- The forecasts for EHCPs and special school places sets out the expected number of pupils in Reception to Year 14 with EHCPs maintained by CBC irrespective of where those pupils are educated (i.e., irrespective of the type of provision they attend, or the geographic location of that provision).
- Mainstream schools (including those with ARPs) and special schools within Central Bedfordshire educate children and young people where the EHCP is maintained by CBC, but also pupils where the EHCP is maintained by another local authority.
- CBC only has statutory powers to propose and determine school organisation changes to schools that are maintained by CBC – this means community, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools within Central Bedfordshire. CBC has no legal powers to propose or determine changes to academies, which includes two of the four special schools situated in Central Bedfordshire. Collaborative working is essential as part of a common commitment to inclusion, increasing the access to specialist places that meet the needs of all pupils.

Principles

CBC is committed to:

- a) Promote inclusion in mainstream settings to support pupils identified with SEND Support and those with EHCPs where those pupils can access the curriculum and their other needs can be met through reasonable adjustments.
- b) Agree a strategic approach to ARPs and their number/designation/location/ size / entry and exit strategies.
- c) Develop robust collaborative working with ARPs to ensure that there are clear accountability processes linked to appropriate revenue funding.
- d) Increase places available in special schools and address accommodation shortfall / suitability so that they can meet the needs of our children and young people with the most complex needs; and
- e) Embed culture / processes that share and develop expertise, capacity and resilience across our schools, including strong leadership, secure safeguarding, quality assurance, and appropriate levels of staffing with identified development.

In respect of principle (a) above in mainstream settings:

- i. CBC's intention is that pupils who can access a mainstream education should do so at a school closest to where they live, subject to parental preference, and receive the support that they require.
- ii. All settings should have a culture of inclusion and provide effective support to pupils identified as requiring SEND Support.
- iii. Schools should use their internal SEND processes – with support from CBC – to identify pupils where they may meet the threshold for an EHCP.
- iv. CBC will work with schools to improve practice in relation to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND, and through Schools for the Future will seek to include space to enable multi-agency support of pupils and enable more needs to be met locally.

In respect of principle (b) school organisation principles for future establishment or adaptation of Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs):

- i. ARPs should enable progression with peers within a cluster where possible.
- ii. For those primary needs with higher incidence there should be appropriate geographic spread of ARP provision across localities/clusters.
- iii. ARP provision should grow towards being able to accommodate 10-15% of pupils with EHCPs, with focus upon needs where pupils can access a mainstream curriculum with specialist support and reasonable adjustments.
- iv. ARPs should be of sufficient size and revenue funding to enable effective specialist staffing and reflect the size and age-range of the school they are situated in; and
- v. ARP development will include expansion and / or redesignation of current ARPs as well as the establishment of new ARPs.

In respect of principle (c) above

- i. We will develop a robust Service Level Agreement that is agreed for three years and annually reviewed.
- ii. We will implement a quality assurance framework including an annual QA visit from a SEND Advisory Teacher (SENDAT).

Regarding principle (d) above: school organisation principles for future establishment or adaptation of special school provision CBC:

- i. Anticipates approximately 43% of pupils with an EHCP would be placed within a special school (this is an increase of an average of 38% previously forecast in Central Bedfordshire);
- ii. Will commission places at special schools inside and beyond Central Bedfordshire as appropriate to the needs of individual pupils but anticipates that capacity at special schools within Central Bedfordshire or other schools within a tri-borough arrangement (Luton, Bedford, CBC) where CBC has a strategic commissioning arrangement should have capacity for around 40% of CBC maintained EHCPs¹.
- iii. Will work with families and schools through the EHCP Annual Reviews, and any re-assessment processes, to ensure that placements continue to be appropriate for the current needs of pupils, including through transition points as pupils near the upper age limit of their current provision.
- iv. Anticipates continuing with a school organisation structure of area special schools (Chiltern and Ivel Valley currently) which each meet a range of special educational needs for their geographic areas and of schools that have a particular specialism(s) and serve a broader geographic area (Oak Bank and Weatherfield currently but could include additional specialist provision in the future).
- v. Will consider any school organisation changes, CBC would wish to maintain or improve pupil progression options. Currently, all four special schools have a lower age limit in Key Stage 2 or below, and all progress to 16 or above. Any changes to provision would need to coherently form part of the overall pattern of provision.
- vi. Will assume any new provision (either whole schools or satellite provisions of existing schools) need to be of sufficient size to be educationally and financially viable – this is likely to mean a minimum of 50 pupils on a special school site.

In respect of point (e)

We will develop a SEND Strategic plan aligned to our shared values. The values and six priority areas in our SEND Strategy are:

Values:

- Children and young people will be at the centre of all that we do
- Transparency
- We will be reflective
- We will work together effectively

¹ This assumes that the number of CBC pupils educated beyond these schools is balanced by schools in CBC educating pupils where the EHCP is maintained by another local authority.

Priorities:

- Ensuring suitable educational provision
- A local area that is working together - 'Together is Better'
- A knowledgeable workforce and community empowered to support families
- Clear pathways with seamless transfers and transitions
- Children and young people receive the right support at the right time
- Opportunities in the community for children, young people and their families

Current provision (for children and young people from reception to Y14)

As of 1st September 2022:

- CBC maintains over 2347 EHCPs of pupils within Reception to Year 14;
- Within Central Bedfordshire there were 14 ARPs, collectively providing 130 places (equivalent to 6% of CBC EHCPs). Almost all of these places provide for CBC maintained EHCPs; and
- Within Central Bedfordshire there were 4 special schools, collectively providing 822 places (equivalent to 35% of CBC EHCPs from reception to Y14).
- Annex 1 provides more detailed information about the ARP and special school provision as at September 2022.

Current identified pressures and/or gaps in provision are:

- Insufficient provision to meet demand, both in ARPs and special schools, despite increases in places in recent years and again for 2022. There is particular pressure for placements for pupils with primary needs of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH);
- Progression options for pupils attending an ARP are inconsistent meaning that pupils may not be able to progress with their peers – for example ASD provision in the north of the authority has primary provision in Sandy, middle school in Biggleswade, and upper school in Shefford and Stotfold.
- ARP provision is geographically uneven compared to pupil distribution – for example there is no provision in Amptill and Flitwick or Cranfield and only lower / primary in Sandy and Leighton and Linslade.
- Special school accommodation is undersized and the incremental increases in pupil numbers have not been matched by investment in core school infrastructure – investment is required even before the need to increase provision.

Forecast demand and headline implications

The Have Your Say Consultation stated:

Questions were raised about the forecasting in terms of how numbers were arrived at (and who is included in them), as respondents feel that if the forecasting is based on current EHCP numbers, the forecast will be incorrect as some EHCPs have been determined as unlawful and some children are being denied EHCPs that should be entitled to them. As a result, a considerable number of respondents suggested that the number of current children that need specialist places had not been fully identified, and queried whether the forecasting was as accurate as it needs to be

The following forecast is based on latest data considering an almost 80% increase in plans and including a subsequent rise in the requests for specialist provision over the past five year.

The tables below set out a forecast from January 2023 based on data from the January 2022 School Census and SEN2 returns and the 2021 SCAP return. Table 1 sets out the forecast number of children living in CBC with EHCPs in Reception to Year 14.

Table 2 sets out the same data for special school places required for pupils with EHCPs maintained by CBC. Annex 2 sets out the methodology underpinning these forecasts.

	YR to Y11	Y12 to Y14	total YR to Y14
Jan 22	1960 (Actual)	340 (Actual)	2300 (Actual)
Jan 23	2210	320	2530
Jan 24	2310	330	2640
Jan 25	2350	360	2710
Jan 26	2430	390	2820
Jan 27	2440	410	2850
Jan 28	2600	430	3030

The number of CBC maintained EHCPs for pupils in Reception to Year 14 at the start of 2022 was 2300 (SEN2 Data for January 2022). The forecasts predict additional 410 EHCPs by January 2025 on the start of the year (18 % increase), and a further 320 EHCPs by January 2028.

If ARPs are to grow to be equivalent to approximately 15% of pupils with EHCPs, it means growing provision from the current 110 places to 410 places by January 2025 and up to 450 places by January 2028. This plan will be reviewed annually to achieve this target up to 2030 and beyond.

Table 2 outlines the forecast number of places required based upon different percentages of pupils with EHCPs who require a special school place. This indicates an increase in the number of places required through the 2020s, if 43% of pupils with EHCPs require a Special School place the total number of places required will increase to approximately 1170 by January 2025 and up to 1300 places by January 2028 based on the average percentage of pupils with EHCPs attending special schools nationally. **This represents an increase in provision of 446 from the January 2022 number of special school places by January 2025 and a further 130 by January 2028.**

The figures below represent projected figures based on the delivery of proposals set out in this plan and will be reviewed annually as forecast need is adjusted based on the numbers and types of

places required. Where a child or young person lives cannot be used as a reason by special schools to refuse admission to their schools so some places in CBC special schools will cater for children from other local authorities. CBC works closely with neighbouring Local Authorities to plan for need and we will always need to commission places outside of CBC both for parental preference and complex needs that will need specialist residential provision. Equally some places in CBC special schools will cater for children from other LAs.

	38% of 2021 EHCP Forecast (original prediction)	43% of 2021 EHCP Forecast	43% of 2022 EHCP forecast	Forecast Planned Places	Needs met outside of LA
Jan 22	890	1010	824 (Actual)	822	58
Jan 23	1020	1160	1090	933	157
Jan 24	1100	1240	1140	962	157
Jan 25	1150	1300	1170	1038	132
Jan 26	1190	1340	1210	1318	-108
Jan 27	1220	1380	1230	1318	-88
Jan 28	N/A	N/A	1300	1318	-18

Table 3 details the forecast indicative needs of pupils with EHCPs. These are derived from the core projection for number of pupils with EHCPs detailed in Table 1. Table 3 assumes that the current proportions of EHCPs for each area of need continue; future annual refreshes of this plan can include consideration of the area of need of new EHCPs to provide potential trend information.

Table 3: Indicative areas of need for pupils with EHCPs maintained by CBC in Reception to Y14								
	Communication and Interaction		Cognition and Learning		Social, Emotional, and Mental Health		Sensory and / or physical needs	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Jan 22	1220	1340	440	360	520	540	140	150
Jan 23	1420	1400	510	410	610	560	170	150
Jan 24	1520	1450	540	410	650	590	180	190
Jan 25	1590	1490	570	430	680	600	190	190
Jan 26	1640	1560	590	450	700	630	190	190
Jan 27	1690	1570	600	450	720	670	190	190
Jan 28	N/A	1680	N/A	480	N/A	670	N/A	200

Note – the totals do not always match the core projection totals due to rounding to the nearest 10 for each area of need.

Meeting need

To meet the forecast need, we plan to implement the following

For ARP provision our options are to expand existing provision and / or create new provision.

- i. The age of transfer process for mainstream schools (as clusters move from a three-tier system with middle schools to a primary / secondary school model) may provide opportunities to establish / expand ARP provision as part of the age-of-transfer process and capital projects.
- ii. The forecast population growth in Central Bedfordshire because of housing developments will result in additional new mainstream schools being established (on land provided by developers), which could include new ARP provision.

For special schools the options are the same as ARPs (i.e. expansion or new schools), with the potential for expansion of existing schools onto satellite sites or a completely new school.

- i. If any mainstream sites are no longer required, either as a result of age-of-transfer and / or reconfiguration to respond to housing developments, these may be suitable for adaptation into special school provision, whether for a relocation, new school, or satellite;
- ii. Where co-location is appropriate, mainstream sites may be able to be utilised for satellite provision;
- iii. New schools, or whole school relocations (potentially with expansion) would require either redeployment of an existing site or the securing of a new site.

SEND changes to maintained schools (community, foundation or voluntary-aided schools) would require formal school organisation processes in accordance with legislation and DfE guidance, while changes to academies would require applications to the DfE / Regional School Commissioners in accordance with their guidance. New schools would need to be established in accordance with legislation, which currently has a presumption that a new school commissioned by the local authority would be established through an academy competition.

It is important to note that not all places at expanded or new provision becomes available immediately, since these are places across the age-range of the ARP / special school. If they are to be filled from the point of entry to the school, the places may be filled over a number of years.

Increasing places available in Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)

ARP Phase 1 September 2022 to August 2024

1. The following tables set out potential proposals.
2. From September 2022 to August 2024 the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places
Arnold	Expansion by 6 places of ASD ARP (middle)	+ 4
Ramsey Manor	Expansion by 3 places of ASD ARP (lower)	+ 3
Leighton Buzzard Upper Provision*	New ASD ARP for 12 places (upper)	+ 24
Henlow *	New SEMH ARP for 12 places (secondary)	+ 12
Samuel Whitbread	Expansion by 6 places of ASD ARP (upper/sec)	+ 6
The Vale	New ASD ARP for 10 places (primary)	+ 10
Rushmere Park	New ASD ARP for 10 places (lower)	+ 10
Stratton Upper	New ASD ARP for 24 places (upper/sec)	+ 24
Brooklands	New ASD ARP for 12 places (middle)	+ 12
Biggleswade Academy	Expansion by 6 places of ASD ARP (middle / primary)	+ 6
Total		111

*Yet to be confirmed but early discussions have taken place and operational from September 2023

In total, these projects would:

- Provide 49 additional ARP places from September 2022 up to 127 with an additional 103 from September 2023. If all these projects proceed, in September 2023 there would be 6 new ARPs and extensions to 3 others, collectively providing 197 places (equivalent to 7% of forecast CBC EHCPs).
- Establish ASD provision within the Leighton and Linslade cluster (lower and upper; middle school provision to be established subsequently).
- Increase ASD places available in the Harlington, Shefford and Stotfold and Dunstable and Houghton Regis and Biggleswade clusters.
- Establish secondary-phase SEMH provision in Shefford and Stotfold.

ARP Phase 2 September 2024 to August 2027

For the 2024 or 2026 academic years the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places
D&HR cluster *	New secondary-phase ASD ARP for 12 places	+ 12
D&HR cluster *	New secondary-phase SEMH ARP for 12 places (to provide progression from Lancot)	+ 12

Harlington cluster *	New upper school ASD ARP provision for 12 places (to provide progression from Arnold)	+ 12
Leighton and Linslade cluster *	New middle and upper SLCN ARP provision for 16 places (to provide progression from Heathwood)	+ 16
Shefford and Stotfold cluster *	New primary-phase SEMH provision for 12 places	+ 12
Sandy Cluster *	New secondary-phase ASD ARP provision for 10 places	+ 12
Ampthill and Flitwick cluster *	New lower / middle / upper SLCN ARP provision for 10 / 8 / 8 places.	+ 26
		102

**Individual schools have yet to be identified for proposed new provisions marked with an asterisk.*

In total, these projects would:

- i. Provide 227 additional ARP places. If all these projects proceed, by September 2024 there would be 32 ARPs, collectively providing 351 places (equivalent to 11% of forecast CBC EHCPs).
- ii. Establish ASD ARP progression within Biggleswade cluster (with the secondary provision complementing the primary provision at Biggleswade Academy)
- iii. Establish ASD and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) ARP progression within Leighton and Linslade cluster (with the middle school ASD provisions complementing Rushmere Park, and the middle and upper SLCN provision complementing existing SLCN provision at Heathwood).
- iv. Establish SEMH progression within Dunstable and Houghton Regis cluster (new secondary provision complementing the primary provision at Lancot)
- v. Establish ASD and SEMH progression within Shefford and Stotfold cluster (with the new primary-phase SEMH provision complementing Henlow, and new primary-phase ASD complementing Samuel Whitbread).
- vi. Establish a SLCN pathway within Ampthill and Flitwick cluster and complete the ASD pathway within Sandy cluster.

Future geographical need will be assessed through the review of the data and the annual refresh of the plan.

Providing additional places in special schools

In the Have Your Say Consultation stated

Chiltern Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Chiltern Special School. Within the comments, respondents demonstrated support for the school, but highlighted that the increase in the number of places wasn't enough. There were also comments agreeing with the need for a new site, along with questions about where the new site would be. Within this, there were concerns about the impact of moving the school site on the students

Ivel Valley Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Ivel Valley Special School. Comments were strongly in support of the school and the work it does for the children there. Comments also identified that the current school site isn't fit for purpose, so to be able to accommodate further numbers it would need a new building. There were also comments stating that the increase in the number of places wasn't enough.

Oak Bank Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Oak Bank Special School. Comments were supportive of the school and felt that even more places were needed. Questions and concerns were raised about the location of the second site, detailing potential issues around the sharing of resources over such large distances, and that children would be expected to travel large distances to the second site.

Weatherfield Academy Special School

There was strong support for the proposals for Weatherfield Academy Special School. The comments received were supportive of the school, but identified that the amount of proposed places isn't enough, and that the school needs more places now. Other types of provision Many types of provision were identified in the answers to this question. Coming through strongly was the need for specialist teaching and ensuring that teachers received the right training. There was also a call for the need to support home schooling/education or flexi schooling, as many felt as a result of the pandemic that home schooling could work (and it's important to note that for some children with SEND it really suited them), as was shown throughout periods of lockdown.

Special School Phase 1 September 2021 to August 2023

The following tables set out potential proposals.

From the 2020/21 to 2022/23 academic years the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places
Ivel Valley	New purpose build classroom and additional dining space. Refurbish the post-16 provision	+ 30
Chiltern	Renovate the onsite building to a multi-purpose post-16 provision to release space in the main building	+ 25
Weatherfield	Erect a purpose-built additional classroom and associated staff facilities	+ 10
		65

In total, these projects would provide 65 additional special school places, resulting in a total of 825 special school places within Central Bedfordshire (equivalent to 30% of forecast CBC EHCPs).

Phase 2 September 2023 to August 2026

For the 2023/24 or 2024/25 academic years the following changes are proposed:

School	Proposal	Net impact on places
Chiltern	Refurbish the UTC on the Kingsland site for satellite provision for ASD with complex needs	+ 50 from September 2023 up to 150 if needed

In total, this project would provide 150 additional special school places, resulting in a total of 962 special school places by September 2024 within Central Bedfordshire

Phase 3 September 2026 to August 2030

For the period 2026/27 to 2029/30, the following projects are proposed with places available by September 2027. In order to achieve this, school organisation processes and capital feasibility studies for larger projects may need to commence during 2022/23 or 2023/24.

School/Cluster/ Need	Proposal	Net impact on places
Ivel Valley	New build to expand to 300 pre 16 and 50 post-16 places and improve core accommodation (expansion of 55 places from the 2022/23 capacity). Rationale: Address shortage and quality of current accommodation and provide additional places	+ 55
Weatherfield	Establish satellite provision at the former Brewers Hill	+ 150

	Middle School site for 50 pupils. This would provide additional places, including post 16, as first stage for potential relocation of whole school into appropriate accommodation.	
SEMH provision Submission of Free School	Establish additional special school places for SEMH in the north of the authority so that there are 175-200 places in SEMH schools in total. Rationale: Forecast increasing demand for SEMH provision, creation of places in the north of the authority area, current Oak Bank site unable to accommodate more pupils	+ 130

In total, these projects would provide 335 additional special school places. The plan for special school places is to have secured approximately 1318 by September 2026 within Central Bedfordshire. **As this plan will be reviewed annually these parameters will be revised to give an updated forecast.**

Conclusion

This plan will allow us to ensure that 43% of children with EHCPs will be able to access appropriate provision as close to home as possible. This will include at least 40% of children being placed in CBC schools and settings and will allow us to work with parents/carers to identify suitable provision effectively and in an appropriate time frame. As the plans are brought to fruition, work will continue with parents and carers to secure the best possible educational placements to meet the needs of their children.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders to review this plan on annual basis to ensure that the longer-term plans will meet the required need.

Annex 1: Specialist provision within Central Bedfordshire, September 2021

Annex 2: Methodology for forecasts of CBC maintained EHCPs and associated special school places

Annex 3: Glossary

Annex 1: Specialist provision in Central Bedfordshire, September 2022

Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) September 2022

Done

Cluster	Need	Phase	School	Status	Places (Sept 21)	ARP Progression
D&HR	ASD	Primary	Ardley Hill	Academy - MAT	4 (not admitting new pupils)	Manshead
D&HR	ASD	Secondary	Manshead	Academy - MAT	10	
Harlington	ASD	Lower	Ramsey Manor	Comm	6	Arnold
Harlington	ASD	Middle	Arnold	Academy - SAT	11	Samuel Whitbread
Sandy	ASD	Primary	St Swithun's	VC	8	Biggleswade Academy into Y7
Biggleswade	ASD	Middle phase	Biggleswade Academy	Academy - MAT	8	Samuel Whitbread
S&S	ASD	Upper	Samuel Whitbread	Academy - MAT	24	
D&HR	SEMH	Primary	Lancot	Academy - MAT	12	Mainstream or Oak Bank
Harlington	SEMH	Lower	Silsoe	VC	8	
Harlington	HI	Lower	Toddington St George	Academy - SAT	8	Parkfields
Harlington	HI	Middle	Parkfields	Foundation	8	Harlington
Harlington	HI	Upper	Harlington	Academy – SAT	4	
L&L	SLCN	Lower	Heathwood	Comm	8	Varied
Biggleswade	SLCN	Lower	St Andrew's	VC	8	Varied

ARPs: Issues for consideration

- 1) Needs being met: Nearly two-thirds of the current places are for ASD; there is then an all-through progression route for Hearing Impairments (HI) and lower / primary only provisions for SLCN and SEMH.
- 2) The geography of provision: There is currently no designated provision in Ampthill & Flitwick or Cranfield, and only lower / primary in Sandy and Leighton & Linslade (while Leighton and Linslade is the cluster with the second highest number of pupils after Dunstable and Houghton Regis).
- 3) Progression routes:
 - a) For pupils in ASD provision – currently, only in Dunstable and Houghton Regis can you go 'all through' within the cluster.
 - b) SLCN provision in Leighton and Linslade and Biggleswade is only in the Lower phase with no ARP provision for older pupils. This is also true of SEMH provision in Leighton and Linslade (although some progress to Oak Bank).
 - c) Some progression routes may be affected by clusters moving to a primary / secondary model.

Special school provision, September 2021

The following table details the current provision:

School	Cluster	Age range	Status	Needs	Sept 2021 places	Site	Site usage	Site places
Ivel Valley	Biggleswade	3 – 19	Community	MLD / SLD / PMLD	230 places	Hitchmead Road, SG18 0NL	Early Years to KS4	C140
						Biggleswade Academy	To end Y8	C30
						The Baulk, SG18 0PT	KS5	C30
Chiltern	D&HR	3 – 19	Community	ASD / MLD / SLD / PMLD	268 places	Kingsland, LU5 5PX	Complex SEND (SLD / PMLD pathways)	
						Beech Road, LU6 3LY	Cognition, learning, communication, interaction needs (ASD / MLD pathways)	
Weatherfield	D&HR	7 – 19	Academy (SAT)	MLD	155 places	Brewers Hill Road, LU6 1AF	Whole school	
Oak Bank	L&L	9 – 19	Academy (SAT)	SEMH	127 places	Sandy Lane, LU7 3BE	Whole school	

- Chiltern and Ivel Valley are ‘area special schools’ and meet a range of complex needs. Broadly speaking, Chiltern takes most of its pupils from the west of Central Bedfordshire, while Ivel Valley takes nearly 90% of pupils from the east. Pupils from Amthill and Flitwick and Cranfield attend Chiltern and Ivel Valley. Chiltern and Ivel Valley are both 95+% CBC residents.
- Oak Bank serves the whole of Central Bedfordshire, but takes over half of its pupils from D&HR and L&L.
- Weatherfield predominately serves the west of Central Bedfordshire, with 75% of pupils from Dunstable and Houghton Regis and Leighton and Linslade and 10% from Ampthill and Flitwick. Very few attend from Biggleswade, Sandy, or Shefford and Stotfold.

All four schools have increased pupil numbers over the last 5 years:

Total pupils in CBC special schools					
	Chiltern	Ivel Valley	Oak Bank	Weatherfield	Total
2022/23	289	241	127	165	822
2021/22	268	230	127	155	780
2020/21	247	200	115	155	717
2019/20	223	192	111	154	680
2015/16	172	160	77	126	535

Annex 2: SEND forecasting methodology

Points to note:

1. The projections are for EHCPs maintained by CBC for children and young people in Reception to Year 14, irrespective of where those children or young people are educated.
2. These projections differ, therefore, from data or projections:
 - a. Regarding all EHCPs (since these only focus upon Reception to Year 14); and
 - b. Regarding CBC schools (since the school census data for schools in Central Bedfordshire does not include CBC maintained EHCPs where pupils are educated outside of Central Bedfordshire, and the school census does include pupils educated in schools in Central Bedfordshire where the EHCP is maintained by another council).

Children and Young People with EHCPs (Reception to Y14) forecast: Methodology

1. For the projections until January 2025 (i.e. the 2024/25 academic year) the total number of children and young people with EHCPs (Reception to Y14) is based upon estimates of pupils gaining EHCPs and those with EHCPs leaving education (i.e. end of Year 14). The estimates of the number of new EHCPs is based upon recent EHC Needs Assessments proceeding to assessment rates and an assumption that those will reduce over the next few years to the lower 95% confidence interval of this rate until it reaches the rate seen in 2018 (see the end of this Annex for more detail).
 - a. This approach results in pupils with EHCPs in YR – Y11 rising to the equivalent of 6.0% of the mainstream YR – Y11 forecast in January 2026.
2. For the projections from January 2027 and 2028:
 - a. The YR – Y11 element is based upon 5.0% of the mainstream YR – Y11 forecast, which equates to an EHCP cohort that rises towards approximately 220 pupils per year group.
 - b. Sixth form rises towards 440 pupils, which is equivalent to Y12 – Y14 for an average cohort of roughly 150 pupils.

The longer-term forecasts are based upon the CBC mainstream pupil forecasts. This ensures that they can be updated and evaluated together and that they use the same base demographic and housing assumptions.

The forecasts will be updated each September following the annual update of the mainstream forecasts.

CBC commissioned special school places forecast: Methodology

Currently, approximately 35% of pupils with EHCPs maintained by CBC are educated within local authority maintained or academy special schools. The forecasts assume that the percentage of pupils with an EHCP requiring a special school place will increase to be in line the national average at roughly 43%.

Indicative primary needs of pupils with EHCPs

The forecast for the number of pupils with EHCPs can be divided to provide an indication of the number of pupils with each primary need. This is based upon the distribution of primary needs from the Reception to Y14 for CBC maintained EHCPs in 2021/22. The forecast does not build in any assumed change in the distribution of primary need to reflect different rates of incidence. This

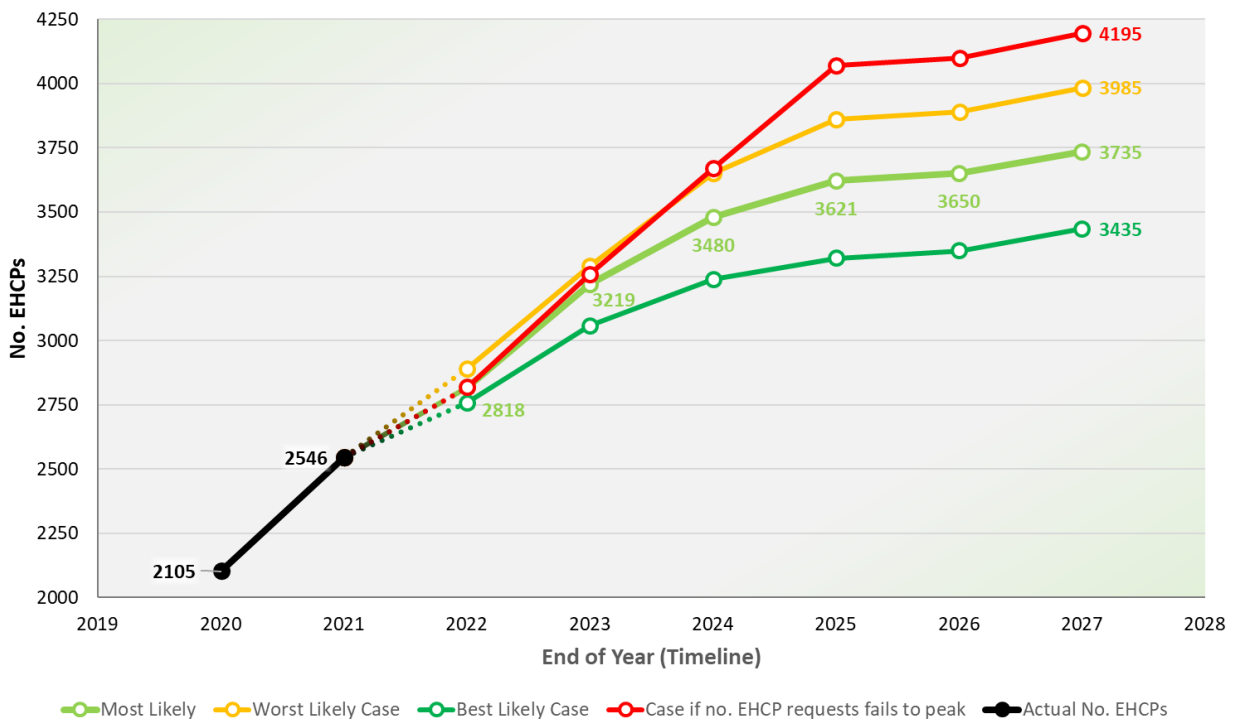
element will be considered further in future years and potentially use modelling based upon recently agreed EHCPs to provide evidence of trend.

Detail: Build-up of the EHCP forecasts

This forecast shows the forecast for the number of EHCPs for all young people aged 0 to 25 years old. The likely forecasts are based on the EHCP strategy but vary as to when we would start seeing the impact of it.

The numbers in the other tables are based on the lowest forecast and are for just those in Reception to Y14 and are for those aged 5-19 at the end of the academic year. They are a subset of the same forecasts.

Line graph showing the most likely, worst case and best case forecasts, the forecast that assumes the no. new requests remains constant and the actual no. EHCPs



Annex 3: Glossary

Academy	A school that has a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for its operation in accordance with the Academies Act 2010. Both mainstream and special schools can be academies, and mainstream academy schools can have Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs)
ARP	Additionally Resourced Provision. This means that the mainstream school has a designated provision within the school for a certain number of pupils who have the primary need that the ARP is designated for (such as ASD). ARPs can be provided in all phases of mainstream provision (lower, primary, middle, secondary, upper). The school receives place funding (£10k) for each funded place within the ARP as well as ‘top-up’ funding from the local authority who maintains the EHCP of each child within the ARP. Children attending an ARP would have an EHCP or, exceptionally, be in the assessment process for an EHCP.
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
DfE	Department for Education, part of the Government
EHCP	A Education, Health, and Care Plan issued in accordance with the Children and Family Act 2014 following a needs assessment led by the relevant local authority.
Independent special school	A special school that is not a maintained school or an academy or a non-maintained special school. These are run by an organisation that may be a charity or may be profit-making. Some independent special schools are known as ‘section 41 schools’ because they have been approved under section 41 of the Children and Family Act 2014 and so must admit a pupil if they are named on the EHCP.
Maintained school	A school that is maintained by a local authority (almost always the one in whose area it is situated). Maintained schools include community, foundation, and voluntary-aided schools whether they are mainstream or special schools.
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi-sensory Impairment
NMSS	Non-maintained special school, which are schools that have been approved by the DfE under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. These have contracts with the DfE through which they receive some funding, and also receive funding from the commissioning local authority.
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
RSC	Regional Schools Commissioner, an office within the DfE who exercises some of the powers of the Secretary of State with regard to academies in particular.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
SEN Code of Practice	This is the DfE’s statutory guidance for organisations who work with children with SEND, including schools, colleges, and local authorities
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
Special school	A school that exclusively makes provision for pupils with identified SEND who have an EHCP or, exceptionally, are in the assessment process for an EHCP. Within this document, special school is shorthand for those special schools that are maintained schools or academies.
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties