

St Elizabeth's Centre

Admission Policy and Procedure



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Admission Policy and Procedure ("**Policy**") sets out:
- a) the values, principles and criteria underpinning St Elizabeth's Centre's ("**Charity**") approach to Admissions, Transitions, Discharges and Admissions Appeals; and
 - b) a clear and streamlined application and assessment process, providing accessible and accurate information within agreed timescales.
- 1.2. The Charity operates three core services:
- c) St Elizabeth's School (*non-maintained special school*) and Children's Home ("**School**");
 - d) St Elizabeth's College (*section 41 exempt special post-16 institution*) and Supported Living ("**College**"); and
 - e) Adult Services, including Day Opportunities and Social Enterprises ("**Adult Services**")
- 1.3. The Charity is its own admissions authority – i.e. the body that deals with admissions for the School, Children's Home, College, Supported Living and Adult Services, with age ranges as follows:
- a) The School and Children's Home cater to pupils aged from 5 – 19 years. . Pupils may enter at any stage of their school career, subject to this Policy and where vacancies arise;
 - b) The College and Supported Living cater to learners aged from 19 - 25 years. Learners may enter at any stage of their College career, subject to this Policy and where vacancies arise; and
 - c) Adult Services cater for those aged 18 or over.
- 1.4. The Policy is applied in accordance with legislation that is applicable to each of the three core services, as well as the Charity as a whole, including but not limited to:
- a) The Children and Families Act 2014;
 - b) The Human Rights Act 1998; and,
 - c) The Equality Act 2010.
- 1.5. The Policy is written in accordance with the standards set by:
- a) Ofsted;
 - b) Care Quality Commission;
 - c) Department for Education (DfE);
 - d) Education Skills Funding Authority (ESFA); and
 - e) Council contracts monitoring.
- 1.6. The Charity's core values are *compassion, aspiration, creativity, collaboration and joy*. The Charity's Strategic Leadership Team works to ensure the core values are understood by all staff, learners and residents and permeate through both education and care delivery.
- 1.7. The admissions, transition, discharge and admissions appeals processes are non-discriminatory - all applicants are considered in accordance with the admission criteria (*see Section 2, below*).

- 1.8. St Elizabeth's Centre is a Roman Catholic charity that welcomes people of any or no denomination and works closely with individuals, their loved ones and/or their legal representatives, to ensure that the Charity meets personalised religious, cultural and spiritual needs.
- 1.9. The Policy reflects the principle of meeting applicants' individualised needs, wherever possible. Careful assessment, good person-centred planning and communication are essential in order to ensure individuals obtain the services identified as appropriate to their needs.

2. Criteria for Admission

- 2.1. St Elizabeth's Centre welcomes applications from those who will benefit from the specialist health and therapy support, as well as the relevant curriculum offer in respect of applicants to the School or College.
- 2.2. Applicants' individualised needs, and the Charity's ability to meet those needs, are assessed against the following admissions criteria:
 - a) A diagnosis of a learning disability and/or other complex medical need, often caused or complicated by severe epilepsy and/or autism;
 - b) Application supported by statutory agencies;
 - c) Appropriate support and funding is in place (in principle or actual) from the applicant's funding/placing authority;
 - d) In respect of residential applicants, whether an appropriate house / bungalow is identified; and
 - e) Availability of an appropriate and compatible peer group.
- 2.3. In addition, the following criteria must be adhered to when an individual is applying for a place in the School or College, only:
 - a) Evidence that the Charity can meet specific identified needs, as outlined in a Child or Young Person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
 - b) Evidence of learning potential and capacity to learn;
 - c) Evidence that the individual (over 16) wishes to attend an education setting;
 - d) In respect of College applicants, that the individual meets the eligibility criteria for funding (See Section 3, entitled 'Student eligibility' of either the [ESFA Funding Guidance 2020 – 2021](#) or [ESFA Funding Guidance 2021 – 2022](#)).
- 2.4. With regard to those applying for supported living placements (College only), an applicant (with the required support as determined by a mental capacity assessment) must also agree to the conditions set by the housing association, Catalyst Housing Group, to enter into a license agreement to reside in such accommodation.
- 2.5. It is a criterion for entry that day (non-residential) School applicants be adequately transported to and from School. The Charity will ask that the relevant funding authority make the necessary arrangements for this. In special circumstances, notably where an agreement has been reached between the funding authority and the family, the transport costs and arrangements may be the responsibility of the parents.

3. Application process

- 3.1. The first step is for the prospective applicant and their family, where appropriate, to visit St Elizabeth's Centre.

- 3.2. Open Days are held in both the College and School but arrangements can be made for visits to take place outside of these events. The Admissions Team will arrange and lead on these visits.
- 3.3. Referrals can be made with or without a visit.
- 3.4. External enquiries are accepted on behalf of the prospective applicants from an appropriate professional, a loved one or guardian.
- 3.5. Applicants' details are entered onto a restricted database, as part of an internal monitoring system.
- 3.6. The Admissions Team will scrutinise the information received and ensure that the Charity can meet the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations, in accordance with the admissions criteria (as set out at section 2, above).
- 3.7. If the Admissions Team concludes that the Charity cannot meet the individual's needs, the enquirer is contacted to inform them of the decision.
- 3.8. It is a requirement for all School and College applicants that individuals have an EHCP, a copy of which will be requested alongside any other additional information, for example behaviour support plans and risk assessments, therapy reports and guidelines, medical reports and medication details.
- 3.9. After reviewing the supplied documentation, if it is established that St Elizabeth's may be able to meet the applicant's needs, an assessment will be carried out by the multi-disciplinary team.

4. Assessment Process

- 4.1. An initial assessment will be arranged at St Elizabeth's Centre and/or at the individual's home or current school or college, if applicable.
- 4.2. Staff attending the assessment from St Elizabeth's Centre will vary, depending on the needs of the individual and service required.
- 4.3. The assessment is a further opportunity to establish a fuller picture of the individual's needs, wishes and aspirations. This can take some time to complete. However, it is an essential part of the admissions process.
- 4.4. Following assessment, the individual's case will be discussed by the multi-disciplinary team and a decision will be made as to whether to make a provisional offer.
- 4.5. The outcome of the assessment will be shared with all relevant parties and a formal provisional offer will be sent by letter to the next of kin or person representing the individual, as applicable and the funding authority.

5. Formal paperwork and funding of placement

- 5.1. Funding authorities will require information on the proposed fees for the placement. This will be compiled by the Charity's contracts officers, based on the multi-disciplinary team's assessment and the number of hours that they have calculated as being essential to provide the individual with the service(s) that they require.
- 5.2. The proposed fee details will be sent to the relevant funding authority.
- 5.3. No placement can proceed without written confirmation from the relevant funding authority that the fee has been agreed. It is a requirement that a contract between St Elizabeth's Centre and the relevant funding authority (education, social care and or health authority) be entered into before a place may be formally offered. A start date will

be proposed once this signed contract has been received from the relevant funding authority.

- 5.4. Once all contractual paperwork is in place, the Admissions Team will notify the relevant Heads of Service (School, Children's Home, College, Supported Living or Adult Services) of the proposed start date.
- 5.5. At this stage, all documentation is transferred to the relevant service area to commence the transition process.

6. New transitions into a Service

- 6.1. The transition period can be an exciting time for individuals where they will be developing their skills, gaining independence and moving onto to a new milestone in their lives.
- 6.2. The transition period can also be a very anxious time for the individual and their family. It is important to recognise that the transition may be as difficult for the family as it may be for the individual.
- 6.3. Transition considerations must also be given to those already using the service. Preparation and planning with the existing individuals that are living and receiving their education from St Elizabeth's Centre is essential.
- 6.4. If the individual is going to live at St Elizabeth's Centre, then the house manager will ensure that all the elements of the care plan are compiled prior to the individual moving in. This will be a collaborative approach from the multi-disciplinary team, with the individual and their loved ones and representatives kept at the centre of the process.
- 6.5. If the individual is going into Supported Living, then licence arrangements will be produced by Catalyst Housing Group and 'sign up' day organised.
- 6.6. If the individual is attending for education only, then the Head of School or Head of College, or a designated lead will take responsibility for the transition.
- 6.7. An initial review meeting is arranged within the first six weeks. In the event of any concerns, the multi-disciplinary team may schedule an earlier review.

7. Internal Transitions

(This section applies to residential placements only)

- 7.1. Any transition process must be agreed with all parties involved and with the best interest of the individual as the core focus.
- 7.2. If the transition involves an individual over the age of 16, then a mental capacity assessment must be carried out, to determine the individual's capacity to understand and be able to make an informed decision about their future. If required, an independent advocate may need to be involved.
- 7.3. The service area will hold an initial multi-disciplinary meeting involving all concerned parties and an agreement will be reached regarding the internal transition.
- 7.4. The individual is entitled to a notice period of four weeks, but this may vary depending on the individual's needs and wishes and whether it will be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. If this is the case, then the typically four week notice period may be shortened or lengthened.
- 7.5. In the event of a safeguarding issue, the Charity retains the right to move the individual sooner than four weeks, so as to ensure that all residents are protected within the safeguarding framework.

- 7.6. Following a move, the individual and where appropriate their loved ones or representative will meet with the house manager to ensure that they have settled well.

8. Discharge Process

- 8.1. All placements should be reviewed at least annually. This is to ensure that the services provided by St Elizabeth's Centre still meets the needs, wishes and aspirations of the individual, as outlined in their care and education support plans.
- 8.2. Any individual who wishes to explore a move to an alternative lifestyle will be supported to do so in a planned way.
- 8.3. The Charity may also identify that an individual's needs, wishes and aspirations can be supported in another setting, for example, supported living.
- 8.4. If this is the case, this will be explored with the individual, their funding authority and where appropriate their loved ones or representative.
- 8.5. In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to bring the placement to an end. This is known as a 'breakdown of placement'. A breakdown of placement may be due to, but not limited to, any of the following non-exhaustive examples:
- a) a change in needs of the individual rendering the Charity unable to meet those needs;
 - b) a serious escalation in behaviours, which depletes the Charity's ability to safely and effectively support the individual and/or other service users;
 - c) an individual, or their representative's, choice to move;
 - d) the outcome of a safeguarding issue; or
 - e) non-payment of fees.

In respect of School and College, further information can be found in the [School & College Exclusions Policy](#).

- 8.6. The Charity reserves the right to serve notice, in accordance with the contract that is signed on admission. The Charity will make every effort with all relevant parties to seek solutions to prevent a breakdown in placement. Notice would only be given in the event that all available options had been exhausted.
- 8.7. If the Charity has no alternative but to give notice, this will be issued to the individual, their loved ones and the relevant funding authority. In respect of Supported Living, Catalyst Housing Group have the right to serve notice in accordance with their licence agreement.
- 8.8. The notice period is 28 days for each of the three services, and seven days in respect of Supported Living licences.
- 8.9. The approach to discharge planning will be to ensure that the individual's voice is heard and their needs, wishes and aspirations are known to the new provider, if applicable.
- 8.10. If necessary, an independent advocate may be required.
- 8.11. The relevant funding authority will be responsible for leading on the discharge but will be fully supported by those staff at St Elizabeth's Centre that know the individual well. Endings can be a time of sadness so it is important that closures are carefully planned.

9. Admissions Appeals Process

- 9.1. St Elizabeth's reserves the right to refuse a placement if:

- a) the School, College or Adult Home is unsuitable to the applicant's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs; or
 - b) the applicant's attendance would be:
 - (i) in respect of the School or College, incompatible with the efficient education of others; or
 - (ii) incompatible with the efficient use of resources.
- 9.2. If the outcome is that a placement cannot be offered, then St Elizabeth's Centre offers applicants the opportunity to appeal the decision. Appeals will only be successful if it can be demonstrated that the Charity's admissions process was not applied in accordance with the legislation set out in paragraph 1.4, above.
- 9.3. Appeals should be made in writing to the Admissions Team. The Admissions team will acknowledge receipt of the letter in writing and provide a copy of this policy. The appeal will then be passed on to the relevant director of the service area.
- 9.4. The information that formed the basis of the decision will be reviewed by the relevant member of SLT. The director will make a formal request to reconvene the multi-disciplinary team who made the decision, so that it can reconsider the application.
- 9.5. Additional information may be requested from other agencies if appropriate.
- 9.6. The outcome of the decision will be conveyed by the service area director, by letter, to the person making the appeal.
- 9.7. If the outcome is to accept the appeal, then the reasons why the decision has been changed will be outlined in the letter.
- 9.8. If the outcome is to decline the appeal, then the reasons why the decision has not been changed will be outlined in the letter.
- 9.9. In respect of School and College applicants, the Admissions Team will notify both the applicant and the relevant local authority of the decision, so as to inform the local authority's decision as to whether St Elizabeth's Centre should be named on an applicant's EHCP.
- 9.10. If the applicant is still not satisfied with the outcome, they should seek advice from their funding authority.

10. Quality Monitoring

Internal

- 10.1. In order to monitor the effectiveness of the systems and processes, St Elizabeth's Centre's Service Leads undertake a quality improvement evaluation on an annual basis.
- 10.2. The impact of the policy will be monitored by considering:
- a) the application process, including unsuccessful applicants;
 - b) retention and success of adults, children and young people;
 - c) appeals; and
 - d) compliments and complaints.

External

- 10.3. External quality monitoring of this Policy may be carried out during inspection visits, in accordance with the relevant frameworks and cycles, by:
- a) Ofsted;

- b) Care Quality Commission; and
- c) Hertfordshire Contract Monitoring service.

11. Policy Approval & Review Process

This policy will be reviewed by the Charity's Board of Trustees annually.