

APPENDIX 1

Consultation on the proposal to change the age range of Willows Centre for Children

Proposal

Portsmouth City Council is consulting on a proposal to make a change to the age range of Willows Centre for Children in order to allow the school to provide specialist education to Year 1 pupils in order to meet local demand for specialist education for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The formal proposal is that the age range of Willows Centre for Children should be increased by two years so that the school becomes a school for pupils aged 2 to 7 years, as opposed to the current age range of 2 to 5 years.

Background

Willows Centre for Children is a fully inclusive setting offering specialist education for pupils aged 2 to 5 years (i.e. nursery and Year R pupils) with SEN and community child care for children aged from 3 months.

The specialist SEN setting offers 42 full time equivalent spaces for children allocated a Local Authority place because of their Special Educational Needs. At the end of Year R many of the pupils will continue their education in special schools in Portsmouth (primarily Cliffdale Primary Academy and Mary Rose Academy).

Portsmouth is experiencing an increase in demand for places in infant level specialist provision, particularly for children with more complex needs. Demand for Year 1 places in special schools will be greater than the number of places currently available by September 2018. If additional places cannot be provided in schools within the city, some pupils may have to be placed in specialist provision outside of the city.

Neighbouring local authorities are also experiencing increased demand for special school places and there are very few places available for Portsmouth pupils. In addition, the placement of very young children outside is not desirable due to the increase in school journey times.

Enabling Willows Centre for Children to deliver Year 1 provision will ease the pressure on specialist places in the city. However, it is recognised this is only a short to medium term solution and a city wide strategy to address the growing need for specialist places in the city is being drawn up and will be informed by the outcome of a SEND Strategic Review which will be completed at the end of March 2018.

Willows Centre for Children is working closely with Solent Academies Trust (who are responsible for Mary Rose, Cliffdale Primary and Redwood Park Academies) to plan the proposed Year 1 provision at Willows.

Why Change the age range?

Changing the age range of Willows Centre for Children from 2 to 5 years to 2 to 7 years will allow the school to provide specialist education for pupils in Year 1. This will increase the number of specialist places for Year 1 pupils with SEN within the city. The change in age range will also allow Willows Centre for Children to consider a transfer to an Academy Trust, as many other schools in the city have done.

What happens next?

Portsmouth City Council is obliged to consult on this proposal and wants to hear the views of parents, carers and other stakeholders. The consultation opens on 29th January 2018 and closes on 26th February 2018. At the end of the consultation period the Council will review the responses and formally decide whether to change the age range.

If the proposal is agreed the change will be effective from 1st September 2018.

How you can have your say?

If you would like to find out more or discuss this proposal there will be a public drop in meeting at

2pm on Wednesday 21st February at Willows Centre for Children

Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting. Please come along and ask us any questions you may have about what this means for the schools and the community.

Anyone can comment on this proposal until 26th February 2018 by completing the attached comment form and returning it to the Willows Centre for Children.

Or via either

email to: eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk (please title your email: **Willows Proposal**)

or

by post to: Janet Andrews,
Education Service
Portsmouth City Council
Floor 2 Core 6
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2EA

You can get this Portsmouth City Council information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9284 1717.



Response Form

Consultation on the proposal to change to age range Willows Centre for Children

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick:

Parent

Governor

Staff

Other (please state)

Do you support the proposals to change the age range of the Willows Centre for Children?

YES

NO

Comments (please attach separate sheets of paper if necessary):

Signature: _____

Date _____

It is important that you sign and date this form.

Responses must be received by 26th February 2018

Please return Response Forms either to the School Office,

or by post to: Janet Andrews, Education , Portsmouth City Council, Floor 2, Core 6, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2EA.

or by email to: eandsc@portsmouthcc.gov.uk (please title your email Willows Consultation)