

To:

- Newcastle City Council
- Each local authority which maintains an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or statement of SEN for a child attending VIARP at Gosforth Junior High and Gosforth Academy
- Parents of pupils who attend VIARP at Gosforth Junior High and Gosforth Academy
- Parents in the local area
- Primary, Secondary and Special Education Needs (SEN) schools in the area

12th January 2026

Dear Stakeholder

Visually Impaired Additionally Resourced Provision (VIARP) Relocation Consultation

In line with the Department for Education's guidance on *Making significant changes to an open academy*, the Board of Trustees of Gosforth Federated Academies Limited (Gosforth Group) is consulting on the proposed relocation of the Visually Impaired Additionally Resourced Provision (VIARP) from Gosforth Junior High Academy and Gosforth Academy to Great Park Academy.

VIARPs form part of the specialist provision available within designated mainstream schools across Newcastle. These placements are designed for pupils with a visual impairment who require a significantly higher level of support than is typically available in a mainstream setting.

The aim of the provision is to ensure that, with appropriate specialist support, such as a qualified Teacher of Children with Visual Impairment (QTVI), specialist LSAs, a Mobility and Habilitation Specialist, and a Technical Support Officer, pupils can make meaningful progress in a mainstream learning environment while fully benefiting from inclusive education.

The relocation of the VIARP provision to Great Park Academy will give pupils with visual impairment access to a modern, purpose-built environment designed to promote learning

Dr. Alexandra Thorp CEO

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Registered Office: Gosforth Academy, Knightsbridge, Great North Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2JH

and inclusion.

This move ensures continuity of high-quality specialist support while providing enhanced facilities, state-of-the-art resources, and spaces tailored for both collaborative and individual learning.

By creating an environment that meets the growing demand for places and equips staff with dedicated areas and advanced technology, the proposal aims to deliver an exceptional educational experience for every pupil.

Key Questions and Answers

Q: What do we mean by Visual Impairment needs, and who will attend the VIARP?

A: Pupils attending the VIARP have a diagnosed visual impairment, often accompanied by additional learning, communication, or mobility needs. Each pupil will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that names the VIARP as their placement in Section I. These pupils require highly specialised support, including access to Qualified Teachers of Children with Visual Impairment (QTVIs), personalised learning and communication strategies, and assistive technologies. This provision is designed to ensure pupils can access the curriculum effectively, develop independence, and thrive within a mainstream school environment while benefiting from inclusive education.

Q: Will VIARP places be additional to Great Park Academy's Pupil Allocation Number (PAN)?

A Yes, these places are additional to the school's current PAN.

Q: When is it proposed that the relocation will take place?

A: After April 2026

Q: How will the proposal affect the running of Great Park Academy?

A: The VIARP will have dedicated spaces and specialist staff. Pupils will be included in mainstream classes where appropriate. There will be no negative impact on current pupil-staff ratios.

Q: How is the local community being consulted?

A: This consultation letter has been published on both the Trust and school websites and shared with the identified stakeholders above. We welcome and encourage responses from all members of the local community.

Q: How can I respond to the consultation?

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A: Please email communications@gosforthgroup.org.uk, inserting 'VIARP Consultation 2026' into the subject line, or write to:

Gosforth Group
Communication, Assurance and Engagement Team
C/O North Gosforth Academy
Dudley Lane
Seaton Burn
NE13 6EJ

Deadline for responses: **12 noon on Friday 13 February 2026.**

If you would like to discuss the proposal in more detail, please contact Debbie Worrall on 0191 429 9797 ext. 4014 or email communications@gosforthgroup.org.uk, inserting 'VIARP Consultation 2026 – Callback' into the subject line.

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Yours faithfully



Bryan Stewart
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