

Royal Borough of Greenwich Children's Services

New Transition Learning Centre (TLC) Special Post-16 Institution (SPI)

*For learners with autism with severe and complex
learning needs*

GUIDANCE & SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR PROSPECTIVE PROVIDERS

March 2026

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Location and facilities.....	3
3.	Appointment of a provider.....	4
4.	Eligibility and due diligence.....	5
5.	Assessment criteria.....	7
6.	Appendices (to be issued with application pack).....	19
	APPENDIX A: PROPOSED SERVICE SPECIFICATION.....	20
1.	Aims and objectives.....	20
2.	Service scope and model.....	20
3.	Learners’ profile.....	21
4.	Admissions, capacity and placements.....	22
5.	Building hours and wider use.....	23
6.	Funding model and financial viability.....	24
7.	Out-of-Borough (OOB) Placement and Market Rent Subsidy Recovery Charges.....	25
8.	Property lease: Heads of Terms (summary).....	27
9.	The curriculum and educational programme.....	27
10.	Health and social care integration.....	29
11.	Behaviour, retention and exclusions.....	29
12.	Staffing and training.....	29
13.	Safeguarding and clinical governance.....	30
14.	Data protection and information governance.....	30
15.	Transport and travel assistance.....	30
16.	Business continuity.....	30
17.	Performance management and KPIs.....	31
18.	Social value.....	31
19.	Implementation governance.....	32

Version	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	13 March 2026	RBG Children’s Services	Final publication

1. Introduction

Local authorities are required to ensure there is sufficient education and training places for young people with Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plans up to the age of 25. Currently, Royal Greenwich faces a shortfall in Post-19 provisions, resulting in a significant number of young people being placed outside of London and in independent provisions. These arrangements are costly, disrupt continuity of support, and can weaken young people's connections to their home community.

To address this need, Royal Greenwich is establishing a new purpose-built Transitional Learning Centre (TLC) for young people aged 19–25 with EHC Plans who require specialist, locally delivered post-19 education. The TLC will be registered as a Special Post-16 Institution (SPI) and will offer up to 30 places. Its educational offer will provide a high-quality, inclusive programme designed to prepare young adults for adulthood, including developing independence, enhancing community participation, and where appropriate, supporting pathways into employment, through a blended model integrating education, health and social care support /provision.

The Council has considered its statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010, ensuring the TLC contributes to advancing equality of opportunity and reducing inequalities in post-19 SEND pathways.

Suitably qualified Further Education (FE) colleges and academy trusts interested in operating the TLC are being invited to submit an application to operate the provision, through a competitive grant award process. The grant award will be for an initial period of twenty-five (25) years with an option to extend for a further five (5) years, subject to performance and mutual agreement. The grant award will consist of a pre-operational mobilisation grant, followed by an operational grant covering the full duration of the award period.

The TLC will open with a phased and structured intake, with full capacity expected to be reached within three years of operation. The final intake model, based on three year groups of approximately ten learners each, will be set out within the grant agreement.

2. Location and facilities

The TLC will operate from a newly constructed, purpose-built facility located at 77 Bexley Road, London SE9 2PE, with an approximate gross internal area of 1,200 sqm. The building has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the TLC cohort. The Council will provide the core fit-out and specialist equipment required for safe and effective delivery, recognising that some learners may also attend using their own personal equipment.

While the building design is already well progressed, the Council has incorporated feedback from the recent market engagement process to ensure the facility meets the expectations of prospective operators and reflects adult-appropriate specialist design principles. Key features include:

- Overhead track hoists
- Wet rooms and intimate care facilities
- Dedicated equipment storage
- Appropriate staff welfare and administrative areas
- Secure external learning spaces suited to the needs of young adults with complex SEND

The building is being developed in accordance with relevant Department for Education (DfE) area guidelines, net capacity requirements, and established best practice for SEND specialist settings. The Council is confident that the final design provides a robust and future-proof environment for delivering the TLC's vision and ambitions.

The building project is currently at design stage with an anticipated completion date of August 2027. There will be a period of soft landing upon completion followed by a 12-month defect liability period, during which the contractor would be responsible for resolving any defects arising during this period.

Prior to handover / practical completion, the successful provider would provide input into the building finishes, furniture and fittings. The Provider would also be given pre-opening access to the building for setting up and preparing for students arriving upon opening.

Upon handover, the provider shall take full responsibility for utilities, including water electricity, gas, broadband, etc. The Provider will also have full repairing and insurance obligations.

3. Appointment of a provider

Royal Greenwich is seeking to appoint a suitably qualified education provider with a demonstrable track record of delivering high-quality specialist post-16 provision for young people with complex SEND, including autism, Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), and other high-support-needs profiles (see Section 4 for full eligibility criteria). The appointed provider will be responsible for the effective operation, management and continuous development of the TLC, ensuring that the provision consistently meets the

needs of learners and delivers the Council's ambitions for high-quality local Post-19 pathways.

Providers wishing to apply must complete the designated application form, which will be available via [Royal Greenwich website](#). Completed application forms must be submitted to school-place-planning@royalgreenwich.gov.uk by the deadline specified in Section 5 of this guidance.

All applications will be assessed against the criteria detailed in Section 5. Providers meeting the required standard at the application stage will be invited to participate in an interview as part of the competitive grant process. Following the interview, the Council will select and appoint the successful provider.

The appointed provider will be required to enter into a two-stage grant agreement structure comprising:

- a) A pre-development grant to support mobilisation activities in advance of the planned opening date for the TLC; and
- b) Annual grant payments under a 25-year grant agreement, with an option to extend for a further five (5) years, subject to performance and mutual agreement.

The Council will ensure fairness, non-discrimination and transparency throughout the competition process.

The Council reserves the right to exclude any provider from the competition process on the grounds of insolvency, fraud, safeguarding concerns, contractual non-performance or any other adverse circumstances associated with the provider in question.

Further details regarding the grant funding arrangements are set out in the Service Specification accompanying this guidance.

4. Eligibility and due diligence

To be eligible to apply to operate the TLC, providers must:

- a. Be eligible for delivering state-funded Further Education (FE) or Post-16 education;
- b. Hold a valid United Kingdom Provider Registration Number (UKPN) and be listed on the UK Register of Learning Providers (UKRLP);
- c. Demonstrate relevant experience delivering high-quality FE or post-16 education for learners with complex SEND; and

- d. Meet all DfE due-diligence requirements for high needs students funding as a new SPI. Details of these requirements are set out [here](#).
- e. Have achieved at least 'Expected', 'Strong', or 'Exceptional' standards in the relevant evaluation areas under the Ofsted's renewed inspection framework (effective from November 2025). Providers with isolated areas rated as 'Needs Attention' may still be considered, subject to the submission of a credible and time-bound Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the identified weaknesses. For providers who have not yet been inspected under the renewed framework, the Council will assess quality using outcomes from the previous Ofsted framework. In such cases, applicants must demonstrate a track record of delivering 'Good' or 'Outstanding' provision (or equivalent judgements under the previous Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook) and provide additional evidence, where required, to enable the Council to make an equivalent judgement aligned to the new framework's expectations. This may include recent self-assessment reports, external moderation findings, performance data, and/or internal quality assurance evidence.

Applications from providers with any relevant areas graded as 'Urgent Improvement', whether assessed under the new or previous inspection framework, will not be considered unless exceptional circumstances are clearly evidenced, alongside robust mitigation and demonstrable safeguards to ensure quality and learner safety.

In addition to the above eligibility criteria, as part of the Council's due diligence process, providers will be subject to the following checks.

- a. Safeguarding history check – Providers are required to disclose any ongoing serious incidents, investigations, or notices of concern raised by Ofsted, Charity Commission, ESFA etc.
- b. Financial stability assurance – Providers are required to submit audited accounts for past 2–3 years.
- c. Minimum threshold for operational capacity – Providers must demonstrate that the TLC will not constitute more than 20% of their total organisational turnover unless mitigating structures are provided.

5. Assessment criteria

Prospective providers must submit their application using the designated application form for this competitive grant process. The application window will open on **16 March 2026** and will close **by 11:59 PM on 08 May 2026**.

The competitive grant application process comprises of two stages and scored accordingly:

- a) **Application Stage (80%)**, and
- b) **Interview Stage (20%)**.

All scores will be subject to internal moderation to ensure consistency, fairness and adherence to evaluation guidance

The application form is structured in two parts:

- a) Part A – Quality, Experience and Deliverability
- b) Part B – Vision, Education Plan, Capacity and Capability

5.1 PART A – QUALITY, EXPERIENCE AND DELIVERABILITY

5.1.1 *Criteria for PART A*

PART A seeks evidence of the provider’s organisational performance, capability, and readiness to establish and operate the TLC. Applicants will be required to demonstrate:

- a) **Quality** – Evidence of the provider’s existing Special Post-16 or Further Education (FE) college(s) and/or special school(s) receiving strong external evaluation outcomes. This includes Ofsted judgements assessed in accordance with Section 4(e) above, reflecting the provider’s ability to deliver consistently high-quality provision.
- b) **Experience** – Evidence of the provider’s experience operating Special Post-16 or FE college(s) and/or special school(s) for young people with complex SEND needs, such as autism, PMLD, and other high-support-needs profiles at sixth-form level or beyond.

- c) **Deliverability** – Evidence of the provider’s capacity to work collaboratively with the Council and relevant partners to deliver the TLC in line with the implementation timescales set out in the specification. This includes demonstrating:
- The ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances relating to the construction or mobilisation of the TLC;
 - Flexibility in responding to any required contingency measures arising from changes to construction or handover timelines; and
 - A credible plan for ensuring operational readiness by the agreed opening date.

5.1.2 Scoring Framework for PART A

The assessment for PART A will be based on the scoring scales below:

Questions 3 (Quality’) and 4 (Experience’) will be scored on a four-point scale, so that:

0 = The evidence and response(s) provided to the question is ‘inadequate’

1 = The evidence and response(s) provided to the question is ‘adequate’

2 = The evidence and response(s) provided to the question is ‘good’

3 = The evidence and response(s) provided to the question is ‘excellent’

Pass threshold (Quality and Experience): A minimum score of 2 above is required to pass each question for ‘Quality’ and ‘Experience’.

Question 5 (Deliverability’) will be scored on a two-point scale, so that:

0 = ticked “No”, not met the acceptance criteria.

1 = ticked “Yes”, met the acceptance criteria.

Pass threshold (Deliverability): A minimum score of 1 is required to pass the ‘Deliverability’ question.

5.1.3 Overall Requirements for PART A

To progress to **PART B** and remain in the competition, providers must:

- Achieve a minimum total score of 5 points across all **PART A** questions; and
- Meet the pass threshold for each individual test (Quality, Experience and Deliverability).

Applications that do not meet any of the individual pass thresholds or do not achieve the required minimum total score of 5 points will be discontinued at this stage. Such provider's responses to **PART B** will not be evaluated.

At this stage, the Council will formally notify any provider that does not progress beyond **PART A**, with the relevant feedback provided.

5.2 PART B – VISION, EDUCATION PLAN, CAPACITY & CAPABILITY (100% OF THE ASSESSMENT SCORE WITH AN OVERALL WEIGHTING OF 80%)

5.2.1 Criteria for PART B

PART B carries the highest weighting in the assessment process and provides the Council with the strongest indication of the provider's ability to successfully operate the TLC to the required standard. Scoring will be based on three domains:

- a) Vision – 20% of Assessment Score
- b) Education Plan – 50% of Assessment Score
- c) Capacity & Capability – 30% of Assessment Score

Applicants are expected to provide concrete evidence, practical examples, and clear alignment with the TLC's purpose, the [Preparing for Adulthood \(PfA\) agenda](#), and the Council's ambition for high-quality, integrated Post-19 specialist provision.

5.2.2 Scoring framework for PART B

VISION (20%) – This section assesses the clarity, credibility and alignment of the provider's vision for the TLC as a Special Post-16 Institution (SPI) for young adults aged 19–25 with complex SEND.

Assessment Criteria for Vision – The Council will evaluate how far the provider's vision:

- a) Aligns with the Council's overarching strategic vision. This part of the application form will contribute **7.5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:
- Shows clear strategic coherence and demonstrates how the provider's organisational aims would inform the TLC's educational model.
 - Demonstrates ambition for young adults with complex SEND and a commitment to outcomes focusing on independence, communication, community participation, and where appropriate, employment-related progression.
- b) Is credible, deliverable, and financially sustainable. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:
- Demonstrates that the proposed vision is achievable within the TLC's funding envelope, staffing model, specialist provision design, and expected learner profile.
 - Evidences realistic delivery assumptions and awareness of operating within the challenging high-needs funding environment.
- c) Aligns with the Council's expectations for Post-19 SEND provision. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:
- Demonstrates a strong fit with [Royal Greenwich's SEND and Inclusion Partnership Strategy](#), [Preparing for Adulthood priorities](#), and the Council's stated ambitions for local, high-quality Post-19 pathways.
 - Provides practical examples of working with local authorities or other stakeholders to support system-wide SEND improvements.
- d) Demonstrates understanding of the TLC learner cohort. This part of the application form will contribute **2.5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:
- Shows an informed understanding of the needs of learners with autism, PMLD, significant sensory needs, behaviours that may challenge, and other high-support needs.
 - Explains how the vision encompasses support both during and beyond the college day (e.g., enhanced community access, personal development activities, support for families/carers).

Scoring will reflect the quality, coherence and evidential strength of the vision using the assessment panel's professional judgement.

EDUCATION PLAN (50%) – This is the core of the application. Providers must set out how they will translate their vision into a high-quality Post-19 specialist educational programme that meets EHCP outcomes and supports progression into adulthood and individually appropriate independence.

Assessment Criteria for Education Plan – The Council will assess the Education Plan across four sub-domains:

a) *Blended Curriculum Model – Ambitious, Broad, Balanced and Deliverable.*

This part of the application form will contribute **20%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider demonstrates:

- A curriculum that is ambitious, person-centred, and tailored to young adults with complex SEND, including those with autism, PMLD, significant sensory needs and behaviours that challenge.
- Evidence that the curriculum:
 - Includes a blended approach, integrating education, health and social care support delivered in partnership with other relevant stakeholders.
 - Supports development of independence, communication, life skills and where appropriate, employability.
 - Promotes functional literacy, numeracy, digital skills and social communication.
 - Includes meaningful community-based learning and work-related learning where appropriate.
- Sample timetables, case studies or examples from existing Post-16 or Post-19 provisions illustrating impact on learner outcomes.
- A rationale grounded in PfA outcomes and EHCP-driven planning.

b) *Inclusivity, Safeguarding & Preparation for Adult Life.* This part of the application form will contribute **10%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider demonstrates:

- Strong inclusive practice enabling all learners, regardless of need, background or belief, to thrive and participate fully.
- A curriculum that prepares young adults for life in modern Britain, embedding SMSC, British values, personal safety, healthy relationships, and adulthood readiness.

- Policies and practices supporting a safe, respectful, aspirational culture.
- Examples showing how learners with diverse needs are supported to interact positively, develop relationships and participate in community life.

c) Measuring Learner Progress & Outcomes. This part of the application form will contribute **10%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:

The provider must:

- Sets out a clear assessment strategy designed for learners with complex SEND, including sensory profiles, SEMH needs and communication differences.
- Demonstrates how baselines will be established, progress measured, and outcomes monitored continuously.
- Provides examples of tools, tracking systems and quality assurance processes used in existing settings.
- Shows awareness of factors affecting regulation, behaviour, and wellbeing, and how these will be monitored and acted on.
- Demonstrates how learner voice, parental/carer views and multidisciplinary insights will inform provision.

d) Staffing Model & External Professional Input. This part of the application form will contribute **10%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:

- Presents a staffing structure aligned to the proposed curriculum and phased learner numbers.
- Shows how specialist expertise (e.g., SALT, OT, physio, PBS practitioners, clinical governance) will be integrated into the education model.
- Demonstrates flexibility to manage phased opening and varying funding levels.
- Provides evidence (e.g., from existing provisions) showing successful workforce planning, performance management, team development, and integrated therapy delivery.

CAPACITY & CAPABILITY (30%) - This section tests whether the provider has the leadership, project management, financial planning, governance and workforce expertise to establish and operate the TLC successfully.

Assessment criteria for Capacity & Capability – The Council will assess the capability, capacity and practices of the provider under the following sub-domains

a) Project Planning & Risk Management. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:

- Submits a credible, costed project plan aligned to the TLC mobilisation timescales.
- Demonstrates understanding of risks associated with opening a new provision, workforce recruitment, building handover, and PPM/lease obligations.
- Provides a risk register with mitigations and clear accountability. A risk register template is included in Appendix G.
- Shows practical examples of delivering similar projects or managing phased expansions.

b) Experience & Leadership Credentials. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score and will evaluate how much the provider:

- Demonstrates organisational experience operating specialist FE or Post-16 SEND provision.
- Shows strong leadership expertise in areas including education, safeguarding, SEND, finance, estates.
- Identifies key pre-opening and post-opening leadership roles (e.g., Principal, SEND Lead, Operations Lead) and supply CVs where available.
- Identifies skills gaps and provide credible plans to fill them.

c) Governance, Accountability & Decision-Making. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score. Here the provider must demonstrate that its organisational structure and resources are resilient, robust and able to withstand any unforeseen risks. As such, the provider must provide evidence that its:

- Governance structure is capable of ensuring strong accountability, quality assurance, financial oversight, safeguarding scrutiny and strategic decision-making.
- Plan for the TLC aligns with its Academy Trust or FE governance expectations (as appropriate).
- Processes have appropriate and clear delegation, conflict-of-interest management and independent challenge arrangements.

- Policies and processes include a plan to continuously recruit and train governance members to ensure alignment with the changing legislative climate.

d) Resources & Infrastructure Readiness. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score. Here, the provider must show:

- Access to appropriate educational, clinical, finance, HR, estates and project management expertise.
- Realistic staffing and resource planning aligned to funding assumptions and learner needs.
- Ability to provide specialist resources or secure external specialist capacity.

e) Business Continuity. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score. Here the provider must provide:

- Evidence of an existing and credible business continuity plan covering staffing contingencies, IT/communications outage, building related issues, extreme weather and other emergency scenarios.
- Evidence that the existing business continuity plan is suitable and flexible to accommodate a new provision.
- Evidence that the existing business continuity plan has been agreed through the management structure.

f) Social Value Commitments. This part of the application form will contribute **5%** towards the assessment score. Here, the provider should set out their proposal for measurable social value by completing the social value matrix provided in Appendix H.

5.2.3 Scoring of PART B (Vision 20% + Education Plan 50% + Capacity & Capability 30%)

Each sub-domain will be scored on a qualitative scale against the extent to which evidence is:

- Clear
- Robust
- Coherent
- Practical

- Demonstrably aligned to the TLC specification

Final **PART B** scores will be weighted to reflect:

- Vision – 20%
- Education Plan – 50%
- Capacity & Capability – 30%

PART B will have a weighting of **80%** in the overall scoring process.

5.3 INTERVIEW STAGE (20%)

The Interview Stage will account for **20%** of the overall score for the competitive grant process.

Shortlisted providers will be invited to attend an interview with a panel. The interview date will be confirmed closer to the time, and providers will be given sufficient advance notice to support their preparation.

The interview panel will consist of senior officers from Children's Services, Health and Adult Services, a representative from the Integrated Care Board (ICB), and a parent/carer with lived experience of navigating transition to adulthood for a young person with complex needs.

During the interview, shortlisted providers will be required to:

- a) Present their proposal for the operation of the TLC, using a format of their choosing. A copy of the presentation must be submitted to the panel no later than three working days prior to the interview; and
- b) Respond to questions from panel members relating to the information provided in PART B of the application form, as well as any matters arising from their presentation.

The interview assessment will focus on:

- a) Coherence and consistency between the information provided in the written application and the responses given during the interview; and
- b) The extent to which the provider's vision for the TLC aligns with the Council's strategic ambitions and with the provider's own organisational vision, values and strategic direction.

5.4 DECISION STAGE

Final decision on the appointment of the successful provider will be made through the Council’s formal governance and approval processes.

Following completion of the assessment stages, the assessment panel will submit a recommendation to the Director of Children’s Services, who will consider the recommendation in consultation with the Director of Health and Adult Services. The Directors, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children and Young People and the Lead Member for Health, Adult Social Care and Borough of Sanctuary, will then recommend approval to the Leader of the Council.

Once the governance process is complete, the Council will notify the successful provider.

Indicative dates for each stage of the application process, including the decision-making timeline is set out below.

Stages	Date(s)	Action	Status
I. Market Engagement Phase:			
A Information Brief (this document) available for prospective providers.	November 2025	Published on the commonplace website .	Completed
B Introductory webinar for eligible providers.	1 December 2025 from 2.30pm	A 1–2-hours session with presentations on various aspects of the TLC provision including an opportunity for Q&As. Eligible providers can register here to attend the webinar .	Completed
C Eligible providers feedback & expressions of interest (EOI) survey starts and ends (deadline).	1 to 10 December 2025	Eligible providers are invited to complete the provider feedback & EOI survey here .	Completed
D	January 2026		Completed

Stages		Date(s)	Action	Status
E	<p>Review of provider feedback during the market engagement phase.</p> <p>NEW: Building design webinar for eligible providers</p>	15 January 2026 from 2pm.	<p>Feedback reviewed on viability and adjustments considered to the final specification before the competition phase commences.</p> <p>A 1–2 hours session held by Council representatives and the appointed design team on the latest building design. Eligible providers will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the latest building design and can register here to attend the design webinar.</p>	Completed
2. Provider Competition Phase (ASSESSED):			<i>Dates for the competition phase to be confirmed and announced during March 2026.</i>	
A	Application opens.	16 th March 2026	Guidance document published with acceptance criteria, specification and application form template.	Commenced
B	Application submission deadline for eligible providers.	8 th May 2026	Provider applications submitted to school-place-planning@royalgreenwich.gov.uk (time stamped).	TBC
C	Interview and assessment of provider submissions.	From Mid-May 2026	The assessment panel will interview and assess applications using the published acceptance criteria.	TBC

Stages		Date(s)	Action	Status
3	Provider applicants notified of the outcome from the competition phase.	From June 2026	Successful and non-successful applicants are notified.	TBC
4.	The Council democratically appoints the successful provider	By July 2026	Democratic approval is sought to appoint the successful provider (SPI) and grant the necessary legal agreements.	TBC
5.	Pre-Opening /Mobilisation Phase.	From July 2026 to August 2027	<p>The Council must submit the high needs place change notification to the DfE before December 2026 regarding the new SPI and for the DfE to initiate their due diligence process. Please check the full details of the DfE's due diligence process requirements, stages and timelines for establishing a new SPI which will likely need to be completed by March 2027 for 2027-28 academic year.</p> <p>The appointed SPI provider is also expected to receive a pre-opening phase grant by the Council to support them with the set-up of the new provision prior to the opening date.</p>	TBC
6.	The TLC provision opens.	From September 2027	Admission of first cohort(s) of young people.	TBC

6. Appendices (to be issued with application pack)

Appendix A: Proposed Service Specification

Appendix B: Draft Lease Heads of Terms.

Appendix C: RIBA Stage 3 design outputs.

Appendix D: PPM/lifecycle schedule and building maintenance responsibilities.

Appendix E: Admissions criteria.

Appendix F: KPI dashboard template.

Appendix G: Risk register template.

Appendix H: Social value matrix template.

APPENDIX A: PROPOSED SERVICE SPECIFICATION

Title	Transition Learning Centre (TLC)
Address	77 Bexley Road SE9 2PE
Document Type	Proposed Service Specification

1. Aims and objectives

- 1.1. The establishment of the Transition Learning Center (TLC) is consistent with the ambitions and priorities set out in the Royal Greenwich’s Children and Young People’s Plan 2024-2029 and Special Education Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Partnership Strategy 2024-2029. These strategies ensure that all children and young people in Royal Greenwich, regardless of their background or circumstances have a happy and fulfilled childhood where they learn, belong, grow and achieve so that they enter adulthood ready and able to reach their full potential.

2. Service scope and model

- 2.1. The TLC shall operate as a Special Post-16 Institution (SPI) with the Provider creating a high-quality, inclusive learning environment that fosters independence and prepares learners for adult life. The TLC shall function as a multi-agency collaboration hub for a holistic and person-centred approach to supporting the transition of learners with complex needs towards achieving greater independence, community participation, and where appropriate, pathways into employment, through a blended model integrating education, health and social care support /provision.
- 2.2. The Provider will have full possession of the site and shall be responsible for the effective operation, management and continuous development of the TLC, ensuring that the provision consistently meets the individual needs of learners and delivers the Council’s ambitions for high-quality local Post-19 pathways.
- 2.3. Given the specialist and multi-agency nature of the provision and the need for a blended education and social care curriculum, the provider shall work collaboratively with health, social care, and voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) partners to provide a holistic, person-centred offer.

3. Learners' profile

- 3.1. Learners attending the TLC will typically present with complex, lifelong Special Educational Needs (SEN) requiring highly specialist, multidisciplinary support. This includes young adults functioning at an early cognitive level who may have Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), some physical disabilities, sensory impairments, medical needs requiring daily care, and may require specialist equipment such as hoists, postural management systems and alternative communication technologies to function.
- 3.2. Others may be autistic young people with severe learning difficulties who require high levels of structure, predictability and movement, with limited awareness of risk and potential for behaviours that challenge, including behaviours linked to dysregulation, sensory overload or underlying mental health needs.
- 3.3. In general, may be non-verbal or highly supported when communicating, while relying on consistent adults, visual systems, multi-sensory cues and structured routines to engage meaningfully in learning.
- 3.4. All learners will require personalised programmes focused on communication, independence, emotional regulation, positive behaviour support, and safe access to their community, delivered by a resilient, solutions-focused team working collaboratively across education, health and social care to maximise each young adult's quality of life and progression towards adulthood.
- 3.5. The following table outlines the typical profiles of young people who may be placed at the TLC.

Profile	Description
Profile I: Young Person with Complex Needs	<p>This young person functions at an early cognitive level (birth to 18 months) and presents with multiple complex needs requiring input from a wide range of professionals. They are not independently mobile and rely on specialist equipment, hoisting, and a postural care routine. Communication is non-verbal, with adults interpreting facial expressions, body language, and vocalisations to understand and respond to needs.</p> <p>Daily medical care is likely needed, including routine and emergency interventions. Additional health concerns may include low immunity, temperature regulation difficulties, and feeding needs such as enteral feeding or texture-modified diets. There may also be sensory difficulties including cortical visual, hearing or multisensory impairments.</p>

	<p>Learning is facilitated through real-life, concrete experiences and structured using multi-sensory cues and consistent routines. Trusted adult relationships are critical to engagement and well-being. Access to adapted, specialist technology may be required.</p> <p>A solutions-focused team is essential to identify strengths and reduce barriers to a full adult life.</p>
<p>Profile 2: Young Person with Autism and Severe Learning Difficulties</p>	<p>This young person functions at an early cognitive level between 11 to 36 months and is highly active, requiring regular movement and safe, spacious environments. They may have limited awareness of danger, with risks including absconding and mouthing or eating inappropriate objects. Periods of dysregulation can result in behaviours that pose risks to themselves or others.</p> <p>Communication is typically non-verbal or limited, with reliance on visual supports such as symbols and objects to understand routines and express needs. Attention and focus are fleeting, and learning is best supported through visual modelling and structured repetition. Support is needed across all areas of daily life, including toileting and mealtimes, and they may have mental health needs including the involvement of CAMHS and other mental health professionals.</p> <p>This young person benefits from predictability and finds change challenging. A resilient, energetic team is required to provide consistent structure and to support safe, meaningful access to adult life.</p>

4. Admissions, capacity and placements

- 4.1. TLC total capacity will be 30 full-time places (30 hours/week) organised into three-year groups of 10.
- 4.2. The Council will have first refusal on all places and will place eligible learners through statutory EHCP processes.
- 4.3. The Provider will be expected to:
 - a) Admit all young learners resident in the Royal Borough of Greenwich with an EHC Plan naming the TLC. Places may be made available to out of borough residents only where the Council has not been able to fully utilise the available capacity. The Provider may admit out-of-borough residents where the TLC is

named in their EHC Plan through the statutory SEND school consultation process; in which case, the Council reserves the right to recover the cost of such placements from the relevant authorities through the Provider.

- b) Where the Council is unable to fully utilise the places at the TLC, the Provider can liaise with other local authorities to market the provision and recruit learners for all remaining places, where applicable.
 - c) For every place taken up by another local authority (whether that place is filled or unfilled), pay the Council a placement fee for advisory and resourcing support (typically between £3K-£5K per place per academic year, subject to adjustments in line with inflation/CPI index). In addition, any wraparound care cost incurred by the Council due to such placements, will be recovered from the relevant local authority. These payments are intended to reflect the Council's obligation under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain best consideration for the use of its assets and to ensure efficient use of resources. These payments are intended to reflect the Council's obligation under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain best consideration for the use of its assets and to ensure efficient use of resources.
- 4.4. TLC will have a Joint Admissions Panel comprising of the relevant Council officers and the Provider setting and applying admissions criteria (including fitness-to-study), managing phased intake and agreeing exit/transition pathways.
- 4.5. Learners requiring part-time placements will be placed at the TLC where appropriate and such aligns to EHCP outcomes. In these circumstances, the Provider shall offer part-time placements on a pro-rata basis, agreed in advance by the Council.

5. Building hours and wider use

- 5.1. Core staffing hours shall be 08:30–16:30, with flexibility in the learning day to accommodate transport, family and learner needs. The Provider shall maximise use of the building in evenings, weekends and holiday periods for the cohort and, by agreement, trusted partners (e.g., Royal Borough of Greenwich - RBG services such as GLO) to support social links and transition into adult provision.

6. Funding model and financial viability

- 6.1. The Provider must obtain the DfE's relevant registration to operate the TLC as a SPI and must be eligible for naming in the Council's high needs place change notification to the DfE in line with the relevant DfE's timeline for naming under Section I of an EHC plan for 10 or more places.
- 6.2. The Provider must meet the requirements for [the DfE's due diligence process](#), which will determine eligibility for direct funding. There are 3 stages to the due diligence process:
- a) Stage 1 – legal status and background information, and LA confirmation of placements and reason for seeking direct DfE funding for SPIs, including why provision is not available elsewhere.
 - b) Stage 2 – [financial health assessment](#)
 - c) Stage 3 – quality of provision
- 6.3. The Provider must then secure relevant DfE direct funding for 19–25-year-olds (Elements 1 and 2).
- 6.4. The Council shall pay the top-up funding (Element 3) via individual placement agreements in the form of grants as set out in the grant agreement between the Council and the Provider.
- 6.5. The Council shall pay the Provider a Pre-opening Development Grant (PDG) to cover mobilisation activities (curriculum leads, recruitment, statutory compliance, realistic fit-out assumptions). Details of the amount and disbursement of the PDG are also set out in the grant agreement.
- 6.6. In the meantime, the table below provides an initial estimate of the funding that likely to be available to operate the TLC provision, including the PDG based on the assumption indicated:

INCOME (estimate)

Place Funding	300,000
Top-Up Funding	1,447,890 (maximum based on all learners being on RBG SEND Band 6)

1,747,890

PDG - ONE OFF	168,750
	50,000
	218,750

- 6.7. The funding agreement shall include an indexation mechanism to maintain viability over the term (e.g., CPI-linked or sector benchmark uplifts for pay and non-pay), applied to the agreed baseline funding model.
- 6.8. Out-of-borough (OOB): The Provider may accept OOB placements where the Council has not fully utilised capacity for Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG) learners, or where the TLC is named in an OOB EHCP or ordered via tribunal. Where an OOB placement is made, **an OOB placement recovery charge** set at no less than the relevant Council rate and inclusive of the applicable subsidy-recovery charges may be charged.

7. **Out-of-Borough (OOB) Placement and Market Rent Subsidy Recovery Charges**

- 7.1 The Council has established an OOB Recovery Charge to ensure that public funding and subsidy intended for RBG learners is used appropriately. The TLC has been developed through significant capital investment to meet the needs of RBG young people aged 19–25 with SEND, and the Council is foregoing commercial market rent under the lease to secure essential SEND sufficiency. Where OOB placements reduce the availability of places for RBG learners, the Council may apply recovery charges through the Grant Agreement to restore its financial position. These charges reflect only the evidenced cost impact to the Council, namely the additional cost of sourcing alternative placements for displaced RBG learners and the proportionate rent subsidy foregone, and do not generate any profit. The Council intends to apply these conditions under its general powers in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. This recovery mechanism is therefore considered lawful, proportionate, and transparent, protecting public subsidy and ensuring RBG is not financially disadvantaged by OOB placements.

- 7.2 Where an OOB Recovery Charge is applicable, subject to the terms of the proposed Grant Agreement, the Provider would be required to charge the placing local authority accordingly and remit the charge to the Council. While the details of how the charges would be calculated are subject to the proposed Grant Agreement, the overarching principle would be that they would be calculated using the annual average cost difference between:
- a) the Council's cost per place at the TLC; and
 - b) the average cost of an equivalent place elsewhere (for example, in the independent sector).
- 7.3 The above charge exclude any 'health recharge' levies or any therapy/health inputs in line with the learner's EHCP and local commissioning arrangements to avoid double charging.
- 7.4 In addition to the OOB Recovery Charge, a Market Rent Subsidy Recovery Charge will apply where an OOB learner occupies a TLC place. This is because the peppercorn rent represents a subsidy provided by the Council to support in-borough SEND sufficiency. A proportionate share of this subsidy will therefore be recovered from the Provider for each OOB placement, with the expectation that the cost is passed on to the placing authority. Subject to the terms of the proposed Grant Agreement, this charge will be calculated by:
- a) determining the annual commercial market rent of the premises;
 - b) dividing this figure by 30 places (the TLC capacity); and
 - c) multiplying the per-place rate by the number of OOB learners.
- 7.5 All recovery charges are strictly cost-based and designed solely to restore the Council's financial position. They are not punitive and do not amount to the Council undertaking a commercial activity within the meaning of Section 4 of the Localism Act 2011. Terminology such as "OOB Recovery Charge" and "Market Rent Subsidy Recovery Charge" is used to ensure that charges are understood as cost-recovery mechanisms, not commercial fees. All such clawback arrangements will be applied through the Grant Agreement in accordance with the Council's general powers under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, ensuring that charges remain lawful, proportionate, and directly linked to the actual costs or foregone subsidy incurred by the Council.
- 7.6 Where confirmed RBG placements remain below capacity by 1 April for a September intake, the Council will agree a risk-share payment mechanism for unused places,

subject to mutually agreed conditions and the Provider demonstrating reasonable endeavours to fill vacant places.

8. Property lease: Heads of Terms (summary)

- 8.1 The TLC shall be let to the Provider on commercial terms for a period of 25 years from September 2027, with a break clause linked to continuation of the grant agreement with the Council. The Provider shall pay peppercorn rent for the duration of the funding agreement, with rent reverting to full commercial rent when the service ceases or the Grant Agreement terminates.
- 8.2 As set out in 7.4 above, peppercorn rent reflects a rent subsidy provided by the Council to support the delivery of specialist post-19 SEND places for young people who are ordinarily resident in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Where places intended for Greenwich learners are instead utilised by OOB residents, the Council reserves the right to recover a proportion of the rent subsidy equivalent to the proportion of TLC places occupied by OOB learners. While the calculation methodology and reporting requirements will be set out in the Grant Agreement and reviewed annually, this proportional recovery mechanism accounts for:
- a) the loss of in-borough places,
 - b) the corresponding reduction in benefit to Greenwich residents, and
 - c) the foregoing of commercial rent by the Council to support local SEND sufficiency.
- 8.3 The Provider shall have full repairing and insurance (FRI) obligations on terms that support lifecycle maintenance and upkeep of the building; delineation of landlord (Council) and tenant (Provider) responsibilities.
- 8.4 The Provider shall make the TLC available for flexible use for community-based activities during evenings, weekends and holidays.
- 8.5 Details of the proposed draft Heads of Terms together with the PPM/lifecycle schedule of the premises are included in Appendix B and Appendix D respectively.

9. The curriculum and educational programme

- 9.1 On appointment, the Provider shall work collaboratively with all the relevant partners including parents, young adults and other stakeholders to co-design a curriculum that

is inclusive and able to deliver a high-quality provision to meet each young adult's individual needs and facilitate progression towards greater independence and their bespoke outcomes as set out within their EHC Plan.

- 9.2 The co-designed curriculum shall be reviewed periodically in partnership with young adults, parents and carers, as well as local employers and voluntary sector organisations (where applicable) to improve and make responsive to individual needs and aspirations.
- 9.3 The curriculum must ensure that all expectations specified in each learner's EHC Plan are delivered effectively to support the achievement of identified outcomes. The provider shall be responsible for managing the education component of each learner's EHC Plan, ensuring that learning pathways are meaningful, inclusive, and aligned with opportunities for community engagement, work-related learning (where applicable), and progression into adulthood.
- 9.4 The Provider shall deliver a strengths-based, outcomes-focused programme aligned to each learner's EHCP, integrating functional skills, independent living, vocational learning and social development. Programmes shall embed Preparing for Adulthood outcomes (employment, independent living, participation, health) and where applicable, provide clear pathways to work or meaningful activity and community engagement.
- 9.5 Core components of the curriculum programme must include:
- a) Travel training (where appropriate),
 - b) Personal care and intimate care,
 - c) Cooking,
 - d) Care of home,
 - e) Washing,
 - f) Budgeting,
 - g) Activity planning,
 - h) Citizenship,
 - i) Digital skills,
 - j) English and Maths (where appropriate),
 - k) Motional literacy,
 - l) Positive behaviour support (e.g., zones of regulation),
 - m) Work-related learning and enterprise (where appropriate).

- 9.6 The Provider must build links with local employers and the voluntary/community sector to offer supported work placements, job shadowing, enterprise, volunteering and community-based learning. All external activities require appropriate risk assessment and alignment with EHCP outcomes.

10. Health and social care integration

- 10.1 The Provider shall work with relevant health and social care partners to deliver wrap-around interventions where specified in EHCPs (e.g., OT, SALT, physiotherapy). Wider clinical governance will be clarified with the Council during mobilisation. Health inputs will be funded according to statutory responsibilities (per EHCP and commissioning arrangements).
- 10.2 Where learners are assessed as eligible for care and support under the Care Act 2014, the Provider shall work in partnership with the Council's Children's and/or Health and Adults Services to support them in accessing the relevant social care support (e.g. personal budgets for supported living), and ensure integrated support aligns with each learner's assessed care and support needs.

11. Behaviour, retention and exclusions

- 11.1 The Provider must adopt a person-centred behaviour support approach. Placements shall not be terminated, nor learners excluded without the Council's explicit agreement following multi-agency review and exploration of reasonable adjustments.

12. Staffing and training

- 12.1 The Provider shall employ appropriately qualified staff and ensure mandatory training/competence for: safeguarding (children and adults); positive behaviour support; first aid; manual handling; intimate/personal care; seizure management; feeding systems; medication administration; autism and complex SEND; and data protection. All staff must have Enhanced DBS checks and follow safer recruitment process.

13. Safeguarding and clinical governance

- 13.1 Policies must comply with the Care Act 2014, London multi-agency safeguarding adults' procedures, and (where relevant) child protection procedures.
- 13.2 Medication policies must reflect current professional guidance; medicines stored and administered in line with legal requirements and best practice.
- 13.3 Clinical tasks must only be undertaken within competence and with appropriate consent and governance.

14. Data protection and information governance

- 14.1 The Provider shall comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 14.2 Accurate records must be maintained securely; privacy notices and lawful bases documented; data sharing agreements in place with partners; and personal data processed proportionately and securely.
- 14.3 The Provider shall notify and manage personal data breaches in line with ICO guidance.

15. Transport and travel assistance

- 15.1 Home-to-college transport duties shall remain with the Council in accordance with applicable legislation and local policy.
- 15.2 The Provider shall be responsible for delivering appropriate travel training (ambitious yet realistic), supporting the reduction of reliance on specialist transport where safe and agreed.

16. Business continuity

- 16.1 A Business Continuity Plan must be provided during mobilisation and reviewed annually, covering ICT disruption, staffing contingencies, adverse weather, financial sustainability, and safe service continuation.

17. Performance management and KPIs

17.1 Quarterly grant management meetings will review performance against KPIs and quality indicators. Where performance falls below target for two or more periods, the Provider must implement a performance improvement plan (PIP) with agreed timescales.

17.2 The following are illustrative KPIs (final list to be finalised at mobilization and reviewed periodically):

- **Safeguarding:** statutory compliance (met’).
- **EHCP annual reviews:** % completed within statutory timescales.
- **Preparing for Adulthood outcomes:** % of leavers in paid employment (where appropriate), education or training at 6 months; % sustaining independent living arrangements aligned to assessed need; % participating regularly in community/volunteering.
- **Attendance and engagement: average attendance;** % positive engagement in community-based learning.
- **Quality:** learner/family satisfaction; audit outcomes; lesson observations/self-assessment; implementation of QIP actions.
- **Workforce:** mandatory training completion; supervision frequency; retention rates.
- **Data:** timeliness/quality of required returns.

18. Social value

18.1 Social value commitments are included to ensure that the TLC delivers wider, long-term benefits for the Royal Borough of Greenwich beyond its core educational purpose. As a publicly funded specialist provision, the TLC is expected to contribute positively to the local community, local economy and to the life chances of residents. Embedding social value within the funding agreement enables the Council to maximise the return on public investment by generating employment, skills, volunteering, and community-based opportunities that directly support Preparation for Adulthood outcomes. It also ensures that the Provider operates in a way that promotes social responsibility, supports local priorities, strengthens community cohesion, and enhances access to high-quality services and opportunities for learners, families, and the wider Greenwich community.

18.2 In view of the above, the Provider will be required to propose measurable social value commitments to be incorporated into KPIs and monitored through the funding agreement. The social value commitments will be in the areas of local employment, apprenticeships, volunteering, social enterprise development and community use of facilities.

19. Implementation governance

19.1 A Strategic Board (Council and Provider) will oversee mobilisation and ongoing performance. Members of the Strategic Board will be required to sign a confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declaration.