



Review of Primary Education  
for Children Living in the  
Armathwaite and High Hesket Area

**A CONSULTATION PAPER**

Enquires to:

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## Armathwaite and High Hesket Schools

### **Consultation Document Summary**

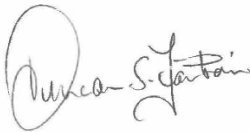
#### **What are we proposing to do?**

This consultation document is about the arrangements for primary education for the villages of Armathwaite and High Hesket. The suggested change is that Armathwaite becomes an all-through primary school catering for children aged 4 to 11 with no transfer at the end of Year 3 to High Hesket School. The county council wants to hear your views on this possibility before deciding whether to make a change.

This suggestion is in no way intended to reflect badly on the good education provided at High Hesket School and, if there is no change to the age range at Armathwaite, the schools will simply continue as before. A similar consultation exercise is being undertaken involving the other 'first' school in Cumbria at Culgaith.

I hope you will take the time to let us know what you think. If you would like any further information in the meantime, please contact Mike Tuer – School Organisation on 01228 226038 or by e-mail: [mike.tuer@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:mike.tuer@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Duncan Fairbairn  
Cabinet Member  
Children's Services



Julia Morrison  
Corporate Director  
Children's Services

## Background

The arrangements for primary education for the villages of Armathwaite and High Hesketh along with nearby communities are quite unusual. They existed long before the National Curriculum was introduced, and the local system does not fit particularly well within that framework.

The county council feels that the situation should be reviewed, and one of the schools involved has also indicated that it would like change to be considered.

On this basis, the decision has been taken to consult with those most closely associated with the schools about provision for the future. The aim of the consultation exercise is to gather the views of local communities on whether the present arrangements:


- Are likely to be the most effective in educational terms.
- Could be varied to enhance educational opportunities.
- Represent the best use of available resources.
- Provide the best fit with the wishes of parents.

This paper is aimed at parents, staff, governors and everyone else with an interest or stake in primary education in the area. It is intended as a basis for discussion during the consultations.

In terms of content, the paper:

- Describes briefly the current school provision.
- Sets out the wider context.
- Indicates some of the factors which it is important to consider.
- Indicates a preferred alternative to the status quo.
- Outlines the consultation and decision-making processes.

The main purpose of this consultative document is to encourage a reasoned debate and to gather your views. It is important that local opinions are expressed so that they can inform decisions when they are eventually taken.



## Current Provision

The area is served by two schools; Armathwaite Community School and High Hesket C of E Voluntary Controlled School. The location of the two schools and their catchment areas for 4-8 year old pupils are shown on the map in the centre pages.

### **Armathwaite Community School**

This is one of just two 'first' schools remaining in the county. It caters for pupils aged between 4 and 8. Most pupils transfer to the school at High Hesket aged 8 at the end of Year 3. The school is housed in a building which dates from 1910, though the interior has been remodelled to modern standards. The school has a recently-built hall and a 'private' community Nursery joined to the original school buildings. The school has ample outdoor areas to provide for the number and age range of pupils likely to be catered for in an all-through primary school. The school has a pupil capacity of 68. A copy of the school floor plan can be found on the county council website

[www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation) .

The school currently has two classes, each containing two year groups. One of these spans National Curriculum Key Stages 1 and 2.

### **High Hesket C of E Voluntary Controlled School**

The school, which is 2.75 miles from Armathwaite School, caters for pupils aged 3-11. The Armathwaite School catchment area forms part of the High Hesket School catchment area for pupils in Years 4-6. The original school building was constructed in 1850. However, most of the accommodation for the school was built in 1970 with a number of recent adaptations and extensions including the Nursery wing. The school has a pupil capacity of 133 (excluding the Nursery class). A copy of the floor plan of the school building can be found on the county council website detailed above.

The school is currently organised so that there are six classes. There is a foundation class catering for pupils in the Nursery and Reception years, a Key Stage 1 class which covers Years 1 and 2 and four classes covering Key Stage 2, two each spanning Years 3 and 4 and individual classes for Years 5 and 6.

## The Context

The question of all-through primary provision at Armathwaite has arisen several times over the last 30 years. The county council used to maintain several 'first' schools but, over time, all of them have either been closed or have been allowed full primary school status to fit in with the National Curriculum. Consultations have been undertaken from time to time on the future of Armathwaite but no changes have been made.

The governors of Armathwaite School have made it clear that they would like consideration to be given to it becoming an all-through primary school. Parents have also pursued a change on several occasions, and the county council has a duty to look into parents' concerns.

### **Neighbouring Schools**

There are nine schools with catchment areas which abut the Armathwaite/High Hesket catchments areas. They are all 4-11 primary schools. Brief details of these schools can be found on the county council website detailed above.


## Some Important Factors to Consider

### **Educational Issues**

#### **Transferring Between Schools at Age 8**

The Education Reform Act of 1988 introduced the National Curriculum. Since then, compulsory education in England and Wales has been organised in four Key Stages. Key Stage 1 from 5-7 years and Key Stage 2 from 7-11 cover the years in which most children receive their primary education.

In small schools, mixed age classes are inevitable. Although there are exceptions, schools generally try to avoid mixed Key Stage classes because different programmes of study apply to the different Key Stages. Schools like Armathwaite, with only one year group in Key Stage 2 and small numbers, do not have this option. It is partly for this reason that since the introduction of the National Curriculum a reduction in the number of schools in the county taking pupils between 4 and 8 years of age has been actively sought through school reorganisations. There are now just two schools in this category, the other being Culgaith.



Children's attainment at the end of each Key Stage is formally assessed. As far as Key Stage 1 is concerned, children are assessed through teacher assessment in reading, writing and mathematics. If transfer between schools during the 4-11 primary phase is to happen, these arrangements now more than ever make the 'natural' age for this 7, not 8.

Of course, good practice in terms of liaison and planning between schools can minimise difficulties surrounding transfer even where this occurs part way through a Key Stage. All things being equal, however, there is likely to be less risk of disruption where the curriculum for each Key Stage is planned in one setting.

### **All-Through Primary Schools**

The county council has a preference for all-through primary schools as opposed to separate infant and junior schools. This view was formed in the context of the 4-7/7-11 pattern of provision in some of the more urban parts of the county.

But the arguments are also relevant to more rural settings such as the one in which Armathwaite and High Hesket are located, in that 4-11 schools offer the opportunity for better continuity of education than systems which rely on pupils' transfer during the primary phase. There is often a dip in academic performance in Years 3 and 4 - some of this is due to changes in the content of the curriculum, expectations and way of teaching, but not entirely. It has been judged that much of this is due to both children and teachers taking time to adjust following the pupils' transfer to a new school. Continuity in learning, assessment and tracking of performance are vital to prevent the 'dip'. If teachers know the children and can refer back to the previous teacher to compare performance in Year 2 or Year 3 (for those going into Year 4) it can help prevent this.

All-through primaries allow a natural sense of progression for children through their primary education. This is important both in social and curricular terms, and is something on which the National Curriculum places a good deal of emphasis. Provision which is based on as few points of transfer as possible offers clear advantages.

## **School Performance**

### **General**

Summaries of the inspection reports for Armathwaite and High Hesket Schools can be found online at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Inspection-reports/Schools](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Inspection-reports/Schools). Ofsted reports need to be read in full as each school was inspected under a different framework.

Armathwaite School last had a full inspection in May 2007 and was rated as outstanding. This was reiterated following an interim assessment in 2010.

High Hesket CE School was last inspected in June 2010 and was rated as good with some outstanding areas.

## **Financial Resources**


### **General**

Budgets for running costs – staff salaries, heating, lighting, etc – are devolved to schools, largely on the basis of the numbers of pupils on roll. It follows from this that pupil rolls and finance are inextricably linked.

Approximately 80%-85% of a school's budget is spent on staff. Consequently, fluctuations of any significance in pupil numbers are likely to affect staffing levels. Were the suggested change to be implemented it will mean a loss of pupil based income to High Hesket School with a similar increase to Armathwaite School. As a consequence High Hesket is likely to need to reduce its staffing levels at the same time that Armathwaite needs to increase.

### **The Schools' Budgets**

Neither school has experienced any particular difficulties in managing its budget. Both schools carried modest levels of surplus at the end of the 2009-10 financial year and are expected to break even at the end of the current financial year. However, the loss of pupils transferring to High Hesket over time will require careful budgetary planning to maintain this situation through the transition, as will the need for Armathwaite to plan for additional pupils.





## School Capacity/Pupil Numbers

The combined pupil roll of the two schools is expected to remain broadly the same over the next three years. Details for each school relating to the status quo and the suggested option for change outlined are provided below. The current capacities of the two schools are also shown.

	Net Capacity	Number on Roll Jan 2011	Projected Pupil Nos 2011-12	Projected Pupil Nos 2012-13	Projected Pupil Nos 2013-14
<b>Option A</b>	Status Quo				
Armathwaite	68	48	47	44	42
High Heskett	133	127	120	124	115
<b>Option B</b>	No Transfer from Sept 2011				
Armathwaite	68	48	58	69	78
High Heskett	133	127	111	104	85

High Heskett pupil numbers exclude nursery pupils. The capacity does not include the Nursery classroom.

## Premises Issues

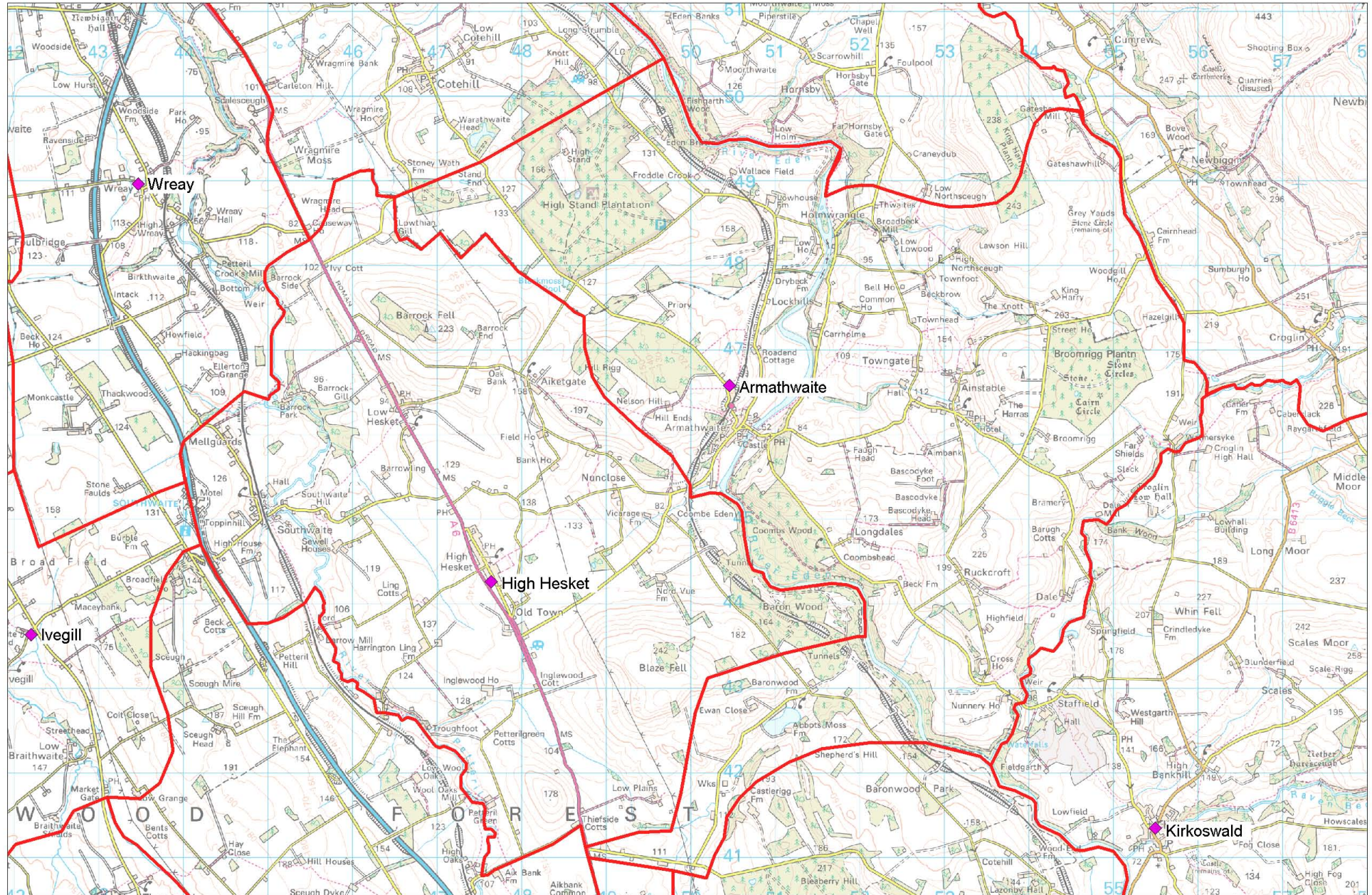
### Armathwaite School

The school building generally provides well for the existing number of pupils. The addition of the new hall has allowed the old hall to be used as a classroom. This will enable the premises to accommodate a full primary school from age 4-11 without the need for additional buildings, assuming an annual intake of ten, which is the same as the current Published Admission Number (PAN).

### High Heskett School

The school building generally provides well for the existing number of pupils and there is sufficient space to support additional pupils. The loss of pupils transferring into Year 4 would result in spare capacity at the school.

### Armathwaite Community School and High Heskett Church of England School Catchment Areas



Mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright 2006. License number 1000019596.

## **Transport Issues**

A change in age range at Armathwaite would mean there would be no need to provide transport from Armathwaite to High Hesket. A number of pupils currently attending Armathwaite already have some distance to travel from home to school. For many of those living in the Armathwaite catchment area the transfer to High Hesket may result in an increase in travel times, although some may see little difference.

There are other advantages in that savings will eventually accrue in the home to school transport budget.

## **The Future**

### **General**

#### **Option A: The Status Quo**


Existing arrangements appear to be working well, with effective liaison between the two schools. To make no change would obviously avoid disruption in the short term.

The authority's belief, however, is that transfer at age 8 is not desirable educationally. The present situation is anomalous and far from ideal in terms of the National Curriculum. It can place an additional burden on staff and represent something of a challenge as far as planning of the Key Stage 2 curriculum is concerned. It would certainly mean the perpetuation of a class spanning Key Stages 1 and 2 at Armathwaite.

#### **Option B: Armathwaite School Becoming a 4-11 Primary**

Full primary status for Armathwaite would be in line with the governors' wishes. It would enhance the continuity of primary education for pupils attending the school. Parents with more than one child may find it easier to relate to one primary school rather than two. It would also reduce the number of pupils being transported and cut the costs involved.

Clearly, any change is likely to require staffing issues being resolved at both schools. There is likely to be the need to reduce the number of classes taught at High Hesket with a corresponding reduction in staff. At Armathwaite, there may be a need to increase the number of classes and, therefore, staffing at the school.



## **Other Possibilities**

The options identified above are felt to be the most reasonable and realistic at present. Other possibilities have been considered over the years but, for various reasons, are felt to be inappropriate at this time and unlikely to be in the best interests of children. If you feel that there is a different option that should be considered, however, please let us know.


## **Transition Arrangements**

Were a change of age range at Armathwaite to be implemented this could take place over a number of years starting in September 2011. At that time no pupils would transfer from Armathwaite to High Heskett School and a Year 4 group would be established at Armathwaite. No pupils currently attending Years 4 and 5 at High Heskett School would be allowed to transfer to Armathwaite. In September 2012 a Year 5 group would be established at Armathwaite. The implementation would be complete when a Year 6 group is established at the School in September 2013.

As Armathwaite parents of Year 3 children will have already indicated which school they wish their children to be educated at from September 2011, any offers of a place at High Heskett or elsewhere will be honoured. In those circumstances children who transfer from Armathwaite to High Heskett in September 2011 and who would have been eligible to free home to school transport will have that entitlement protected.

Alternatively, should the suggested change to allow Armathwaite to become a primary school from September 2011 be approved parents can opt not to transfer their children at that time.

Should parents in future years still wish to transfer their children to High Heskett, then this would still be possible through the usual arrangements for transfer between schools. However the authority's general home to school transport policy will apply. That means that no children living in the catchment area for Armathwaite would be eligible for free home to school transport if they move after the start of the autumn term 2011.



## **And Finally**

This consultative paper tries to explain the main issues involved simply and quite briefly. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion rather than cover all of the issues exhaustively.

Any request for additional information or clarification should be directed to the School Organisation Team: contact details are given on the front cover.

Details of the consultation arrangements are given below. This is an important issue for everyone involved with the running of the two schools and for parents of both existing and younger children who are due to enter school in the next few years.

We hope that as many people as possible with an interest in primary education in the area will participate in the consultation process. The authority needs your views in order to inform its decisions. Our collective and overriding responsibility must be to ensure the most effective primary education for young people in the area.



## **Making Changes to Maintained Schools and the School Organisation and Governance Regulations 2009**

The provisions of the School Organisation and Governance Regulations mean that, if an authority proposes to change the age range of any school, their proposal must be published in a statutory notice.

There are five stages to the statutory process which must be followed:

### **Consultation**

The issue of this document marks the beginning of a period of consultation during which the views of any interested parties are sought. These views will be considered before any move to the more formal stages of the process.

### **Publication**

Dependent upon the outcome of the consultation, a decision to proceed to issue a statutory notice must be made by Cumbria County Council.

### **Representation**


Statutory notices for changes of age-range allow a six week period for anyone to submit their comments on the proposals. This is another opportunity for people to express their views either supporting or objecting to the proposals.

### **Decision**

Within two months after the six week representation period ends, the county council must make a decision on the proposal.

### **Implementation**

If the proposal is approved there would be no transfer of pupils from Armathwaite to High Hesket, in all probability starting in September 2011.



## The Consultation and Decision Making Process

### **Timetable**

Consultation	16 February – 16 March 2011
Decision: Cumbria County Council considers the results of the consultation and decides whether to publish a Statutory Notice	31 March 2011
Publication of the Statutory Notice	15 April 2011
Closing date for responses to the Statutory Notice	27 May 2011
Final decision by Cumbria County Council	30 June 2011
Possible start of implementation of any changes	September 2011

### **Consultation Events**

You are invited to attend a consultation event so that you can find out more about the proposals/offer views on the proposals.

#### **Location**

#### **Date and time**

Armathwaite School

Thursday 3 March 2011 at 6.00pm

High Hesketh School

Wednesday 2 March 2011 at 5.30pm

There will be a separate meeting for the governors and staff at each school starting at 3.45pm.



## **Who We Will Consult**

List of those people and organisations that may have an interest in this proposal and to whom the consultation document will be provided:

Headteacher, governors and staff of Armathwaite and High Hesket Schools

Families and carers of pupils at Armathwaite and High Hesket Schools

Headteachers and governing bodies of schools with adjacent catchment areas

Chief Executive of Eden District Council


Local Nursery providers

Other members of the public via Cumbrian libraries, Parish Councils and Cumbria County Council website

Church authorities and faith groups in the local area

Cumbria Children's Trust

Trade Unions and Associations





## Your Response

As stated earlier in this document, we welcome your views on this proposal and all observations and objections will be considered very carefully before a decision is made to progress any further with this proposal.

The consultation runs until 16 March 2011 and you can respond by completing the questionnaire in this document or writing separately (No stamp needed) to:

FREEPOST RRBS-RLBG-GZGL  
Cumbria County Council  
School Organisation  
18 Portland Square  
Carlisle  
CA1 1PE

By Email to:

[school.organisation@cumbriacc.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@cumbriacc.gov.uk)

On-line at: (Use the link below to complete the questionnaire contained in this document on-line)

<http://www.opinionsuite.com/cumbria/cumbria-county-council>

It is not possible to enter into individual correspondence.

Thank you.



## Armathwaite and High Hesket Schools

Reply slip – please send by 16 March 2011 to FREEPOST RRBS-RLBG-GZGL, Cumbria County Council, School Organisation, 18 Portland Square, Carlisle CA1 1PE

We need to know which school you are linked with so that we can accurately report back to the council's Cabinet. Please tick those boxes that apply:

Are you a:

	Armathwaite	High Hesket	Other (please specify)
Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree that Armathwaite School should have its age range extended to 4-11?

Yes

No

Name ..... Date .....  
(please print)

Address .....

.....

.....Postcode .....



Please provide any additional comments below:

