

WORCESTERSHIRE
CHILDREN FIRST



Proposal for new Special Free School in Worcestershire

October 2022

Background

- On 30th March 2022 the **Department for Education** (DfE) published the SEND Review
- The **SEND Review** sets out government's proposals for a system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.
- Excellent provision from early years to adulthood including delivery of more new special and alternative provision free schools in addition to 60 already in the pipeline
- June/ July 2022 pre-registration for local authorities to apply for new special free school

Opportunity for all:
strong schools with great
teachers for your child



Commits to improve specialist
provision through investment to
deliver new places and improve
existing provision for children and
young people with SEND



Priorities for DfE

The investment in new special free schools aims to provide children and young people with **good quality provision in their local area**, which in turn will **reduce the time and money spent on transport**. Investing in new special free schools will **reduce the use of more expensive provision**, with a view to **delivering a local system** which both **meets local authority needs and is financially sustainable**.

Applications will be prioritised which:

- are in areas where a new school **fits with the local authority's wider SEN and high needs strategy**
- make a strong strategic case for why a new special free school is needed, and **will better meet the needs and achieve better outcomes for children and young people in the area**
- demonstrate that a new special free school will help local authorities **reduce their dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficit**
- demonstrate that a new school will be financially sustainable and that local authorities **will commit to commissioning, funding and supporting places**
- will **contribute to the wider aims of the SEND green paper**
- include details of **a viable site** which is likely to secure value for money, in a timely manner, and with an acceptable level of risk

What is a Free school?

- All new schools are classified as free schools.
- This reflects the fact that ‘free school’ is the department’s term for any new provision academy.
- ‘Academy’ is the legal term for state-funded schools that are independent of local authority control and receive their funding directly from the government.
- The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A (the ‘free school presumption’) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which requires that, where a local authority identifies the need for a new school in its area, it must seek proposals to establish an academy (free school).
- There are two routes for Local Authorities to opening a Free School:

DfE Free School Waves	Local Authority Presumption Route
The DfE free schools programme targets specific areas or needs e.g. Special and AP	Where a LA identifies the need for a new school to meet basic need for additional school places, section 6A of EIA 2006 places the LA under a duty to seek proposals to establish an academy (free school)
New schools approved through this process are part of the central free schools programme and will be delivered and funded as such.	The local authority is responsible for providing the site for the new school and for delivering the capital programme for building the new school.
Applications are welcomed from new providers e.g. Academy Trusts, a diocese or charitable trust etc	The site be made available free or on a peppercorn basis by the local authority to the trust.
	The local authority are responsible for associated capital and pre/post-opening revenue costs.
	Basic need capital funding is provided on an un-ringfenced basis, so that local authorities can provide the places that they need, including through new presumption schools

Worcestershire's SEND Strategy and vision

SEND Strategy Vision - *In Worcestershire we want all children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities to be truly seen and respected as individuals and to be the best they can be.*

Local Area Partnership SEND Strategy Priorities:

Priority 2: There is sufficient and effective SEND provision

Priority 5: CYP with autism achieve positive outcomes & the support required to enable this to be in place

“Children and young people in Worcestershire with SEND have been placed in specialist settings when their needs could have been met in mainstream school ...

*This has led to not having enough places for those children and young people with complex needs. **It has also led to too many children and young people being placed in settings outside of Worcestershire and in independent settings”***



CYP with SEND said they would like education to be within their communities where they want to feel trusted, respected and included. They want equality opportunities in their communities including access to employment.

Multi-agency partners and families said a priority is for an effective range of provision that improves outcomes for CYP, offers value for money and ensures that wherever possible CYP can live and learn in their local communities.

SEND Strategy Co-production Group (2021)



How will this proposal contribute to aims of SEND Green paper?

The proposed school will:

- Ensure that children and young people can access the right support in the right place at the right time.
- Appropriate provision to be made available for different types of needs.
- Provide support to CYP when it is required.
- Make available excellent provision to support Autistic Children and Young People.
- Enable parents to make an informed choice for a provision that can meet their child's needs

Worcestershire's rationale for a new school

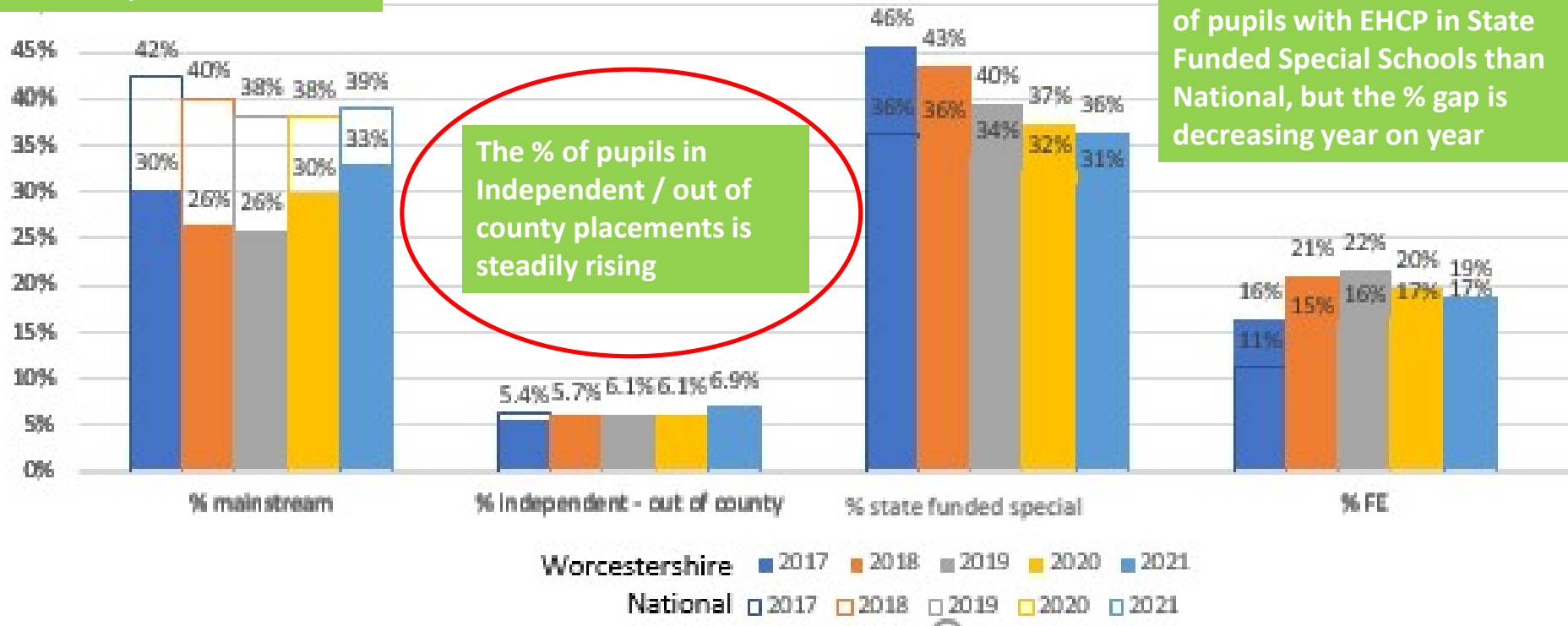
- This proposal will support the local authority to meet its **statutory responsibilities** with regard to the provision of special school places across Worcestershire.
- It will positively impact on children and young people up to the age of 19 years with an EHCP with Autism, by providing **choice of provision within the local area**.
- The new **National Autism Strategy 2021-2026**, published in July 2022 incorporates both children and adults into the National Strategy ambitions. The following priorities are of relevance to this application:
 - Improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood.
 - Building the right support in the community.
- The **Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy** will align with national and local priorities. The **Worcestershire multi-agency Autism Partnership Board** provides critical oversight and challenge to our Autism work and reports jointly to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Integrated Care System Learning Disability and Autism Programme Board.
 - The Director of All Age Disability in Worcestershire is leading on the priority 'improving autistic children and young people's access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood' and is also the joint.
- The **Worcestershire Education and Skills Strategy**: Ensuring a good education for every child in Worcestershire refers to ensuring that there is 'a curriculum and approach which inspires and helps children and young people develop the skills, knowledge and attributes to become successful citizens'.
- Worcestershire is part of the **Delivering Better Value in SEND** which will support the transformation on how services are delivered. The focus being on improving outcomes for children, and young people, ensuring value for money, and a sustainable clear trajectory showing how a more sustainable financial position can be achieved. This proposal will support the planned transformation within Worcestershire.

Where do Worcestershire children with EHCPs access their education?

Since 2020 Worcestershire has seen an increase in the % of pupils with EHCPs placed in mainstream provision

% EHCP Children by placement

Worcestershire has a higher % of pupils with EHCP in State Funded Special Schools than National, but the % gap is decreasing year on year



The % of pupils in Independent / out of county placements is steadily rising

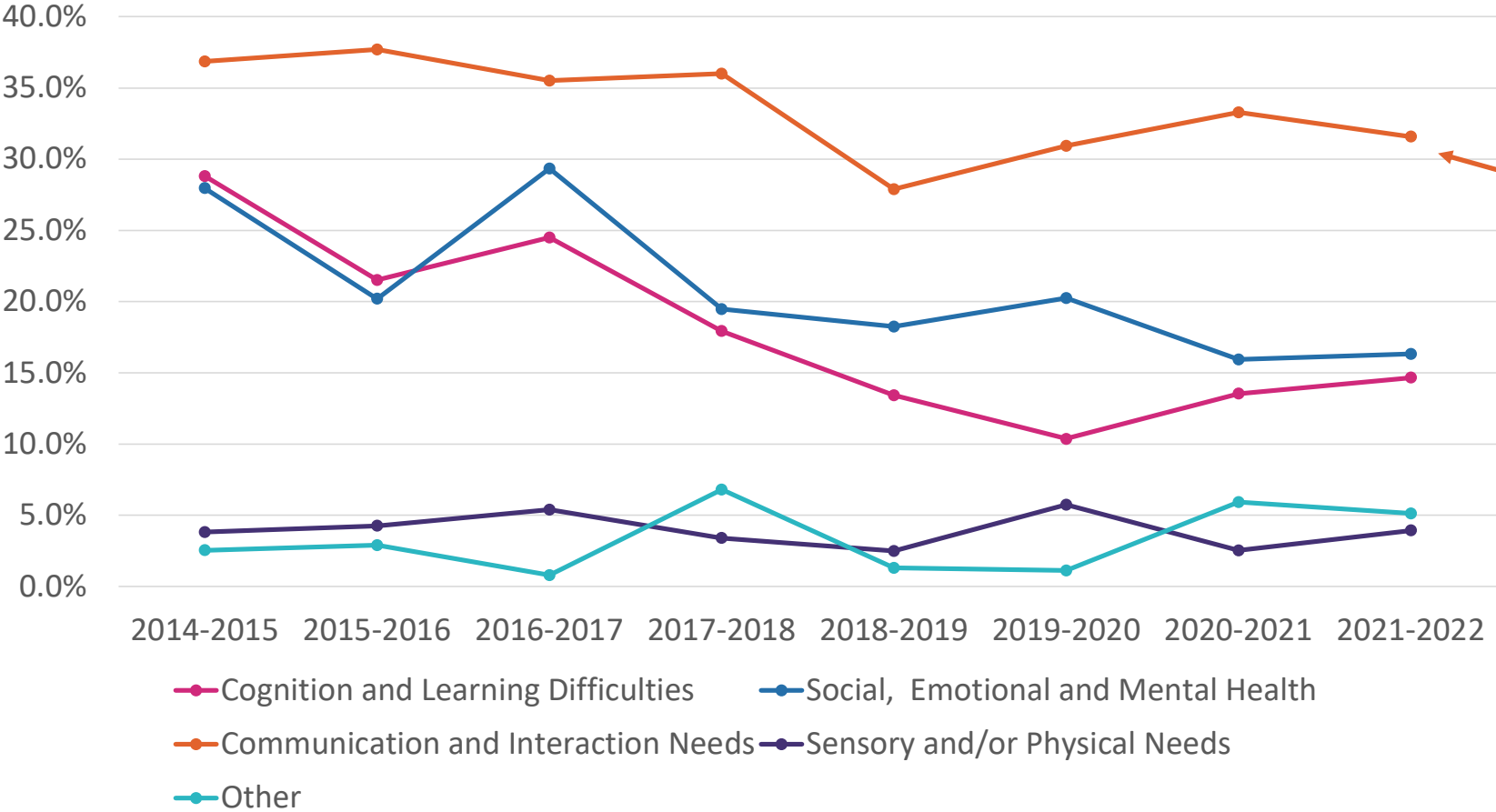
Children with EHCPs in Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools in and out of County by Primary Need

Providers	Cognition and Learning				Social, Emotional and Mental Health			Communication and Interaction Needs		Sensory and / or Physical Needs				Other		Grand Total
	SpLD	MLD	SLD	PMLD	BESD	SEMH	ADHD	SLNC	ASD	VI	HI	MSI	PD	Complex medical	Other	
Education Otherwise - not School (EOTAS)	2	8	5	0	3	20	0	10	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	51
Independent Special, Non-maintained Special and Out of County Special	0	29	4	0	10	62	0	22	83	0	0	0	1	0	5	441
	33				72			105		1				5		

There are 83 children and young people with a primary ASD need attending Independent Special, Non-maintained Special or out of County Special Schools

Education Other than at School means all forms of education that take place outside the formal school environment and meet the specific needs of children who cannot attend a mainstream or special school.

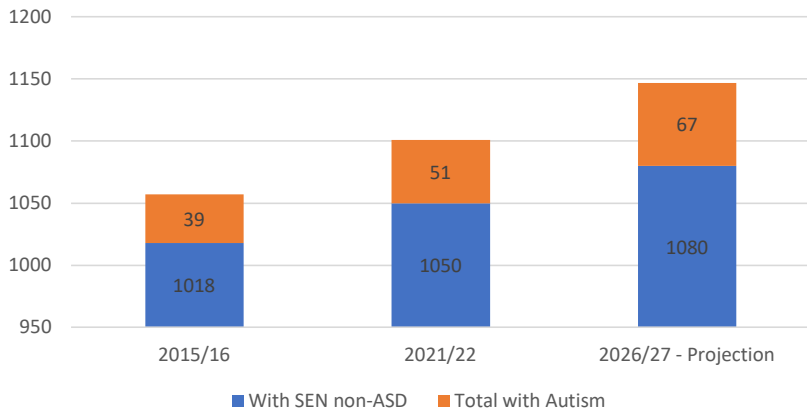
New EHCPs by SEN Category 2014 - 2022



The highest percentage of all new EHCPs in Worcestershire fall under Communication and Interaction needs including Autistic Spectrum Disorder

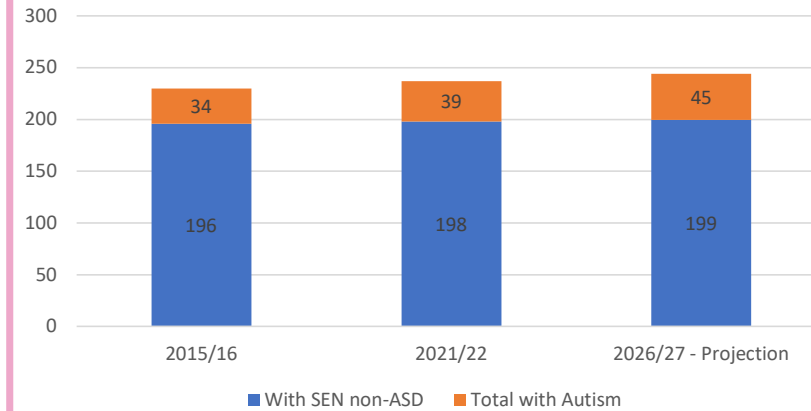
Autistic Children and young people in Worcestershire

Pre-School age children



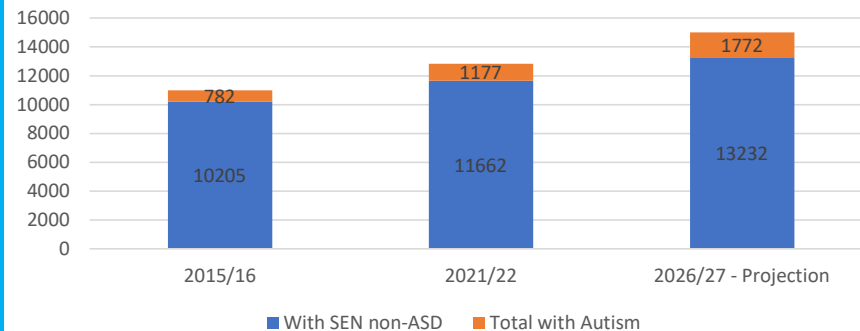
In 2015/16 7% of the total 5 - 16 year olds with SEN had a primary need of ASD
 In 2021/22 this increased to 9%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 12%

Young people 17 years +



In 2015/16 4% of the total pre-school age children with SEN had a primary need of ASD
 In 2021/22 this increased to 5%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 6%

Children age 5 - 16 years



In 2015/16 15% of the total 17 + year olds with SEN had a primary need of ASD
 In 2021/22 this increased to 16%
 By 2026/27 this is projected to be at least 18%

Needs analysis of current Autistic children and young people in Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools in and out of County

The new ASD Special Free School would provide an education for children and young people that:

- may experience high anxiety and / or demand avoidance as a result of Autistic presentation;
- are unable to access mainstream education provision with support;
- have the cognitive ability to access a mainstream curriculum;
- need smaller class sizes (e.g. 6 - 8 group sizes); and
- need a whole school and staff dedicated to a holistic Autistic approach.

How will this school better meet the needs and achieve better outcomes for children and young people in the area?

A new ASD Special Free School in Worcestershire will:

- Provide more good quality education provision for children and young people in Worcestershire
- Provide a suitable learning environment in Worcestershire
- Reducing travel times to education provision for more Worcestershire children and young people
- Build social networks in local communities for more children and young people with SEND including holistic support with emotional health and physical health
- Reduce the demand for out of county and/or independent specialist education provision on the High Needs budget

How will this proposal reduce the dedicated schools grant (DSG) deficit?

- The current total annual cost of education places for the 83 Autistic children and young people with EHCP and ASD primary need in the Independent Special, Non-Maintained Special in and out of County =

£4.8m

- An average of £58k per place per annum (Indep / Non-Maintained Special)
- The average cost of a place in the new ASD Special Free School will be £25k (dependent on level of need)
- An annual saving of circa £2.7m

Transport costs and travel times for Autistic children to Independent, Non-Maintained Special Schools in and out of County

The total cost of transport for the 83 children travelling to Independent, non-maintained and Special schools in or out of county is **currently £476k per annum**

Opportunities to reduce transport cost include the use of shared transport to single destination

Distance / Duration	0-10min	11-20min	21-30min	31-40min	41-50min	51-60min	>1hr	>3hrs	(blank) *	Grand Total
0-5miles	4	1								5
5-10miles	1	14	1							16
10-15miles		5	18	2						25
15-20miles			14	2				1		17
20-25miles				6	2					8
25-30miles			1		2	1				4
30+miles					2	1	2			5
(blank)									3	3
Grand Total	5	20	34	10	6	2	2	1	3	83

The majority of children are travelling 21-30 minutes to provision, with most travelling between 10-15miles.

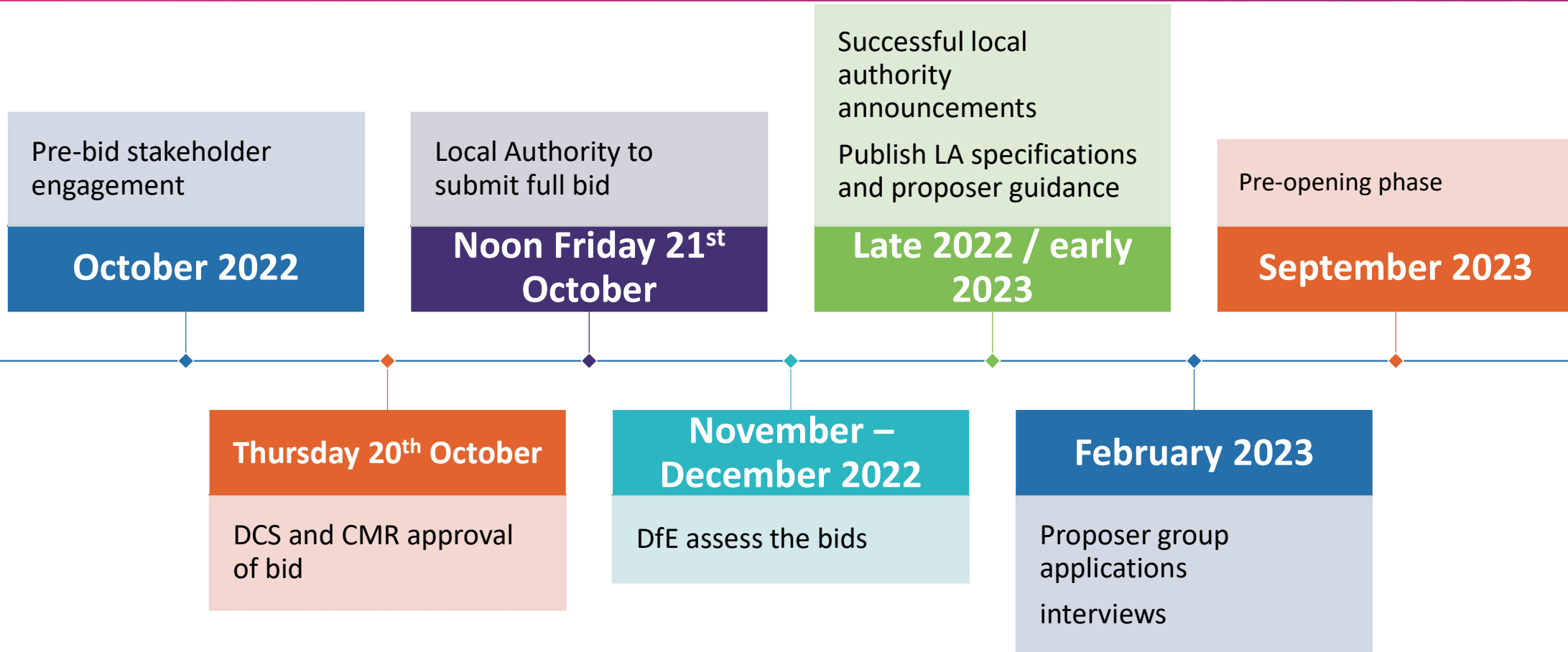
* Those blank within the table below are either in Residential or virtual provision.

What is the proposal for?

A 120 place ASD Special Free School for 5 – 19 year olds (Reception to Year 14):

- located in Malvern at a suitable site owned by the Local Authority;
- offering full-time placements;
- With group sizes of 6 – 8 pupils;
- Opening in a phased approach to fill places over a period of 5 years
 - 6 places per year group Reception – Key Stage 2
 - 12 places per year group – Key Stage 3 – Key Stage 4
 - 18 places for Post 16
- With room to expand to circa 162 longer term if needed
- Delivering targeted and creative support to children and young people at transition points
- Support integration / re-integration into mainstream settings where appropriate

What is the timeline for bids and decisions?



Questions?

You will receive a short survey by email asking your views on this proposal, your views are important to us, please do reply by 9am Wednesday 19th October 2022.

How would you like to continue to contribute?