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Consultation on Proposal to Establish a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit at King Edward VI College, Totnes

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Proposal

Education South West is proposing to establish a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit at King Edward VI Community College, Totnes from September 2025/January 2026. A SEN Unit is a special provision within a mainstream school where pupils are taught within separate classes. It is proposed that the unit will provide 20 places for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) from Year 7 to Year 11. All pupils attending the unit will 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 SEN Unit 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, either within the SEN unit, or with provision blended across the unit and the mainstream school.

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 Autistic Spectrum Condition. 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 settings further away.

KEVICC's Proposal

The proposed SEN Unit at King Edward VI Community College (KEVICC) would support children and young people with a primary need of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) who, as a result, may be experiencing high levels of anxiety. It is proposed that the unit would open from September 2025/January 2026 and grow to 20 places by the end of the academic year 2025-26.

The unit 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 unit will sit within KEVICC's current leadership structure. The school will be supported by the Special Partnership Trust (SPT) in terms of curriculum and staffing development. The purpose of the unit is to provide a bespoke curriculum, specialist facilities and appropriate intensive adult support to ensure that those young people accessing the SEND unit can be successful.

The proposal involves the redevelopment of existing buildings on the KEVICC site which will provide a separate unit so that pupils can thrive in a small environment supported by the expertise already in the school.

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;
- Ensure that needs can be met locally, avoiding the requirement for students to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate provision further away. This is better for young people and will save public funds by reducing the costs of transport;
- 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.

Costs and Expenditure

There is sufficient capacity within the college to accommodate the SEN Unit. Refurbishment of former Art Foundation block in the Kennicott site will be required to ensure the space is fit for purpose and of high-quality provision. The capital project will include the remodelling of existing spaces as well as refurbishment. Revenue funding from Devon County Council is in place to support this proposal and the required capital funding is in the process of being approved by Devon County Council.

Admission to the Resource Base

To be considered for a place in the SEN Unit, the child or young person must have an EHCP. Should the creation of the SEN Unit be agreed, it is Devon County Council's SEN Statutory Team who will allocate places in the unit, in consultation with the Trust. The pupils within the new SEN Unit 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 **31 March to 29 April 2025**.

Following the end of the consultation, the Board of Trustees will consider all responses received and make a decision as to whether or not to proceed with the proposal. If it is decided to proceed, Education South West 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 or not to approve the proposal.

Responding to the consultation

The Trust welcome feedback on this proposal. Comments can be made to Education South West either by:

Email: SENconsultation@kingedwardvi.org.uk

By post to: SEND Consultation 2025, King Edward VI Community College, Ashburton Rd, Totnes TQ9 5JX

Please note that all responses must be received by midnight on 28 April 2025.

All responses to the consultation will be considered and will be shared with the school's leadership team, 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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