

28 May 2021

To:
Newcastle City Council
Each local authority which maintains an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement of SEN for a child attending Benfield School
Parents of children who attend Benfield School
Parents in the local area
Primary, secondary and special schools in the area

Dear Stakeholder

Local consultation on proposal to increase pupil places in the Communication and Interaction Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) at Benfield School from 1 September 2021

In accordance with the Department for Education's guidance on 'Making significant changes to an open academy', the Board of Directors of NEAT Academy Trust is consulting on the creation of additional places within the Communication and Interaction Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) at Benfield School.

Communication and Interaction ARPs form part of the specialist provision in mainstream schools across Newcastle. Pupils are identified as requiring a placement in an ARP if they have special education needs who require a higher level of support than can typically be provided in a mainstream school but can make progress within a mainstream learning environment, given the right level of support.

Over recent years the significant and steady increase in the proportion of pupil population with communication and interaction needs has left insufficient capacity in the ARPs to meet the needs of such pupils. Increasing capacity within the ARP at Benfield School will meet the urgent demand for places in September 2021, providing appropriate provision for pupils within the East of Newcastle City at the earliest opportunity in their secondary education.

NEAT Academy Trust is committed to working with the City Council to ensure there are sufficient places for learners who require this specialist support and Benfield School is well placed to meet this need as it has an existing ARP with specialist and experienced staff and strong leadership.

The questions and answers below set out the key facts about the proposal:

Q What is the proposed change to the number of places in the Communication and Interaction ARP at Benfield School?

A It is proposed to increase the number of places from 15 to 25.

Q Which children would be eligible to attend the ARP if the proposal is approved?

A The children who would be offered the additional places within the ARP will be pupils whose Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) names the ARP at Benfield School as being suitable provision to meet their needs.

Q When is it proposed that the increase in the number of ARP places will come into effect?

A The trust proposes that the number of places would increase from September 2021 to meet the urgent need for additional places within the East of the City identified by Newcastle City Council.

Q How will the proposal affect the running of the school?

A Increasing the number of ARP places will provide additional funding for Benfield School. The school has developed operational plans for its premises, staffing and finances to take account of this proposal and ensure that the school would be able to meet the needs of all pupils within the ARP. This will include providing extra accommodation to locate the additional pupils and increasing specialist staffing. The school's headteacher and senior leadership team fully support the proposal and are well placed to manage the expansion of the current provision. They are confident that the provision will be well run and there will not be any detrimental effect on pupils who already attend the school.

Q How is the local community being consulted about the proposal?

A In addition to circulating this letter to key parties, the trust will publish a public notice in the Newcastle Journal to ensure this consultation is in the public domain.

Q How can I respond to the consultation?

A A consultation response form is provided so that you can indicate whether you support or object to the proposal.

Your response to the above proposal must be received by the trust's Registered Office **no later than 12 noon on Wednesday 30 June 2021** so that views can be taken into account when the trust's Board of Directors decides whether to submit an application to the Regional Schools Commissioner to increase the number of places within the ARP at Benfield School. We will publish the outcome of the consultation, provide feedback on any issues raised and confirm the Board's decision in due course.

Responses can be sent to the NEAT Registered Office:

- By email to: admin@neat.org.uk
- By post to: NEAT Academy Trust Registered Office, c/o Heaton Centre, Trewhitt Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5DY.

Meetings with the school's headteacher to discuss the proposal in more detail are available upon request and a mutually convenient date and time will be agreed. If you would like to take up this opportunity, please contact Lilian Reeson, PA to the Headteacher, Benfield School on 0191 2656091 or by emailing Lilian.Reeson@benfield.newcastle.sch.uk.

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Yours faithfully



Debi Bailey

Chief Executive Officer on behalf of the NEAT Academy Trust Board of Directors

Copies:

Roger Alston, Chair of NEAT Academy Trust Board of Directors

Richard Carr, Headteacher, Benfield School

Gail Rochester, Chair of Local Governing Committee, Benfield School

Suzanne Hendey, Head of Governance and Corporate Affairs