

# Consultation on the proposed change of age-range at the Island Learning Centre, Newport, Isle of Wight

## **Consultation document**

A change of age-range at the Island Learning Centre, Newport, Isle of Wight from age 5-16 to age 11-16.

### **Introduction**

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The Isle of Wight Council is committed to a programme of improving inclusive provision across the school system and meeting the needs of all children and young people effectively within their local schools on the Island.

The council would like to hear your views on plans to change the age-range at the Island Learning Centre (ILC) from 5-16 to 11-16, therefore removing the current primary provision. This is a consequence of the proposed introduction of a new Primary Behaviour Service (PBS) from September 2023. The PBS model would provide both outreach and inreach support for primary pupils with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs which manifest themselves in challenging or unproductive behaviour. PBS would cater for primary-aged children who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion, therefore negating the need to retain primary provision at ILC.

### **Background**

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The ILC is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) offering alternative provision for pupils of both primary and secondary age on the Isle of Wight. Its core purpose historically has been to accommodate pupils who have been permanently excluded from school and those who are too medically unwell or emotionally vulnerable to access mainstream education short-term, thus enabling the local authority to discharge its statutory functions through the ILC's provision. Additionally, the ILC offers inreach and outreach provision for pupils at risk of exclusion.

The ILC should be viewed as an intervention which facilitates successful return to mainstream education; wherever possible and in the best interests of the pupil, it should not be a long-term destination or indeed a permanent placement for excluded children. Single rolling other than for a permanently excluded pupil should be rare; even then, the ambition would be that a permanently excluded pupil could also return to a mainstream school, given time and support.

The ILC is an important part of the wider system on the IoW, for those pupils who are experiencing vulnerability and/or whose behaviour is unproductive and who therefore would benefit from short-term, specialist support.

The demand for primary outreach provision has increased over recent years and is now exceeding the capacity of ILC, further compounded almost certainly by the

impact of Covid-19 on lost learning, emotional well-being and schools struggling to help pupils re-gain good 'behaviour for learning' habits. Being unable to access outreach at an early intervention/prevention stage is adding to schools' growing practice to escalate earlier than might need to be the case, contributing to exclusions/suspensions, requests for in-reach provision at ILC and requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessments.

The ILC has an agreed place number of 60, of which 10 are allocated to the primary provision. This number has been exceeded as there are currently 20 children on roll within primary and 73 on roll within secondary. Whilst the ILC has this number of children on roll, the full-time equivalent is closer to 60.

## **The Proposal**

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Support for primary-aged children experiencing behavioural challenges and those with medical/emotional needs which are preventing them from accessing mainstream education on the Isle of Wight currently sits within the remit of the ILC. The local authority aspires to reduce the proportion of primary-aged children experiencing exclusions/suspensions and build capacity across the system to better meet their needs at an earlier stage. This would also enable the ILC to focus on secondary provision.

There is a need to further strengthen capacity across the school system on the IoW to better meet social, emotional and mental health needs, manage behaviour positively and reduce exclusion/suspension levels. Early intervention and prevention work is a key part of this, and also has a positive impact where successful on preventing unnecessary escalation, for example a request for Education Health and Care assessment. Part of early intervention is a strong outreach offer for schools and whilst the ILC does have some capacity – and funding – for this currently, it is not sufficient to meet demand in primary and to deliver a cohesive, dedicated programme of outreach.

It is proposed that the primary provision be removed from ILC and replaced by an Island based extension of Hampshire's Primary Behaviour Service (PBS). This is an established service with a successful track record in short-term intervention, reductions in exclusion/suspension rates and good impact of work to improve policy and practice, at both individual pupil and whole school level. Its annual survey consistently shows overwhelmingly positive impact and responses from schools. Some primary schools on the Island have been purchasing PBS support ad hoc and have also benefited from input by PBS funded through the Well-being for Education Return/Recovery grant. Again, feedback has been very positive and a number of primary schools have expressed an interest in a PBS model for Island schools.

Further details on PBS can be found on the website below:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationinclusion/service/primarybehaviourservice>

## **What do the proposals mean for children already in the Island Learning Centre?**

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The proposal is that the change of age-range will be implemented from 1 September 2023. If approved, only the primary provision will be removed from the ILC; therefore, this will not have an impact on secondary-aged children or the current offer they/secondary schools receive. For primary-aged children currently accessing support through ILC, the transition to support through PBS will be managed on an individual basis, with close liaison between schools, parents/carers and PBS from the summer term of 2023.

### **Please tell us your views**

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This document sets out the reasons why the Council is making proposals for change and asks for feedback.

Within six weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any individual, group or organisation wishing to express their views them should contact Jade Kennett, Strategic Development, County Hall, Newport, IOW, PO30 1UD,

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