

Consultation on the proposed
increased capacity of the Lionheart
School, Newport, Isle of Wight
through a satellite provision

Consultation document

The proposal is to increase the Agreed Place Number from 60 to 120 with 60 places being offered at the Cowes Primary School, Cowes (subject to the closure on 31 August 2025)

Introduction

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 increase the Agreed Place Number (APN) from 60 to 120 with 60 places being offered on the former Cowes Primary School site, Cowes (subject to closure on 31 August 2025) .

Background

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

The Lionheart School 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 current APN has been exceeded with a high number of children on part-time timetables, outreach access only or reduced hours. The aim of the increase is to ensure through expansion of the accommodation a full-time offer can be provided for up to 120 children.

The Lionheart School 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 Proposal

There is a need to further strengthen capacity across the school system on the IoW to better meet the needs of young people who need a trauma informed, therapeutic provision, 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.

Therefore, an increase in the agreed number of places is necessary to ensure that all children and young people who may require specialist support and intervention can access these services.

What do the proposals mean for children already in the Lionheart School?

The proposal is that the increase in capacity will be implemented from 1 January 2026. If approved, works would be required to adapt the primary school site to meet the needs of secondary aged pupils. For any pupils required to transition to the satellite site this will be managed on an individual basis, with close liaison between the Local Authority, schools and parents/carers.

Please tell us your views

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

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any individual, group or organisation wishing to make comment, show support or opposition to them should contact Jade Kennett, Strategic Development, County Hall, Newport, IOW, PO30 1UD,

Telephone: 01983 821000, e-mail: strategic.planning@iow.gov.uk