



Consultation on Proposal to Establish a Specialist Base (Special Educational Needs (SEN) Hub) at Exmouth Community College

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Proposal

The Ted Wragg Trust is proposing to establish a Specialist Base at Exmouth Community College. It is proposed that the base will initially open in September 2026 with a small number of students, with the number increasing over the next 18 months up to a maximum capacity of 20 places as part of a phased implementation.

A Specialist base is a provision within a mainstream school where pupils are taught within separate classes. The Specialist base will support students from Year 7 to Year 11 with communication and interaction needs (including autistic spectrum condition (ASC)) and/or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). All pupils attending the base would have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Background

Increasing local SEN provision is part of a county-wide strategy by Devon County Council in response to the demand for increased special educational needs provision and to enhance the inclusive capacity of mainstream schools.

A Specialist base supports learners whose needs can be met in a mainstream setting, but who require a specialist environment and support within the school. Pupils are supported within this environment with an Education Health and Care Plan, small class sizes and high staffing ratios. Our aim is to enable pupils to fulfil their potential to successfully access their education on our site at Exmouth, either within the Specialist base, or with provision blended across the base and the mainstream school as appropriate to pupils' individual needs.

Evidence of need

Devon has seen a significant increase in the number of children and young people with an EHCP since 2018. There is a need to increase local capacity to meet demand around specific areas of growth which includes increasing support for pupils with Communication and Interaction needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. This proposal will ensure a better offer for children and young people that is local and suitable to their needs. The proposal will support more children with special educational needs to be educated and thrive in a local school and community, facilitating better access to the curriculum and avoiding the need for children to travel to an appropriate setting further away.

The base will be designed to provide a structured, nurturing environment that is small, welcoming and inclusive and supported by a high level of adult support. The leadership of the base will sit within Exmouth College's current

leadership structure. The school will be supported by the Special Partnership Trust (SPT) in terms of curriculum and staffing development. The base will provide a bespoke curriculum, specialist facilities and appropriate support to ensure that young people accessing the base can flourish and be successful.

Initially, from September 2026 the base will cater for a small number of pupils within an existing classroom. In 2027, the proposal involves the re-modelling of existing accommodation on the Green Close site to provide a separate tailored space so that pupils can thrive in a small and nurturing environment.

Benefits of the proposal

- Support more students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be educated and thrive in their local school and community;
- Enhance student's progress by effectively meeting their individual special educational needs;
- Help facilitate better access to the curriculum and support students to achieve their potential;
- Better support students for life beyond school and in preparation for adulthood;
- Ensure that needs can be met locally, avoiding the requirement for students to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate provision further away;
- Increase the availability of places to meet the needs of students with SEND;
- Address identified geographical, age and phase gaps;
- Support the sharing of expertise and good SEND practice within the local area.

Project, costs and expenditure

There is sufficient capacity within the college to accommodate the Specialist base. A feasibility study is underway and it is anticipated that this will include sensory space, refurbishment of WC's, classroom spaces and specialist spaces such as for life skills. Funding for the works has been approved within Devon County Council's capital programme. The project will include the construction work as well as furniture and equipment. Revenue funding from Devon County Council is in place to support this proposal.

Admission to the resource base

To be considered for a place in the Specialist base, the child or young person must have an EHCP. Should the creation of the base be approved, it is Devon County Council's SEN Statutory Team who will allocate places in the base, in consultation with the Trust. The pupils within the new Specialist base will be admitted above the mainstream published admission number (PAN). The PAN of the College will remain the same and will not be impacted by this proposal.

Consultation and decision-making process

This consultation will take place from 15 May to 5 June 2026.

Following the end of the consultation, the Board of Trustees will consider all responses received and make a decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal. If it is decided to proceed, the Trust will make an application to the Department for Education's (DfE) South West Region's Group. It is the DfE's Regions Group who will

consider the application and responses received to the consultation before making a decision on whether to approve the proposal.

Responding to the consultation

The Trust welcome feedback on this proposal. Comments can be made to Ted Wragg Trust either by:

- Email: exmouthconsultation@tedwraggtrust.co.uk
- By post to: Specialist Base Consultation, Exmouth Community College, Gipsy Lane, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3AF

Please note that all responses must be received by midnight on **5 June 2026**.

All responses to the consultation will be considered and will be shared with the College's leadership team, Trust board of directors and trustees. Responses will also be shared with Devon County Council and the South West Region's Group at the DfE, but we will not send individual responses to any specific points made.

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