

Press release: Applications open to run country's first Secure School

- £5 million will be invested redeveloping existing Ministry of Justice site in Kent
- This first Secure School is set to open in Autumn 2020

The government has today opened applications for specialist, not-for-profit education providers to apply to run the UK's first Secure School. This provides a custodial setting for young people which is focused on education and health services.

This is the very first example of this establishment in the UK. Based at Medway, it will offer up to 70 places for boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 17 and will predominantly serve the South East, including London – a crucial area of demand. Headteachers will be given complete autonomy to run a tailored curriculum.

Justice Minister Edward Argar said:

Today's publication of the 'How to Apply Guidance' is a crucial step in our ongoing commitment to reform youth custody and equip children with the skills they need to live successful, crime-free lives on release.

Secure Schools will lead the way across the youth estate by focusing on tailored early intervention and putting education, healthcare and physical activity at the heart of rehabilitation.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System Lord Agnew said:

All children deserve the chance to fulfil their potential regardless of their background or circumstances – a high quality education can be the key to helping young offenders get their lives back on track.

That is why we have worked with the Ministry of Justice in the development of Secure Schools so that education, care and health are at the heart of youth justice.

Academies are rich in expertise and innovation that could be extended to helping these young people and I hope to see them putting themselves forward for this.

The Ministry of Justice has engaged with and listened to over 150 stakeholders to ensure the Secure Schools model is built on evidence and

shaped by best practice.

The [application process](#) has been designed to ensure a wide range of organisations is able to make a strong application, including those with less experience of bidding for government contracts – resulting in a provider with genuine expertise and experience in this field. It will run until February 2019 before a provider is announced in the summer – with the aim of the school opening in Autumn 2020.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate a child focussed ethos and show their experience of working with children who have undergone significant trauma.

£5 million will be invested to redevelop Medway Secure Training Centre into a Secure School, including extensive refurbishment of the existing classrooms and residential areas as well as improvement to sports provision on the site. This work will benefit from the findings of the review of sport in youth custody and efforts ongoing as part of the Education and Employment Strategy – both published this year.

Secure Schools are just one part of a package of reforms to the youth estate, including developing Enhanced Support Units to provide specialist support to children with the most complex needs. We are also expanding frontline staff capacity in public-sector YOIs by 20% equating to over 120 new recruits.

Notes to editors

- The government is developing a specific inspection regime to robustly monitor the performance of Secure Schools.
- Secure Schools will be run by secure school academy trusts and will be governed and run under the same legislation as children's homes and academies.