

Statutory proposal to close the residential facilities at Fountaindale Special School, Nottingham Road, Harlow Wood, Mansfield, NG18 5BA¹

In respect of a Local Authority proposal: School and Local Authority details:

1. The name, address and category of the school and Local Authority

Fountaindale Special School, Nottingham Road, Harlow Wood, Mansfield, NG18 5BA, a community Special School maintained by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7QP.

Implementation date and any proposed stages for implementation:

2. The date on which the proposal is planned to be implemented, and if to be implemented in stages, a description of what is planned for each stage, and the number of stages intended and the dates of each stage.

Following a four-week consultation between 22 September and 3 November 2020, Nottinghamshire County Council Councillors will make a final decision at the meeting of the Children and Young People's Committee on Monday, 30 November 2020. If the decision is approved to close the residential unit, this will be implemented early in 2021.

Support, objections and comments:

3. A statement explaining the procedure for making representations including:

- a) the date prescribed by which support, objections or comments should be sent to Nottinghamshire County Council and
- b) the address to which objections or comments should be sent.

The consultation on the proposal will run from Tuesday, 22 September until Tuesday, 3 November 2020 inclusive.

The process is designed to obtain the views of parents and carers, pupils, governors, staff, the local community and other interested parties in respect of the above proposal.

All responses need to be returned to:

¹ [Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools - Statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers \(Department for Education, October 2020\)](#)

By post to Fountaindale Special School, Nottingham Road, Harlow Wood, Mansfield, NG18 5BA marked '**Statutory Proposal – Residential Provision**'.

By email to Christopher.1.jones@nottscc.gov.uk with the subject title: '**Statutory Proposal – Residential Provision**'.

Any comments received later than 16:00 hrs on Tuesday, 3 November 2020 will not be included for consideration of this proposal.

4. Description of the proposal:

It is proposed to close the residential facilities at Fountaindale Special School with a view to increasing the space available for pupils to attend a Special School in the Mansfield locality.

Fountaindale Special School is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council and has provision for physically disabled and sensory-impaired children and young people aged from 3 to 18 years. There are currently 81 pupils on roll at the school.

The school has a small residential unit which is adapted to meet the physical needs of children and young people. Residential care is provided during term time for pupils aged 14 to 18 years on a rota basis. The primary focus of the service is to promote independence and improve social skills. The residential unit is used on two nights of the week (Monday and Tuesday) for up to four young people per night for a period of 10 weeks. Over the school year the potential is for 24 students to access the unit for one night over a 10-week period. The cost for each pupil spending ten nights in the provision is £4,833. The school receives an annual budget from the High Needs Block (Dedicated School Grant) of £116,000 to support the residential provision.

Only pupils at Fountaindale Special School can access the residential provision. No other publicly funded Special School in Nottinghamshire offers a similar experience for pupils. All staff working in the residential unit are employed by the school.

Early this year an [Ofsted inspection](#) (February 2020) of the residential unit highlighted several issues with the residential provision including:

- *The school did not meet several of the national minimum standards for residential Special Schools;*
- *School leaders have not ensured effective safeguarding and management arrangements. A new senior leadership team have implemented a programme of development. Improvements are evident, but not yet embedded;*
- *Safeguarding practice is not good enough, although there are no serious failures which have resulted in actual harm.*

Following the Ofsted inspection, the residential unit has remained closed to school pupils.

Nottinghamshire County Council considered several options for the residential unit. These options would have required additional expenditure from the High Needs Block if implemented.

In recent years the High Needs Block, both in Nottinghamshire and nationally has been under considerable pressure due to rising demand for specialist provision and the extension of the age range to 25 years regarding eligibility for Education Health and Care Plans. Despite receiving one of the highest increases in the High Needs Budget for 2020-2021, Nottinghamshire remains one of the poorest funded local authority areas when compared with statistical neighbours. Due to the increased demand for specialist provision, the High Needs Budget was over spent by £1.002m during 2019-2020. The demand for Special School places in the County remains a challenge, this proposal will allow over the medium to long term an increase in specialist provision available to families, primarily in the Mansfield locality. There will likely be some minimal costs involved in altering the use of the residential facilities to classroom provision.

The County Council in partnership with schools would be able to use the budget for the residential provision at Fountaindale Special School to fund other specialist provision in Nottinghamshire, including additional placements at Fountaindale Special School.

Effect of the Proposal:

5. The effect of the proposal on other schools, academies and educational institutions.

It not anticipated that this proposal will have any adverse effect on any other schools or educational establishments in the locality.

Impact on pupils:

6. The impact on children and young people attending the school

All Fountaindale Special School pupils living in Nottinghamshire can access statutory short breaks through the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Local Offer, if they meet the minimum criteria. The focus of the County Council's community short breaks offer is on preparation for adulthood and the gaining of appropriate life skills.

Publication of Proposal:

7. Evidence of the list of persons/recipients who received a copy of this proposal

- All parents and carers of children and young people attending Fountaindale Special School.
- The School's Governing Body.
- School staff.
- Other local authorities who place children and young people at Fountaindale Special School.