

Decision to Change Residential Provision at Rowdeford Special School 11.03.15

Following the guidance laid out by the Department of Education's publication "School Organisation – Maintained schools" (January 2014) a four week consultation period was taken forward between the 9th of January 2015 and the 6th of February 2015 to propose the reduction of residential beds from 23 to 16 at Rowdeford Special School, Rowde.

Information was made available to key stakeholders regarding the proposals and the background behind these proposals. Stakeholders were encouraged to respond by filling in a consultation reply form which was available, by post and email and via the Wiltshire Council and Local Offer Websites.

In addition two meetings were held in which parents, governors, staff and interested parties were invited to attend. 14 staff and governors attended the first meeting and 14 parents and carers attended the second meeting.

There were 11 replies to the consultation, of these 8 were from parents and 3 from members of staff. Wiltshire Council would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated with their time and consideration of these issues. Two collective concerns were raised:

- That there might be insufficient support offered to future families who are struggling with social care issues. Wiltshire Council acknowledges these needs and in response would note that the reduction in beds is to enable the school to respond more flexibly to these needs.
- Concerns were also raised about job security and these will be responded to through the school and the appropriate Human Resources policies if there are further implications.

Following the closure of the consultation period all replies and responses were reviewed and appropriate information shared with senior officers and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Laura Mayes. A delegated Councillors decision has now been taken (CS – 01 – 15) and Wiltshire Council will:

- Reduce the number of residential beds at Rowdeford School from 23 to 16, by closing one 7 bedded residential unit in the school, and
- Commission the school to provide approx. 2,400 residential nights p/a (which equates to full placement in 16 residential beds)

This decision will now be conveyed to the Secretary of State by updating the Department's Register of Educational Establishments. The only appeal to this decision is by the Rowdeford School Governors within 4 weeks of the publication of this notification. These proposals can now only be revoked by significant changes to those circumstances which presented in the original proposals.