



**Meeting:** North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive Committee

**Date:** Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

**Time:** 7:00 pm

**Venue:** Virtual meeting via Zoom



**Committee Membership:**

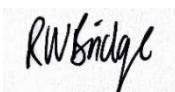
Councillors Roberts (Chair), Smithers (Vice-Chair), Addison, Beattie, W Brackenbury, Griffiths, Jelley, D Jenney, North, Partridge-Underwood.

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed on the agenda.

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015		Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Facility Lease Arrangements</li> </ul>	Jonathan Waterworth	<b>To Follow</b>
<b>Urgent Items</b>				
016		To consider any items of business of which notice has been given to the Proper Officer prior to the meeting of the Shadow Executive and the Chairman considers to be urgent pursuant to the LGA 1972.		
017		Close of Meeting		
		Rob Bridge, Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Shadow Authority  <b>Proper Officer</b> <b>26<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>		

## Virtual Meetings

During the current Covid-19 pandemic, meetings of the Shadow Authority will be conducted via Zoom as virtual meetings. Those meetings which are normally accessible to the public will be live-streamed on YouTube at -

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH\\_JAaHaMtgHDeMQEVXi2g/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH_JAaHaMtgHDeMQEVXi2g/videos)

Where there is a need for the Authority to discuss exempt or confidential business, the press and public will be excluded from those parts of the meeting only and will be unable to view proceedings.

## Public Participation

The Shadow Authority has approved procedures for you to present petitions or request to address meetings of the Authority.

ITEM	NARRATIVE	DEADLINE									
Members of the Public Questions	Questions may be submitted by members of the Public to meetings of the committee. The question must be in writing and submitted 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. There are no supplementary questions permitted, and no debate on questions or answers. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Public Questions.	5:00 pm Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2021									
Members of the Public Agenda Statements	Members of the Public may make statements at meetings in relation to reports on the agenda. A request to address the committee must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. The member of the Public has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Public Statements.	5:00 pm Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2021									
Other Shadow Members Questions	Written questions of up to 50 words maximum permitted. To be received at least 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. Chair's discretion on supplementary question. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Other Shadow Members Questions.	5:00 pm Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2021									
Other Shadow Members Agenda Statements	Other Shadow Members may make statements at meetings in relation to reports on the agenda. A request to address the committee must be received 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. The Shadow Member has a maximum of 3 minutes to address the committee. A period of 30 minutes (Chair's Discretion) is allocated for Shadow Member Statements.	5:00 pm Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2021									
Members of the Public Petitions	<p>Anyone who lives, works or studies in North Northamptonshire may submit a petition to the Shadow Authority. Depending on the size of your petition it will be responded to as follows:-</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Signatory Threshold</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Petition which triggers a debate</td> <td>1,500 +</td> <td>Any petition with 1,500 or more signatures will trigger a debate at a Full Authority meeting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Petition which calls an officer to account</td> <td>750 – 1,499</td> <td>Any petition with 750 – 1,499 signatures will summon a senior officer of the Authority to give evidence at a public Authority meeting</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Signatory Threshold	Description	Petition which triggers a debate	1,500 +	Any petition with 1,500 or more signatures will trigger a debate at a Full Authority meeting	Petition which calls an officer to account	750 – 1,499	Any petition with 750 – 1,499 signatures will summon a senior officer of the Authority to give evidence at a public Authority meeting	
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	Standard Petition	5 – 749	Any petition with 5 – 749 signatures will be referred to a senior officer of the Authority to provide a response	
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These procedures are included within the Shadow Authority’s Constitution. Please contact [democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk) for more information.

### Members’ Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded of their duty to ensure they abide by the approved Member Code of Conduct whilst undertaking their role as a Shadow Councillor. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** other Registerable Interests, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but must not take part in any vote on the matter unless you have been granted a dispensation.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **relates to** your own financial interest (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or **relates to** a financial interest of a relative, friend or close associate, you must disclose the interest and not vote on the matter unless granted a dispensation. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

Members are reminded that they should continue to adhere to the Authority’s approved rules and protocols during the conduct of meetings. These are contained in the Authority’s approved Constitution.

If Members have any queries as to whether a Declaration of Interest should be made please contact the Monitoring Officer at – [Adele.Wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Adele.Wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk)

### Press & Media Enquiries

Any press or media enquiries should be directed through the Authority’s Communications Team to [futurenorthants@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:futurenorthants@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

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## North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive Committee

At 7:00 pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Held as a virtual meeting via Zoom

Item No: 04

### **Present: -**

#### Shadow Members

Councillor R Roberts (Leader of the Shadow Authority and Chair)

Councillor J Addison

Councillor T Partridge- Underwood

Councillor D Jenney

Councillor S North

Councillor J Smithers (Deputy Leader of the Shadow Authority)

Councillor W Brackenbury

Councillor T Beattie

Councillor I Jelley

#### Officers

R Bridge – Chief Executive

A Wylie – Monitoring Officer

C Hadley – Director of Children’s Services

G Candler – Executive Director Place & Economy

M Cox – Executive Director Corporate, NCC

S Darcy – Executive Director Corporate, BCW

I Smith – Head of Service, Planning & Development, CBC

M Williams – Principal Facilities Manager, CBC

F McHugo – North Northamptonshire Democratic Services

J Gotts – Executive Director Finance

L Hyde – Director of Transformation

D Watts – Director of Adult Services

G Hammons – Executive Director, Resources and Commercial

K Brown – Acting Director of Adult Social Care, NASS

G Kane – Executive Director – Strategic Delivery & Transformation, NCC

M Dickenson – Head of Service – Resources KBC

S Smart – Assets Manager, CBC

G Macdonald – Head of Economic & Commercial Development, ENC

B Smith – North Northamptonshire Democratic Services

Also in attendance – Councillor Stanbra, Councillor Perry.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor M Griffiths.

### **2. Notifications of requests to address the meeting**

The Chair informed the meeting that there had been one request received to address the meeting. Councillor Stanbra, would address the Committee on Agenda Item 6: Transformation Director’s Update, Item 9: Housing Revenue Account and Item 10: Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The Chair also introduced Councillor Perry who

also requested to speak on Item 10 in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### **3. Members' Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were received.

### **4. Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

The draft minutes of the Shadow Executive Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 had been circulated.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED, and Councillor S North SECONDED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

#### **RESOLVED that: -**

- (i) The minutes of the Shadow Executive Committee meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **5. Programme Status Update**

Councillor Stanbra entered the meeting. In addressing the meeting, Councillor Stanbra asked officers whether savings figures for BRR09 Adults review of Target Operating Model were gross or net figures. Councillor Stanbra also suggested that figures in Appendix 2.1 could be broken down to individual years for greater transparency.

The Chair thanked Councillor Stanbra for his comments and Councillor Stanbra was returned to the waiting room.

A copy of the Programme Director's report and status summary for November 2020 had been circulated to the Committee. The report provided details of progress made towards the creation of the new unitary council on Vesting Day.

Lisa Hyde, Director of Transformation introduced the report. In relation to the Programme Status Summary, it was noted that a majority of services had moved to amber on the RAG scale due to risks associated with the short timescale of 60 working days until vesting day. It was noted that most of the risks related to NCC systems access beyond vesting and that the work force has a respond and adapt approach to rapidly address risks as they arise.

It was noted in response to previous concerns from members that staff and resources were in place to ensure the close down of sovereign council financial accounts was completed, although due to account reporting this would go on past Vesting Day.

The Director of Transformation highlighted changes in the Change Management reporting system. This would now report on the outcomes and impact of Change Champions rather than the headcount. It was noted that contact was being maintained

with staff and that responses were being issued to feedback which would ensure that staff comments had an impact. It was stated that the HR team had provided support and clarity to staff over the Tier 1-3 structure.

It was noted that the Communications & Engagement team were working on delivering Day 1 rebranding and promoting the new authority.

In response to Councillor Addison's question, J Gotts, stated that a level of uncertainty was the key implication until sovereign accounts are signed off.

Mr Hammons introduced the Budget Monitoring report and highlighted a £190,000 saving which resulted from the later than planned start date within the budget for statutory and director roles. It was noted that a slippage of around £1 million had occurred through the combination of extra Children's services slippage and the impact of Covid-19. It was noted that the programme would remain on track to realise the planned benefits in future financial years. Mr Watts echoed comments made by Mr Hammons and assured members that net savings would be made.

Councillor North asked how central Covid-19 funds to sovereign councils would be reported and was assured that reductions would be offset from funding going forwards.

Councillor W Brackenbury MOVED, and Councillor I Jelley SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The high-level Programme Delivery Status be noted;
- (ii) The update on Change Readiness be noted;
- (iii) The Communication and Engagement update be noted; and
- (iv) The Finance Monitoring report be noted.

## **6. Assets, Capital Schemes & Reserves Notifications**

Members were presented with an overview of the original structure for Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notifications which had been agreed by the Shadow Executive in June 2020. Officers provided a summary of minor changes including removal of reference to interim roles and an extension to include leases and licenses.

It was noted that Kettering Borough Council had given approval for a lease extension for the Green Patch Kettering. Councillor North expressed support for the community garden and cited the health and wellbeing benefits of the facility.

The additional fund requirement of £870k for the Shire Lodge extension was recommended with the funds to come from Corby Borough Council reserves. This would meet the demand for a space increase over a 25-30 year period.

Councillor Jelley endorsed Green Patch Kettering and offered support to the Shire Lodge extension as a great project and necessary addition to cemetery provision.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED, and Councillor S North SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The proposed changes to the Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification Process as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report be approved;
- (ii) The decision by Kettering Borough Council to grant Groundworks Northamptonshire a 99 year lease of The Green Patch, Kettering at a undervalue rent (Appendices 2 and 3) be noted and endorsed;
- (iii) The decision by Corby Borough Council to allocate an additional £870,000 to the Shire Lodge Cemetery Extension capital project, with the additional funds being drawn down from the Council's Reserves (Appendices 4 to 6) be noted and endorsed.

## **7. Blueprint Change Requests**

Members were presented with the report which detailed a series of change requests in the attached appendices 1-11 which sought to ensure a robust change management and recording process for the Blueprint for the new unitary authorities.

K Brown summarised the small sections of Adult's services that would be unable to disaggregate on day 1 and requested that they be hosted for a 12 month period. Statutory roles and the need for team resilience were noted as an area that would need to be addressed through recruitment and transformation during the hosted period after Vesting Day.

M Cox updated members on the HR traded services agreements with schools and stated that the 3 staff would need to remain in situ to deliver the existing commercial arrangements. It was noted that these agreements ran for academic years and the new authority would have the opportunity to decide upon the future strategy for 22/23 onwards.

G Kane introduced the proposed changes and stated that the small team of 4 with varied skills and disciplines, meant the team could not be disaggregated on day 1. Mr Kane explained that a technicality in instructing contractors to carry out works existed which meant that contracts for Community Liaison Officers remain with the West as the contracting authority until the contract term ends.

C Hadley introduced the alteration of a move from disaggregation to a 12 month hosted model for the Information Advice and Support Service (IASS). It was noted that this would avoid duplication and retain service impartiality. The service would be allocated to the Intelligent Client Function department, which has been created as a lead function for service provision to the West.



Councillor W Brackenbury MOVED, and Councillor S North SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The changes requested to the Blueprint as outlined in Appendix A to this report be approved.

**8. Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan**

Members were presented with an update to the first draft Revenue Budget 2021-22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan for North Northamptonshire Council that was considered by the Shadow Executive on 7th December 2020. The update sought to provide members with an update following the announcement of individual authority allocations in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 17th December 2020.

J Gotts introduced the report and updated members on the mitigation work undertaken to close the £10 million gap following the Local Government Financial Settlement and balance the budget. It was noted the settlement assumed councils apply the precept in full when looking at local government funding.

J Gotts outline the improved position following greater than anticipated New Homes Bonus, Covid-19 funding and Lower Tier funding. This was complemented by improvements to NCC budget disaggregation, the freeing up of reserves, reductions in the forecast of election costs and improvements to the collection fund to give a balanced budget.

Councillor North thanked the finance team for achieving a balanced budget and emphasised the need for clarity over the term 'reserves' when referencing the use of Covid-19 funding to offset the impact of the pandemic on the base budget.

Councillor T Beattie shared his disappointment at the Local Government Finance Settlement and the exclusion of any new money to support the new council. Concerns were expressed over the expectation of a 4.99% raise in council tax. R Bridge responded to these concerns and expressed hope that the new authority would be a beneficiary of the MHCLG exceptional support grants when announced in the coming weeks.

Councillor I Jelley echoed support for the financial team in balancing the budget and reminded both members and the public that the budget consultation is live until 29<sup>th</sup> January and encouraged views to be submitted.

Councillor I Jelley MOVED, and Councillor S North SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The updates to the 2021-22 draft budget and medium term financial plan as set out in this report be approved;
- (ii) This report shall be considered by Task and Finish groups that have been established by the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the draft budget; and
- (iii) The addition of this report to the consultation process outlined at section 11.8-11.11 which commenced on 11th December 2020 be endorsed.

**9. Housing Revenue Account**

Councillor Stanbra was admitted back into the meeting. Addressing the meeting, Councillor Stanbra raised concerns over a lack of proposals for addressing inefficiencies and the missed opportunities for reinvestment for the benefit of residents.

Councillor Stanbra was returned to the waiting room.

J Gotts introduced the report and gave a brief overview of the MTFP for the single HRA of North Northamptonshire. It was stated that there would be two Neighbourhood Accounts, Corby and Kettering, which amounted to a £35 million spending income.

J Gotts outlined the rent increases of 1.7% in line with government guidance for rent increases within both of the Neighbourhood Accounts. This followed a four year period of 1% rental decreases. It was noted that the HRA Capital Budget information is included to provide context but forms part of the Capital Strategy which is out as part of the consultation. J Gotts stressed the importance of tenant engagement and welcomed responses to the consultation.

In response to Councillor Stanbra's question, it was suggested that efficiencies would be addressed by the new authority and that further work was also part of the Climate Change working group consideration.

Councillor T Beattie MOVED, and Councillor T Partridge-Underwood SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The draft 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Budgets consisting of the Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account as set Janice Gotts Item Subject Decision Responsible Officer out in Appendix A be noted, which will be consulted upon with Tenants and which includes: a. an increase in dwelling rents for 2021/22 of 1.7% (based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2020 + 1%) which is in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Policy statement on rents for social housing published in February 2019 be noted;

- (ii) The draft Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Plan beyond 2021/22 consisting of the Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account, for 2022/23 to 2025/26 as set out in Appendix B be noted;
- (iii) The draft 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Capital Budgets for both the Corby Neighbourhood Account and the Kettering Neighbourhood Account and that these were subject to a separate report to the December Shadow Executive be noted.

## **10. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 21/22**

Councillor Stanbra re-entered the meeting and was invited by the Chair to address the meeting.

In addressing the meeting, Councillor Stanbra highlighted that the recommendations from the working group in 3.6 did not represent a unanimous view of the Task & Finish group. Councillor Stanbra expressed disappointment in the 25 % scheme and the omission of a discretionary fund and transition period.

The Chair thanked Councillor Stanbra for his comments and he was returned to the waiting room.

The Chair then invited Councillor Perry to address the meeting.

Councillor Perry shared that the LCTSS had been a detailed area of debate and summarised the following views arising from the Shadow Overview & Scrutiny Committee:-

- Concerns over a £20 per month increase for some residents
- Phased introduction of new minimum contribution –
- Warning of the potential for arising inequalities claims with a phased introduction
- A discretionary fund to address concerns of the sudden increase in the short term
- Request for details of sovereign council support and what support will be carried forward to the new council.
- Validity of a one option consultation.

The Chair thanked Councillor Perry for her contribution and welcomed L Hogston to introduce the report.

The report which had been circulated included analysis of the public consultation alongside an update on the LCTS claimant caseload.

L Hogston introduced the report and gave an overview of the responses to the public consultation citing a higher than usual level of engagement. Letters had been sent to claimants along with an information sheet on the proposals. There was a low level of telephone responses for assistance with the consultation. It was noted that the Armed

Force Covenant was a protected scheme and along with war pensions and pensioner protection they sit within the harmonised scheme. Members were assured that there was a varied internal and external provision for money and debt advice and that this would be enhanced and developed to shape the service going forward.

Members were reminded that the 25% proposal for LCTS was a cost neutral scheme and that each 1% deduction would equate to a loss of around £109k.

In response to member questions regarding a phased scheme, A Wylie commented that a harmonised scheme must be implemented where practical to do so and that inequalities could be raised if a harmonised scheme were not to be implemented from Day 1.

Councillor D Jenney, Chair of the Council Tax Harmonisation Task & Finish Group, thanked members and officers for the invaluable support and highlighted the focus of the group in achieving a harmonised scheme. Councillor Jenney commented that £20 increases eluded to by members would be unlikely given that less than 1% of claimants live in a Band D or above property. Councillor Jenney expressed caution over prolonging harmonisation and reinforced the desire to avoid legal challenge.

Councillor Addison expressed disappointment in the suggestion to proceed with harmonisation with no phased introduction and shared concerns that this could add to the financial discomfort of low income residents. Councillor Addison shared the view that a discretionary fund should be considered.

Councillor Beattie commented that the LCTSS was clearly a contentious matter which he could not support and raised concerns over the scale of increase for Corby residents, particularly alongside the potential 4.99% council tax base increase.

Councillor Jelley shared an understanding of the concerns felt by members and residents and suggested that this identified a need for clear communication with the new council tax bills including sign posting to available areas of support.

Councillor Smithers thanked members and staff for their work and encouraged the council to see this as an opportunity to demonstrate how to spend money wisely for the benefit of the residents of North Northamptonshire.

Councillor D Jenney MOVED, and Councillor J Smithers SECONDED the recommendations.

**It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The outcome of the consultation as detailed in Appendix 1 be given due regard;
- (ii) The Equalities Impact Assessment in Appendix 2 be given due regard; and
- (iii) The proposed new North Northamptonshire Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 3 be approved.

## **11. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

### **It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business, 'Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification', in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because exempt information may be disclosed.

## **12. Assets, Capital Schemes and Reserves Notification**

G Macdonald introduced the report and outlined the available options and assessments for asset facility improvements. The report was not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government 1972.

Councillor Jenney supported the need for the new provision along with the alternative procurement process considered.

Councillor D Jenney **MOVED**, and Councillor I Jelley **SECONDED** the recommendation.

### **It was RESOLVED that:-**

- (i) The decision from East Northamptonshire Council to release funds from its development pool into its facilities management budget to deliver the replacement of two lifts be noted and endorsed.

## **13. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

## **14. Close of Meeting**

Meeting closed at 8:42 pm

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**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**

**SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Future Northants Task and Finish Group update Transformation Chair - Cllr Steven North</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Lisa Hyde, Director of Transformation</b>

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive of progress made by the Transformation Task and Finish Group and to make recommendations as listed below.

**2 Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group since June 2020 and provides recommendations arising from this.

**3. Recommendation**

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- 3.1 The Task & Finish Group recommend that the principles for the Transformation programme, as outlined above in 2.6 are noted and endorsed.

**4. Background**

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- 4.1 The Transformation Task & Finish Group was tasked In June 2020 to undertake a wide review of future transformation activity, post the programme reset and the approval of the revised blueprint, for the functions that will be delivered in North and West Northamptonshire.
- 4.2 The initial part of that work involved a study and detail around “what has worked well” within the LGR programme, capturing detail around good practice and observing the transformation activity that is being delivered using the Business Rates Retention Pilots investment, with particular reference to the

new Target Operation Model for Adults social care services and the development of locality hubs for connecting communities.

- 4.3 The Task and Finish Group members were keen to determine the “principles” of transformation early in their deliberations to ensure there was a robust ideology to underpin the proposed transformation of services going forward.
- 4.4 The Task & Finish Group are now working on a prioritised road map for Year 1 of the new unitary authorities relating to those services that are “hosted” in the North and West but will disaggregate and/or aggregate in the first year. The Transformation Task & Finish Group West are undertaking the same exercise and the two groups will meet in the near future to bring their plan for the first year together.
- 4.5 The following table show the priorities to be addressed in the blueprint for Years 1-3 and all other aspects of future service transformation.

Years 1 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post Vesting day safe &amp; Legal.</li> <li>• Hosted to disaggregation.</li> <li>• Aggregation - Former NCC and D&amp;B services coming together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer led transformation – co-designed to improve the customer experience.</li> <li>• Prevention &amp; early intervention.</li> <li>• Digital – transforming through technology.</li> </ul>
Year 3 onwards		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public service integration - working together as a system.</li> <li>• Place/growth/regeneration led.</li> <li>• Commercial opportunities.</li> </ul>

- 4.6 The Task & Finish group members are proposing that members endorse the following proposals as key principles for the transformation programme for North Northamptonshire,

That the transformation of services in North Northamptonshire must:

- Ensure there is one stop customer resolution.
- Be co-designed with partners involved in service modelling.
- Always use quality data and information (to support business cases).
- Decision making should be made with and around the residents and may not always be cost cutting.
- Be supported and align with ICT investment.
- Ensure that ICT systems are integrated.
- Use the most appropriate method of communication; digital and face to face.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 A prioritised road map is being prepared, with recommendations to be brought to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.



## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 The recommendations in this report do not require consultation.

### **6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 None.

### **6.6 Climate Impact**

6.6.1 None related to the proposals outlined in this report

### **6.7 Community Impact**

6.7.1 None related to the proposals outlined in this report

## **7. Background Papers**

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7.1 None.

**Report Author: Lisa Hyde, Director of Transformation**

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## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE

**3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Change Requests</b>	
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Director of Transformation</b>	
<b>Future Northants Programme</b>	<b>Corporate and Children's</b>	
<b>Future Northants Programme Lead</b>	<b>Martin Cox Cathi Hadley</b>	
<b>Date of final endorsement by Joint Implementation Board</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>	
<b>Date of final endorsement by Joint Implementation Executive</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>	

### List of Appendices

#### **Appendix A – Change Requests that affect the Blueprints:**

**A1: Corporate – Opus**

**A2: Children's – Commissioning and Sufficiency**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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1.1. To set out and approve Change Requests relating to the Future Northants programme.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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2.1 This process will

- a) ensure a clear governance and recording process and,
- b) propose changes that amend the Blueprint, outlined in Appendix A to this report

#### **Recommendations**

2.2 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:

- a) Approve the changes requested to the Blueprint as outlined at Appendix A

*(Reason for Recommendations – to ensure a robust change management and recording process for the Blueprint for the new unitary authorities).*

### **3. Report Background**

---

- 3.1 This process has been agreed to ensure a clear governance and recording process for any changes to be made to the Blueprint or to other aspects of the programme.
- 3.2 This report includes proposed changes for approval, in line with the agreed process.

### **4. Issues and Choices**

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- 4.1 The Blueprint was approved by the West Northants Shadow Executive on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and the North Northants Shadow Executive on 24<sup>th</sup> September. The Blueprint is the key document that shows how the functions and services provided by all the constituent authorities will be placed across the two new North & West Unitary authorities.

### **5. Implications (including financial implications)**

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#### **5.1 Resources and Financial**

There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

#### **5.2 Legal**

There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

#### **5.3 Risk**

- 5.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.
- 5.3.2 The changes proposed to the Blueprint re designed to mitigate risks in ensuring services are safe and legal for Day 1.

#### **5.4 Consultation**

- 5.4.1 The change process does not require consultation.

#### **5.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

- 5.5.1 Consideration is welcome as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

#### **5.6 Climate Impact**

- 5.6.1 None related to the change process outlined in this report

## **5.7 Community Impact**

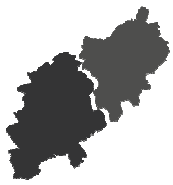
5.7.1 None related to the change process outlined in this report

## **6. Background Papers**

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6.1 Blueprint for each of North and West Northants Shadow Authorities.

6.2 Agreed process for managing change requests as agreed by West Northants Shadow Executive on 24<sup>th</sup> November and by North Northants Shadow Executive on 26<sup>th</sup> November.



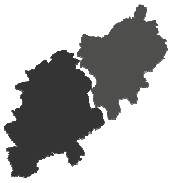
### Change Request Form

<b>Document Type</b>	Change Request Form
<b>Programme Name:</b>	Corporate Programme
<b>Audience for this document</b>	
Programme Board, Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance, Programme Implementation Board	
<b>Purpose of this document</b>	
The Change Request Form is a form used to submit a request for a change within the Programme. All changes to scope should be documented on a Change Request Form, and authorised by the Programme Board, Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance, Programme Implementation Board and relevant stakeholders. The Change Request Form should be used alongside the Change Request Log to track progress (template available).	

<b>Version History</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Brief Comments on Changes</b>
07.10.20	0.1	E Conway	First draft

<b>Distribution (For Information, Review or Approval)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Resp (1)</b>
Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance	A
Corporate Programme Board	A

(1) Responsibility: R=Review, A=Approval, I=Information



Document Approval	
Date	Who
	Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance

### 1. Description of Requested Change

Opus recruitment agency is currently used by NCC through a partnership agreement which provides agency staff at a reduced commission rate. The current set up is a Limited Company arrangement under Teckal, with Opus (Suffolk CC) owning 52% of the company and NCC, MKC and CCC each owing 16% respectively. With the move to the two new unitary authorities, the 16% share of NCC will be transferred to the North and West.

### 2. Purpose of Request

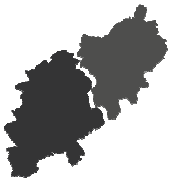
The request is to add Opus as a **provider** of a service (yellow) via the lead authority model, to both the North and West blue prints.

If approved, there will be a further paper drafted detailing the next steps; for example the services agreement and shareholder agreements will need to be re-drafted in line with the new arrangements for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Non-executive board members for North and West will also be required to sit on the board alongside other shareholders; traditionally this has been at officer level, such as an HR Director or Section 151.

### 3. Likely Impact of Requested Change

This will mean that reduced contracting agency rates will be available to the North and West authorities, and the NCC Shareholding will be transferred to the new authorities. There will be a minimal impact to an officers time to attend the board meetings.

### 4. Impact of *not* implementing Requested Change



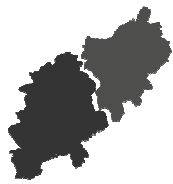
If OPUS is not used, there is a risk that much higher agency fees are paid per individual which would mean additional costs to the services that frequently use this type of resource to support their service delivery. Previous analysis indicated that NCC saved a money across all service areas using agency staff which has reduced the overall revenue spend.

**5. Additional costs of implementing Requested Change**

Capital Costs	
Revenue Costs	
Benefit Costs	

**6. Additional Benefits**



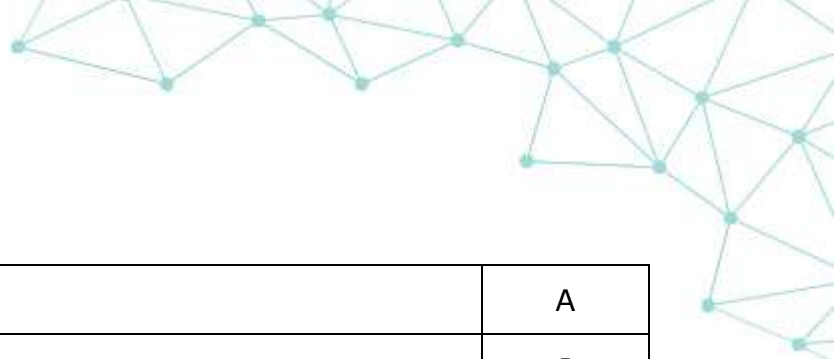
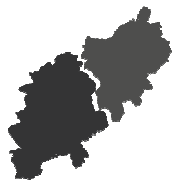


### Change Request Form

<b>Document Type</b>	Change Request Form
<b>Programme Name:</b>	CFN Education
<b>Audience for this document</b>	
Programme Board, Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance, Programme Implementation Board	
<b>Purpose of this document</b>	
The Change Request Form is a form used to submit a request for a change within the Programme. All changes to scope should be documented on a Change Request Form, and authorised by the Programme Board, Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance, Joint Implementation Board and relevant stakeholders. The Change Request Form should be used alongside the Change Request Log to track progress (template available).	

<b>Version History</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Brief Comments on Changes</b>
18/12/2020	V0.1	K Parsons	Creation
21/12/21	V0.2	L Cundall	Amendments
21/12/21	V0.3	Cathi Hadley	Amends/authorised
21/12/21	V0.4	Lisa Hyde	Comments
21/12/21	V0.5	L Cundall	Amends following comments from L Hyde

<b>Distribution (For Information, Review or Approval)</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Resp <sup>(1)</sup></b>
Programme Manager – Day 1 Assurance	A
Cathi Hadley – DCS	A



Theresa Grant – Chief Executive	A
PMO	I
Joint Implimentation Board	A
Joint Implementation Executive	A

(1) Responsibility: R=Review, A=Approval, I=Information

Document Approval	
Date	Who
21/12/20	Cathi Hadley

### 1. Description of Requested Change

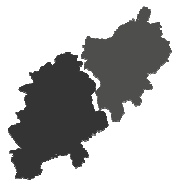
To make an addition to the original blue print for the Education sector by adding an Education Commissioning and Sufficiency department to both the North and West authorities. As well as the creation of two additional managerial posts across the two unitaries.

As a direct result of the formation of the Children’s Trust, the Education Service has been left without any Commissioning and Sufficiency resource, as all current provision for this service area has transferred to the Trust.

Prior to the formation of the Children’s Trust the Education team shared Commissioning and Sufficiency resource within the Children’s Service. Previously, Education resource had been moved into the Children’s Commissioning and Sufficiency team to streamline services and share best practice.

The initial blueprints did not show this requirement, at the time of the creation of the blueprint the resource allocation of the team and the full remit of the Intelligent Client Function (ICF) had not been defined.

The two new departments are required to support and manage the contracts within Learning Skills and Education (LSE), and to ensure placements and High Needs Funding requirements are met within the Designated School Grant (DSG) allocation for this area. (This grant is paid in support of the local authority’s schools budget. It is the main source of income for the schools budget. Local authorities are responsible for determining the split of the grant between central expenditure and the individual schools budget (ISB) in conjunction with local schools forums. Local authorities



are responsible for allocating the ISB to individual schools in accordance with their local schools funding formula.)

They will be responsible for commissioning education packages and placements for children with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and Special Educational Needs (SEN)(1200), children with sensory impairment (SIS)and children excluded from mainstream education (approx. 370 at any one time). There are already significant pressures on the DSG funding, and these will only increase with population growth and socio-economic environment likely to be very challenging in the next few years.

## **2. Purpose of Request**

Following change control requirement this report seeks to formally approve the change to the agreed blueprint of the North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Structure via the Joint Implementation Board.

## **3. Likely Impact of Requested Change**

The impact of implementing the change will be a cost of £274,000 per annum. However, the budget for these new posts has already been agreed for 20/21, and accounted for within the 500K confirmed budget for structural changes within this service area.

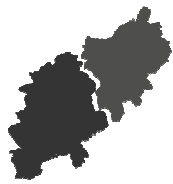
The positive impact of the change will be the management and control over the budget and contracts in this service area. Costs can be stabilised and DSG allocations meet (ensuring that spend remains within the previously agreed allocation of DSG as agreed by the Schools Forum).

Having a dedicated team will enable us to develop the market in a way which meets the needs of our children, maintain value for money provision in the county and actively negotiate the cost of packages and placements.

The current model of provision is no longer meeting the emerging needs of our children and this team will engage with the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency to ensure that the right type of provision is commissioned in the right place, and that we are prepared for emerging need.

## **4. Impact of *not* implementing Requested Change**

Education Service having no dedicated resource or control, so a continuing trend of overspend against the allocated DSG and High Needs budget.



A skills and knowledge gap for this service area as all current resource has moved to the Trust, and no dedicated resource is currently available to manage the budget.

A large contract and placement register not being properly managed as no provision within the department to write and negotiate terms and conditions for contracts and placements, including formal processes to quality check and evaluate performance.

No dedicated resource to complete contract / placement renewals, whilst considering value for money and quality of provision.

Underperforming provision for this cohort of children as no independent challenge or future planning.

Service unable to meet the corporate requirements as no owner or expertise in this field.

No future proofing in an area where we can drive down high expenditure and negotiate value for money with our contractors / providers.

<b>5. Additional costs of implementing Requested Change</b>	
Capital Costs	0
Revenue Costs	£274,000 per annum (initial allocation agreed)
Benefit Costs	

**\*\*These costs sit within the £500K allocation available to disaggregate the Education Services**

**6. Additional Benefits**

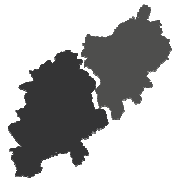
A specialist team that will monitor and control cost within this high expenditure area.

A dedicated team to improve relationship and partnerships with external contractors allowing scope to negotiate and drive down future costs.

Confidence for the service that we are utilising our funds to get the best value for money for this cohort of children whilst meeting their requirements.

Specialists in this field to offer advice and guidance to the LSE teams through continuous knowledge sharing and training. Including potential linked up learning and collaboration with the Childrens Trust so previous skills are not lost.

A specialised service that can provide honest, accurate and unbiased views in quality and assurance assessment.



## FUTURE NORTHANTS



Competitive and active tendering service, so current service managers can have confidence the process has been completed to legal standards whilst also offering value for money, choice and competition.

Resource available to link up with other sufficiency and commissioning teams across both organisations to look at efficiencies and saving opportunities.

Management can have confidence that they are fully informed and build contingency into the Service areas.

Joint working between all partners to achieve the best outcomes for children with SEND, SIS, High Needs and EHC plans.

Opportunity for innovation, as the team will have the skills to review including accurate benefit realisation of projects and tenders, whilst considering payment by results (PbR) models.

Joined up learning across the county and with other LA's, through SEND commissioning boards, reviewing policy and giving access to intelligent analysis, knowledge and experience.

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**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**  
**SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**3 FEBRUARY 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	Private Sector Housing Policy
<b>Report Author</b>	Jenny Walker, Environmental Protection Manager jwalker@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

**List of Appendices**

**Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Private Sector Housing Policy**

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 To seek approval of the draft North Northamptonshire Private Sector Housing Policy attached as Appendix A to this report.

**2. Executive Summary**

---

- 2.1 The report sets out the draft Private Sector Housing Policy for North Northamptonshire following conclusion of work that has been undertaken by officers across North Northamptonshire district and boroughs as part of the Private Sector Housing workstream to achieve a common policy by April 2021.
- 2.2 The policy sets out key areas delivered by the service and sets out the proposed housing grants criteria as required by The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The grant areas covered include the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, discretionary disabled facilities grants and other key housing related grants.

**3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee agrees to adopt the draft Private Sector Housing Policy for North Northamptonshire
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations –
  - The option proposed aligns with local government reform and transformation outcomes;

- The future Council (or customers) will receive the maximum benefit from the option proposed
- To accord with legislation or the policy of the Shadow Authority

#### **4. Report Background**

---

- 4.1 The Private Sector Housing Policy was reviewed and drafted by the SMEs for Kettering, Corby, East Northants and Wellingborough in October 2020. The draft policy brings together information from all 4 councils existing policies and updates throughout to create a consistent policy.
- 4.2 All four councils in the north have been working together on private sector housing matters for a number of years and have concentrated our efforts on working towards consistent policies ready for North Northamptonshire. Where an authority has made a change to their policies in the last few years, they have been discussed across the north to seek the views of officers and looking forward to North Northamptonshire.
- 4.3 In developing the draft policy provided in Appendix A we have reviewed all work areas relating to private sector housing and considered the different grants available across the four Councils currently. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 requires a local authority to set out in a policy the types of grants that are offered and criteria relating to the application of those grants. The main areas included are Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.4 Each authority is required to provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant as stated in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants are currently in place at Kettering and it was the aim of the other 3 councils to adopt the same discretionary criteria prior to North Northamptonshire commencing, however it has not been possible to do so. This policy therefore includes the discretionary disabled facilities grant criteria currently in place at Kettering and it is viewed by the SMEs that this is an appropriate addition for the new North Northamptonshire Council and would benefits all of our applicants across the north.
- 4.5 A review of other grants currently provided across the four councils was also considered and is detailed in section 4 of the policy and include:
- HomeMove Grants (Private Sector) – cost effective alternatives to the mandatory DFG for example relocation costs to a suitable property rather than trying to adapt existing;
  - Renovation Grants – detailed criteria set out within the policy and aim to ensure the legal decent home standards are met;
  - Landlord Improvement Grants – minor repairs for privately rented accommodation offered to homeless or threatened with homelessness households
- 4.6 Each of these grants have specific eligibility criteria, terms and conditions and with the exception of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant are available subject to sufficient budget being available.



- 4.7 There are some authorities that do not currently offer the above grants, therefore the proposal to extend them across the north moving forward is a positive benefit to the residents of those areas.
- 4.8 Aside from the grant framework the policy sets out key private sector housing functions such as:
- Empty Properties – how we review and deal with long term empty properties
  - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) – minimum amenity standards for HMOs (currently set agreed across the north and in operation), licensing requirements and processes
  - Immigration Inspections – process for application and reports
  - Support for Tenants – includes the new Homes (fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 requirements and how it is proposed North Northamptonshire council will deal with related requests.
- 4.9 The policy does not replicate enforcement functions as these are specifically set out in the North Northamptonshire Enforcement Policy.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

---

- 5.1 In reviewing the differences in the existing policies across the north, the SMEs felt that the inclusion of grants in place across some of the councils being extended across the whole of the north was a benefit to all residents and that as they are limited to budget availability, the amount and number could be controlled via the budget setting process.
- 5.2 The SMEs recognise that the inclusion of these grants is a choice because they are not mandatory like the DFGs but they do provide a benefit and a useful tool in improving private sector housing, potentially saving time and further costs elsewhere, if a different route was taken.
- 5.3 A critical area that is required to be included within the new policy is the discretionary DFGs. The process in place at Kettering is considered to be an appropriate process for North Northamptonshire to ensure that maximum benefit is achieved for our DFG clients. The whole DFG process is currently under review nationally but due to BREXIT and COVID-19 the recommendations for change have not been addressed yet. There are several key areas that the discretionary DFG policy will benefit for those clients in need of ensuring adaptations are undertaken.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is provided through the Better Care Fund and is currently passported from upper tier authorities to lower tier authorities that have the requirement for DFG delivery. Each area receives a certain allocation determined by the government each year. The grant money provided contains certain grant conditions that have to be met and an annual return is undertaken each year to central government. Audits of the money spent are also undertaken.

6.1.2 The proposals for discretionary DFGs to be included in the North Northamptonshire Private Sector Housing Policy would be funded via the government grant allocation and is subject to funding availability.

6.1.3 The other housing related grants would need to be funded by Northamptonshire Council and is a key consideration in relation to this policy. No specific budget has been proposed in relation to these grants and as stated within the policy their availability is subject to budgets.

## 6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 requires each local authority to detail the housing related grants that they offer and the criteria for applying for these grants. In order to ensure the new authority is safe and legal it is necessary to adopt the policy in advance of vesting day.

## 6.3 Risk

6.3.1 A key risk in relation to this policy is ensuring a policy is in place by vesting day that details what housing grants North Northamptonshire will offer. This is a legal requirement for an authority to have in place.

## 6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 This Policy is an amalgamation of existing policies which have already been consulted on by the Sovereign Councils and does not suggest the removal of certain functions and grants therefore, there is no need to consult again.

## 6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee has not made any recommendations in relation to this report.

## 6.6 Environmental Impact

6.6.1 There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

## 6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 This policy has a positive impact on the community of North Northants in relation to the details and mechanisms the authority will follow, in relation to private sector housing and grants.

## 6.8 Equalities

6.8.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken ([link to web](#)). There is an overall neutral impact across all groups in relation to private sector housing and the processes and services provided.

6.8.2 In relation to DFGs and the other proposed grants there is a positive impact in relation to the following groups:

- Disability – DFGs and discretionary DFGs when provided will improve their quality of life and ability to live independently at home
- Socioeconomic – All grants available have an element of financial eligibility; this assists those in lower incomes to access grant funding to improve their property in relation to DFGs or for repairs and improvements.

## **7. Background Papers**

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### 7.1 Equalities Impact Assessment ([link to web](#))

# North Northamptonshire Council

## Private Sector Housing Policy

April 2021 – April 2023

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document is the North Northamptonshire Council's Private Sector Housing Policy in relation to the provision of information, advice and support to homeowners, tenants of private rented properties and private landlords regarding the repair, improvement and adaptation of their property. It sits alongside the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy which covers regulatory matters.

## 1.2 Policy aims and objectives

### Disabled Facilities Grants

The Council provides mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to assist with adaptations enabling residents to remain in their homes, where this is the most appropriate option. DFGs permit a maximum grant of £30,000 per property. The Council also offers discretionary DFG funding subject to funding availability and qualifying criteria.

### Discretionary Grants

Discretionary grants may be made available, subject to funding availability and qualifying criteria. This includes discretionary funding for:

- DFG adaptations, support and ancillary costs
- HomeMove Grants
- Renovation Grants
- Landlord Renovation Grants
- Home Repair Assistance Grants
- Landlord Improvement Grants

### Energy efficiency

The Council engages in energy efficiency projects in order to improve the energy efficiency of domestic dwellings across North Northamptonshire and to assist in reducing fuel poverty. In conjunction with partner organisations, the Council promotes the availability of Government funded projects, such as the Energy Company Obligation (ECO and ECO Flex), as well as implementing national affordable warmth and carbon reduction policies or incentives. This work is primarily undertaken through the Northants Warm Homes partnership.

The Council processes applications for Eco Flex applications. An updated Statement of Intent was signed in 2019.

### Empty Properties

The Council has a programme of works to identify long term empty properties (defined as empty for 6 months or more) and engage with owners to bring the properties back into use. Where informal measures are unsuccessful, the Council will seek to take enforcement action, including compulsory purchase action, where necessary. This is to reduce the negative impacts that can arise through long-term empty properties and to assist ensure all housing stock is occupied.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation

The council have a role in ensuring all licensed and non-licensable houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) are safe and fit for tenants. This work includes proactive and reactive interventions, inspections and investigations to ensure all properties requiring a licence are licensed, and all properties regardless of licensing are of a suitable and safe standard.

### Immigration Inspections

A chargeable discretionary service the councils Private Sector Housing team offer is property inspections where people are immigrating to the UK from outside the EEC, to ensure the property they are moving in to will be suitable. Where a property meets the required standard, a certificate is provided to the applicant, for them to produce with their immigration application.

### Support for Tenants

The Private Sector Housing team will support tenants in certain circumstances to take action against landlords (including social housing providers) where their rented property presents a risk of harm to the occupants. This support will usually be limited to guiding tenants how to take their own action.



## 2. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a framework for delivering mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to assist people with a disability to remain in their own home;
- Provide discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants for certain works and where qualifying criteria are met.
- Provide advice and discretionary financial assistance through a HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) to support alternative action to a mandatory DFG (for example, to support a disabled applicant in a move to a more suitable home), where there are cost savings and/or socio environmental benefits for doing so.

### 2.1 Principles of Assistance

When considering assistance to individual homeowners, including private landlords, the following principles will apply:

- Homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained; they are also responsible for the maintenance of any works undertaken by the DFG. Once completed and signed off, the responsibility for ongoing maintenance and servicing is the responsibility of the grant recipient.
- Support and assistance should encourage private investment and maximise the impact of available public funds, for example, by securing nominations rights to private rentals in return for grant assistance;
- The Council will not approve an application for assistance if the eligible works have been started or completed before the application is approved.
- Applications meeting all necessary criteria will be approved, but the provision of financial assistance for all discretionary grants is subject to the availability of funding.

### 2.2 Available Assistance

The Council will continue to make mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants available in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996, and subsequent amendments.

The Council is required by law to provide the statutory Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt homes for people with a disability if the adaptation is considered necessary, appropriate, practical and reasonable.

The grant is means-tested for applicants over 18 years old and the maximum grant is currently **£30,000** per application.

The Council is required to consult with Occupational Therapists regarding any proposed adaptations to ensure that the proposals are necessary, appropriate, reasonable and practicable.

Disabled Facilities Grants play a key role in enabling elderly and/or disabled residents to continue to live independently in their own homes with adaptations.

### **2.3 Purpose of the Assistance**

This is a mandatory grant to adapt the home of a person with a disability, so that they can continue to live at home safely.

The purposes for which adaptations may be provided are:

- a) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling or the building in which the dwelling or, as the case may be, flat is situated;
- b) Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with him/her;
- c) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
- d) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;
- e) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- f) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- g) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a wash hand basin, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
- h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant;
- i) Improving any heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system in the dwelling or any such system is unsuitable for use by the disabled occupant, providing a heating system suitable to meet his/her needs;
- j) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control;

- k) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to enable him/her to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care;
- l) Such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State. Note: The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 lists two further purposes specified by the Secretary of State:
  - m) Facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant;
  - n) Making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

Works are determined through an assessment of the client and their home environment by an Occupational Therapist. The assessments concentrate on the client's ability to remain living independently in their own home and must distinguish between works, which are desirable, and those, which are necessary and appropriate.

When considering the provision of hard standings (3.6 x 4.8 max) and associated crossover for vehicle access, where the disabled person is in a wheelchair or has extreme difficulty walking to the house, the following will apply.

Hard standings and associated crossovers will only be given where existing on-street parking is considered unsatisfactory and a marked disabled parking bay is not possible or where it affords a more economical solution than providing additional paths / ramping from the house to the roadside. Please note that being the holder of a blue badge is not the eligibility criterion for this item.

When identifying and agreeing adaptations the Council will ensure:

- They are the simplest, least disruptive and most cost-effective adaptation to meet the needs of the client;
- They are designed to fit within the existing structure of the home; this may involve using the home in a different way i.e. sleeping in a ground floor room or sub dividing space;
- That providing additional space within a home is only considered if all other options have been fully exhausted and if it is practicable to provide additional space.

Where a recommendation has been made by an Occupational Therapist that doesn't fall within the above legislative criteria, the referral will be sent back to the Occupational Therapy team for review and determination under the Care Act requirements for the individual.

## **2.4 Maximum Assistance**

Maximum statutory grant is currently £30,000 per application.

## 2.5 Method of Application

Applicants should contact the Council's Community Occupational Therapy Service in the first instance so they can undertake an assessment of needs. Once this has been completed, the Private Sector Housing team will require a copy of the Occupational Therapist's referral before they can progress an application.

The Council will prioritise applications for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants by the priority awarded to the applicant by the Community Occupational Therapist team. There are three different priorities that they award, these are Critical, Urgent and Standard.

Where possible the Council will not split an application which has multiple different priorities. On occasions, however, this may be necessary. For example, when an exceptionally high number of critical and urgent applications are received.

Applicants for the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant must complete and submit an application form which is supported by:

- Plans and/or schedule of work with sufficient detail to enable the Council to determine whether the adaptation is practical and reasonable (although this is usually done in-house via the Council's surveyor after the application has been submitted)
- Evidence, usually in the form of original documents, to confirm the financial status claimed in the application form;
- Confirmation of tenure (Owner's Certificate or Tenant's Certificate see 'eligibility' below); and
- The Council requires original documents or copies that have been endorsed by an Officer of the Council or appointed agent to confirm that the original was viewed by them and that the copy is an accurate reproduction of the original.

Once an OT referral and application have been submitted, the Private Sector Housing team will explore options with the applicant, to establish whether remaining in their current home or moving to suitable alternative accommodation with adaptations better meets the applicant's needs and provides a more cost-effective solution. If after options have been explored, the applicant decides that they wish to remain in their existing home, an Officer will conduct a means test of resources prior to making a referral to the Occupational Therapy Service.

## 2.6 Eligibility

The applicant must:

- Be aged 18 or over on the date of application (If the person with a disability is a child the applicant should normally be the parent or legal guardian).
- Be either the owner of the dwelling or be a tenant (including licensees), and be able to provide an Owner's Certificate or Tenant's Certificate. This will not necessarily be the disabled person for whom the works are required. A landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled tenant. Where an owner cannot provide proof of ownership with any legal documentation, other informal documents indicating ownership may be considered. If no such documents

can be sourced, a good reason should be provided. In such cases, approval will be subject to the discretion of the case worker.

- Satisfy a means test as prescribed by the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended), if the disabled person is an adult, unless the application is being made on behalf of a child.
- The adaptation must be for the benefit of a person who is 'disabled' within the criteria in section 100 of the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996.
- The grant is available to applicants residing in North Northamptonshire.

## **2.7 Terms and Conditions Applicable**

The applicant, whether an owner occupier, tenant or landlord, must be able to provide a certificate which states that he/she intends that the disabled occupant will live in the qualifying property (dwelling, flat, houseboat or park home). In the case of a tenant's application, the landlord must agree to the works and produce an Owner's Certificate at the same time.

A minimum of two quotes are required with a preference that three quotes are sought for the cost of carrying out the work. In most cases the Council will tender for the works through the Northamptonshire countywide register of contractors. The only exception is where specialist equipment is required, and a lack of suitable contractors means it is not possible to obtain three estimates.

An applicant may only select their own contractors to provide quotes if they have taken the decision at the start of the process, following the Occupational Therapists (OT) recommendation to undertake the works themselves. The same rules apply for clients who have decided to undertake the process themselves and not wait for the Council to deliver their scheme.

Clients must provide to the Council a completed application form, a technical drawing and detailed specification meeting the OT requirements and a minimum of two quotes. The applicant must also provide the particulars of any preliminary or ancillary services or charges.

Only works that directly relate to the required specification will be undertaken under the grant. For example, a new tiled splashback will be provided to a new sink, however the grant will not retile the rest of the room in matching tiles.

The Council will decide on the winning quote based on suitability of meeting the disabled person's needs and best value. The applicant's preferences will be taken into account however, if there are no concerns on suitability, where an applicant has requested to use a certain contractor, who has submitted a higher price for the works than the winning contractor, the applicant will be required to pay the difference.

Where an applicant would like additional works to be undertaken as part of the process these must be discussed and agreed in writing with the winning contractor separately and in advance of the works commencing. The Council will not comment or engage in issues between the applicant and contractor on any works outside of the scope of those required in the OT recommendation and the contractor will invoice for these separately directly to the applicant.

In approving a grant application, the Council will require that as a condition of the grant, the eligible works are carried out in accordance with any specification they decide to impose.

The Council will not approve an application for assistance if the works involved have been carried out before the application has been approved, except where the relevant works have begun but have not been completed. In this case, the application may be approved if the Council is satisfied that there were good reasons for beginning the works before the application was approved. Where the Council decides to approve an application in these circumstances, it may decide to treat the application as varied so that the eligible works do not include any that are completed.

The specific works must be carried out within twelve months from the date of the approval of the application. This period may however be extended by the Council if it thinks fit, particularly where it is satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, completed without carrying out other works which could not have been foreseen when the application was made.

If following grant approval, but before the certified date of completion, the applicant ceases to be a person entitled to a grant, the Council may refuse to pay a grant and demand that any instalment be repaid.

Where an application for grant has been approved and the Council ascertains:

- that the amount of grant was determined on the basis of inaccurate or incomplete information; and
- exceeds that to which the applicant was entitled; or
- that without its knowledge the eligible works were started before the application was approved; or
- the works were carried out otherwise than as required (condition as to contractors employed).

The Council may refuse to pay the grant or any further instalment of the grant which remains to be paid; or make a reduction in the grant and it will demand repayment by the applicant in whole or in part of any grant paid.

The payment or part payment of grant is conditional upon the eligible works, or corresponding part of the works, being completed to the satisfaction of the Council and upon the authority being provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for payment for the works and any related preliminary or ancillary services or charges. For this purpose, an invoice, demand or receipt is acceptable if it satisfies the Council and is not issued by the applicant or a member of his family. In cases where the work is carried out by the applicant or a member of his/her family, then grant assistance will be limited to the cost of materials only. Where the assistance is paid by instalments, the aggregate of the instalments paid before the completion of the eligible works shall not at any time exceed nine-tenths of the amount of the assistance.

It is a condition of payment that the specific works are carried out by the contractor, whose quote accompanied the application or, where two or more estimates were submitted, by one of those contractors.

The Council may pay the full, or part of the, assistance by direct payment to the contractor(s), or by delivering to the applicant an instrument of payment in a form made payable to the contractor. However, in any case, the Council will not do so unless the applicant was informed before the application for assistance was approved that this would or might be the method of payment.

Where the works in question have not been completed to the satisfaction of the applicant, the Council may, at the applicant's request, and if the Council considers it appropriate to do so, withhold payment from the contractor. If the Council does withhold payment from the contractor, it will work with both the applicant and contractor to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion with the agreement of all parties. The Council can proceed with a payment to the contractor despite the applicant's wish to withhold payment, if this is not justified. For example, if the applicant's justification is malicious or if the relationship between the applicant and the contractor broke during the works.

The contract of works is between the applicant and the contractor. The Council will not be liable in any way whatsoever, contractually or otherwise, for the payment of any works carried out by the contractor under the terms of the assistance.

Where an adaptation has been completed and signed off by the client, contractor and council the case is then closed. Any issues arising after completion is for the client to resolve with the contractor. The DFG grant is a one-off payment and does not include any ongoing maintenance, this includes all installed equipment such as stairlifts, through floor lifts, step lifts, showers etc. Where manufacturers or installers offer an extended warranty, the council will include payment for this as standard in all relevant cases, for whatever the extended period may be in each case. However, the council is not responsible for dealing with future issues. The applicant remains responsible for ensuring all ongoing maintenance obligations are fulfilled.

Where the applicant dies after liability has been incurred or any preliminary or ancillary services or charges, the Council may pay grant for some or all of the works already carried out and other relevant works and associated preliminary or ancillary services or charges covered by the application.

Where the applicant dies after the relevant works have begun and before the certified date of completion, the Council may pay grant for some or all of the works already carried out and other relevant works covered by the application. The applicant must take reasonable steps to pursue any relevant insurance or legal claim, if applicable, and to repay the grant from the proceeds of such a claim.

During the grant condition period where the eligible works consist of or include the installation into the property of either or both specialist equipment or portable accommodation for the disabled occupant, the applicant shall notify the Council if and as soon as the equipment and/or portable equipment is no longer needed so that the Council can explore the possibility of reusing it.

## **2.8 For applicants who own the property**

In the event of a grant exceeding £5,000, it is a condition of the grant that the Council may demand the repayment by the recipient of such part of the grant that exceeds £5,000 (but may not demand an amount in excess of £10,000) if:

a. the recipient disposes (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) of the premises in respect of which the grant was given within 10 years of the certified date; and

b. the Council, having considered:

i The extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were he or she be required to repay all or any of the grant;

ii Whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of his/her employment;

iii Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well-being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and

iv Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity,

and the Council is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

This condition is a local land charge and is binding on any person who is for the time being an owner of the dwelling.

## **2.9 Processing an application**

The Council will notify the applicant in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and, in any event not later than six months after the date of the application concerned, whether the application is approved or refused.

Where the Council decides to approve an application for assistance it will determine:

- Which of the works are eligible for assistance. Such works will be referred to as 'eligible works';
- The amount of the expenses which in its opinion are properly to be incurred in the execution of the eligible works (the eligible expense);
- The amount of assistance the Council has decided to pay;



- If the Council approves the application for assistance, it will notify the applicant in writing that the application is approved and the notification will specify the eligible works, the amount of eligible expense and the amount of assistance payable;
- If the Council notifies the applicant that his/her application for assistance has been refused, then the Council will, at the same time, advise the applicant of the reasons for refusal;
- If the applicant wants the grant money to be paid to another agent or direct to a contractor, they must inform the Council.

## **3.0 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants**

### **3.1 Purpose of the Assistance**

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants shall only be made available to complement mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, and shall be limited to:

1. Contributing to the cost to repair and make good to wall, ceiling or floor finishes disturbed by work to provide adaptations funded by mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants. In the interests of clarity, it is not always possible to match finishes back into existing finishes appropriately or to a reasonable standard, for example, colour, finish type, or tile type may be obsolete.
2. Paying for an extended warranty towards equipment such as stair lifts, hoists, through floor lifts, step lifts, etc.
3. Contributing towards the cost of an applicant's means test where the means test has established that the applicant has to pay a contribution and yet they don't have savings of over £6,000.
4. Contributing an additional amount towards works that are recommended by the Occupational Therapist and those works that cost more than the mandatory grant limit of £30,000. For example, a ground floor extension to provide a bedroom and level access shower room is deemed the most reasonable and practical way of meeting the applicant's need but the cost of this work is above £30,000. The Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant can be used to top up the maximum grant award possible.

Where this is the case, the Council will include such work as eligible discretionary works that are complementary to those identified as mandatory.

### **3.2 Maximum Assistance**

The maximum contribution that the Council shall make towards the cost of discretionary works shall be £1,000 in total for points 1, 2 and 3 listed above and £10,000 in total for point 4 listed above. In the interests of clarity, no applicant can receive more than £1,000 in total towards points 1, 2 and 3 listed above.

Furthermore, no applicant that qualifies under point 4 listed above, can receive more than £10,000 worth of Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant. Any award of Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant shall be shown separately to an award of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

### **3.3 Process for Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants**

Additional specifications shall be included along with those eligible works identified under a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant and the award shall be made by Officers authorised to approve a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant at the time the mandatory grant is awarded. These works shall not be considered as extras to any mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and must be approved at the same time as the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

### **3.4 Terms and Conditions Applicable**

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants will be subject to the same terms and conditions as mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants. They will only be available subject to budget allocation, and on a priority needs basis. As these are discretionary grants, they may be withdrawn at any time.

### **3.5 Maintenance**

A discretionary Disabled Facility Grant is in effect a one off, good faith payment, to provide a specific adaptation. Any ongoing maintenance, servicing or guarantees becomes the responsibility of the grant recipient on completion of the grant works. Any equipment provided through a discretionary grant will be covered by the standard warranty and after this time all maintenance and repairs are the responsibility of the applicant. The client can request a quote for extending the manufacturer's warranty of which they can take out at their own cost.

## **4 Other Discretionary Housing Grants**

### **4.1 HomeMove Grants (Private Sector)**

#### **4.1.1 Purpose of the Assistance**

HomeMove Grants will be provided to fund more cost-effective alternatives to providing a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. For example, the relocation costs for a disabled applicant to move to an alternative home that is more appropriate for their immediate and long-term needs and that move (together with any costs of adapting the new home) is cost effective compared to remaining in their own home.

#### **4.1.2 Eligibility**

The applicant must:

- Be aged 18 or over on the date of application (If the person with a disability is a child the applicant should normally be the parent or legal guardian).
- Be either the owner of a dwelling or be a tenant of a private landlord or Registered Provider.
- Satisfy a means test as prescribed by the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended), if the applicant is the disabled person, unless the application is being made on behalf of a child.
- The HomeMove Grant must be for the benefit of a person who is 'disabled' within the criteria in section 100 of the Housing (Grants, Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996.
- The grant is available to applicants residing throughout North Northamptonshire and who are moving to suitable alternative accommodation located within or outside of North Northamptonshire.

#### **4.1.3 Access Criteria for a HomeMove Grant (Private Sector):**

The applicant must be eligible for a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant as outlined in the criteria above. The Council will assess the costs of adapting the existing dwelling as well as the proposed dwelling to establish the costs and benefits of pursuing a HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) compared to a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

Full cost estimates will be presented in a report to an Officer with appropriate delegated authority under the Council's constitution to decide whether or not the HomeMove Grant will be approved.

#### **4.1.4 Maximum Assistance**

The Council must be satisfied that there are tangible benefits for the HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) to be awarded as an alternative to an adaptation funded by a mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Such benefits will either be as a cost saving to the Council, or in the event that the cost of each option is broadly similar, tangible benefits to the disabled applicant.

The maximum amount payable as a HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) will not exceed £6,000. The total amount payable will be based on the cost of adaptations to the new home up to a maximum of £5,000, together with up to £1,000 to cover other expenses including removals, etc.

#### **4.1.5 Process for HomeMove Grants (Private Sector)**

Given the flexible nature of this option, any decision to award or refuse the HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) will be taken by an officer with appropriate delegated authority under the Council's constitution, following the submission of a report compiled by a case officer.

The decision shall be made within 6 months of the completed submission (the date at which the case officer confirms they have sufficient information to compile the report) and shall be in writing. In the event of a refusal, the letter shall include the reason for that refusal.

The Council will reserve the right to consult with an Occupational Therapist from the Occupational Therapy Service in respect of the suitability of this option.

#### **Terms and Conditions Applicable**

The HomeMove Grant (Private Sector) is payable at the discretion of the Council and will only be awarded where there are tangible benefits for both the applicant and the Council.

## 4.2 Renovation grants

### 4.2.1 Purpose of the Assistance

Renovation grants are discretionary grants to help vulnerable households on low incomes to carry out repairs and improvements to their home to enable them to bring the property up to the Decent Home Standard.

<p><b>Renovation grant - eligible works</b></p>
<p>To prevent a category 1 hazard in a dwelling as defined in Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 and category 2 hazards where they may be encountered by a member of a vulnerable group.</p>
<p>To provide adequate thermal insulation, improve energy efficiency and provide affordable warmth.</p>
<p>The replacement of a condemned boiler; or provision of a central heating system or night storage heaters where none exists, or it is beyond repair</p>
<p>Repair or replacement of existing old, unreliable central heating boiler where the owner is on a means tested benefit. If they don't meet ECO/ FE criteria</p>
<p>Repair or renewal of the fabric or facilities to bring dwellings that have been empty for at least 3 years back into use.</p>
<p><b>Landlords Renovation grants – eligible works</b></p>
<p>Repair or renewal of the fabric and facilities to bring dwellings that have been empty for at least 3 years back into use</p>
<p>Repair or renewal of the fabric and facilities to bring properties back into use as accommodation into which the council can discharge its homelessness duties.</p>
<p>The conversion of unused space over shops in the town centre to form living accommodation.</p>
<p>The replacement of a condemned boiler; or provision of a central heating system or night storage heaters where none exists, or it is beyond repair</p>

<b>Home Repair Assistance - eligible works</b>
Essential minor repairs and safety improvements to the living accommodation and access paths/walls immediately adjoining.
Any of the following Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security work recommended by the Community Safety/Crime Prevention Officer.</li> <li>• Insulation and draught proofing work where the applicant is unable to secure Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding.</li> <li>• Additional plug sockets</li> <li>• Upgrading re-wireable fuse boxes / consumer units and electrical earthing</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.2 Eligibility

Renovation and Home Repair Assistance grants will be limited to:

- Owner-occupiers, charities and qualifying tenants over 18, on means tested benefits or subject to the definitions and means test introduced by the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended) to provide essential maintenance and remove category 1 hazards.
- Home Repair Assistance (HRA) for owner-occupiers on a means tested benefit including council tax support.
- Landlords for conversion of empty accommodation into living accommodation.
- Owners of dwellings that have been empty for more than three years.
- Where the tenant is in fuel poverty.

#### 4.2.3 Maximum Assistance

A maximum of £10,000 will be applied to renovation grants, with conversion grants limited to a maximum of £5,000 per unit of accommodation created.

#### 4.2.4 Terms and Conditions

- i) Owner occupiers and leaseholders (of more than 5 years) will be subject to the means-test detailed in the Housing Grants Regulations 1996 (as amended) with the following adjustments:
  - The value of the applicant's home will be taken into account where the application relates to another property which is to be occupied by the applicant and/or his family
  - An applicant applying for a grant to remedy fuel poverty will not be subject to further means testing beyond the affordable warmth calculation
  - 100% Renovation Grant will be provided to vulnerable households in receipt of universal credit, income support, guarantee pension credit, income-based job seeker allowance, council tax support, and either working tax credit or child tax credit with an income of less than £15,050
- ii) Landlord renovation grants will be on the basis of 50% of the cost of approved work.
- iii) Making good damage to decoration resulting from grant work will not be included.
- iv) Renovation grants for owner occupiers are subject to a 30-year grant condition period requiring the repayment of the grant in the event the property is sold or transferred or of failure to comply with the grant conditions protected by a local land charge.  
N.B. Applicants on means tested benefit, who have no equity in their property or less than 30 years remaining on their lease will be exempt from the condition for grant repayment.
- v) Landlords' renovation grants are subject to a 5-year grant condition requiring repayment of the grant in the event the conditions aren't met, and also protected by a local land charge. Also, it is a requirement that the property is let on the open market for 5 years after the work is completed.
- vi) Work that is normally covered by buildings insurance (with the exception of the retention sum) is not eligible for grant assistance.



## **4.3 Landlord Improvement Grants**

### **4.3.1 Purpose of the Assistance**

The purpose of the Landlord Improvement Grant is to provide grant assistance to private landlords to fund minor repairs or improvements to their properties to ensure that the Council's prescribed standards for privately rented accommodation offered to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are met. This would include existing tenants where the landlord agrees to issue a new fixed term tenancy of at least 6 months.

### **4.3.2 Eligible Works**

Any minor repairs or improvements that are required to ensure that the property meets the suitability requirements of Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012, and in the case of an HMO any works identified to ensure that the property complies with the Council's adopted Amenities and Space standards.

### **4.3.3 Eligible Landlords**

Private landlords aged 18 years or over are eligible to apply for a Landlord Improvement Grant if they have a property in North Northamptonshire that is available for single occupancy or as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) and:

- Their property is currently empty (or likely to become empty within 56 days) and they agree that the property will be occupied by a household/s nominated by the Council for a minimum of six months; or
- Their property is currently tenanted and occupied by a household owed a prevention or relief duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Council has no reason to believe that the household would be eligible for temporary accommodation should their tenancy not be renewed, and the landlord agrees that the existing tenant can remain in occupation for a further minimum period of six months.

The following eligibility criteria also apply:

- The property must meet all other suitability requirements as stipulated in Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 that are unrelated to physical property condition (e.g. HMO's must be licensed, or have submitted an application for licensing that is likely to be granted, if subject to mandatory licensing).
- The landlord must not be subject to any recovery procedures for monies due to the Council, and/or have any outstanding enforcement notices issued by the Council.

#### **4.3.4 Maximum Assistance**

The maximum grant payable is £1000 per property. There is no limit to the number of grant applications a landlord can make.

#### **4.3.5 Terms and Conditions Applicable**

The Council reserves the right to refuse to award the Landlord Improvement Grant despite all eligibility criteria being met, for example:

- if the council tax band is so high that it is regarded as unaffordable for the tenant or prospective tenant;
- if the property has been built within the past 10 years and is still under a NHBC warranty;
- the landlord has failed a fit and proper person test e.g. as part of a HMO license application
- The landlord has failed to take remedial / improvement action following an enforcement notice
- This list is not exhaustive.

## **5 Criteria Applying to all Grant Funding**

### **Availability of Funding**

Notwithstanding all other qualifying criteria, approval of any application for grant funding is subject to sufficient funding being available.

### **Appeals Against Refusal or Rejection of Grant Funding Applications**

There is no automatic right of appeal against refusal or rejection of any discretionary or mandatory grant funding applications.

Complaints about refusal or rejection of any application can only be considered under the Council's complaints procedure.

## 6. EMPTY PROPERTIES

The financial benefits from restoring property are gained not only by the owners in additional rental income, or capital raised through sale, but also by the local authority in council tax income, new homes bonus and by the community with a better environment and increased employment opportunities.

Empty properties can become a target for nuisance, anti-social behaviour, and squatters; potentially causing blight and devaluing neighbouring properties. Additionally, they are a wasted asset and the impacts caused by empty properties can tie up the resources of local authorities.

As such, North Northamptonshire Council will have an ongoing programme to identify and encourage reoccupation of empty residential properties. Identification of empty properties may come about through review of council tax records, routine interventions from Council officers, and through intelligence or complaints from members of the public.

Where a residential property is a long-term empty, it will be considered for adding to the database for action.

Appendix A illustrates the scoring matrix used to prioritise action to bring empty properties back into use.

The Council will:

- provide advice and encouragement to owners in respect of how to become a landlord and the referral of potential tenants;
- work with Registered Providers (RP's) who may be interested in managing, leasing or purchasing property and consider financial assistance;
- consider grant for repairs and improvements;
- use internal and external working groups for the exchange of ideas and information;
- identify long term vacant and difficult to let buildings and create a database for ongoing assessment and prioritisation
- contact with owners to offer advice and discuss available options
- survey town centres to identify the opportunities for 'flat over shop' conversions
- intervene in the case of properties seriously detrimental to the amenity of the vicinity.

In line with local authorities across the country, the Council no longer provides a council tax discount for empty properties. For all empty properties 100% council tax

is charged and where the property has been empty for more than two years this is increased to 150% council tax charge.

The Council will usually try to work informally with owners and landlords to bring about reoccupation of empty properties. However, there may be times where a more formal approach is required. This might require use of formal actions such as repair notices or compulsory purchase or demolition.

The Council will use a range of tools and will work across different departments to tackle the various problems arising from or associated with empty residential properties.

The Compulsory Purchase Procedure is set out in full in the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy. This course of action would require committee approval and the process would have regard to the following criteria:

- ◆ Effect on the local amenity
- ◆ Length of time empty
- ◆ Complaints regarding the property
- ◆ State of disrepair
- ◆ Housing need locally for that type of accommodation

Compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) will not be made unless there is a compelling case in the public interest.

It is acknowledged that CPOs lead to a period of uncertainty and anxiety for owners and the statutory processes following a Council decision to make a CPO will be completed as quickly as possible, in order to keep this period to an absolute minimum.

## **7. Houses in Multiple Occupation**

A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a building which is occupied by three or more occupants from more than one household and meets the standard test under section 254 of the Housing Act 2004.

### **7.1 What qualifies as an HMO?**

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a new definition of what makes up a household, restricting it to members of the same family (parent, child, grandparent, brother or sister), persons who are married to each other or live together as husband and wife (or an equivalent same sex relationship). This new HMO definition now includes shared houses such as student accommodation.

HMO licences are granted under the conditions of the Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018

### **7.2 Standards for HMOs**

Statistically HMOs pose a greater risk from fire to the occupants than do single-occupancy homes and living conditions are often poor compared to other forms of private sector housing.

The Council's main duty is primarily to ensure that accommodation is warm, safe, in good repair and free from Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004. Additional standards for fire precautions, space, heating, washing facilities and kitchen provision must also be met. Appendix B illustrates the Amenity and Space Standards for HMOs that North Northamptonshire Council expects landlords and Licence Holders to adhere to.

Officers may inspect a property to ensure it meets the current housing standards and take enforcement action where necessary. HMOs such as bedsits and shared houses must also be managed in accordance with the HMO Management Regulations 2006.

### **7.3 Licensing of HMOs**

The Housing Act 2004 introduced a system of mandatory licensing of HMOs and requires landlords to apply to the local Council for a licence to operate some types of HMOs.

### **7.4 Do I need an HMO licence?**

Properties are required by law to be licensed by the local authority if the property is let to five or more tenants who form more than one household.

It is an offence to operate a licensable HMO without a licence from the local authority. You cannot legally collect any rent on the property and upon prosecution maybe subject to an unlimited fine, alternatively the authority may impose a civil penalty of up to £30,000 per offence. Tenants may also seek a rent repayment order.

## 7.5 Licence requirements

To obtain a licence the local authority must be satisfied that:

- the property meets the current minimum prescribed housing and fire safety standards to ensure it is safe for tenants;
- the property meets minimum prescribed amenities standards, such as an adequate number of bathrooms and cooking facilities;
- the landlord or managing agent is a "fit and proper" person;
- the property and tenancy agreements are managed appropriately.

Conditions are attached to the licence:

- May include the requirement to provide a written statement of terms of occupancy.
- Will state which rooms within the property maybe used for sleeping purposes and how many occupants and households each can accommodate.
- Additional conditions maybe agreed with the licensing officer in cases where the property does not meet the space and amenities standards but works to rectify the issue(s) can be completed within a reasonable time frame agreed with the Officer.

The licence lasts for up to five years, but the local authority may issue a licence for a shorter period of time if deemed appropriate. The licence will specify the maximum number of occupants and households that may occupy the property. A copy of the licence must be displayed prominently in the property.

A public register of all licensed HMOs in North-Northamptonshire is available on the Licensing Unit website at: [\(INSERT WEBLINK\)](#)

## 7.6 Apply for an HMO licence

To make an application please contact the Licensing Administration Unit by telephoning (01832) 742102 or emailing: [LicensingUnit@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:LicensingUnit@northnorthants.gov.uk)

## 7.7 Licence fees

Each application must be accompanied by the application fee. A separate fee will be due upon grant of the licence. Licence fees are set annually by the Council.

Regulation of HMOs is covered under the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

## 8.0 Immigration Inspections

### 8.1 Housing inspections and accommodation certificates

People immigrating to the UK from outside the EEC must confirm that the housing they're moving into will be suitable. (At the time of writing, it is unknown what impact, if any, Brexit may have on this arrangement)

The Immigration Authority asks the 'sponsor' for written proof that this is the case. The British High Commission normally asks for an inspection to be carried out by a suitably qualified surveyor or Environmental Health Officer.

The inspection and report or letter needs to show that the accommodation:

- doesn't pose a significant risk to the health or safety of those who will be living there
- is in a reasonable state of repair and will not become overcrowded with the extra people living there.

We can carry out this type of inspection for properties within North Northamptonshire.

There is a charge for this service and the current fee can be confirmed by contacting the Private Sector Housing team. The charge covers the cost of the inspection, associated administration and a letter stating the suitability of the property. The fee must be paid in full before the inspection takes place.

North Northamptonshire Council offer a standard and fast-track service for Immigration Inspections.

When you contact us (details below), we'll ask for the following information:

- Your name and telephone number
- The address we need to inspect and details of the owner and/or letting agent
- The full name, date of birth, current address and passport number of the applicant
- The name, date of birth and sex of all of the current occupiers of the property and how they are related to you

When we receive this information, an Officer from the Private Sector Housing Team will be in touch to arrange a suitable date and time for the inspection to take place.

The inspection will consider the general state of repair of the property and check if there is adequate space and facilities for the increased number of people.

You'll be asked to show us around the property, show how the property is occupied and we'll need to have access to all rooms. Please be aware that the Immigration Authorities won't normally accept letters older than 12 weeks. If your letter 'expires' or there is a change in circumstances since it was written, we'll need to carry out a further inspection which will incur another fee.



## **9.0 Support for Tenants - Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018**

The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 came into force on 20 March 2019. The aim of the Act is to help drive up standards in rented homes in both the social and private sectors and provide an alternative means for tenants to seek redress from their landlord if their rented property presents a risk of harm to the health and safety of the occupiers. It does this by empowering tenants to hold their landlord, including registered providers such as housing associations, to account without having to rely on the local authority to do so.

This is a power for tenants and does not alter any existing local authority powers.

However, local authorities can decide whether they wish to give guidance to tenants to seek redress under the Act. The Act adds to the existing regulatory framework. Under the Act, sections are inserted into the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 requiring all landlords (private and social) to ensure that their properties, including any common parts of the building, are fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout. The Act does so by implying a covenant to this effect in the tenancy agreement.

The Act applies to the social and private rented sectors and, while it does not impose any new responsibilities on landlords, it does confirm that:

- landlords must ensure that their property, including any common parts of the building, is fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout
- to achieve that, landlords will need to ensure that their property is free of hazards which are so serious that the dwelling is not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition

Where a landlord fails to do so, the tenant has the right to take action in the courts for breach of contract on the grounds that the property is unfit for human habitation. The remedies available to the tenant are an order by the court requiring the landlord to take action to reduce or remove the hazard, and / or damages to compensate them for having to live in a property which was not fit for human habitation.

North Northants Council is a stock holding authority and with the aim of avoiding a conflict of interest, all social and Council tenants will be referred to the complaints procedure of their landlord. North Northants Council will seek only to give guidance in such cases and will advise tenants to seek their own independent legal advice and follow the guidance available on the Shelter website.

## 9.1 The Act applies to:

- tenancies shorter than 7 years that are granted on or after 20 March 2019 (tenancies longer than 7 years that can be terminated by the landlord before the expiry of 7 years shall be treated as if the tenancy was for less than 7 years)
- new secure, assured and introductory tenancies (agreed on or after 20 March 2019)
- tenancies renewed for a fixed term (on or after 20 March 2019)
- assured shorthold and introductory tenancies that become periodic tenancies on or after 20 March 2019

For pre-existing periodic or secure tenancies, landlords will have 12 months after 20 March 2019 before the requirement comes into force.

## 9.2 Exceptions

The landlord will not be required to remedy unfitness when:

- the problem is caused by tenant behaviour which is in breach of the tenancy
- the problem is caused by unforeseen circumstances beyond the landlord's control
- the problem is with tenants' own possessions
- the landlord has not been able to get necessary consent despite making reasonable efforts to do so, e.g. planning permission, permission from freeholders etc
- the tenant is not a person e.g. local authorities, national parks, housing associations, educational institutions

The Act does not apply to licences to occupy. This is likely to exclude some temporary accommodation, lodgers and some property guardians, depending on whether they have a tenancy agreement or licence to occupy. Local authorities can still use their enforcement powers in these circumstances.

North Northamptonshire Council Private Sector Housing team will offer guidance to any tenants' enquiries about the Fitness for Habitation Act. In instances where a grievance made by a tenant falls under the scope of the Council's duty to investigate, then the standard enforcement procedure will be followed, as set out in the Enforcement Policy. In these cases, tenants can request from the Council any reports, witness statements, notices, photos or any other forms of evidence obtained through the course of the investigation.

If the grievance is made by a social or Council tenant, they will be advised to seek assistance from an independent legal body or seek advice from Shelter. The courts

do not consistently require factual reports of inspections carried out by an authorised body. However, if such evidence is deemed necessary in complex cases, then tenants can obtain reports of inspections carried out by an independent body.

If North Northamptonshire Council does not have a duty under the legislation, to investigate the grievances put forward by the tenant, then it will use its discretion to refuse support for Fitness for Habitation claims.

# APPENDIX A – Empty Property Scoring Matrix

North Northamptonshire Council – empty property scoring matrix

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Score

## Length of time vacant (max 80 points)

Less than six months	0
6 months – 1 year	10
1 year – 2 years	20
2 years – 3 years	40
3 years – 4 years	50
4 years – 5 years	60
5 years plus	80

## Property type (max 20 points)

Flat in private block	5
Flats over shops	10
House	20

## Appearance (max 15 points)

Good	0
Overgrown	10
Poor repair	15

## Enforcement action already taken (no maximum)

Notices – points awarded per notice	10
Enforcement by other agencies per action	10

## Council tax arrears (max 40 points)

0-1,000	5
1,000 – 2,000	10
2,000 – 3,000	20
3,000 – plus	40

## Dangerous structure notice served (assessed by building control) (max 50 points)

No	0
Yes	50

## Complaints (max 20 points)

One score per complainant (up to maximum of 4)	5
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**Total**

**Date**

# **APPENDIX B – Amenity & Space Standards for HMOs**

# *A Landlord's Guide*

## **Amenities and space standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation**



## Using this guide

Not all of the standards contained within this document are legal requirements, however the standards contained within this guide have been adopted by the majority of Local Authorities in the East Midlands. This includes Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

The standards are usually regarded as a **MINIMUM** but are a guide only. Other factors or compensatory features will be taken into account when inspecting a property, therefore allowing for a degree of flexibility in certain circumstances. These factors could include the shape of the usable living space, or the needs and wishes of the occupants.

## Notes

### Kitchens

- All kitchens shall be of such a layout and size to adequately enable those sharing to safely store, prepare and cook food.
- Shared kitchens must be suitably located, normally not more than one floor away from any living accommodation except where dining room is provided next to kitchen.
- All equipment and facilities in kitchens shall be fit for purpose.

### Bathrooms

- Any person with access to an en-suite facility shall be excluded from the calculations.
- Bathrooms and WCs must be of an adequate size and layout and be adequately heated and ventilated and should include humidistat-controlled extraction.
- All rooms in which a WC is located shall have a wash hand basin in the same room.
- All baths, showers and wash hand basins shall be fit for purpose and have taps supplying an adequate supply of hot and cold water.
- Bathrooms and WCs must be suitably located, not more than one floor away from any living accommodation.

### General

HMO's with 5 or more occupants require a licence, please contact the Licensing Unit on 01832 742057.

Accommodation must have adequate means of space heating.

All areas should be fitted with appropriate fire detection and fire precaution equipment. Please contact your local Fire Officer to arrange an inspection.

HMO's with 6 or more occupants and those requiring any kind of building works may require building control approval.

HMO's of 7 or more occupants will require planning consent. Please contact the Planning and Building Control Departments for more information.



## Amenities

Minimum requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

### Bathroom requirements

Occupiers	Up to 4	5	6 - 10	11 - 15
Shared WC with wash hand basin with splashback	1	1	2	3
Shared bath or shower	1	1	2	3
		WC must be in it's own separate room	One WC must be in it's own separate room	Two WCs must be in their own separate rooms

### Kitchen requirements

Item	HMOs where occupants live as a cohesive group i.e. shared house	HMOs with more distinct units of accommodation and where occupants tend to live separately i.e independent living	Households within HMOs who have exclusive use of facilities i.e. bedsits
Cooker	Oven, grill and 4 ring cooker for every 5 occupants	Oven, grill and 4 ring cooker for every 3 occupants	Grill, oven and two hot rings (for a single person), or four hot rings (for a
Microwave	Optional – may allow extra sharing of cooking facilities at the council's discretion		

Kitchen sink	Sink and drainer with hot and cold water supply for every 5 occupants		Sink and drainer with hot and cold water supply
Worktop	Depth – min 500mm Length – 0.5m per person for first 3 occupants plus 0.25 for each additional occupier		Depth – min 500mm Length – 1m per person
Electrical sockets over worktop	At least 4 sockets for every 5 occupants (excluding those in use for fridge, washing machine etc). Increase number proportionately for extra occupants		At least 4 sockets excluding those in use for fridges etc.
Dry Food storage	Single wall unit for each occupant	Double wall unit for each occupant	Double wall or single base unit for one person (proportionately more for households)
Fridge (with freezer compartment or separate freezer)	Standard size fridge with freezer compartment for every 5 occupants	Standard size fridge with freezer compartment for each household	Standard size fridge with freezer compartment
Refuse disposal	Please follow your Local Authorities waste disposal scheme		
Ventilation	A mechanical extraction fan in accordance with Building Regulation requirements		

## Space standards

Minimum requirements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

### Bedroom requirements

\*The minimum legal requirement for a 1 person room is 6.51sqm and 10.22sqm for 2 persons

	1 person Room	2 person Room	3 person Room	4 person Room
Bedroom with no lounge or cooking facilities not provided in bedroom				
Bedroom with adequate lounge or dining space elsewhere & cooking facilities not provided in bedroom	8 square metres*	12 square metres*	17 square metres	22 square metres
Bedrooms with cooking facilities provided in the room	14 square metres	18 square metres	23 square metres	28 square metres
<b>Kitchens</b>	7sqm if used by 1-5 persons			
	For over 5 persons an additional 3sqm per person sharing the kitchen			
<b>Dining Space</b>	2sqm per person (for those sharing the space)			
	<b>Any dining space (shared or for exclusive use) shall be suitable, and conveniently located (normally not more than one floor from the living unit)</b>			

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# NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

## SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

3 February 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	North Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme
<b>Report Author</b>	John Conway, Head of Housing, Kettering Borough Council <a href="mailto:john.conway@kettering.gov.uk">john.conway@kettering.gov.uk</a>

### List of Appendices

**Appendix A** - Draft North Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme

**Appendix B** - Detailed consultation analysis

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. To seek Committee approval of the draft North Northamptonshire Housing Allocation Scheme to provide a common framework for the allocation of social rented homes to households across North Northamptonshire from April 2021.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The report sets out a final draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire following the conclusion of a six-week consultation with service users and stakeholders. It provides a summary of the feedback received from the consultation and explains how this has influenced the final draft scheme. The report also provides an update on the wider housing allocations project and plans for implementation of the draft scheme, subject to approval.

#### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:
- a) Approves the final draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire contained in Appendix A to this report.
  - b) Supports the aim to launch the new scheme on vesting day, 1 April 2021

## Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.2 The launch of a common housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire on vesting day represents a first step in transforming housing services to the benefit of all local residents who are seeking social housing.
- 3.3 As well as aligning four existing housing allocation schemes into one common scheme and creating equality of opportunity to access social housing across North Northamptonshire, the recommended course of action brings with it cost savings and wider benefits to North Northamptonshire Council and its customers (see section 6.1 for further detail).

## 4. Report Background

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- 4.1 Members will be aware that all local housing authorities are required by law to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures when allocating social housing, including council housing and housing association properties to rent. The four sovereign housing authorities across North Northamptonshire have all operated Choice Based Lettings (CBL) schemes for some time and residents are therefore familiar with this model of housing allocation whereby applicants place 'bids' (or expressions of interest) on advertised properties.
- 4.2 Whilst the Local Government (Structural Changes) (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 provide a period of two years for the housing allocation schemes inherited from predecessor councils to be revised and harmonised across the new unitary authority, on 29 October 2020 the Shadow Executive Committee supported the aim to launch a new North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme on vesting day, 1 April 2021, to supersede the existing schemes covering Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.
- 4.3 A draft North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme applicable to existing housing applicants, new applicants and existing social housing tenants in North Northamptonshire who wish to transfer, was developed by a project group of officers from the four local housing authorities in North Northamptonshire. This is provided at Appendix A and proposes to retain the CBL model of allocation. The draft scheme is largely based on the existing Keyways scheme operated by the councils of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough who share an IT system but do have some minor differences between their existing allocation policies which therefore require alignment.
- 4.4 To ensure readiness for vesting day, the Shadow Executive on 29 October 2020 approved the launch of a six-week consultation in respect of the draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire. The consultation subsequently ran from 4 November to 15 December 2020. A copy of the report taken to Shadow Executive on 29 October 2020 to seek approval to launch a consultation is provided [here](#).
- 4.5 The consultation has since concluded, and responses have been thoroughly analysed. The feedback that was received is summarised in section 6.4 alongside detail including reasons as to whether or not amendments have been made to the final draft scheme as a result.

- 4.6 This report proposes the final draft housing allocation scheme for adoption at Appendix A.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 The Shadow Executive Committee is asked to provide its support to the recommendation (at 3.1 above) to adopt the final draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire in order that the project team can continue with its aim to launch the scheme on vesting day, 1 April 2021 and in order that delivery of the wider project is not compromised.

### **5.2 Details of the housing allocation scheme proposed for approval**

- 5.2.1 The previous report to Shadow Executive Committee provided detail in section 5.2 as to how the draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire had been developed, essentially via a process of mapping current allocation schemes, examining housing supply and demand data and having regard to current strategic housing priorities across North Northamptonshire. It also provided a brief overview of the headline aspects of the draft scheme, which are examined in more detail in section 6.4 of this report further to the conclusion of a public consultation.

- 5.2.2 The draft housing allocation scheme sets out the proposed rules regarding:

- Who would qualify for social housing in North Northamptonshire
- Who would receive priority for social housing in North Northamptonshire
- How the new Council would allocate social housing and who could be considered for what type and size of property
- How applications from those in the greatest housing need, including people who are homeless, will be managed

- 5.2.3 The draft scheme at Appendix A contains full details of these rules but the headline proposals contained within the draft scheme are as follows:

- Some applicants will not qualify to access the scheme including:
  - Those with no housing need (some exceptions apply for example applicants eligible for sheltered accommodation)
  - Some homeowners
  - Those without a local connection to North Northamptonshire
  - Persons who have behaved in an unacceptable way
- A local connection can be established by virtue of two years' residency, family connections and employment. Special circumstances also apply for example in cases relating to domestic abuse and armed forces personnel.
- The scheme proposes an opportunity for free movement across North Northamptonshire in order that applicants can consider housing solutions across the wider geographical area in order to meet their needs however it is recognised that most applicants will likely remain keen to secure housing solutions within their existing communities and support networks. There remains a mechanism to exempt some properties or developments from this rule for example some village properties and new build schemes.

- The proposed banding criteria reflect the statutory reasonable preference categories and also local priorities which are based on housing supply and demand data across North Northamptonshire
- Five priority bands A, B, C, D and E are proposed which contain a list of criteria that satisfies each priority band. Applicants that are homeless or threatened with homelessness span Bands A – D depending on the type of statutory homeless duty owed, and other factors pertaining to the circumstances of their individual case.
- The detailed priority banding criteria are provided in Appendix A but to provide a summary of the proposed tiers of housing need:
  - Applicants awarded a Band A will receive the highest priority for rehousing and this band includes households that are owed the main statutory homeless duty, those with a severe medical need to move and those at serious risk of harm.
  - Band B priority includes applicants that are owed a homeless prevention or relief duty and that are vulnerable or have dependent children where they appear to be homeless through no fault of their own. This priority band also includes those with an urgent medical need to move and those that are overcrowded requiring additional bedrooms.
  - Band C represents those applicants with lower level housing needs and includes applicants with a less urgent need to move on medical grounds. It also includes those homeless applicants owed a prevention or relief duty who are not deemed to have worsened their own circumstances but who are not regarded as vulnerable.
  - Band D includes a limited number of applicants who must be provided a reasonable preference as homeless households but who have been deemed to have deliberately worsened their circumstances or found to be intentionally homeless. It also includes applicants who are regarded to have adequate accommodation that is shared with others but who would benefit from independent accommodation.
  - Band E includes two specific groups of applicants with no housing need but who are permitted to qualify for the scheme nonetheless, namely those seeking sheltered accommodation and those with a local connection to a rural exceptions site or section 106 site where allocation requirements are contained within legal planning agreements.
- The priority banding criteria also considers the likely wider strategic objectives of North Northamptonshire and its partners considering the role of housing in meeting health and social care outcomes. Examples of this are a high priority proposed to those requiring suitable accommodation to facilitate hospital discharge (in Band A), and a high priority for those ready to move on from supported housing or local authority care (in Bands A and B). The scheme proposes that statutory homeless applicants, and other applicants in Band A with an emergency housing need, will be provided with a suitable offer of accommodation determined by a system generated 'autobid' function. This will enable their critical housing need to be resolved at the earliest opportunity. Safeguards will be in place to ensure that any



offer of accommodation is suitable in line with statutory suitability regulations.

- It is proposed that other categories of applicants who refuse two suitable offers of accommodation within a 12-month period will have their applications suspended and be unable to participate in the scheme for 12 months.
- The draft scheme also proposes specific preference rules relating to the allocation of specialist property types in order to make best use of social housing stock to meet the needs of the existing applicant profile. Such rules apply to family accommodation with gardens (reserved for families with dependent children), properties offering disabled adaptations (preference to applicants with an evidenced medical need for such adaptations) and general needs bungalows (preference to those aged at least 60 years).

### 5.3 Options considered

- 5.3.1 The alternative option would be to utilise the two-year period detailed in 4.2 to revise and harmonise the existing allocation schemes into a North Northamptonshire scheme prior to April 2023 and to continue with the four housing allocation schemes currently in operation in the interim. On the basis that local circumstances in North Northamptonshire make achieving a harmonised and common scheme feasible, and due to an evidence-based desire to ensure that residents of North Northamptonshire are subject to the same rules governing the allocation of social housing, the project team committed to aiming for the delivery of a new common scheme for Day One.
- 5.3.2 The project team with their experience of operating frontline housing allocation teams and developing and delivering new housing allocation schemes across North Northamptonshire believe that continuing with four different schemes and sets of rules after April 2021 would lead to confusion and result in different levels of support and opportunity for residents depending on their current area of residence. A common scheme for Day One would mean increased simplicity for customers and ensure that applicants with the same housing circumstances and level of need would be provided the same level of assistance and opportunity to resolve their housing difficulty irrespective of their current area of local connection.
- 5.3.3 Alongside the project work to create the new draft housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire, are two other related projects:
- The housing allocation IT system project (see section 6.1) which consists of IT amendments in line with the draft policy and a system upgrade
  - The housing allocation processes project (see 5.3.4 below)
- 5.3.4 A **housing allocation processes project** is underway with the aim of aligning back-office processes, letter templates and operational practices that will underpin delivery of the new scheme in order to ensure clarity and consistency across local offices in delivery of the draft scheme from Day 1. The scope of this project includes staff training to ensure that existing teams are fully prepared and equipped to implement the draft scheme from Day 1, to improve

customer service and minimise the risk of issues that might otherwise be associated with the implementation of a new scheme and amended IT system. The scope of this project also includes alignment of existing Registered Provider nominations agreements to bring consistency across North Northamptonshire in the joint working arrangements with housing associations who have social housing stock across North Northamptonshire.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

**6.1.1 The housing allocation IT system project:** At Shadow Executive Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020, Members were briefed that the North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme would be delivered by making changes to, and upgrading, the existing Keyways IT system provided by Civica. Relevant approval for the accompanying IT project which supports delivery of the new scheme has been obtained. The amended and upgraded IT system, if delivered in April 2021 subject to approval of the new draft scheme, will reduce costs for North Northamptonshire Council and achieve significant benefits for customers. It will also enable the launch of the new North Northamptonshire housing allocations website to take place with the creation of the new Council.

6.1.2 The accompanying IT system policy changes and upgrade are the only components of the draft North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme project that have associated costs, specifically a revenue cost of £87,000 for the licence and implementation costs of an amended and upgraded IT system (consisting of policy changes £19,925 and system upgrade £67,075).

6.1.3 Annual support and maintenance costs of the upgraded IT system will be £20,700 representing a saving of £16,120 per annum on existing annual support costs which will be realised from procuring one new contract with Civica to replace the four existing contracts. These savings will be reflected in the new council's budget when they are realised.

6.1.4 A separate report has been taken through the necessary Future Northants internal governance processes and the implementation costs are being funded through the Future Northants Programme budget.

6.1.5 The current version of the Civica allocations system is seven years old and a new system will inevitably offer enhanced capability and process improvements for officers working on housing applications and allocations. More importantly, however, it will enable North Northamptonshire Council to be more proactive in letting properties and securing housing solutions for residents in need and offer customers a more modern, accessible and streamlined experience with increased functionality that will help them to help themselves. Specific improvements will include:

- A more modern and accessible website that is easier for customers to navigate and use.
- A website that is readily compatible with a variety of mobile and tablet devices.

- More efficient processing and secure handling of applications leading to quicker decisions for customers
- Better adverts for individual properties with improved layouts, graphics and tailored information.
- Information on waiting times for specific property types that can be tailored to customers' individual circumstances.
- More opportunities for self-service as customers will be able to upload evidence in support of their applications and have the facility to reset forgotten login details.

6.1.6 There are no implications at this stage in relation to staff resources

## 6.2 Legal

6.2.1 The adoption of a housing allocation scheme for North Northamptonshire is a legal requirement and is dealt with in Section 166A of the Housing Act 1996, as amended (the Act). Section 4.2 of this report provides detail on the Local Government (Structural Changes) (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 which provide a two-year period in which to align existing allocation schemes in the context of Local Government Reform.

6.2.2 The previous report taken to Shadow Executive Committee on 29 October 2020 describes at paragraphs 6.2.2 – 6.2.4 how Sections 166A and 168(3) of the Act have been fulfilled in the development of the draft housing allocation scheme and the subsequent consultation, which both carry legal requirements.

6.2.3 The draft scheme has been developed to be compatible with other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance listed in section 3 of appendix A including full compliance with the Armed Forces Covenant.

6.2.4 The legal team at District Law reviewed the draft scheme in September 2020 prior to consultation and were satisfied in relation to statutory compliance. Any changes made since this date following the consultation feedback are minor and do not affect the fundamental legality of the proposed scheme.

## 6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There is a legal requirement to have in place an allocation scheme for determining priorities, and the procedure to be followed, in allocating social Housing. The Local Government (Structural Changes) (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 enable a North Northamptonshire scheme to be developed post vesting day so there remains no risk of legal challenge should members decide to continue operating the existing four allocation schemes from vesting day. However, the risks that are likely to arise by not progressing this transformational work for Day 1 pertain mainly to operational inconsistencies as detailed in 5.3.2.

6.3.2 Rather than any failure to approve the proposed scheme presenting any significant risks to North Northamptonshire Council, the transformational nature of this proposal represents an opportunity to deliver improved housing services to benefit customers of the new Council.



## 6.4 Consultation

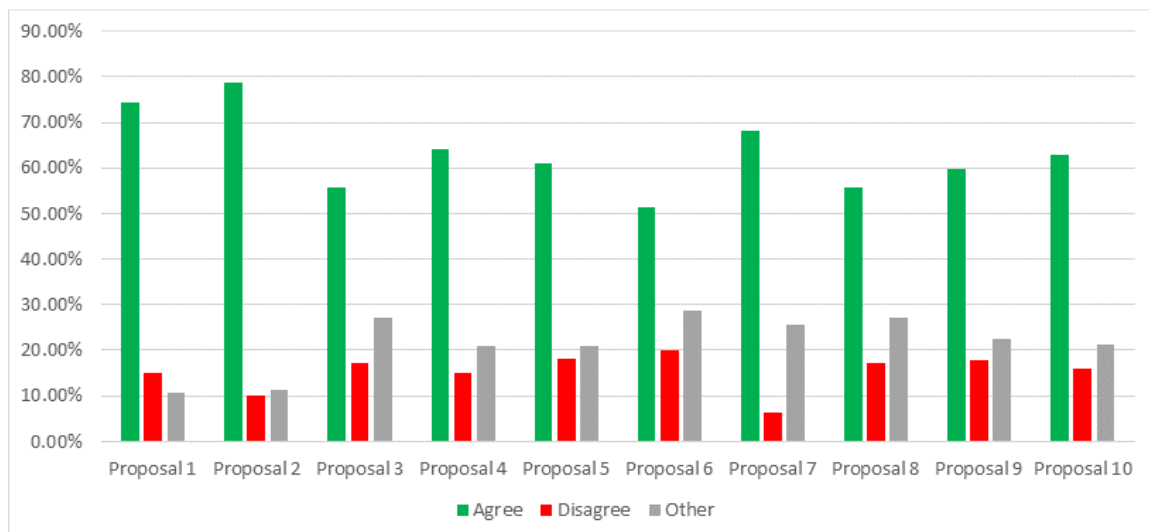
- 6.4.1 A six-week consultation in respect of the draft North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme was launched on 4 November 2020 and closed on 15 December 2020. An online survey was made available on the Future Northants Citizen Space. Consultation survey responses were received online and via post, hard copy, telephone and email. This evidences the accessibility of the wider consultation methods that were provided.
- 6.4.2 The consultation was promoted via press release, social media announcements, website articles (on sovereign council websites and the existing Keyways and Homes Direct websites) and staff / member briefings. More importantly, all existing applicants were contacted directly via email (where provided) or letter to notify them of the consultation opportunity and the relevance of the proposed changes to the general allocation of social housing in the future. Applicants with pending and suspended (non-qualifying) applications were also contacted so as not to restrict the communication regarding the consultation only to those with a currently active application which would be likely to yield more positive feedback in terms of their experience to date. Direct communication was also provided to all housing association (Registered Provider) partners, other statutory and voluntary sector partners with an interest in housing and homelessness, and those individuals registered with NCC's Resident's Panel and Consultation Registers. Kettering and Corby Borough Councils also promoted the consultation opportunity and draft scheme detail to existing council tenants via their Tenant's Forum and Tenant's Voice Group.
- 6.4.3 The consultation presented ten key proposals and invited respondents to say whether or not they strongly agreed, tended to agree, neither agreed nor disagreed, tended to disagree or strongly disagreed with the draft proposals. It also provided sufficient scope for respondents to provide free text feedback on each proposal and on the wider draft scheme.
- 6.4.4 The ten key proposal areas on which feedback was specifically sought were:
1. The proposed inclusion of certain **non-qualifying categories** (restricting access to the housing register)
  2. The proposed **local connection criteria**
  3. The proposed **'free movement'** across North Northants (some exceptions apply)
  4. The proposed **priority banding criteria**
  5. The proposal to disallow access to those applicants with **no housing need** (limited exceptions apply)
  6. The proposed approach to allocating **village properties**
  7. The proposed **property eligibility rules** – who can be considered for what property type
  8. The proposed approach to allocating **disabled adapted properties**
  9. The proposal to **remove choice for homeless and emergency need cases**
  10. The proposed **sanctions for property refusals**
- 6.4.5 The consultation received 238 responses in total, consisting of 143 fully completed surveys and 95 part completed surveys. Responses that make up

the part-completed surveys have been included in the consultation analysis in the sections that follow. More detailed data on the consultation responses to date and demographic information pertaining to respondents is included in Appendix B with headlines being provided below.

6.4.6 Of the 238 respondents, only 8% were responding on behalf of an organisation with the remaining 92% being individuals with an interest in the proposals. Of those individuals 41% were existing service users of the sovereign council allocation schemes and there was a good representation of individuals across all four local authority areas

6.4.7 Tables 7–11 in Appendix B show the breakdown of respondents by demographic factors and illustrate a representative sample of our service users in line with the data presented in the Equality Impact Assessment which is reassuring and indicates that the consultation was widely accessible to all service users based on the protected characteristics.

6.4.8 Overall, across the ten proposals, the consultation returned a rate of 63% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposals, 15% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and the remaining 22% of responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing or not knowing. Across all ten key proposal areas, more respondents agreed with each draft proposal than disagreed with them as illustrated by Figure 1 in Appendix B also provided below:



6.4.9 Table 1 and Figure 1 in Appendix B shows variation in agreement and disagreement between the different proposals. Proposals 1, 2 and 7 received the highest proportion of support and lowest proportion of disagreement telling us that respondents appear to feel most strongly about, and largely agree with the proposed non qualifying categories of applicant who would be unable to access the North Northamptonshire housing register, the proposed local connection qualifying criteria and proposals regarding who is eligible for what property type and size.

6.4.10 Proposal 6 (relating to village properties / connection) led to the highest rate of disagreement and lowest rate of agreement, but still only 20% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with these specific proposals. Proposal 5 (relating to the non-qualification of applicants with no housing need) led to

the second highest rates of disagreement at 18% and generated lots of free text comments examined in more detail in section 6.4.12 overleaf.

6.4.11 As the proposal that attracted the lowest rates of agreement and highest rates of disagreement, the feedback on proposal 6 was particularly closely examined. This related to the proposal to allocate village properties according to the wider scheme i.e. based primarily on housing need (priority band) irrespective of the village location, albeit the draft scheme contains mechanisms to enable village local connection preferences to be applied in accordance with planning agreements and/or when a local lettings policy is adopted. The table below provides some examples of respondent's comments in support of, and against, this proposal:

<b>Strongly agree / Tend to agree: 51.2%</b>	<b>Strongly disagree / Tend to disagree: 20.1%</b>
<i>Why should villages be exclusive to the families that already live there?</i>	<i>I think that if you have been born and brought up in a particular village or town and still wish to remain there, you should be given priority. In the grand scheme of things, the percentage of these types of applications will be relatively few</i>
<i>The need to be housed has to be the overriding factor.</i>	<i>A connection to the village should be a high factor in decision making, i.e. if someone is in a lower band of need, they should get priority for a village property if there is a legitimate connection</i>
<i>Again, opens more opportunities to new communities</i>	<i>Village Communities need social Housing for their Children particularly if they are working in the Agricultural sector</i>
<i>If somebody needs a house, then they should take priority over someone that just wants to live in a village but can't afford to buy or private rent there.</i>	<i>The lack of facilities and transport in most village locations would be alien to someone used to town and city life. In my experience like a square peg in a round hole!</i>
<i>I think you have to do this but it is tricky as public transport links are not great and some people may have a specific need to be close to family in a village for example to help with child care or medical needs. I think this needs to be taken into consideration also.</i>	<i>If a person has always lived in a town/village and is waiting for a property to arise in that specific place and then a person from another town 5/10 miles away gets it, I do not find this fair. When a person that has a lot of extended family living in a town, they should get priority over someone living in a different town.</i>
<i>"It's a matter of choice. There are people who choose to live quietly in villages provided there are social amenities and shops for their children and the houses will be cheaper. Why not?"</i>	<i>What needs to be taken into account is, age of person, and what property they are giving up. Also, if they are ill and need family who live in the village for help and to look after.</i>

<i>More options should help with less waiting time on the register to find a home.</i>	<i>Many people have been moved to [village] with no local connection and don't even want to be here then people like me don't get a look in</i>
<i>I very strongly agree with this. Say a 4 bedroom (which I need) becomes vacant in [village], I have a chance of not being allocated it just because I have no connections there its stupid</i>	<i>We believe elderly, existing village residents should receive higher priority if they find themselves in need of a bungalow due to mobility/health issues. They should be able to remain in the community.</i>
<i>There should be free access for all and no exclusions.</i>	<i>Village communities are very important and can only be sustained by allowing people to come into the area who have a desire to live there - i.e. those with a local connection. 'Outsiders' tend to treat the properties as a stepping stone and make no effort to keep them well maintained or make any effort to integrate into local society.</i>
<i>We agree to this approach, prioritising what is most important.</i>	<i>Allocating any village housing to those from outside the village does not engender a sense of community or enhance family life</i>
<i>Inescapable, given the shortage of Social Housing.</i>	<i>This is very unfair! Small towns and villages should be different. People who already live there should get priority! Unless they are nurse, Dr, fireman, teacher."</i>
<i>Nobody has a specific right to live anywhere</i>	<i>It is important for the sustainability of any village and to ensure that families can live in close proximity; therefore, where the local connection is close family, they should receive a higher priority. There may be other examples of local need, such as education, employment, caring and health that may mean the local connection is important. NNC should, as a matter of urgency, maintain a complete list of co-terminus villages and Local Lettings Policies for each parish."</i>

6.4.12 Some of the concerns from respondents who disagreed with proposal 6 can be addressed by the draft scheme which contains sufficient flexibility to enable the specific circumstances of a village to be taken into account to propose and adopt a local lettings policy. Section 7.10 of the draft scheme at Appendix A deals with this and states *"For existing communities, any local lettings policy will be drawn up in consultation with existing tenants and residents, and will have regard to housing management considerations such as the social mix of tenants, density, age range, vulnerability of tenants, for example, because of insufficient facilities for vulnerable people, as well as community stability."* It is envisaged that data on the social housing stock profile in a particular village,



alongside planning agreements, housing demand data and the views of residents and parish councils can be considered on a case by case basis rather than adopting a blanket policy to allow or disallow village connection to be adopted as an overriding factor in allocation decisions. Respondents concerns about the lack of facilities and transport links causing a potential issue for some applicants are unlikely to be an issue in practice because applicants will maintain choice by enlarge, and where this is removed such suitability considerations regarding health, education and other support networks will be a key factor in making allocations.

6.4.13 It is important to point out that for every proposal, the consultation attracted more positive support than comments disagreeing with proposals, but particular focus was given to the latter to understand respondent's concerns and to see if any action could be taken to mitigate those.

6.4.14 Officers have carefully considered every comment received from the consultation. Many relate to very specific sets of circumstances or raise concerns that the draft scheme detail actually addresses, but the information in the table below summarises some of the more common and general comments received alongside commitments to make changes and/or take action in relation to the draft scheme and its delivery. Whilst some comments pertained to the detail of the draft policy itself, many others pertained more to the accompanying processes, the future housing strategy of North Northamptonshire and some to central government policy (e.g. right to buy, insecurity of tenure in the privately rented sector and increasing the supply of new affordable homes) which are issues that cannot be addressed via the allocation scheme but which are useful as North Northamptonshire Council develops its strategic housing vision.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Theme / comment</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Action</b>
5	<p>Non-qualifying those with no housing need, particularly those who privately rent</p> <p>Those that disagreed with this proposal felt that everyone should have a chance to access the waiting list. Specific reasons related largely to those with low earnings who cannot access home ownership thus their viable option is to privately rent which is expensive and</p>	<p>The draft scheme is framed to provide everyone in need the opportunity to move to more suitable housing. It has been proposed not to allow those with no housing need to qualify because:</p> <p>a) Demand is high from those in housing need</p> <p>b) Staff resources would be spent administering applications for those with very little or no prospect of being housed</p> <p>c) Allowing everyone to access the list irrespective of housing need would also serve to create false hope when data tells us that such customers have very little prospect of being housed. The proposed approach aims to be open and transparent regarding opportunity at application stage in order that applicants explore more viable housing solutions instead</p> <p>The difficulties of raising a deposit</p>	<p>We will commit to continuing to review the lettings and local housing market data annually to monitor the impact of the draft scheme, and continue to work with our RP partners to develop and deliver low cost home ownership (intermediate market) products alongside the delivery of more affordable homes to rent. We will ensure that this feedback is provided to strategic housing</p>

	<p>compromises residents' ability to save for a deposit to access home ownership. Respondents also spoke about the insecurity of private tenancies</p>	<p>whilst funding private rent levels is recognised and symptomatic of the wider housing market. Unfortunately, whilst the difficulties are recognised, the private rented sector plays an important role in meeting housing need including for homeless households. There are a high number of applicants in significant need of accommodation who must legally be provided priority access to social housing and for whom such affordable rent levels are their only viable option. The Council would like to provide private renters with access to social housing for the reasons provided by these respondents, but unless there is a housing need, the demand / supply data tells us that this cohort of applicants are highly unlikely to secure an offer of social rented housing.</p>	<p>colleagues to reflect in any future Housing Strategy for North Northamptonshire</p>
8	<p>Disabled applicants should not be experiencing significant waiting times for suitable housing</p>	<p>The draft scheme proposes that we will allocate adapted properties to those that have an evidenced need for those adaptations so that applicants with some disabilities do receive preference. The Equality Impact Assessment provides more detail on this. The banding system is framed to reflect medical need across the top three bands – A, B and C, depending on the severity of the medical need (severe, urgent or non-urgent).</p>	<p>We will continue to regularly monitor the needs of applicants on our waiting list particularly those that require more specialist property types including disabled adapted properties, and use this data to inform our strategic response to meeting housing need including future development and enabling opportunities.</p>
General	<p>Processing times:</p> <p><i>“There should be a deadline that the council should work towards for urgent cases”</i></p>	<p>If the comment is in the context of the time taken to process an application then the draft scheme includes service standards against which performance will be monitored; If it refers to time taken to secure a housing solution via the housing allocation scheme then the Council's ability to adhere to such deadlines is restricted by housing supply.</p>	<p>Ensure that performance indicators in the newly developed allocation processes monitor application processing times</p>
3 and 9	<p>Free movement and suitability of property offers</p> <p>A high number of</p>	<p>The CBL scheme means that many applicants will have choice over the areas in which they reside, and even when choice is removed (homeless applicant's for example) the Council</p>	<p>Closely monitor complaints and reviews relating to the suitability of property offers,</p>

	<p>applicants have expressed concern that the free movement proposal coupled with the removal of choice for some applicants will lead to unsuitable offers of accommodation away from current communities</p>	<p>will have to have regard to statutory suitability regulations when providing 'one reasonable offer' of accommodation to discharge such statutory duties. Suitability considerations include regard to the geographical location of the property as well as the property attributes, in the context of health, education, employment and support needs as well as other factors prescribed in statutory regulations. In the main, it is expected that such property offers will remain in an applicant's current locality or area of connection. If an applicant is offered a property which they feel is unsuitable for any reason, then they have a legal mechanism available to request a review of suitability in the case of homeless households (section 202 Housing Act 1996, as amended) and a mechanism in the draft housing allocation scheme to request a review of the allocation also. Refusal sanctions do not apply to refusals of unreasonable offers or unsuitable properties where there are genuine and evidenced factors that render a property and/or its location unsuitable.</p>	<p>and 'cross-boundary' moves in order to inform future annual reviews of the allocation scheme.</p> <p>Maintain the IT functionality to identify an applicant's locality connection which will future-proof the IT system should the evidence base obtained from this monitoring mean that we need to amend the proposed free movement rules.</p>
General	<p>Processing and monitoring</p> <p><i>"As with any process, the people delivering it are the key to success. Training needs to be thorough (it's quite complex!) and there need to be checks / audits of cases to determine if delivery has met the standards."</i></p>	<p>The Council will be subject to audits. Internal back office processes need to include periodic audits by managers to ensure consistency and accuracy in the application of the draft scheme. An allocations processes project to underpin the delivery of the draft scheme, if approved, is underway.</p>	<p>Ensure that the allocations processes project encompasses arrangements for robust staff training, and the development of a suite of procedures to support staff. Ensure that performance management arrangements include regular case file review samples to monitor adherence to the scheme.</p>
6	<p>Accessing village properties</p> <p>Some respondents spoke about the</p>	<p>The additional difficulties faced by those seeking affordable housing in rural locations is recognised. There is typically less housing stock for affordable rent and alternative housing solutions are at the less affordable</p>	<p>Ensure that the upgraded IT system provides customers with annually updated data on stock</p>

	difficulties they faced accessing housing in their villages of birth even with a recognised housing need	end of the housing market. Even where a priority band does apply to such a case, the low housing stock and turnover of stock in villages would likely mean that rehousing in a village would take an extended period of time.	levels and turnover by property size, type and location in order that service users can make informed choices on their housing options based on the likelihood of them securing a social housing solution in their area of preference.
7	Age criteria for bungalows  An applicant commented on the lack of clarity as to whether both individuals in a couple need to be at least 60 years old to receive preference for a bungalow	Section 7.6 of the draft scheme deals with bungalows and that applicants over 60 receive preference for general needs bungalows without adaptations. This section doesn't clarify whether one or both people in a couple need to be aged 60+ so we have added some clarity to that in the final draft scheme. In respect of sheltered housing, the rules regarding the age of both individuals in a couple will depend on the policy of the individual social landlord.	The draft allocation scheme has been amended at section 7.6 to clarify that only one applicant in a joint application needs to be at least 60 years old to receive preference for general need bungalows
4 and 6	Neighbourhood Plans  <i>“Consideration should be given to treating sites allocated for housing in Neighbourhood Plans in a similar way to Rural Exception sites which may act as an incentive to parishes to allocate sites in rural areas, thereby increasing overall supply”</i>	It is a possibility to include sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plans in the Band E exceptions, but this would require more consideration in terms of how this would be managed practically and supported by the IT system. It would be helpful to understand data as to how many Neighbourhood Plans apply and how many sites / affordable housing properties this applies to currently to determine whether, or how many, vacant properties it might apply to per annum for example.	Having regard to the timescales and the belief that this applies to very few properties / sites currently, we propose to proceed on the basis of the draft scheme if approved and gather relevant data on Neighbourhood Plans to inform our first annual review relating to this.
Sections 4.6 and 5.11 of the draft scheme	Children and U18's in the context of housing allocations  One respondent working with young offenders	The move to a unitary council will ensure closer joint working with Children's Services and the project group notes the particular points relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guarantors for U18's</li> <li>• Children in temporary care</li> </ul> These points will be fed into the Housing and Children's Services joint	Commitment to build upon existing joint working relationships with Children's Services, develop processes for common scenario's and

	requested clarity on this matter and the joint working of Housing and Children's Services referencing a specific scenario	working project group	provide clarity in future allocation schemes as necessary
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6.4.15 The table above shows that most feedback has not necessitated a change in the draft housing allocation scheme itself and explains the reasons for this. One change has been made to section 7.6 in order to provide clarity that was previously lacking as highlighted by one respondent. Although no further changes have been made to the draft scheme, the table above details how the feedback will inform future monitoring and reviews of the scheme and/or be fed into the workstream that is considering the future Housing Strategy for North Northamptonshire and the project team dealing with the new allocation processes.

## 6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 None.

## 6.6 Environmental Impact

6.6.1 None.

## 6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 There are currently almost 3900 applicants registered to and active on the existing four housing allocation schemes across North Northamptonshire. The draft North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on existing applicants' prospects of securing accommodation as applicants will have access to a greater number of properties across North Northamptonshire under the new scheme.

6.7.2 The most noticeable change will be experienced by the 1,239 applicants to the existing Homes Direct scheme in East Northants as it is proposed that they will move to an amended version of the existing Keyways scheme utilised by the other three councils in North Northamptonshire. This will involve for example, existing applicants moving from a priority system of bands 1, 2, 3, 4 and X with a 'Priority Card' option, to a new system of Bands A – E. In practice, the comparison exercise that mapped out the various aspects of the four existing allocation schemes shows that many aspects of the Homes Direct scheme are broadly similar to the other Keyways schemes and there is unlikely to be a significant impact on any one group of applicants in relation to losing or gaining relative priority for an allocation of housing. This is largely because the draft scheme is framed on statutory reasonable preference categories which existing schemes also reflect. This means that the following categories of applicants must receive a priority for housing, and this will not change:

- People who are homeless as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996;

- People who are owed a particular statutory duty by any local housing authority under certain provisions of homelessness legislation;
- People occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory Housing;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability;
- People who need to move to a particular locality within the district to avoid hardship to themselves or others.

6.7.3 Existing applicants to the East Northants Homes Direct scheme will also experience slightly more disruption in relation to the reapplication process associated with the proposed new scheme and IT system. Whilst all existing applicants will need to take some action in order to have their personal and housing circumstances assessed in line with the new housing allocation scheme, Keyways applicants in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough will experience this to a lesser degree as some of their existing details can 'transfer' to the amended and upgraded IT system. Applicants in East Northants will need to reapply in full to the new scheme. However this is not an unusual requirement with the delivery of a new allocation scheme and bespoke IT system and also acts to replace the annual renewal process whereby applicants are required to check and confirm the details on their applications each year anyway. In order to counteract this additional inconvenience for East Northamptonshire applicants as much as possible, the new application will include a field to note existing Homes Direct application reference numbers in order that a process of manual cross referencing can take place by back office staff avoiding the need for customers to provide extensive duplicate information and supporting evidence. Officers will ensure that sufficient opportunities for accessing help and support with the reapplication process are available and communicated to applicants.

6.7.4 A particular impact on current housing applicants to Corby Borough Council is that those with no housing need seeking general needs housing (a group of 555 households as at 10 December 2020) will not qualify to access the new North Northamptonshire housing register if the draft scheme is approved. In practice, and as the demand for social housing continues to increase, the impact would be minimal as is illustrated by the fact that only two Band E applicants were housed via Corby's scheme in 2019/20 – a figure that would be further likely to reduce with the adoption of a combined North Northants housing register.

6.7.5 There are many individual details of the new draft scheme which have been considered and harmonised. Section 6.6.3 in the 29 October 2020 report to the Shadow Executive Committee provides a summary table of some of the main variations between the existing allocation schemes alongside the proposals to align any differences. The project team have retained a detailed matrix and record of all decisions made should further information be required on specific detail. Unsurprisingly on the basis that the Localism Act enables local authorities to determine their own rules around who qualifies for their housing registers, the most significant changes that are required to align the existing schemes relate to who qualifies to access the housing register. Reassuringly, this aspect of the draft scheme was the part that received the highest rates of positive feedback and agreement from respondents who took part in the consultation (see section 6.4.9 of this report).

## 6.8 Equalities

- 6.8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment in respect of the draft North Northamptonshire housing allocation scheme was completed and made available alongside the consultation. Minor changes have been made to this Equality Impact Assessment further to some feedback obtained during the consultation and a revised version is available at ([link to web](#)).
- 6.8.2 Members will see from this assessment that there are two negative impacts noted in the assessment, based on age and socio-economic factors. Firstly, the equality impact assessment sets out how some young applicants, particularly those aged under 18 years, may be negatively impacted by the draft scheme but it provides the reasons for this and sets out in detail mitigations that have been built into the draft scheme to minimise such potential impact on this group of applicants. The draft scheme also negatively impacts homeowners and other applicants with significant earnings and/or savings however on the basis that such applicants will be evidenced to have alternative viable housing solutions available to them, this negative impact is felt to be necessary in the context of allocating the limited supply of affordable housing to those most in need and with few alternative housing options.

## 7. Background Papers

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[Report taken to Shadow Executive on 29 October 2020](#)

Equality Impact Assessment ([link to web](#)).

Consultation responses

# **North Northamptonshire**

## **Keyways Housing Allocation Scheme**

**December 2020**

Draft V5



## HELPING YOU TO UNDERSTAND OUR HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME

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*New North Northamptonshire accessibility information will be entered here. The Kettering Borough Council current version is pasted above as an interim measure.*

**Please contact North Northamptonshire Council at:**

*New North Northamptonshire contact details will be entered here:*

*Address:*

*Telephone:*

*Website:*

*Email:*

*For the purposes of the consultation the following contact details apply:*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

All local housing authorities are required by law to have a scheme for determining priorities and procedures when allocating social housing.

This document sets out the housing allocation scheme for the newly formed North Northamptonshire Council. The scheme sets out who is eligible and qualifies for social housing, and how the Council decides who should have priority for those properties that are available.

The new scheme supersedes the previous schemes covering Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.

North Northamptonshire, like many areas nationally, is facing increasing demand for social housing that far outstrips supply. In that context, the housing allocation scheme offers households with a housing need (as defined by the scheme) some choice in bidding for a home while giving reasonable preference to those in the greatest housing need and with a local connection to North Northamptonshire.

This housing allocation scheme applies to:

- New applicants
- Existing social rented housing tenants who have a need to transfer from one tenancy to another with their current landlord
- Existing social rented housing tenants who need to transfer from one tenancy to another with a different social landlord.

The accommodation allocated through this scheme includes housing for social and affordable rent which is owned and managed both by North Northamptonshire Council and by housing associations operating in the area.

North Northamptonshire Keyways, the Council's choice-based lettings scheme, provides a single access point to good quality, affordable housing for people in housing need and aims to make the task of applying for social housing as simple as possible. On a day-to-day basis, landlords advertise their vacant properties on the Keyways website and applicants, who would like to live in those properties, register their bids on the Keyways website at [new scheme web address to be confirmed](#). Properties are then allocated in accordance with the procedures and priorities set out in the housing allocations scheme.

As well as operating a housing allocation scheme, North Northamptonshire Council also provides a housing options service which works to prevent homelessness and provides housing applicants with advice on a range of alternative housing options including:

- Mutual exchange
- Low cost home ownership
- Renting in the private rented sector
- Options to remain in the current home

## **2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

In addition to meeting the Council's statutory duties, the aim of this housing allocation scheme is to provide good quality, affordable housing to those in the most need whilst promoting sustainable tenancies and communities.

The objectives are:

- To provide clear, and transparent information to people who need to find a home about the social housing that is available so that they can make realistic, informed and affordable housing choices
- To support all Keyways landlords in making the best use of their housing stock in North Northamptonshire, ensuring that larger homes, specialist housing, and homes adapted for disabilities, are made available to those who need them most
- To support Keyways landlords in managing their homes effectively, by ensuring properties can be let quickly and that tenants are given the best chances of maintaining their tenancies in the long term
- To help prevent homelessness and enable the discharge of the Council's statutory homelessness duties, minimising the use of temporary accommodation
- To ensure and promote equality of opportunity in accessing safe, secure and affordable housing via the Keyways scheme, both to local people in housing need and to other categories of people that do not satisfy a local connection to North Northamptonshire including those that have served in the armed forces, care leavers, those fleeing domestic abuse and people who are looking to continue or take up employment

This housing allocation scheme will be monitored and reviewed when necessary (at least annually) to ensure that it continues to meet local needs, responds to changes in the local housing market, meets to council's strategic objectives and remains legally compliant. As part of the development of this new North Northamptonshire scheme (completed in 2020), the Council has consulted with existing social housing tenants in the North Northamptonshire area, applicants on the Keyways Housing Register, Keyways landlords, and other interested client groups and partner agencies.

## **3 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The Council's housing allocations scheme sits within a tight legal framework which is summarised in this section. The legislative framework applies to North Northamptonshire Council directly and requires Registered Providers to 'cooperate to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances in offering accommodation to people with priority under the authority's scheme'.

The primary legislation governing the allocation of social housing is Part 6 Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Any reference to legislative sections contained within this scheme are sections contained within the 1996 Housing Act. This legislation requires councils to make all allocations and nominations in accordance with a published housing allocation scheme which determines priorities between applicants for housing and sets out the procedure to be followed when allocating housing.

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to frame their housing allocation schemes to give "reasonable preference" to certain categories of people namely:

- a) People who are homeless as defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996

- b) People who are owed a particular statutory duty by any local housing authority under certain provisions of homelessness legislation
- c) People occupying insanitary, overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory housing
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality within the district to avoid hardship to themselves or others

In addition to the primary legislation, North Northamptonshire Council's housing allocation scheme takes full account of the associated statutory codes of guidance and statutory instruments. In developing the scheme, the Council has also had regard to its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Tenancy Strategy.

The housing allocation scheme has been developed to be compatible with other relevant legislation, regulations and guidance including, but not restricted to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- The Localism Act 2011
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Public Sector Accessibility Regulations 2018
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

A summary of this housing allocation scheme is available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy. It can be downloaded free of charge from the North Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Keyways websites. If requested a hard copy can be provided on payment of a reasonable fee (to be confirmed at time of request).

### **3.1 Scope of the Scheme**

The following are defined as allocations within this scheme:

- The selection of a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of council accommodation or
- The nomination of a person to be a starter or assured tenant of Registered Provider accommodation

The housing allocation scheme does not apply to the following lettings:

- Succession of tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy through mutual exchange
- Assignment of a tenancy to a person who would be qualified to succeed to the tenancy
- Assignment of a tenancy in pursuance of a relevant court order
- Progression from an introductory to secure tenancy
- Sole to joint tenancy changes and vice versa
- Temporary decants in order to complete repairs

- Lettings made by Registered Providers outside of the North Northamptonshire Keyways nomination agreement
- Properties leased to a partner agency (e.g. support provider)

## **4 ELIGIBILITY AND QUALIFICATION**

Any person can approach the Council for advice and assistance regarding housing however, due to the high demand for social and affordable rented housing in North Northamptonshire, the Council does not maintain an 'open' housing register.

In considering an application, the Council will firstly assess if an applicant is eligible for accommodation, and secondly, whether an application qualifies for an allocation of accommodation. Any applicant assessed as either not eligible or who does not qualify will not be considered for an allocation and will therefore not have access to the North Northamptonshire Keyways register.

### **4.1 Applicants who are not eligible**

The legislation and accompanying regulations regarding eligibility for housing are complex and subject to regular change. This section provides an overview of the main rules.

The main law on eligibility in England is contained in the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, which allows the government to introduce regulations about eligibility for allocations. North Northamptonshire Council will determine whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance ensuring compliance with UK immigration and nationality regulations.

Some classes of people are not eligible to join the housing register, specifically those who are:

- Subject to immigration control (unless in a class re-included by regulations made by the Secretary of State – see reference to Regulation 3 in section 4.2 below)
- Not habitually resident in the UK, Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland
- Other persons from abroad excluded by regulations made by the Secretary of State including
  - EEA nationals whose only right to reside is derived from their status as an EEA jobseeker or as the family member of an EEA jobseeker
  - EEA nationals whose only right to reside is the initial three-month period under Regulation 13 of the EEA Regulations
  - Non-EEA nationals whose only right to reside is as the parent of a UK citizen child who has no other rights to reside in the UK (known as a 'Zambrano carer')
- Persons granted limited leave ('pre settled status') under the EU settlement scheme where their only other right to reside is a non-qualifying right (i.e. as a jobseeker, is within his/her first three months or as a Zambrano carer)
- Required to leave the UK by the Secretary of State.

### **4.2 Applicants who are eligible**

The following groups are eligible for an allocation of housing:

- British Citizens
- Certain Commonwealth citizens with a right of abode in the UK
- Irish citizens, who are not subject to immigration control in the UK



- EEA nationals with an EEA 'right to reside' that qualifies for housing (including but not limited to those that are working or self-employed)
- Classes of persons subject to immigration control who are eligible for an allocation of accommodation as set out in Regulation 3 of the Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended. These groups include but are not limited to:
  - people granted refugee status
  - people granted exceptional leave to enter or remain without a 'no public funds' condition
  - people granted humanitarian protection
  - EEA nationals who have been granted settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme and who are 'habitually resident' in the British Isles or Ireland

## **APPLICANTS WHO DO NOT QUALIFY**

The Localism Act 2011 enabled local housing authorities to decide which classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for the purposes of allocating housing. This section sets out the classes of persons which are not considered to be qualifying persons and will therefore not be accepted to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register for an allocation of housing.

### **4.3 Homeowners**

All applicants must declare whether they own a home or have a legal interest in any land or property in the UK or abroad, so that it can be assessed whether this home is suitable for their needs and considered reasonable to occupy.

The definition of a home is a freehold or leasehold property, a static caravan situated on a site open all year round or a boat which has a mooring.

Homeowners (including joint homeowners) will be exempt from the scheme unless they have an urgent housing need to move (Bands A and B) and have insufficient equity, capital or assets to resolve their housing difficulties. This will include the possibility of adapting their current home. Applicants who have a beneficial interest or home rights in a property will be classed as a homeowner and will be exempt from the scheme.

Elderly homeowners who are accepted as eligible for sheltered housing will qualify to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register but are exempt from bidding for bungalows and are eligible for sheltered complex properties only.

Homeowners who sell or transfer their property in the UK or abroad within the last 5 years and received (or would have received) equity of £16,000 or above will be excluded for 5 years from the date of sale, unless they are eligible for sheltered housing.

In addition, household income level and savings (including any deliberate depreciation of savings) may be considered where an applicant has an urgent housing need and could resolve their own circumstances with their income/savings. This includes cases where a homeowner's property is subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Please note that passport benefits and non-contributory disability benefits are not included for the purposes of income in this definition. Any lump sum received by a member of the Armed Forces as a compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service will be disregarded as savings.

#### 4.4 Persons with no local connection

Applicants who do not establish a local connection to North Northamptonshire will not qualify to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register. A local connection to North Northamptonshire will be established by virtue of any permanent member of the household meeting any of the criteria set out in the table below:

Criteria	Additional Detail
<p>Current residency in North Northamptonshire with a past residency of at least two years out of the last five years prior to acceptance onto the North Northamptonshire Keyways register</p>	<p>Applicants must be currently resident in North Northamptonshire at the point of application and at the point of nomination. In addition, their 5-year address history must detail a past residence in North Northamptonshire totalling at least 2 years.</p> <p>Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll, information held on any local authority or third-party database, such as Experian and will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination.</p> <p>This includes those people who currently live in an institution, hospital or are serving a custodial sentence outside of the area but were resident in the area for at least two out of the last five years prior to entering that institution, hospital or custody.</p> <p>Households placed into accommodation as a discharge of any homeless duty under Part VII of the Housing Act by a local authority outside of North Northamptonshire will not qualify to join North Northamptonshire Keyways until all homeless duties have expired (i.e. 2 years if a full homeless duty was discharged through the private rented sector) and they have established an additional 2 years residency. This means such households will require 4 years residency before being accepted to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register.</p>
<p>Employment in North Northamptonshire for a minimum of 16 hours per week.</p>	<p>The main or joint applicant must be working regularly, at the point of application and at the point of any nomination.</p> <p>For the purposes of establishing this local connection, regularly means 16 hours per week or more, and either have a permanent contact (and passed any probationary period), or, be able to demonstrate they have worked for at least six months and there is no reason to believe this arrangement is due to cease.</p> <p>Applicants who are self-employed, or their profession requires them from time to time to work outside the area, will need to demonstrate that their employment has mainly been based in North Northamptonshire for a minimum of six months prior to application and at the point of any nomination.</p>

	Applicants on leave due to maternity or sickness who remain employed will qualify for this criterion if there is no reason to believe their employment is due to cease.
Right to Move	This applies to current social tenants in England who are employed, or who have been offered permanent employment in North Northamptonshire AND who need to move to avoid hardship.
Armed Forces personnel	<p>This criteria is limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Certain members of the Armed Forces community are exempt from any residency / local connection requirements, by virtue of regulations made under section 160ZA(8) which prevent local authorities from applying a local connection test to disqualify such applicants. These are:</li> <li>b) Those who are currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces or who were serving in the Regular Forces at any time in the 5 years preceding their application for an allocation of social housing.</li> <li>c) Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.</li> <li>d) Serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.</li> <li>e) Divorced or separated spouses or civil partners of Service personnel who need to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.</li> <li>f) The above definition of Armed Forces personnel also applies to the Priority Banding criteria called 'Armed Forces' detailed in section 6.4. Verification will be required from the Armed Forces.</li> </ul>
Immediate family members currently resident in North Northamptonshire i.e. parent, sibling or child, who has lived in the area for a minimum of five years continuously prior to acceptance onto the North Northamptonshire Keyways register	Residency may be verified by way of tenancy references, electoral roll or information held on any local authority database. Relationship may be verified by Birth Certificates or information held on any local authority database.

<p>Current tenant of a Keyways landlord resident in North Northamptonshire, whose application is supported by the landlord</p>	<p>Although it will not be necessary for the tenant to have completed two years residency in the area, the applicant must have a housing need as identified in the Priority Bands defined by bands A-D (see sections 6.4–6.7), and the transfer be supported by the applicant’s current landlord.</p>
<p>Applicants owed a homeless duty by North Northamptonshire Council</p>	<p>Applicants owed a homeless duty as specified in the reasonable preference categories outlined in S166A(3)(a) and (b) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S190(2) – Priority Need but Intentionally Homeless</li> <li>• S193(2) – Main Duty</li> <li>• S195(2) – Threatened with homelessness, and eligible</li> <li>• S192(3) – Power to secure for non-priority and not intentionally homeless</li> <li>• S189B – Relief Duty</li> </ul>
<p>Other special circumstances as approved by a senior housing officer</p>	<p>In some special circumstances, the Council will accept people onto the North Northamptonshire Keyways register who cannot demonstrate a local connection as defined above. These circumstances include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those needing to move in order to provide or receive essential care and support in North Northamptonshire</li> <li>• Applicants who were resident in the area for two years or more before moving to supported housing / care placements out of area to prevent homelessness</li> <li>• Applicants who do not have a clear local connection anywhere</li> <li>• Applicants who cannot live in the area in which they have a local connection because of harassment, violence or abuse or the need to move elsewhere for reasons of rehabilitation or personal safety. This includes applicants subject to MAPPA arrangements or the National Witness Mobility Scheme.</li> </ul>
<p>Local Connection to a Section 106 / Village exception site</p>	<p>Applicants who satisfy an established local connection to a Section 106 or village exception site (as defined in relevant legal agreements) and that do not meet any of the other local connection qualifying criteria detailed in section 4.4. Verification of an applicant satisfying this criterion will be required at point of application and at point of nomination. Applicants accepted as qualifying due to this criterion will only qualify to bid on properties within the village development to which they satisfy a local connection.</p>

#### 4.5 Persons who have behaved in an unacceptable way

Applicants who have previously behaved in a way which led to them losing a tenancy, or which could have led to such action being taken by a landlord, will only qualify for an allocation via North Northamptonshire Keyways if they can demonstrate that such behaviour is unlikely to occur again. Applicants may not qualify to join the register due to the behaviour of any member of the applicant’s household, including partner and children.

Behaviour which may lead to someone failing to qualify to join North Northamptonshire Keyways includes (but is not limited to):

Criteria	Further Information
<p>Outstanding housing related debt</p>	<p>Applicants with outstanding housing related debt within the last 5 years, totalling more than the equivalent of 2 months rental liability will fail to qualify for the North Northamptonshire Keyways register.</p> <p>Housing related debt is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current and former rent arrears (owed to social or private landlords)</li> <li>• Recharge arrears</li> <li>• Court costs (against social or private tenancies)</li> <li>• Homeless prevention funds or other similar schemes</li> </ul> <p>Households owed a homeless duty will be exempt from this non-qualifying criterion, however, a suitable repayment plan must be in place and strictly adhered to in order to satisfy North Northamptonshire Council that applicants are proactively addressing past unacceptable behaviours.</p> <p>The two month's rent liability threshold will be defined utilising the rent liability figure at the applicant's current or most recent address. Cumulative debt within a 5-year period in excess of this threshold, will fail to qualify.</p> <p><b>Debt Relief Orders</b></p> <p>Housing related debts included in a Debt Relief Order will remain as outstanding until 12 months from the date of issue, at which point the debts are formally written off by creditors and the debtor is discharged. Households owed a statutory homeless duty will be exempt from the 12-month criteria.</p>
<p>Serious breaches of tenancy or unacceptable conduct within a tenancy</p>	<p>Applicants will fail to qualify where there is evidence of a serious and deliberate breach of social or private tenancy within the last 5 years. Breaches of tenancy are considered serious when, had the applicant been a tenant of the local authority, the authority would have been entitled to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground detailed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Act, with the exception of ground 8.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent arrears</li> <li>• Breach of tenancy agreement</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuisance or annoyance to neighbours including anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Illegal or immoral use of the property</li> <li>• Damage or neglect</li> <li>• Conviction for an arrestable offence committed in the locality of the premises</li> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Making a false statement to gain a tenancy</li> </ul> <p>Applicants evicted from a social tenancy for sub-letting or abandoning a property within the last 5 years will also fail to qualify.</p>
Other breaches of tenancy	<p>The applicant has a history of other unacceptable behaviour relating to tenancy conduct including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent / repeated breaches relating to property condition</li> <li>• Persistent / repeated breaches relating to garden condition</li> <li>• Not allowing reasonable access for statutory safety checks</li> <li>• Other non-engagement in essential activities e.g. preventing housing officer visits and repairs</li> </ul> <p>Existing tenants may be subject to an inspection of their property prior to being accepted onto the North Northamptonshire Keyways housing register. Applicants who fail the inspection, or do not engage with their landlord to complete the required actions will not be accepted onto the Keyways register.</p>
Guilty of criminal offences relevant to rehousing	<p>Any offence that is not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (amended by the Legal Aid and Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012) must be declared. Cautions should also be declared.</p> <p>Relevant criminal offences include but are not limited to the following serious arrestable offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violent offences including GBH and ABH, explosions and riots</li> <li>• Harassment, threats of violence or intimidation including racially motivated and domestic abuse offences</li> <li>• Offences relating to offensive weapons (firearms and certain offences involving knives)</li> <li>• Offences against property, including offences under the Theft Act 1968 such as robbery and burglary, and an offence under Section 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971 of destroying or damaging a property</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug-related offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (restriction of production and supply of controlled drugs and possession of controlled drugs with intent to supply)</li> <li>• Sexual offences</li> <li>• Offences under Part 2 Serious Crime Act (encouraging or assisting one of the above offences to be committed)</li> </ul>
<p>Antisocial behaviour</p>	<p>Acts of antisocial behaviour are defined as acts where the applicant has been subject to some level of formal warning and/or enforcement action. This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closure Order granted as a result of antisocial behaviour in or near the applicant's current or previous property</li> <li>• Civil Injunction such as injunctions preventing nuisance and annoyance</li> <li>• Criminal Behaviour Order</li> <li>• Notice or an Order to abate noise served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990</li> <li>• Community Protection Warnings and Notices</li> <li>• Convictions for breaching any of the above</li> <li>• Any other enforcement action / prosecution under the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.</li> </ul> <p>Antisocial behaviour also includes any act whereby an applicant has been proved to have interfered with security and safety equipment or landlord's electricity supply to communal blocks.</p>
<p>Demonstrated unacceptable behaviour towards any officer, official agent or property of the Council or North Northamptonshire Keyways partner landlord</p>	<p>This includes having received any warning letters from the Council or any North Northamptonshire Keyways partner, and/or criminal or civil action.</p> <p>Unacceptable behaviour includes verbal and physical abuse, intimidation, violence and/or threats of violence by any form and harassment. Damage, defacing or graffiti upon any property is also included.</p>

North Northamptonshire Council does not operate a blanket policy in relation to the above considerations but will consider each case on its own merit. Applicants are invited to provide evidence of a change of behaviour. This could include, for example, evidence of regular payments towards a previous housing debt; evidence from a support agency of undertaking training to develop the skills necessary to manage a tenancy or being ready to move on from supported housing.

#### **4.6 Persons who are incapable in law of holding a legal tenancy**

Applications will not normally be accepted from persons who are aged under 18. However, the following may be considered:

- The applicant is in the care of the Council, or is a care leaver
- The applicant has been defined as a child in need as a result of a S17 Children Act 1989 statutory assessment
- The applicant is owed a full statutory homeless duty following a S20 Children Act 1989 statutory assessment
- The applicant has an adult or adults who will act as a trustee(s) and hold a legal tenancy until the legal incapacity to hold a tenancy ends, and the Council accepts the adult as a suitable trustee

#### **4.7 Persons with no assessed housing need**

Persons/households assessed as having no housing need as defined in the Priority Bands will not qualify to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register.

Applicants to whom another local authority has accepted a rehousing duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 or any other duty to suitably accommodate are regarded as having no housing need and will therefore not qualify for North Northamptonshire Keyways.

#### **4.8 Refusals of offers of social housing**

Applicants who have refused two offers of suitable accommodation in any 12-month period will fail to qualify for the North Northamptonshire Keyways register. See section 8.4 for more information. Households owed a homeless duty will fail to qualify after refusing one offer of suitable accommodation. Those who do not qualify by virtue of this category will not have a reapplication considered for 12 months from the date of non-qualifying decision.

Applicants can request a review of this decision if there has been a significant change in their circumstances through no fault of their own which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in the North Northamptonshire Keyways band increasing.

#### **4.9 Exceptional Circumstances**

In exceptional circumstances, an applicant who would not ordinarily qualify for the Housing Register but who has an urgent housing need (defined by being awarded Bands A or B under this housing allocation scheme) may be allowed to join. The decision to allow a non-qualifying applicant to join the register, will be determined by a panel of senior housing officers. Other professionals, for example, those with social care expertise, may be invited to contribute to the panel and decision making where relevant.

The council retains a discretion to deal with individual cases where there are exceptional circumstances, for example where such circumstances arise in relation to the wider Armed Forces community.

#### **4.10 Community Safety**

North Northamptonshire Council works in partnership with the Police, Probation Service, Community Safety Partnerships and housing providers to manage risk to the community. If there are any details pertaining to an applicant or application which leads the Council to



believe there may be implications for community safety, the Council may refuse an applicant housing in certain areas. The Council may also apply local lettings policies to specific areas or developments for reasons of community safety. Section 7.10 provides more detail on local lettings policies.

## **5 REGISTRATION**

### **5.1 How to apply**

Applicants can apply for an allocation by completing a housing application form online at [new scheme web address to be confirmed](#). Should applicants require assistance in completing the form or require the form to be made available in other formats this can be requested by telephone or by prior arrangement at the Council offices. Following receipt of an application, applicants may be required to provide supporting documentation.

Once a fully completed application form has been received along with any required supporting documentation, the form will be assessed to determine if applicants are eligible and qualify for an allocation (see section 4), followed by an assessment of their housing need (see section 6), and a determination of property eligibility (see section 7).

### **5.2 How North Northamptonshire Keyways works**

North Northamptonshire Keyways advertises available social and affordable housing throughout North Northamptonshire. All available properties are advertised online at [new scheme web address to be confirmed](#) from 00:01hrs (one minute past midnight) on a Thursday through to 23:59hrs on a Tuesday.

During the weekly advertising cycle, applicants can express their interest in up to three properties that are the right size and type for their household requirements. Expressing an interest in a property means that the applicant will be included on the shortlist for that property.

Applicants should only bid on properties after reading all the attribute and locality details in the advert. Bids on suitable properties which are later refused may incur a penalty (see section 8.4) If applicants do not express an interest in a property, they will not be considered for the allocation of that property.

Some North Northamptonshire Keyways applications may be set to Autobid. This means that the Keyways system will automatically place their bids at 00:01hrs on a Wednesday (one minute past midnight) when all other bids have been placed. Applicants who are owed a statutory homeless duty will be subject to an Autobid process whereby up to five bids per cycle will be made automatically on their behalf.

When a property is shortlisted, it is usually offered to the applicant with the highest band and who has been waiting in that band for the longest time (determined by an effective date). Applicants can view their bid queue position and bid outcome on their online account. Only successful applicants are contacted directly

North Northamptonshire Keyways will publish information on accepted offers of accommodation from previous bidding cycles at [new scheme web address to be confirmed](#). The following information will be published on advertised properties:

- Property address
- Property type

- Closing date for bids
- The band of the successful bidder
- The date they were placed in that band
- The number of bids received

Please note, under no circumstances will any personal details of the successful bidder be published.

### **‘Any time’ adverts**

North Northamptonshire Keyways also has the functionality to create ‘any time adverts’ which will sit outside of the weekly advert cycle and bidding process described in this scheme. ‘Any time adverts’ can be added on any date and for any length of time. North Northamptonshire Council will utilise this facility for properties that are regarded as difficult to let in order to avoid multiple and repeated duplicate adverts week on week. In North Northamptonshire this applies mainly to some sheltered properties. Bidding opportunities in respect of ‘any time adverts’ will be in addition to the core bidding opportunities described in this scheme. An applicant that has three bids per bidding cycle will therefore have three bids plus any additional bids that are eligible to be placed on ‘any time adverts’. In addition to difficult to let properties, the Council may utilise the ‘any time advert’ facility in other circumstances including but not limited to adverts and lettings that need to be fast-tracked. Decisions to utilise the ‘any time advert’ facility for any reason other than for a difficult to let property will be made by a senior housing officer.

### **5.3 Types of tenancies**

There are a variety of different types of tenancies that are advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways. These include introductory/starter tenancies, secure tenancies, affordable rent tenancies and fixed term tenancies. Applicants are responsible for deciding which properties and which types of tenancy they wish to express an interest in. However, in addition to the tenancy type advertised, the type of tenancy offered to applicants will often depend on a number of factors including:

- Their current tenure and landlord
- Their current circumstances
- The landlord of the property
- The type of property
- The location of the property

### **5.4 Verification**

In order to assess and verify housing applications, the Council may make additional enquiries with current and former landlords and other relevant agencies. Council officers may also need to arrange a home visit or office interview. Where this is necessary, a council officer will contact the applicant to arrange a convenient appointment. If, after a 28-day period, applicants have not provided information that has been requested, the Council will cancel the application.

Verification includes checks on an applicant’s full circumstances including their eligibility, qualifying criteria, housing need, property eligibility and community contribution. Circumstances will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination prior to a formal offer. It is the applicant’s responsibility to notify North Northamptonshire Council of any significant changes to their circumstances which may affect their application. An

applicant's circumstances can change at any point and accordingly can be reassessed by the Council at any time.

Prior to any formal offer of accommodation, North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords will also conduct a tenancy assessment and other checks to verify an applicant's circumstances. This will include an affordability assessment. Applicants that fail the verification checks and/or affordability assessments will not be offered the accommodation for which they have been nominated. The application may then be reassessed depending on the reasons for refusal.

### **5.5 Disability, mobility and medical needs**

If an applicant or joint applicant, or other member of the household identified on the North Northamptonshire Keyways application have any of the following then it is the applicant's responsibility to provide any medical evidence that they would like to be considered in assessing their application:

- A permanent physical disability
- A mobility problem
- A medical condition, or
- A mental health condition

The Council may need to contact the applicant for further information regarding the condition to help the Council to assess and establish in which band to place the application and what type of property is suitable. In some circumstances the Council may need to seek independent medical advice to help inform this decision and specifically to explore:

- Whether the applicant's current home is having a detrimental impact on the health or mobility of anyone in the household, and the extent of the detrimental impact
- What type of accommodation would suit the needs of the households or if a move is necessary
- What adaptations the household may require

If, after the Council's enquiries it is established that the applicant requires specific adaptations to a property, the application will be amended to reflect this. Households that require specific adaptations will only be nominated to accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

It is recognised that applicant's circumstances are individual and that the medical banding criteria cannot specify every circumstance that might apply. Exceptional banding decisions pertaining to medical issues that sit outside of the normal banding criteria will be made by the manager that oversees the North Northamptonshire Keyways team or an officer of equivalent level.

### **5.6 Application processing standards**

When a North Northamptonshire Keyways application is received, the Council will:

- Contact the applicant within 10 working days of receiving the application to confirm if any additional supporting information is required
- Contact the applicant to confirm that the application is active within 10 working days of receiving a fully completed application and signed declaration form including any relevant supporting information that is required
- Let the applicant know if it cannot register the application within 10 working days of receiving the fully completed application and signed declaration form. Any delay may

be due to the Council requiring additional information from the applicant or another agency.

## **5.7 Contacting applicants**

Once all necessary enquiries have been made and the North Northamptonshire Keyways application has been processed, the Council will email / write to the applicant to inform them:

- If the applicant does not qualify to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register, the reasons for this and their right to a review of the decision or;
- That we have accepted the application and the applicant can start to place bids for properties advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways
- The applicant's unique housing reference and log in details
- The North Northamptonshire Keyways band in which we have placed the application
- The date on which the application was placed into the band – the effective date

## **5.8 Change of circumstances**

Applicants must inform the Council if the circumstances of any person included in the North Northamptonshire Keyways application changes as this may affect their eligibility or qualification status, priority band or property eligibility.

Changes in circumstances include but are not limited to:

- A change in eligibility status
- A change in assets or savings including home ownership / beneficiary of a property
- The accrual of new housing related debt
- New criminal convictions
- A change of address
- A change of contact details
- People leaving the household or new household members
- A change in a household member's health or wellbeing

If the Council later discovers a change in circumstances that has not been disclosed to the Council, this may result in a housing application being cancelled, an offer of accommodation being withdrawn, or possession action being taken to recover a property allocated under this scheme.

North Northamptonshire Council will endeavour to process changes of circumstance within 10 working days.

## **5.9 Reviews of the North Northamptonshire Keyways housing register**

Annually, all applicants are required to complete an online review. The review is to ensure:

- The number of applicants on the North Northamptonshire Keyways register reflects the immediate needs for social housing
- Applicants still want to stay on the North Northamptonshire Keyways register and
- Applicants' details are accurate and up to date.

If an applicant fails to respond to a review within 28 days, the application will be cancelled.

If an applicant fails to place bids on suitable properties over a period of six months their application may be cancelled or their banding reviewed.

### **5.10 Cancelling a housing application**

North Northamptonshire Keyways applications may be cancelled if, for example, the applicant:

- Becomes ineligible for an allocation
- Requests their application is cancelled
- Fails to respond to a review
- Has been re-housed by a North Northamptonshire keyways landlord
- Moved and did not inform the council of their new address
- Fails to respond to a request for information within 28 days
- Provides false or misleading information
- Refuses offers of suitable accommodation
- Fails to qualify for the North Northamptonshire keyways register
- Fails to place bids on suitable properties

### **WHO CAN BE INCLUDED ON AN APPLICATION?**

The applicant should include on their housing application other persons who normally reside with them or who would reasonably be expected to reside with them as a member of their household. All household members who will be living in the new tenancy must be included on the application in order that qualification checks can be conducted. Applicants and household members can only be on one North Northamptonshire Keyways application.

The following can be included on an application if they normally live with the applicant(s) or could reasonably be expected to do so:

- Partner or spouse,
- Children dependent on the applicant / joint applicant
- Adult sons and daughters
- Other adults who are dependent on the applicant / joint applicant

Other people will only be considered if there are demonstrable extenuating circumstances that require them to live with applicants; for example, to provide or receive ongoing and substantial care which can be evidenced.

In all circumstances, the Council may decide whether a person is normally resident as a member of the applicant's family and whether they will be considered for rehousing as a member of the applicant's household. The Council will consider each applicant's individual circumstances when deciding whether to allow persons to be included on the application.

### **5.11 Dependent children**

A dependent child is defined as being aged 0-15 years, or 16-18 years and attending or enrolled in full-time approved non-advanced education or training. The Council will usually expect that an applicant receives Child Benefit in respect of dependent children.

In determining whether a dependent child can be considered as part of the household where there is shared parental responsibility, the Council will consider whether there is a sufficient degree of permanence or regularity to constitute normal residence as a member of the family.

The Council may also take into account the demand for and supply of accommodation, as well as any under occupation which may result where a child spends part of a week with one parent and part of a week with another.

Factors that the Council will consider include:

- Who has the main parental responsibility of the child / children?
- What is the child's main and principal home?
- What address is registered with GP/School/Nursery?
- Who predominantly cares for the child?
- What is the frequency and length of residence at the applicant's property?
- Does the child have other accommodation available to them which it is reasonable for them to occupy?
- Is there an order of the court pertaining to the child's residency?

If a child has no suitable accommodation with either parent, then both parents can include the child on their North Northamptonshire Keyways application until such time as suitable housing for the child has been secured. At this time, the other parents' North Northamptonshire Keyways application will be reassessed accordingly. For clarity, only one social / affordable rented property with a garden will be offered for the children.

Singles parents/couples with a housing need, with access to children who do not permanently reside with them can be considered for properties with up to two bedrooms (excluding family accommodation with its own garden), however they will only be offered a two bedroom property if there is no demand from households who require that size of property. Household income may be assessed by the landlord of the property against their affordability criteria to ensure that the property is affordable before an offer of tenancy is made.

### **5.12 Adult sons and daughters, and other non-dependents**

Non-dependent children are defined as any children of the applicant or joint applicant who do not meet the definition of a dependent child. A non-dependent child is usually aged 18 years or over or aged 16/17 and who is not attending or enrolled in any full-time approved non-advanced education or training.

Where the household includes people aged 18 years or over that are capable of living independently, the Council will assess the needs of the whole household and may refuse to allow them to be included on an application, for example if it is unable to meet the need through existing social housing in the North Northamptonshire. The Council may require such non-dependent members of the household (including adult sons and daughters, or extended family members) to apply for housing separately.

North Northamptonshire Council will allow children living with their parents who are serving in the armed forces or resident at university to be included on an application. In these circumstances their parental home will be considered as their principal home.

Where it is determined that an adult son or daughter, or other non-dependent is not capable of living independently, for example as a result of a disability or severe learning difficulties, family accommodation may be awarded if it benefits the wellbeing of the household.

### **5.13 Family members not resident in the UK**

If applicants are applying to include family members who are not living in the UK, the application may be registered but applicants cannot be allocated together until the family has been reunited in the UK.

### **5.14 Children in care**

Children in compulsory or voluntary care can be included on an application subject to written confirmation from social services that the children are to live on a permanent basis with the applicant(s).

Households currently undertaking fostering may be able to include foster children as part of their application. Written confirmation from social services of the fostering arrangement will be required and considered to inform the decision.

### **5.15 Provision / receipt of care**

Applicants or applicant household members, who require a full-time residential carer which is evidenced by social services or a primary health care professional, may include the carer on their application.

People who provide substantial long-term care to another person which requires that person to live with an applicant in order to receive the care, may include that person on their application. Care needs which cannot be provided by visiting carers must be verified by social services. The care needs must be substantial, i.e. a need for personal care with basic daily activities (dressing, feeding, bathing, toileting), or an inability to live independently certified by a medical professional.

### **5.16 Split and non-traditional households**

The Council will consider applications from households where the main and joint applicants do not currently reside at the same address, or applications from non-traditional households, e.g. friends sharing. In reaching a decision whether to accept applications from non-traditional households, the Council will consider, amongst other factors, the relationship between applicants and the demand for and availability of the property type and size required.

If accepted, both applicants will need to meet the eligibility and qualifying criteria and the priority awarded to the application will be based on the housing circumstances of the applicant in the highest priority band.

## **6 ASSESSMENT OF NEED**

Only applicants who have been assessed as eligible and who qualify will have their housing need assessed.

### **6.1 Reasonable preference**

The Council is required by law to determine the relative priority that housing applicants are awarded. This is particularly important as the demand for social housing is greater than the availability of homes.

The law, as it applies to local housing authorities, requires that reasonable preference for housing must be given to those in the categories set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Applicants with reasonable preference must be given a reasonable head-start in terms of accessing housing over those who do not have reasonable preference. Reasonable preference does not mean that applicants will have an absolute priority over all other applicants.

The statutory reasonable preference categories in section 166A(3) (a) to I of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) are:

- a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII of the 1996 Act)
- b) People who are owed a duty by any housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any housing authority under section 192(3)
- c) People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability
- e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or others).

## **6.2 Additional preference**

The Council can grant 'additional preference' to applicants where the Council is satisfied that applicants who have been assessed as having a reasonable preference also have other exceptional or urgent housing needs.

There are special provisions for such additional preference in relation to armed forces personnel who have urgent housing needs (see section 6.4).

## **6.3 Other specified groups**

The Council includes other local priorities alongside the statutory reasonable preference categories. Local priorities can be included providing:

- That they do not dominate the housing allocation scheme, and
- Overall, the scheme operates to give reasonable preference to those in the statutory reasonable preference categories over those who are not



## THE PRIORITY BANDING SYSTEM

The Council awards each housing application a level of priority for housing using Priority Bands: A, B, C, D and E (No housing need exceptions). Applications in Band A have the highest of priority for rehousing.

### 6.4 Band A

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p><b>S193(2) Main Homeless Duty</b></p> <p>The applicant is homeless and owed a S193(2) Main Homeless Duty because they are assessed as being in a priority need, unintentionally homeless and establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).</p>
<p><b>Hospital Discharge</b></p> <p>The applicant or a member of the household cannot be discharged from hospital or a rehabilitation centre because they have no accommodation, or their current accommodation has been deemed hazardous to their health and the situation cannot be rectified to enable them to continue to live there, and they are accepted by North Northamptonshire Council as being able to sustain their own independent accommodation (with or without tenancy support).</p>
<p><b>Severe Medical Need</b></p> <p>The applicant or a member of the household must have a permanent medical condition or disability AND remaining in the current property is a major and direct contributory factor to pose a severe and life-threatening risk to the member of the household. It will only apply where the current property cannot be made suitable or adapted within 3 months. It is expected that this criterion applies to those few exceptional cases only specifically where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A household member is receiving palliative care</li><li>• A household member is unable to escape their current property in an emergency due to being permanently housebound</li></ul> <p>Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their condition / quality of life. See section 5.5 for more details regarding medical needs.</p>
<p><b>Armed Forces</b></p> <p>The applicant or a member of the household has a reasonable preference as a member of the armed forces and an urgent housing need. The definition for armed forces is set out in section 4.4. The definition of an urgent housing need for the purpose of this criteria is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serving and Former members of the Regular Armed or Reserve Forces, who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their service.</li></ul>

- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of those serving in the Regular Forces where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their service.

### **Risk of Harm**

The applicant or a member of the household is at serious risk of harm (physical or emotional trauma) resulting from violence or threats of violence, or other abuse or serious trauma and needs to relocate to ensure their safety. This will be verified by the Police and/or other agencies as necessary. This may include a move to protect a witness of criminal acts under the National Witness Mobility Scheme. Any offer of accommodation from this criterion will have restrictions attached in terms of eligible areas to minimise any risk as far as is reasonably practical.

### **Category 1 Hazard**

The applicant is a private sector, housing association tenant or owner occupier and North Northamptonshire Council has determined that their current accommodation poses a Category 1 Hazard (excluding overcrowding) under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, the problem cannot be rectified within a reasonable period of time i.e. six months and by continuing to live there poses a significant risk to health.

### **Demolition**

The applicant needs to move because their home is about to be demolished or redeveloped. This only applies when the demolition or redevelopment is beyond the applicant's control.

### **Major Repairs**

The applicant is a tenant of a social or affordable rented property living in North Northamptonshire who needs to move because their accommodation needs major renovation or extensive repairs. This does not include temporary decants.

### **Natural Disaster**

The applicant's home is uninhabitable due to flood, fire or natural disaster through no fault of the applicant and there is no prospect of the problems being remedied within a reasonable period of time i.e. six months.

### **Under Occupying Tenants with Medical Need**

The applicant is under occupying social or affordable rented accommodation in North Northamptonshire, but also has an urgent medical need as defined within Band B criteria. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

### **Releasing Adapted Property**

The applicant is occupying a social or affordable rented property in North Northamptonshire that is either fully wheelchair accessible or offers a level access shower/wet room and is willing to transfer to suitable non-adapted accommodation. This band will not apply where the adaptation does not offer a realistic solution to others i.e. a level access shower in a first floor flat.

### **Releasing Large Family Property**

The applicant is a social or affordable rented tenant under occupying a property in North Northamptonshire that offers four or more bedrooms (including 3-bedroom parlour type houses) and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

### **Priority Sheltered Move**

The applicant is a social rented tenant living in a sheltered, supported or assisted living scheme allocated through North Northamptonshire Keyways with an urgent medical need as defined within Band B criteria, and their needs would be resolved by moving within their current sheltered/supported scheme or a similar scheme nearby.

### **Supported Move On (with local authority nomination rights)**

The applicant is ready to move on from an approved supported accommodation provider or care in North Northamptonshire, where there is a formal arrangement in place that enables North Northamptonshire Council nomination rights to vacancies. The applicant must have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider. This band will not apply to those applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to be able to accept and manage a tenancy and live in a reasonably independent way.

Where the supported accommodation or care is out of North Northamptonshire, this band will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement (e.g. residential care or refuge) available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to the North Northamptonshire Keyways partnership area.

Band A priority is only awarded with the documented approval of a senior housing officer.

In addition to the Band A criteria above, the Council may also award Band A status to households in emergency circumstances not covered by the priority groups above. In such exceptional circumstances, the *Head of Service / relevant North Northants post to be confirmed* has discretion to determine whether an applicant has a need to move which is sufficient to warrant placing an application in Band A.

## **6.5 Band B**

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one or more of the following criteria:

### **Criteria and additional detail**

#### **S195 Homeless Prevention Duty**

The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty. The applicant is believed to be in a priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establishes a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).

**S189B Relief Duty**

The applicant is homeless and owed a S189B Relief Duty. The applicant is believed to be in a priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establishes a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).

**Overcrowding**

The applicant's household has been assessed as being overcrowded which is defined as requiring at least one additional bedroom based on the Council's minimum bedroom standard. The minimum bedroom standard (see section 7.2) states that a separate bedroom shall be required for the following persons:

- A single person (sole applicant)
- A married or co-habiting couple
- Two children both aged under 10 years regardless of gender
- Two children of the same gender regardless of age (unless there is a 10-year age gap AND one child is at least 16 years old)

**Urgent Medical Need**

The applicant or a member of the household has a permanent medical condition or disability which is seriously adversely affected by their current accommodation. This band will apply in the following circumstances for example:

- A household member requires ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) AND requires alternative bathing facilities to that in their current accommodation
- A household member is a permanent wheelchair user and their current property is ground floor with suitable bathing facilities, however, it does not have suitable flow space, widened door frames or ramp access and the property cannot be made suitable or adapted
- A household member requires medical equipment supplied by a health authority/hospital and the current property/living conditions cannot be altered to make sufficient space (this does not include mobility scooter storage)

Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their conditions/quality of life. See section 5.5 for more details regarding medical needs.

**Essential Care and Support**

The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive essential care and support that is substantial and ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Applicants must either be in receipt of Carers Allowance or have a carer who is in receipt of Carers Allowance, or have had an assessment by social services or similar support agency, so it can be established that care and/or support is substantial / essential.

**Supported Move On**

The applicant is ready to move on from an approved supported accommodation provider or care in North Northamptonshire, but the local authority cannot make use of the supported accommodation that will result from the applicant moving on. The applicant must have been accepted as ready for independent living by a relevant support provider. This band will not apply to those applicants who do not have sufficient awareness and/or mental capacity to be able to accept and manage a tenancy and live in a reasonably independent way.

As well as applying to those in supported accommodation schemes and to young people leaving care who are in local authority accommodation, this band criteria also applies to vulnerable applicants who live in a supportive home environment which is not sustainable in the medium to long term, for example, a vulnerable applicant who lives with elderly parents who are their carer's.

Where the supported accommodation or care is outside North Northamptonshire, this band will not apply, unless the placement in that accommodation was due to it being the only suitable specialist placement (e.g. residential care or refuge) available to meet the needs of the applicant at the time, and the applicant has a local connection to North Northamptonshire.

#### **Under Occupying**

The applicant is under occupying a two or three bedroom social or affordable rented property in North Northamptonshire and is willing to transfer to suitable smaller accommodation. Households awarded this band will only be considered for properties that offer fewer bedrooms than their current accommodation.

#### **Successor**

The applicant is a successor or non-statutory successor of social rented accommodation, approved for an offer of alternative suitable accommodation. If after six months from the date of qualification as a successor, the applicant has not secured alternative accommodation, the Council reserves the right to bid on the applicant's behalf, or to make a direct offer, to ensure that the applicant receives one reasonable offer of accommodation within the twelve month statutory time limit.

#### **Employment Hardship / Right to Move**

The applicant or a member of the household needs to move in order to take up or continue permanent employment in North Northamptonshire for 16 hours a week or more, and to avoid hardship. Hardship as a result of employment includes commuting distance, the availability and affordability of transport and other factors such as medical conditions or childcare. A commute between home and work of 60 minutes each way is considered reasonable. The applicant's circumstances must be able to be improved to qualify under this criterion.

### **6.6 Band C**

The Council will place an application in this band if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

<b>Criteria and additional details</b>
<p><b>S195 Homeless Prevention Duty</b></p> <p>The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty. The applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances and establish a local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).</p>
<p><b>S189B Relief Duty</b></p> <p>The applicant is homeless and owed a S189B Relief Duty. The applicant is believed to have no priority need, deemed not to have worsened their housing circumstances establish a</p>

local connection as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).

### **Non-Statutorily Homeless**

The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but have no priority need as outlines in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).

### **Low Level Overcrowding**

The applicant's household has been assessed as having a low level of overcrowding defined as:

- Requiring an additional bedspace within a bedroom
- Having two children of the same gender sharing a bedroom and
  - There is at least a 10 year age gap between the children; or
  - One child is at least 16 years old

For the purposes of assessing overcrowding, single parents are regarded as requiring 1 bedspace and can utilise a single bedroom.

### **Sharing with Others (with Dependents)**

The applicant's household has at least one dependent child or a pregnant woman with a confirmed due date, sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed.

### **Non-Urgent Medical Need**

The applicant or a member of the household must have a permanent medical condition or disability which is adversely affected by their current accommodation. The band may apply in the following circumstances:

- A household member requires either ground floor accommodation (or a stairlift) OR requires alternative bathing facilities to that available in their current accommodation
- A household member is currently receiving ongoing treatment from primary and secondary mental health services for a diagnosed mental health condition which is made worse by their current accommodation, and would be resolved by moving to alternative accommodation

Households will only be considered for properties which meet all their housing needs and improve their conditions/quality of life. See section 5.5 for more details regarding medical needs.

### **Ongoing Care and Support**

The applicant or a member of their household needs to give or receive care and support that is ongoing and that cannot be provided from or in their current accommodation. Ongoing care and/or support does not have to be substantial in that applicants may not be in receipt of qualifying care benefits or have social services involvement. It may include practical and/or emotional support that is essential to the physical or mental wellbeing of the person receiving the care/support.

## 6.7 Band D

The Council will place an application in band D if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p><b>S195 Homeless Prevention Duty</b></p> <p>The applicant is threatened with homelessness and owed a S195 Homeless Prevention Duty but deemed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection to North Northamptonshire as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).</p>
<p><b>S189B Relief Duty</b></p> <p>The applicant is homeless and owed a S195 Homeless Relief Duty but deemed to have worsened their housing circumstances and/or do not establish a local connection to North Northamptonshire as outlined in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).</p>
<p><b>Sharing with Others (without Dependents)</b></p> <p>The applicant (or a couple) has no dependents and is sharing accommodation with their family or another household and is otherwise adequately housed. This will also apply when applicants have experienced a relationship breakdown where a move would prevent the homelessness of any dependent children.</p>
<p><b>Intentionally Homeless</b></p> <p>The applicant has received a S184 decision finding them to be homeless but intentionally so within the definition of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7 as amended 2002. There are additional rules associated with this priority band (see section 8.2).</p>

## 6.8 Band E

The Council will place an application in band E if the applicant's circumstances fall into one of the following criteria:

Criteria and additional details
<p><b>Seeking Sheltered</b></p> <p>The applicant and any other members of their household have no housing need but are eligible to be considered for, and are seeking, sheltered, supported or assisted living accommodation. The applicant's current housing tenure will determine which property type they are eligible for. Homeowners are exempt from bidding for sheltered bungalows and are eligible for properties in sheltered housing complexes only.</p>
<p><b>Local Connection to a S106/Village Exception Site</b></p> <p>The applicant has no housing need but establishes a local connection to a S106 or village exception site whether the connection is to the specific village where the development is located, or a surrounding co-terminus village. Local connection to such sites will be verified at the point of application and at the point of nomination.</p>

## 6.9 Demoting of priority band

Once we have assessed an applicant's priority for rehousing, the Council may reduce that priority if the applicant or a member of their household has done something that has deliberately made their housing circumstances worse.

The applicant's band may be reduced by one band if they have:

- Abandoned or terminated previous accommodation without securing suitable alternative accommodation first
- Sold a property or given notice on a tenancy without securing alternative accommodation first
- Accepted a property owned by a North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord which the applicant now claims is unsuitable despite there being no change to their circumstances
- Moved into accommodation which is unaffordable when being aware of the associated financial implications
- Previously had their application cancelled for failing to bid
- Been found to have deliberately disposed of assets or capital that would have enabled them to secure suitable accommodation
- Ending of any homeless duty due to a deliberate and unreasonable refusal to co-operate

There may be other circumstances where an applicant has moved to new accommodation that is 'worse' than their previous accommodation and where this appears to be without good reason. North Northamptonshire Council will consider the facts of such cases on an individual basis to determine whether an applicant's decision to move accommodation was made solely or largely in order to acquire a housing need for the purposes of securing accommodation via the housing allocation scheme. Decisions to move from suitable accommodation into accommodation that is overcrowded, insecure or lacks basic amenities for example, will be scrutinised.

When a decision is made to demote an application by one priority band, the Council will reduce the applicant's priority for a period of twelve months from the date of the decision. Applicants may ask for a review of this decision.

## 6.10 Effective date

The 'effective date' is used to prioritise between applicants within the same band. The 'effective date' of an application is normally the date that a complete application is accepted onto the North Northamptonshire Keyways register. If there is a change in circumstances after initial registration, then the application will be reassessed, and the applicant may:

Change in circumstances	Effective date
Gain greater priority and be placed in a higher priority band.	The date at which the higher band applies will be used
Be assessed as being in the same band.	The original effective date will be used



Lose priority due to their circumstances and be placed in a lower priority band	The original effective date will be used
Become ineligible or may no longer qualify for an allocation.	The application will be removed from the North Northamptonshire Keyways Housing Register. Applicants may reapply at a later date if circumstances change and a new effective date will then apply.

## 7 ALLOCATING PROPERTIES AND PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY

### 7.1 Statement of Choice

The Council operates a Choice Based Lettings system. To support choice, available social and affordable rented housing vacancies within the North Northamptonshire local authority area will be advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways. Applicants are able to register a bid for properties that are deemed suitable for their needs. There are some circumstances in which this will not apply, and the Council will restrict access to bidding, make bids on behalf of an applicant, or make direct offers.

Keyways landlords are committed to offering the greatest choice possible in the allocation of social and affordable rented housing within North Northamptonshire. The amount of choice that the Council is able to offer is limited by the fact that the demand for social housing in North Northamptonshire, far outstrips supply, and the legal responsibilities owed to some groups of applicants in housing need.

The amount of choice available to applicants will also be affected by the priority given to applicants under the scheme, the type of property the applicant is eligible for, and the availability of suitable properties. The Council will offer assistance to applicants with identified support needs in using the Choice Based Lettings system.

Where an applicant is on multiple shortlists, the Council reserves the right to determine which property is offered to an applicant.

### 7.2 Household composition

The size and type of property for which applicants are eligible will depend on the individual household composition and needs.

If an applicant's household composition or circumstances fall outside the rules detailed in this section, a senior housing officer will determine what size and type of property the household is eligible for. Circumstances where this might apply include where there is an evidenced need for an additional bedroom on urgent medical grounds, to discharge homelessness duties and make best use of stock.

As a minimum, the applicant's household is entitled to one bedroom each for:

- A single person (sole applicant)
- A married or co-habiting couple
- Two children both aged under 10 years regardless of gender

- Two children of the same gender regardless of age (unless there is a 10-year age gap AND one child is at least 16 years old)

This is referred to as the Council’s minimum bedroom standard. Some applicants will also be eligible to bid for properties that offer an additional bedroom to the minimum entitlement detailed above, although they will receive a lower preference for this larger accommodation.

The table below explains what size properties applicants can bid for:

	Minimum bedroom entitlement	Maximum bedroom entitlement
Single person	0 (bedsit)	2
Couple	1	2
1 child	2	2
2 children	2 or 3*	3
3 children	3 or 4*	3 or 4*
4 children	3 or 4 or 5*	4 or 5*

*\*depending on the age and gender of the children – see rules above*

For the purposes of property eligibility, the term ‘children’ refers to both dependent and non-dependent children. Extended family members that are considered as members of the applicant household (e.g. stepsiblings, cousins) are expected to share bedrooms.

### 7.3 Pregnancy

Households assessed as having a housing need who are expecting their first child will only be considered for family accommodation once the pregnancy has reached its third trimester (27 weeks). Similarly, households assessed as having a housing need who are expecting a child will have their property eligibility reassessed once the pregnancy has reached its third trimester (27 weeks).

Households who are otherwise adequately housed will not incur a housing need as a result of pregnancy. An assessment of housing need will be carried out once the baby is born.

### 7.4 Family accommodation

Family accommodation is defined as a house, or a flat offering 2 or more bedrooms with its own garden.









Households only containing adult sons/daughters, and/or other non-dependents are not eligible to be considered for family accommodation except in exceptional circumstances, for example, they require disabled adapted accommodation and their need can only be met with an offer of adapted family accommodation, or where it is determined that the adult sons/daughters are not capable of living independently as a result of a severe learning disability and would benefit from a garden.

Where a three-bedroom property offers two reception rooms, this is referred to as a parlour-type property. Households with a minimum need for 3 or 4 bedrooms are eligible to bid for parlour-type properties. Households with a minimum 4-bedroom need can utilise the second reception room as a fourth bedroom.

Where applicants are occupying and wish to downsize from a property in high demand and/or short supply such as 3-bed parlour, 4 bed or 5 bed social / affordable rented property, they may be able to bid for properties larger than that defined in section 7.2. Such decisions will be made by a senior housing officer.

## 7.5 Adapted Properties

Properties advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways may have the following adaptations:

	Full Mobility Adaptations
	Wetroom
	Level Access Shower
	Stairlift
	External Ramp
	Shower Over Bath
	Minor Adaptations
	Lift

Where a property has been adapted, the Council reserves the right to let the property directly rather than advertising on North Northamptonshire Keyways in the first instances. This is in order to make best use of specialist social housing stock.

Where an adapted property is advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways, households with a need for all the adaptations and who will utilise all other property attributes will be identified via a filtering process first. If no household meets this criterion, the Council will filter the shortlist according to which household will make best use of the adaptations and/or other attributes (such as utilising all the bedrooms) taking into consideration band and effective date.

This may mean a household requiring a three bedroom family home is offered a three bedroom house with a wet room over a household requiring a two bedroom property with a wet room.

Properties situated on the ground floor with an adaptation will first and foremost be offered to households requiring ground floor accommodation due to a disability.

## **7.6 Bungalows**

General need bungalows (not sheltered accommodation) offering no adaptations have a minimum age preference of 60 years of age applied in the first instance. Such properties will be allocated in the following order:

1. Households over 60 years of age with a ground floor need
2. Households of any age with a ground floor need
3. Households over 60 without a ground floor need

General need bungalows (not sheltered accommodation) **offering disabled adaptations** will be allocated in the following order:

1. Households of any age with a ground floor need requiring adaptations
2. Households over 60 years of age with a ground floor need
3. Households of any age with a ground floor need
4. Households over 60 without a ground floor need

Where there are joint applicants, the minimum age preference of 60 years referred to in this section need only apply to one applicant. For example, if an application is received from a couple with one individual aged under 60 years and one individual over 60 years, these joint applicants will be eligible to receive a preference for general need bungalows as described in this section.

## **7.7 Sheltered accommodation**

Sheltered accommodation is usually only available to older people with a support need. Dependent on the sheltered scheme the advert may stipulate an age criterion. While sheltered housing provides some support, it is not suitable for people with high care and support needs. Sheltered housing is a form of independent living, so residents must be able to leave the building unaided in the event of an emergency.

Depending on an applicant's circumstances, some applicants such as homeowners and those with no housing need are restricted to bidding for properties in sheltered housing complexes only. See sections 4.3 and 6.8 for more information.

Applicants who bid for sheltered accommodation will be subject to further eligibility assessments conducted by the specific landlord / provider if they are nominated for sheltered accommodation. This is to check factors such as support needs, suitability and risk issues in line with the individual provider's policies. Landlords of sheltered accommodation reserve the right to refuse nominations if their criteria are not met – see section 8.3 for more information.

## **7.8 Not offering a tenancy to the highest bidder**

The Council has discretion not to offer a tenancy to the highest bidder for advertised properties when taking all circumstances into account. This discretion may be exercised when the

Council decides that it would not be in the interest of the applicant, another party or the good management of the housing stock to do so. Examples where this may happen include:

- Where there is a history of domestic abuse and the property is deemed by the Council to be too close to the perpetrator so as not to resolve the applicant's housing need
- Where the Council deems there to be implications for community safety as defined in section 4.10
- Where the applicant cannot access or adequately use the property because of mobility problems, in particular where their health and safety would be endangered
- Where on completion of a financial assessment, the North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord and Council has determined that the property would be unaffordable to the applicant
- Where an offer of accommodation would be counter to an applicant's stated housing need. For example, where an applicant is awarded priority due to a need to move to a particular area to provide / receive care and support, they will not be considered for areas that do not resolve this housing need
- Where an applicant's individual support needs are such that they are likely to severely impact upon other residents in a housing scheme and affect a landlord's ability to manage the applicant's needs / risk within that scheme.

## **7.9 Direct offers**

In some circumstances, the Council will not advertise available properties on North Northamptonshire Keyways. Instead, a direct offer of accommodation may be made to an applicant. Any direct offer will constitute a formal and suitable offer, and if refused will be subject to the same sanctions for refusal as set out in section 8.4.

Decisions regarding direct offers will be made by two senior housing officers. A senior housing officer is defined in the glossary.

The circumstances in which direct offers may be made include:

- Where the Council considers that it is inappropriate for the applicant to participate in choice-based lettings. For example, applicants who are placed in North Northamptonshire through the National Witness Mobility Scheme or are subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). In these cases, applicants are considered on a case by case basis, and the full range of housing options will be considered;
- Where the Council makes a direct offer by way of discharging a housing duty. This may include but is not limited to statutory homeless households.
- Where it is necessary for the Council or a Keyways landlord to move (decant) one of its tenants on a permanent basis in order to carry out major modernisation or rehabilitation works to the property.
- Where it is necessary for the Council to provide an alternative property to a successor tenant within the 12-month statutory time limit.
- Where a joint social tenant has given notice to quit, and the property is suitable for the remaining tenant to continue to occupy and this allocation is supported by the landlord.
- Where the property offers a specialist housing solution and/or is in particularly short supply e.g. large properties / disabled adapted properties
- In cases where North Northamptonshire Council or a Keyways landlord requests an urgent move due to serious antisocial behaviour issues that cannot be resolved via any other housing management intervention

- Where the Council considers it necessary to suspend choice-based lettings for a period of time, for example due to a public health emergency or another similarly significant event. Such decisions will be taken by the *Head of Service / relevant North Northants post to be confirmed* or a position senior to that.
- Any other circumstance that enables the Council to make best use of housing stock and/or to respond to emerging local housing needs

## 7.10 Local Lettings Policies

North Northamptonshire Council may from time to time agree a local lettings policy for specific areas or developments to reflect local circumstances. Local lettings policies allow the Council to support particular communities to become or remain safe, cohesive communities where people want to live.

The Council may also use a local lettings policy to support people who contribute to their communities such as people in employment, to encourage working people to move to particular areas, or to encourage people who contribute to their local community through volunteering.

Some local lettings policies giving a preference to residents with a local connection to a specific town or village may also be applied. This is usually because there is a legal requirement to do so as a result of the original planning consent for the property. Advertisements for these properties will highlight that preference will be given to applicants who fulfil the criteria set out in the legal agreement.

For existing communities, any local lettings policy will be drawn up in consultation with existing tenants and residents, and will have regard to housing management considerations such as the social mix of tenants, density, age range, vulnerability of tenants, for example, because of insufficient facilities for vulnerable people, as well as community stability.

Once implemented, local lettings policies will remain in force for a fixed period specified within the policy. Upon expiry, the allocation of properties in the area will be made in accordance with the normal housing allocation scheme, unless there is an evidenced need for a further local lettings policy.

Any local lettings policies in place will be advertised in the property advert on North Northamptonshire Keyways. Please see the North Northamptonshire Keyways website [new scheme web address to be confirmed](#) for current local lettings policies applicable in North Northamptonshire.

## Community Contribution

Some local lettings policies stipulate that a proportion of allocations must be made to applicants who satisfy the Council's community contribution criterion. This includes people who play a part in making their neighbourhood a good place to live, work and play. The Council believes such people should be allocated social housing so that they can continue contributing to their sustainment of their local communities. For the purpose of this section 'applicants' means the main and/or joint applicant on an application and not any other household member.

To qualify for the community contribution criterion, applicants must:

### 1) Have a current positive residence history

A positive residence history is defined as:

- No on-going culpable involvement in anti-social behaviour or criminal activities.
- No breaches of tenancy within the last three years
- No recoverable housing related debt
- Having no outstanding unspent convictions

**AND**

**2) Contribute to the economic growth, or make another valuable contribution in their community**

A contribution to economic growth / community includes although is not limited to:

- Working households
- Volunteers
- Applicants in training or education
- Ex-service personnel
- Registered foster carers
- People with disabilities and older residents

Additional information on each of the categories above and associated minimum requirements is available upon request.

**7.11 Property advert details**

To help applicants choose the properties that would best suit their needs, North Northamptonshire Council will advertise all properties with information on size, location and property features. The adverts will also include:

- At least one image of the front of the property
- Which North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord owns the property
- Weekly rent and any other applicable charges
- If known, an estimated date that the property will be available to move in to
- The closing date for applicants to express an interest
- Other available information such as the type of heating supply, adaptations, number of steps leading to the property, priority floor level and restrictions on pets
- Whether a local lettings policy is applicable

At times, similar properties may be grouped together and advertised with one property identification number. In these cases, applicants only have to express an interest once to cover all the properties grouped within the adverts. This may happen when advertising a new build development which includes a number of the same size and type of property.

**8 MANAGEMENT OF SCHEME**

**8.1 Bidding and Autobidding**

Most applicants on the Keyways housing register are entitled to select which properties they will bid for. However, applicants are expected to place bids regularly. If bids have not been placed within a six-month period and suitable properties have been advertised during this time, their housing application may be closed.

**Band A applicants**

Applicants awarded Band A priority will receive additional support to ensure a timely resolution of their emergency housing needs. All applications accepted as Band A have their choice removed and are placed onto Autobid (note additional duties owed to homeless households detailed in Section 8.2).

Autobid means that the North Northamptonshire Keyways system software will place bids on an applicant's behalf. The system places bids on suitable properties which provide the best possible chance of a nomination i.e. the best queue position as at the end of the bidding cycle. Autobids are placed at one-minute past midnight at the end of the bidding cycle once all other bids have been placed.

In order to inform the autobid process, Band A applicants may be required to provide additional evidence to ensure that the autobid functionality is able to provide a suitable accommodation offer in terms of property attributes and geographical area.

Any successful bid will be classed as a formal offer of accommodation and the refusal sanctions set out in section 8.4 will apply.

The table below summarises the bidding mechanism and number of bids that different categories of applicants are entitled to:

Band and criteria	Bidding mechanism	Number of bids per cycle
Band A, B, C and D where a Statutory homeless duty is owed (main duty, prevention and relief duties)	Autobid (no choice)	Up to 5
Band A where a statutory homeless duty is not owed	Autobid (no choice)	Up to 3
Bands B, C, D and E where no statutory homeless duty is owed	Manual bidding - Choice	Up to 3

## 8.2 Households owed a Homeless Duty

The Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 permit North Northamptonshire Council to end any homeless duty by providing one offer of suitable accommodation of any tenure to homeless households. This includes a Private Rented Sector offer which complies with the Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012 (S193(7F)) and a PRSO under Relief - s.193(7AA)(a).

All applications accepted as being owed a homeless duty have their choice removed and are placed onto 'autobid'. This is to ensure the Council prevents and relieves homelessness where possible at the earliest opportunity.

If an applicant believes any final offer to be unsuitable, they are entitled to ask for a review. The applicant may ask for a review whether or not they accept the final offer of accommodation, but the Council may require the household to vacate any temporary accommodation provided whilst the review is conducted. Any applicant considering refusing a final offer should first discuss this with a Housing Options Advisor.

When reviewing a final offer and before making a final decision, the Council will check that:



- The property is the right size and type for the applicant's household
- The property is safe for the applicant's household to live in
- The property is affordable for the applicant
- Consideration has been given to the location of the property
- Consideration has been given to any special needs the applicant and their household members may have
- Consideration is given to any other relevant circumstances that the applicant has told the Council about

A failure to engage in the nomination, viewing, or verification process which results in a property offer being withdrawn, will be regarded as an implied refusal of a final offer.

Applicants owed a statutory homeless duty (main duty, prevention duty or relief duty) will receive up to five autobids per cycle whilst all other households will receive three bids.

Where applicants may be successful on more than one property shortlist the Housing Options team will determine which property will constitute the applicant's final offer. This is likely to be based on the individual circumstances of the applicant, which property is ready to let soonest and/or a decision that allows the council to maximise the number of allocations to homeless households in that cycle

### **8.3 Offers**

If applicants are successful with a bid they will be contacted by the North Northamptonshire Keyways team directly. If the Council is unable to contact an applicant within 24 hours they will no longer be considered for the property and will be bypassed on the shortlist.

If an applicant verbally accepts the offer, the North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord that owns the property will then contact the successful applicant with details of the potential offer. Each North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord may have a different process that they follow.

All North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords reserve the right to:

- Request suitable identification for all household members
- Carry out checks on the information the applicants have provided as part of the North Northamptonshire Keyways application. Usual checks include whether the applicants have rent arrears or criminal convictions. If the applicant's circumstances have changed and they did not inform the Council of the change(s), they may not receive an offer until the changes have been fully assessed
- Withdraw an offer if checks reveal issues that are not included in the North Northamptonshire Keyways application
- Withdraw an offer of sheltered accommodation if an applicant does not meet the landlord's own eligibility criteria
- Withdraw an offer if a notice to vacate a property is withdrawn or the property becomes unavailable for letting
- Withdraw an offer if verification checks confirm that the applicant(s) would be a non-qualifying person
- Carry out a financial assessment of the household to establish if the rental payments will be affordable
- Withdraw an offer if, following a financial assessment, it is established that the household cannot afford the required rental payments

- Carry out a property inspection of the household's current home
- Withdraw an offer if the applicant has failed a property inspection
- Withdraw a property from advertisement if advertised incorrectly
- Request up to 4 weeks rent in advance
- Request rent payments are paid by direct debit only
- Request the applicant(s) complete a tenancy workshop / pre-tenancy training or equivalent

Applicants must tell the North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords whether they wish to accept an offer of a tenancy. The time limit for responding to offers may differ between landlords. If the applicant does not contact the landlord or the Housing Options Team within the timescale given, the Council will assume that the applicant does not wish to accept the tenancy and the offer will be withdrawn.

#### **8.4 Refusals**

There are special suitability/refusal rules that apply to applicants where the Council has accepted a homeless duty (see Section 8.2).

All other applicants are entitled to:

- place up to three bids per bidding cycle
- refuse one suitable offer of accommodation without any sanctions

Applicants who refuse two offers of suitable accommodation within any 12-month period will fail to qualify for the North Northamptonshire Keyways register. For the purposes of this scheme, an offer of accommodation can include a formal written offer of accommodation from a North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord or a verbal offer of a nomination from the North Northamptonshire Keyways /Housing Options team. In the case of joint applications, the main or joint applicant can refuse the offer, and this will constitute as a refusal (i.e. agreement of both is not required).

A failure to engage in the nomination, viewing, or verification process which results in a property offer being withdrawn, will be regarded as a refusal for the purposes of this section, albeit an implied refusal.

All applicants that refuse their final offer of accommodation will not qualify for the North Northamptonshire Keyways register for a period of 12 months. The Council may consider a re-application within the 12 month non-qualifying period if there has been a significant change in their circumstances through no fault of their own which adversely affects the household or would otherwise result in the Keyways band increasing.

#### **8.5 Landlord Rejection**

In some circumstances Keyways landlords may refuse to offer a tenancy to a nominated applicant in accordance with their own policies. If a Keyways landlord rejects an applicant they will inform the applicant in writing how they have reached decision and if the applicant wishes this to be reviewed, the applicant or their representative must make a written request directly to the landlord concerned within 21 days of receipt of the decision. Contact details can be found in Appendix C.

## **9 THE APPLICANTS RIGHT TO A REVIEW**

The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, gives applicants the right to ask for a review if the Council decides not to allow the applicant to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register or makes any decision that affects their housing application.

Any applicants who believe they meet an alternative band must initially submit a banding enquiry in writing explaining the reasons they believe they meet an alternative band. This will be initially reassessed by an officer senior to that of the original decision maker. If the applicant remains unsatisfied with the decision, they will have a right to a review.

### **9.1 To request a review of the outcome of a North Northamptonshire Keyways application**

The applicant, or the applicant's representative, must make a request to *relevant North Northamptonshire post to be confirmed* at North Northamptonshire Council in writing within 21 days of receiving a written decision. The applicant, or the applicant's representative, may give the reasons for requesting a review in person, if it is difficult to tell the Council these reasons in writing.

### **9.2 The decision about a review**

The *relevant North Northamptonshire post to be confirmed* will review the decision and consider the reasons for the review being requested. A decision on the review will be based on the known facts at the time of the review. In some cases, the *relevant North Northamptonshire post to be confirmed* may need to request more information from the applicant in order to make a decision.

The *relevant North Northamptonshire post to be confirmed* will provide the applicant with written confirmation of the outcome of the review and reasons for the decision within eight weeks of the request for the review. A longer period may be agreed with the applicant.

The Council's decision on review is final and can only be challenged by way of a judicial review.

### **9.3 To request a review of a North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord rejection of a nomination**

In some circumstances, North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords may refuse applicants the offer of a tenancy. Reasons for this may include if an applicant fails the verification checks or it is demonstrated that the applicant cannot afford the rental payments following a financial assessment conducted by the landlord. If an applicant wishes for this decision to be reviewed, the applicant or the applicant's representative must make the request in writing direct to the given North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord within 21 days of receiving their written decision.

### **9.4 Compliments, Comments and Complaints**

Applicants who wish to give a compliment, comment or complain about North Northamptonshire Council or the Keyways scheme can do this by contacting North Northamptonshire's Council's *Customer Services team / relevant North Northamptonshire team to be confirmed*. Applicants who wish to make a compliment, comment or complaint

about any partner North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord should contact them directly – contact details are provided in Appendix C.

*Details of North Northamptonshire Internal Complaints Procedure to be inserted here.*

Applicants who remain unhappy can make a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Independent Housing Ombudsman. They are independent services run by central government to make sure that local authorities and housing providers provide a certain standard of service to their customers (see below for contact details).

- The Local Government Ombudsman for complaints about councils

Local Government Ombudsman  
PO Box 4771  
Coventry  
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Website: [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

- The Independent Housing Ombudsman for complaints about Registered Providers (RPs)

Housing Ombudsman Service  
Exchange Tower  
Harbour Exchange Square  
London  
E14 9GE

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## **10 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **10.1 Data Protection and Information Sharing**

The General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (known as information legislation) provide a statutory framework which sets out the responsibilities of the Council as a data controller when it is collecting and processing applicants' personal data. It also defines applicants' rights in relation to their data and provides them with control over how their information is used in various circumstances.

North Northamptonshire Council will, through appropriate management, ensure compliance with information legislation, the Housing Act (1996), and the Council's Privacy and Data Protection Policies. The Council will process applicants' data within the confines of the law and will only share applicants' data where there is a lawful basis to do so.

Below are the seven key data protection principles that will be followed when processing personal data. Applicants' personal information will be:

1. Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
2. Collected for a specified, explicit and legitimate purpose and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with that purpose
3. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary

4. Accurate and kept up to date
5. Not kept for longer than is necessary
6. Processed securely, using technical and organisation measures
7. The Council will demonstrate accountability with principle 1

The information that the Council collects from applicant's, together with information that is gathered from third parties during an application will be used to assess and administer a request for housing. Applicants' information may also be used for other purposes where the law permits such as those relating to child protection, public protection, and preventing and/or detecting fraud or other criminal activities.

Applicants have the right to access their personal data processed by the Council including electronic and hard copy files. Applicant's personal data is information that relates to an applicant as an identifiable individual. Personal data can be accessed by contacting the Council's *Information Governance Team / relevant North Northamptonshire team to be confirmed on contact details to be confirmed.*

## **10.2 Fraudulent Activity and withholding Information**

Applicants must supply full information about their circumstances and must provide supporting evidence where required to do so. It is a criminal offence for applicants and/or anyone providing information in relation to this scheme to knowingly or recklessly make false statements or knowingly withhold reasonably requested information relevant to their application (section 171, Housing Act 1996). An offence is also committed if a third party provides false information whether or not on the instigation of the applicant. This would apply at any stage of the application process.

Where there is suspicion or an allegation that a person has either provided false information or has withheld information, the application will be excluded from being considered for offers during the investigation and until an outcome is reached.

In addition, the Council reserves the right to take legal action including prosecution under any relevant legislation including fraud where it possesses the evidence. If the outcome of any investigation is that an applicant did not provide false information or did not withhold information or was not found to be withheld knowingly, then the application will be reinstated from the date of registration, meaning the relevant applicant should not suffer prejudice.

If the Council determines that an applicant directly, or through a person acting on his or her behalf, has given false information or withheld required information it may result in an applicant being disqualified from an allocation.

Ground 5 in Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the 1996 Act, S146) enables the landlord to seek possession of a property where it has been granted as a result of a false statement by either the tenant or a person acting at the tenant's instigation. Where this is the case the Council will actively pursue recovery of possession.

## **10.3 Councillors, board members, employees and their close relatives**

Councillors, board members and employees of North Northamptonshire Council, partner North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords and their close relatives, can apply to the North Northamptonshire Keyways Housing Register. However, applicants must make their position or relationship with the Council or with the North Northamptonshire Keyways landlord known at the point of application. If the applicant does not do this and it is discovered later that such a relationship exists, the application/tenancy may be adversely affected. Applicants who declare an interest will neither be advantaged nor disadvantaged.

#### **10.4 Equality and Diversity**

North Northamptonshire Council and partner landlords are committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services. We aim to implement, maintain and deliver quality services which ensure that no potential or current applicant is treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age or sexual orientation, nor is disadvantaged by the application of a rule, condition, or requirement, which has a discriminatory effect which cannot be justified by law. Allocations will only be made to those persons who are eligible. The policy will fully comply with the Equality Act 2010.

To view North Northamptonshire Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy please visit:

*Link to North Northamptonshire strategy to be inserted here*

#### **10.5 Monitoring of the scheme**

The Council recognises that it is important for applicants for housing and the wider community to understand how social housing is allocated and who is getting social housing. Therefore, information on the Housing Register and lettings outcomes will be published and made available on the North Northamptonshire Keyways website.

The Council will also regularly monitor to ensure that the scheme remains relevant and continues to prioritise the allocation of affordable rented housing to those people in the most need. Reviews of this policy will be undertaken by the Council annually in response to any policy issues identified and/or changes in legislation / national guidance.

## APPENDIX A: PROPERTY ELIGIBILITY TABLE

Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a household's circumstances do not fit any of the criteria outlined in this matrix, a senior housing officer will decide what size and type of property the household is eligible for</li> <li>Applicants bidding for a property with more bedrooms than their minimum need will receive a reduced preference</li> <li>Applicants that will be under-occupying any property defined in this matrix can be refused on the grounds of affordability. See section 5.4 for further information</li> <li>Whilst households expecting their first child can bid for family accommodation, this will only apply from the third trimester of the pregnancy (27 weeks). See section 7.3 for further information</li> <li>Bungalows may have additional age or disabled adaption eligibility restrictions. See section 7.6 for further information</li> </ul>	Bedsit	1 bedroom bungalow	1 bedroom flat	1 bedroom house	2 bedroom bungalow	2 bedroom flat (no garden)	2 bedroom flat (with garden)	2 bedroom house	3 bedroom bungalow	3 bedroom flat/maisonette	3 bedroom house	3 bedroom parlour house	4 bedroom house	4 bedroom flat/maisonette	5 bedroom house
Single person	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Couple without children	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Household expecting first child					X	X	X	X							
Household with 1 child					X	X	X	X							
Household with 2 children					X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Household with 3 children									X	X	X	X	X	X	
Household with 4 children									X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Household with 5 or more children												X	X	X	X

## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

<b>Adaptations</b>	Adjustments to a property to assist a disabled member of the household access the property or facilities such as a stair lift, wet room, level access shower or ramp.
<b>Affordable Rent</b>	Rented housing let by Registered Providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.
<b>Applicant</b>	A person who applies to go on the North Northamptonshire Keyways housing register.
<b>Autobid</b>	Homeless households and Band A applicants are placed on Autobid. Autobid means that the North Northamptonshire Keyways system software will place bids on suitable properties which provide the best possible chance of a nomination i.e. the best queue position as at the end of the bidding cycle. Auto bids are placed at one-minute past midnight at the end of the bidding cycle.
<b>Band</b>	The Council categorises North Northamptonshire Keyways applications into one of five bands which reflect the level of priority for housing. These bands are A, B, C, D and E. Applications in Band A have the highest level of priority.
<b>Bid</b>	The term used when an applicant expresses an interest in a property advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways.
<b>Choice based lettings</b>	A scheme like North Northamptonshire Keyways that allows applicants to express a choice about where they want to live from within their eligible properties.
<b>Co-terminus village</b>	A term to describe a group of villages that are usually located in close proximity. The allocation of properties on some rural housing developments are governed by legal agreements which may stipulate that housing must be allocated to households with a connection to that village or surrounding (co-terminus) villages. Earls Barton and Great Doddington are examples of co-terminus villages, as are The Harrowdens, Oringbury, Hardwick and the Irchester's.
<b>Decant</b>	The term used to describe the process whereby a tenant of one of the scheme's partner landlords has to temporarily move out of their home into another property to enable the landlord to complete essential repairs / maintenance to the property.
<b>Declaration form</b>	The main and joint applicant (if applicable) must sign this in order to show their understanding and acceptance to adhere to the North Northamptonshire Keyways Allocations Policy. It also provides the local authority permission to make further checks in order to fully assess the application.
<b>Effective date</b>	The date at which a North Northamptonshire Keyways application is registered or escalated into a higher band.



<b>Eligibility</b>	Eligibility determines who is eligible to join the North Northamptonshire Keyways register under the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and related legislation. A person who is not eligible will not be able to join the register, or to bid for properties.
<b>Feedback</b>	An applicant's personal bid history will be available for them to view when they log into their account on the North Northamptonshire Keyways website.
<b>Fixed Term Tenancy</b>	A type of tenancy granted by social landlords that are for a fixed length of time, usually five years.
<b>Habitual residence test</b>	The test looks at whether the applicant's residence in the United Kingdom is of a settled nature. For example, it looks at the length and continuity of residence, work/work prospects or family ties.
<b>Housing allocation scheme</b>	This explains the rules that determine how North Northamptonshire Council and the North Northamptonshire Keyways landlords in North Northants allocate social housing properties.
<b>Intermediate Housing</b>	Housing at below market price. These can include shared equity products (e.g. HomeBuy/Shared Ownership) and other low-cost homes for sale.
<b>Keyways Nomination Agreement</b>	An agreement that North Northamptonshire Council has with some Housing Associations (Registered Providers) that stipulates the proportion of lettings to be made through the North Northamptonshire Keyways housing allocation scheme.
<b>Keyways Landlord</b>	The term for a social landlord with housing stock in North Northamptonshire that advertises vacancies on the Keyways allocation system. This term includes North Northamptonshire Council and Housing Association's (also known as Registered Providers).
<b>Letting / Bidding cycle</b>	New properties will be advertised each week from 00:01am on a Thursday to 23.59pm on a Tuesday. There are no social/affordable properties advertised on a Wednesday with an exception of 'any time' adverts (see section 5.2).
<b>MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)</b>	The framework which joins up agencies, including Probation, the Prison Service and local housing authorities, tasked with the management of offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public.
<b>Mutual exchange</b>	A swap of accommodation between two social housing tenants. The two households swap homes and each move permanently into the other tenant's property.
<b>Non-statutorily homeless</b>	A term that refers to homeless people or households to whom local housing authorities do not have a legal duty to make an offer of settled housing.
<b>Nomination</b>	The term used when a local housing authority provides from its housing register, the name and details of an applicant to a landlord for an offer of housing.

<b>Prevention Duty</b>	A duty owed to households who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days.
<b>Rechargeable repairs</b>	This is damage caused by a tenant or their family or visitors) or arising as a result of negligence to a property during a tenancy.
<b>Registered Provider (RP)</b>	A housing association or a not-for-profit company registered by the Homes and Communities Agency to provide social or affordable housing.
<b>Relief Duty</b>	A duty owed to households where they are within the first 56 days of having become homeless.
<b>Right to Move</b>	Government statutory guidance from March 2015 enabling social tenants that are employed, or have an offer of employment, and need to move to avoid hardship to (a) establish a local connection, and (b) receive a level of priority for rehousing.
<b>Qualifying Person</b>	A local housing authority can decide what classes of persons are, or are not, qualifying persons for joining the North Northamptonshire Keyways register. Only qualifying persons are permitted to join the housing register.
<b>Queue position</b>	When placing a bid, North Northamptonshire Keyways will calculate an applicant's position in the shortlist as at the time of the bid. This can alter (go up or down) throughout the letting cycle (Thursday-Tuesday). The higher up the shortlist for the property an applicant is, the more likelihood there is of that applicant being allocated it. On occasion, an advert will specify if there is a preference criterion therefore the queue position may be affected. i.e. adapted properties will be offered to those requiring the adaptations in the first instance.
<b>Senior Housing Officer</b>	An officer that manages a North Northamptonshire Keyways team or an officer of an equivalent or more senior level
<b>Sheltered housing</b>	Usually housing for older people with a support need.
<b>Shortlist</b>	A list of those applicants that have expressed an interest in a particular property advertised on North Northamptonshire Keyways.
<b>Skipped</b>	Term used when an applicant has bid on a property and been bypassed. Reasons for being bypassed may include but are not limited to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The property is unsuitable for the applicants needs</li> <li>• Enquiries reveal a change in circumstances including housing related debt owed</li> <li>• Local lettings policy or priority criteria apply i.e. preference offered to specific groups of applicants</li> <li>• Adaptations suitable for disabled clients</li> </ul>
<b>Social housing</b>	Housing owned by a local authority (council) or Housing Association (Registered Provider) and rented to tenants at rents restricted by national rent controls.

<p><b>Statutorily Homeless / Main Homeless duty</b></p>	<p>A term that refers to people or families to whom a local housing authority has a duty to make an offer of settled housing.</p>
<p><b>Succession of tenancy</b></p>	<p>When a secure tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to their spouse, civil partner, or other partner living as though they were a spouse or civil partner. Some tenancy agreements include the provision for other family members to succeed to a tenancy on the death of the tenant. These rights vary between different landlords, depending on what the tenancy agreement says. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a successor. Any permission to succeed should be formally confirmed by the landlord.</p>

## APPENDIX C: CONTACT DETAILS

### North Northamptonshire Council

*North Northamptonshire Council contact details to be entered here*

North Northamptonshire Council local offices are currently situated in the areas of Corby, East Northants, Kettering and Wellingborough:

**CORBY****One Stop Shop**

The Corby Cube  
Parkland Gateway  
Corby  
Northamptonshire  
NN17 1QG

Tel: 01536 464000  
housing.options@corby.gov.uk

**EAST NORTHANTS****Homes Direct**

50 High Street South  
Rushden  
Northamptonshire  
NN10 0LZ

Tel: 0345 600 5050  
nomination@midlandheart.org.uk

**KETTERING**

Municipal Offices  
Bowling Green Road  
Kettering  
Northamptonshire  
NN15 7QX

Tel: 01536 410333  
customerservices@kettering.gov.uk

**WELLINGBOROUGH**

Swanspool House  
Doddington Road  
Wellingborough  
Northants  
NN8 1BP

Tel: 01933 229 777  
housingoptions@wellingborough.gov.uk

## Registered Providers Advertising Properties on North Northamptonshire Keyways

**ACCENT HOUSING**

Manor House  
57 Lincoln Road  
Peterborough  
PE1 2RR

01733 295400

[www.accentgroup.org](http://www.accentgroup.org)

**BEDFORDSHIRE PILGRIM HOUSING ASSOCIATION (BPHA)**

Bedford heights  
Manton Lane  
Bedford  
MK41 7BJ

0330 100 0272

[www.bpha.org.uk](http://www.bpha.org.uk)

**CROSS KEYS HOMES**

Shrewsbury Avenue  
Peterborough  
Cambridgeshire  
PE2 7BZ

01733 385000

[www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk](http://www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk)

**EAST MIDLANDS HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

1 Barton Close  
Grove Park  
Enderby  
Leicestershire  
LE19 1SJ

0300 123 6000

[www.emhhomes.org.uk](http://www.emhhomes.org.uk)

**GRAND UNION HOUSING GROUP (GUHG)**

**K2**

Timbold Drive  
Kents Hill  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BZ

0300 123 5544

[www.guhg.co.uk](http://www.guhg.co.uk)

**GREATWELL HOMES**

12 Sheep Street  
Wellingborough  
Northamptonshire  
NN8 1BL

01933 234450

[www.greatwellhomes.org.uk](http://www.greatwellhomes.org.uk)

**GUINNESS TRUST**

30 Brock Street  
Regent's Place  
London  
NW1 3FG

0303 123 1890

[www.guinnesspartnership.com](http://www.guinnesspartnership.com)

**HOUSING AND CARE 21**

Tricorn House  
51-53 Hagley Road  
Birmingham  
B16 8TP

0370 192 4000

[www.housing21.co.uk](http://www.housing21.co.uk)

**HYDE HOUSING**

Jubilee House  
92 Lincoln Road  
Peterborough  
PE1 2SN

0800 328 2282

[www.hyde-housing.co.uk](http://www.hyde-housing.co.uk)

**LONGHURST GROUP**

1 Crown Court  
Crown Way, Rushden  
Northamptonshire  
NN10 6BS

0300 123 1745

[www.longhurst-group.org.uk](http://www.longhurst-group.org.uk)

**MASONIC HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Masonic Housing Association  
c/o Eldon Housing Association  
2nd Floor North Wing  
Legion House, 73 Lower Road  
Kenley  
Surrey  
CR8 5NH

020 8668 9861

[www.masonichousing.co.uk](http://www.masonichousing.co.uk)

**METROPOLITAN THAMES VALLEY HOUSING (MTVH)**

The Grange  
100 High Street  
Southgate  
London, N14 9PW

020 3535 3535

[www.mtvh.co.uk](http://www.mtvh.co.uk)

**MIDLAND HEART HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

20 Bath Row  
Birmingham  
B15 1LZ

0345 602 0540

[www.midlandheart.org.uk](http://www.midlandheart.org.uk)

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RURAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

Whitwick Business Centre  
Stenson Road  
Coalville  
Leicestershire  
LE67 4JP

0330 123 4009

[www.northamptonhirerha.org.uk](http://www.northamptonhirerha.org.uk)

**NOTTING HILL GENESIS**

Atelier House  
64 Pratt Street  
London  
NW1 0DL

033 3000 3000

[www.nhg.org.uk](http://www.nhg.org.uk)

**OPTIVO**

Building 1060  
Cornforth Drive  
Kent Science Park  
Sittingbourne  
ME9 8PX

0800 121 60 60

[www.optivo.org.uk](http://www.optivo.org.uk)

**ORBIT GROUP**

Garden Court,  
Harry Weston Road,  
Binley Business Park,  
Binley,  
Coventry,  
CV3 2SU

0800 678 1221

[www.orbitcustomerhub.org.uk](http://www.orbitcustomerhub.org.uk)

**PA HOUSING GROUP**

3 Bede Island Road  
Leicester  
LE2 7EA

0300 123 2221

[www.pahousing.co.uk](http://www.pahousing.co.uk)

**PLACES FOR PEOPLE GROUP**

PO Box 2070  
Preston  
PR5 9BY

01772 667002

[www.placesforpeople.co.uk](http://www.placesforpeople.co.uk)

**RIVERSIDE**

49 Western Boulevard  
Leicester  
LE2 7HN

0845 111 0000

[www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk)

**SANCTUARY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

164 Birmingham Road  
West Bromwich  
B70 6QG

0800 131 3348

[www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk](http://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk)

**STONEWATER**

Suite C, Lancaster House  
Grange Business Park  
Enderby Road  
Whetstone  
Leicester  
LE8 6EP

01202 319119

[www.stonewater.org](http://www.stonewater.org)

**PLATFORM HOUSING GROUP**

1700 Solihull Parkway  
Birmingham Business Parkway  
Solihull  
B37 7YD

0333 200 7304

[www.platformhgeast.com](http://www.platformhgeast.com)



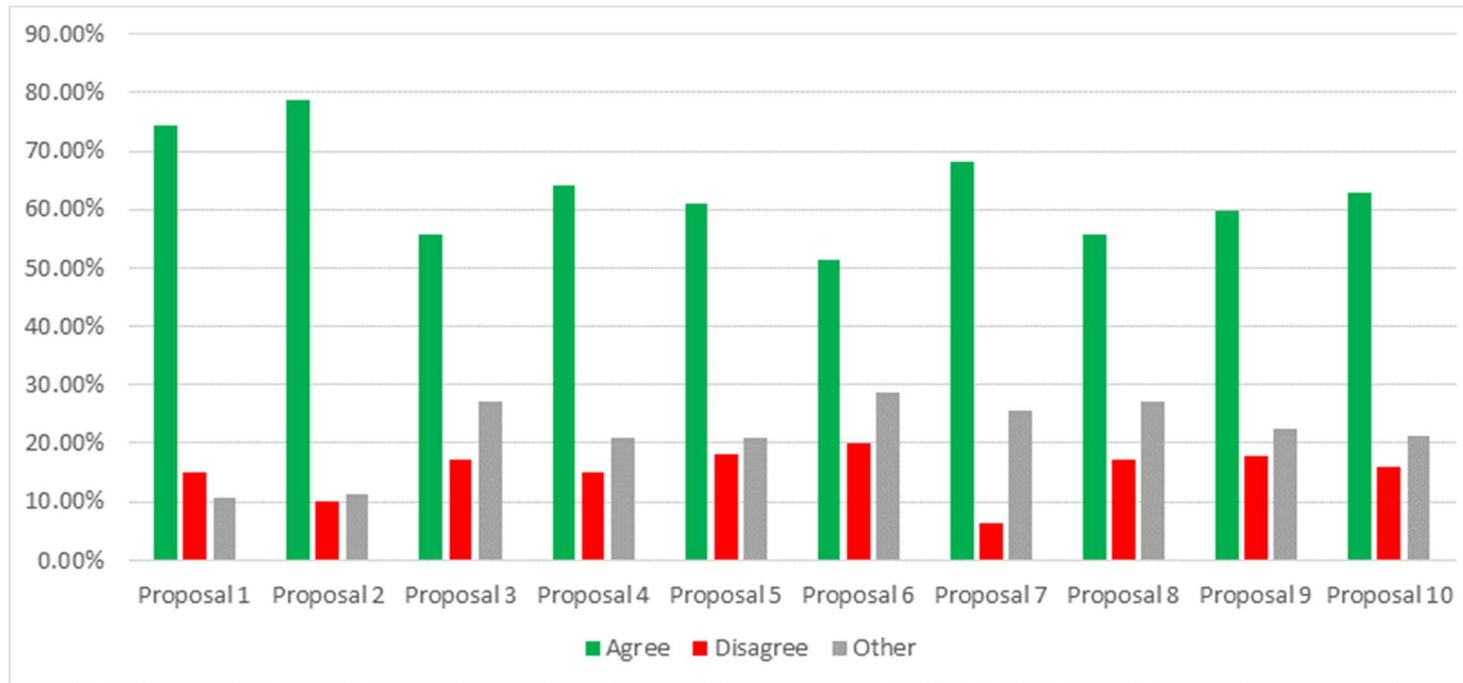
**Appendix C – North Northamptonshire draft housing allocation scheme: FINAL Detailed consultation analysis 16 Dec 20**

The North Northamptonshire Council Draft Housing Allocation Scheme Consultation received 238 responses. Of the 238 responses, 143 completed the whole questionnaire and submitted their feedback. The remaining 95 started but didn't reach the end of the questionnaire – we call these 'incomplete responses' – for data analysis we still consider these people's responses.

**Table 1: survey responses against the ten key proposals: *“To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?”***

	<b>Proposal 1</b> Non-qualifying categories	<b>Proposal 2</b> Local connection criteria	<b>Proposal 3</b> Free movement	<b>Proposal 4</b> Priority banding criteria	<b>Proposal 5</b> No housing need non qualify	<b>Proposal 6</b> Village property allocation	<b>Proposal 7</b> Property eligibility	<b>Proposal 8</b> Disabled adapted property allocation	<b>Proposal 9</b> Removing choice for homeless / emergency cases	<b>Proposal 10</b> Sanctions for refusals
<b>Strongly agree</b>	40.19%	51.53%	20.99%	24.28%	28.31%	25.61%	22.93%	20.99%	29.14%	34.44%
<b>Tend to agree</b>	34.11%	27.04%	34.81%	39.88%	32.53%	25.61%	45.22%	34.81%	30.46%	28.48%
<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	7.01%	9.69%	17.68%	16.76%	15.06%	23.17%	21.66%	17.68%	21.19%	17.88%
<b>Tend to disagree</b>	7.94%	4.08%	12.15%	6.94%	7.23%	9.15%	2.55%	12.15%	7.95%	8.61%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	7.01%	6.12%	4.97%	8.09%	10.84%	10.98%	3.82%	4.97%	9.93%	7.28%
<b>Don't know</b>	3.74%	1.53%	9.39%	4.05%	6.02%	5.49%	3.82%	9.39%	1.32%	3.31%

**Figure 1: Bar graph showing responses in Table 1:**



**KEY:**  
**Green:** Strongly agree + tend to agree  
**Red:** Strongly disagree + tend to disagree  
**Grey:** Neither agree nor disagree + don't know

**Table 2: “Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?”**

	Number	Percentage
As an individual	135	91.84%
On behalf of an organisation	12	8.16%
<b>Total</b>	147	100.00%

**Table 3: “If an organisation, what type of organisation?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Housing Association	5	41.67%
Advice Agency	1	8.33%
Support Organisation	0	0.00%
Existing North Northamptonshire Local Authority team	1	8.33%
Other	5	41.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 4: “Which Local Authority area(s) of North Northamptonshire does your organisation work in?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Borough Council of Wellingborough	9	29.03%
Corby Borough Council	5	16.13%
East Northamptonshire Council	8	25.81%
Kettering Borough Council	5	16.13%
Northamptonshire County Council	4	12.90%
None of the above	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	0	0.00%
Other	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 5: “As an individual, which North Northamptonshire Local Authority area do you currently live in?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Borough Council of Wellingborough	22	16.54%
Corby Borough Council	41	30.83%
East Northamptonshire Council	35	26.32%
Kettering Borough Council	28	21.05%
Prefer not to say	2	1.50%
None of the above	2	1.50%
Other, please specify	3	2.26%
<b>Total</b>	133	100.00%

**Table 6: “Are you an existing or former service user of an allocations scheme in North Northamptonshire or are you responding on behalf of somebody who is?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
I am an existing service user	55	40.74%
I am a former service user	4	2.96%
I am responding on my behalf	20	14.81%
I am responding on behalf of someone else	3	2.22%
None of the above	44	32.59%
Prefer not to say	9	6.67%
<b>Total</b>	135	100.00%

## Demographic Questions

**Table 7: Respondents by gender**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	91	68.94%
Male	37	28.03%
Prefer not to say	4	3.03%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%

**Table 8: Respondents by age**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
20 - 29	17	13.08%
30 - 39	21	16.15%
40 - 49	22	16.92%
50 - 59	34	26.15%
60 - 69	20	15.38%
70 - 79	16	12.31%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%

**Table 9: Respondent by disability: “Do you have a disability?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	42	31.82%
No	83	62.88%
Prefer not to say	7	5.30%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%

**Table 10: Respondents by employment status: “What is your employment status?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
In full-time employment	41	31.78%
In part-time employment	21	16.28%
Not working	21	16.28%
Other	11	8.53%
Retired	27	20.93%
Self-employed	7	5.43%
Student	1	0.78%
<b>Total</b>	129	100.00%

**Table 11: Respondents by ethnic origin: “How would you describe your ethnic origin?”**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Black or Black British: African	4	3.10%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background: White & Asian	1	0.78%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic background: White & Black	3	2.33%
Other Ethnic group	1	0.78%
Prefer not to say	3	2.33%
White: Other White background	2	1.55%
White: White British	115	89.15%
<b>Total</b>	129	100.00%

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## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

### SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Household Waste & Recycling Policy & Street Cleansing Policies
Report Author	Beth Gordon, Service Development Officer <a href="mailto:Beth.Gordon@kettering.gov.uk">Beth.Gordon@kettering.gov.uk</a>

#### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Household Waste & Recycling Policy

Appendix B – Street Cleansing Policy

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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1.1. The purpose of this report and attached documents is to seek member approval of the following documents:

1.1.1. North Northamptonshire Household Waste and Recycling Policy

1.1.2. North Northamptonshire Street Cleansing Policy

1.2 It also summarises a number of policy issues which will require further investigation and consideration by the Council to determine a harmonised service level for future and proposes to bring back further reports for members to consider these issues in more detail.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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2.1 This report summarises the work that has been undertaken by key officers across North Northamptonshire to define a set of policies for the waste, recycling and street cleansing services to be delivered from 1 April 2021. It brings together a number of policies across the existing authorities and creates where possible a harmonised set of standards to be implemented within North Northamptonshire.

2.2 The attached policy documents cover a number of service areas and the policies associated with delivering these services. These include:

- Residual waste collection

- Recycling
- Food waste
- Garden waste
- WEEE collections
- Bulky waste collections
- Commercial / trade waste
- Clinical waste
- Household Waste Recycling Centres
- Street Cleansing

2.3 In undertaking this review a significant number of policies are able to be harmonised, however there are some that require further investigation before they can be harmonised as the Council will need to determine how they wish to deliver these services going forward. These are outlined later in the report.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:

- a) Approve the Household Waste and Recycling Policy
- b) Approve the Street Cleansing Policy
- c) Agree to review the future policies in relation to the delivery of garden waste and food waste service

3.2 Reason for Recommendations –

- To ensure North Northamptonshire has an agreed set of waste and recycling policies and street cleansing policies to ensure clarity for residents on the service standards to be delivered
- To provide harmonised policies where possible from 1 April 2021 to reduce confusion for residents and ensure equity of service where possible
- To enable enforcement action to be taken where appropriate
- Allow a review of services where harmonisation is not currently possible and provide future recommendations on the delivery of these services

### **4. Report Background**

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4.1 On 1 April 2021 North Northamptonshire Council will become responsible for the delivery of street scene services. This includes responsibility for waste collection and disposal and street cleansing. Currently there are a number of differing policies from the predecessor authorities relating to the delivery of these services.

4.2 A review of the existing waste and street cleansing policies has been carried out by Senior Officers from across North Northamptonshire with the intention of trying to harmonise as many of the policies as possible to provide a common set of service standards for residents across North Northamptonshire from 1 April 2021.

4.3 The policies have been designed to ensure there is a clearly defined set of policies and standards across the service to avoid uncertainty for residents, customers, Elected Members and Officers of the Council

- 4.4 By harmonising policies and standards where possible this allows the development of consistent communications messages and promotion of services and tries to minimise confusion for residents with different services being delivered in different areas.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 In reviewing the policies contained within Appendix A and B a number of issues were considered including:

- What policies could be harmonised and what affect this would have on current service delivery
- Customer impact both negative e.g. reduced service level, or positive e.g. access to a service they are currently not receiving, or improved service standards
- Any cost implications particularly if any policy changes would have contractual implications

- 5.2 There are a number of areas within the policy document that have been harmonised including:

- Materials accepted for recycling, garden waste and food waste (where the service is delivered)
- Materials prohibited from the wheeled bins
- Size of wheeled bins provided
- Colours of bin / bin lid for waste collection and recycling (it is proposed these would be colours would only be introduced as new stock is procured – existing bins would remain in use). Garden waste bins would not be changed until a review of the service is carried out.
- Criteria for second bins for larger households and those producing offensive waste
- Clinical waste collections
- Street cleansing including target response times for fly-tipping, graffiti and fly-posting

- 5.3 Due to existing contract / partnership arrangements there are some services that will be harmonised over the first year of operation of the new authority. The introduction of WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) collections currently in operation in East Northamptonshire will be rolled out to Corby and Kettering during 2021 once the Kettering fleet has been replaced with vehicles that have the necessary storage cages on them. Investigations have shown that the current fleet in Wellingborough Norse cannot accommodate cages on vehicles, however these vehicles are likely to be replaced during 2022 and any new fleet will have the necessary storage available to roll this service out.

- 5.4 In proposing the harmonisation of these policies there are a number of considerations that members need to be aware of that will result in changes within some areas of North Northamptonshire. The most significant of these in relation to waste and recycling are detailed in the table1 and street cleansing in table 2 below:

<b>Table 1: Main policy changes – Waste &amp; recycling</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Change proposed</b>	<b>Area affected</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Standard service for individual properties	180l wheeled bin for residual domestic waste	Borough Council of Wellingborough (currently provide 240l bin)  Corby & Kettering (currently provide 140l bin for 1 or 2 bedroom properties)	To promote waste minimisation and recycling  To standardise bins across the area, enabling easier procurement & storage, difficult to check number of bedrooms in a property
Standard service for individual properties	No additional residual bins available for a bin rental charge	Corby & Kettering (447 customers)	To promote waste minimisation and recycling
Standard service for HMO's	No additional capacity available for a bin rental charge.	Corby & Kettering	To promote waste minimisation and recycling
Standard service for individual properties	Recycling bin colour blue or blue lidded (for new bin provisions only)	East Northamptonshire & Borough Council of Wellingborough	To standardise bin procurement and colours
Standard service for individual properties	Additional bin / capacity for garden waste	Borough Council of Wellingborough	To promote recycling
Sack collections	Fortnightly collection of residual waste and recycling	Corby (small number of rural / farm properties)	To provide recycling service to these properties & promote waste minimisation
Collection Time	Bin to be placed out for collection from 6.30am	Borough Council of Wellingborough East Northamptonshire	To make times consistent. This will not affect operational times the collection crews currently operate
Bulky collections	5 items maximum	Corby & Kettering (currently 6 items) East Northamptonshire	To standardise service

		(currently 7 items)	
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<b>Table 2: Main policy changes – Street Cleansing</b>			
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Change proposed</b>	<b>Area affected</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Fly tipping	Remove within 3 working days	Borough Council of Wellingborough	To ensure fly tipping is removed promptly to promote a clean environment & discourage further fly tipping

5.5 In reviewing the policies it has been highlighted that there are two particular services that require further work and information for members to consider what policies should be implemented, these are food waste and garden waste. Until that work is completed and presented to members for consideration it is proposed for each authority area to continue with their existing service provision. The issues are summarised in table 3 below:

<b>Table 3: Policy issues for review</b>		
<b>Service</b>	<b>Currently delivery</b>	<b>Issues to be considered</b>
Food waste	East Northamptonshire & Corby only	The Government’s consultation document “Consistency in Household & Business Recycling” published in 2019 proposed separate weekly food waste collections. The outcome to this consultation stated that the government would legislate to ensure that every local authority provides householders with a separate food waste collection. It was originally proposed these measures would come into effect from 2023. As part of the consultation the Government indicated that new costs arising from policies implemented will be resourced including upfront transition and ongoing operational costs. The Council therefore needs to consider whether it wants to expand the current food waste collection service, and if so by what timescale. A future report will consider the costs and benefits associated with the expansion of this service and proposed

		timescales.
Garden waste	<p>East Northamptonshire – chargeable service, fortnightly, all year (with the exception of 2 week period at Christmas)</p> <p>Corby &amp; Kettering – no charge, fortnightly, all year (with the exception of 2 week period at Christmas)</p> <p>Wellingborough – no charge, fortnightly, 9 months of the year</p>	<p>The Controlled Waste (England &amp; Wales) Regulations 2012 allow councils to charge for the collection of garden waste. The current situation in North Northamptonshire is mixed with one of the four authorities charging. It is therefore proposed to bring back a report considering the future delivery of the service and whether charging should be introduced or not.</p>

- 5.6 Where services are not harmonised from day 1, there may be queries from residents regarding the differing levels of services and charges in their area. Information for the council's websites and customer services staff is currently being developed to assist with explaining these differences.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications for many of the small changes proposed to bring all the existing policies into a harmonised document. Bulky waste collection charges are being considered as part of the draft budget setting process for North Northamptonshire.
- 6.1.2 As it is proposed that there will be no change to the current delivery of the food waste and garden waste services, these are within existing budgets. Further reports will be brought back for consideration of members on these services which will include financial impacts of any future changes proposed.
- 6.1.3 The introduction of WEEE within Corby and Kettering requires cages on the collection vehicles, however these have already been accounted for within the current procurement of vehicles. As it is not intended to introduce the service in Wellingborough until their fleet is replaced then any costs of cages will be incorporated within any procurement of new vehicles.
- 6.1.4 The introduction of a target of 3 working days for the clearance of fly tipping may have implications in Wellingborough, however it is proposed that initially a review of how the service is currently provided to look for efficiencies is undertaken, or consider other options such as support from the other North Northamptonshire authorities.

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals. The powers relied on are provided by the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Localism Act 2011 and other relevant legislation.

### 6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### 6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 The public have not been consulted during the production of these proposals as they seek to bring together existing Council arrangements and harmonise them to make them fair and equitable. Charges relating to the services in the policy documents will be subject to consultation as part of the budget setting process.

### 6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

6.5.1 This report has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 6.6 Environmental Impact

6.6.1 The policies have been developed taking into the account the waste hierarchy, encouraging waste minimisation and encouraging the amount the of waste recycled rather than disposed of.

6.6.2 The street cleansing policies are designed to remove fly tipping, graffiti and fly posting speedily to discourage further dumping and other postings.

### 6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 The harmonisation of the policies where possible seeks to minimise any community impact. Impacts on any particular areas have been identified in Table 3.

### 6.8 Equalities

6.8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be found here ([link to web](#)). There are no negative impacts that have been identified.

## 7. Background Papers

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7.1 Equalities Impact Assessment ([link to web](#))  
Data Protection Impact Assessment ([link to web](#))

# **North Northamptonshire Council**

## **Household Waste and Recycling Policy**



## Document Control

The distribution of this document is controlled and the current version is available on the Council's website.

Any printed copies of this document will no longer be controlled.

### Document Details

Document Title	Household Waste & Recycling Policy
Purpose of document	To detail waste collection policies
Document Control Number	WRP 1
Revision	V6
Document Status	Draft for approval
Document Owner	
Prepared By	Beth Gordon in consultation with other North Northamptonshire SME's
Date Approved	
Approved By	
Next Scheduled Review	

### Revision Status

Revision Number	Section	Details of Change	Date
V3	1.2 1.2.1 4.1 4.3 4.4 4.5	Added sack collections Added food waste provision – flats Added BCW information Added ENC information Updated KBC information following removal of separate paper collection Added section on food waste liners	12.10.20
V4 – Schedule 1	Objectives 1.1 1.2 1.3 1.4 4.1-4.4 5.0 12.0 13.0 16.0 21-25	Updated Updated bin colours Update residual bin to 180l capacity Updated for all council arrangements Update residual bin to 180l capacity Removed availability of additional chargeable capacity Updated acceptable items to common list across all councils Added commercial/trade waste to prohibited items Added information about contaminated missed bins Added flow chart Added section that bin may not be new Added recycling charges apply	03.11.20

V4 – Schedule 2	6 6.1.2 9.0  General	Removed oven cleaner Removed asbestos charges – refer to website Removed administration charge – refer to website Added website links where required	
V5 – Schedule 1	17.0	Updated to say 180l bins	
V5 – Schedule 2  Schedule 2	10.7	Updated HWRC wording for e-permits Moved Asbestos disposal scheme and Charity Waste Permits to Schedule 3	
V6 – Schedule 2	7.0	Updated section	

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## **Introduction**

North Northamptonshire Council's Joint Waste and Recycling Policy aims to ensure that refuse and recycling services are provided in an effective and efficient manner in order to maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste disposed of.

## **Objectives**

The intention of this policy document is to ensure there are clearly defined policies and standards in relation to the collection and disposal of waste and recyclable materials, and the operation of Household Waste Recycling Centres by the Council to avoid uncertainty for residents, customers, Elected Members and Officers of the Council.

The policies have been designed taking into account the waste hierarchy, looking to prevent waste production where possible. If waste is produced, re-use it, then recycle it, then recover it (e.g. for energy recovery) and finally dispose of it.

## Schedule 1 – Waste Collection Services

### 1.0 Bin provision

#### 1.1 *Standard service for individual domestic properties*

The following types of bins are provided\*:

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Container type</b>	<b>Standard provision</b>	<b>Provision of extra receptacles</b>
Residual domestic waste	Black wheeled bin	1 x 180l bin  (Any existing 240l bins will be replaced with a 180l bin as appropriate when lost, damaged or unrepairable).	No further bins will be provided free of charge and additional unauthorised bins will be removed.
Comingle d Recycling	Blue bin or blue lidded bin	1 x 240l bin	Additional bins / capacity will be provided free of charge upon request to encourage recycling.
Garden waste	Colour as per existing council arrangement  CBC/KBC – green bin  WBC – brown bin (9 month of the year collection)  ENC – brown lidded bin	1 x 240l bin (chargeable in East Northamptonshire)	Additional bins / capacity will be provided free of charge upon request in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough.  Residents in East Northamptonshire Council area are charged for this collection. Please see <a href="https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste">https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste</a> for further information on the service and charges. Additional bins can be provided for which the subscription charge will be applicable.

Food waste <b>(Corby / East Northants Residents Only)</b>	External food caddy (Green)	1 x 23l caddy	Please call to discuss additional requirements
	Internal kitchen caddy (Silver)	1 x 5l caddy	

\*Council's will be using up existing stock of wheeled bins before purchasing new bins in line with the colours specified above.

Only official local authority issued receptacles will be emptied.

### **1.2 Sack Collections**

Sack collections will only be provided where the property is not suitable to accommodate wheeled bins.

The standard service for households that remain on sack collections will allow a maximum of two sacks per collection (refuse and recycling). This will also be a kerbside collection. Large families of five persons or more permanently residing at a property will be allowed four sacks per week on request. Requests must be made in writing and will be reviewed annually.

Households that remain on sack collections will have them delivered at regular frequencies and will be provided with the correct amount. No other sacks will be collected except Council provided ones without prior agreement.

### **1.3 Flats**

The preferred method of collection is communal bins but we will consider alternatives if due to reasons of storage capacity or access it is not possible to provide or safely empty communal bins.

The capacity provided per flat will be as follows (either in communal or individual bins):

Refuse –	180l
Recycling –	240l

#### **1.3.1 Food waste provision - flats**

Some flat properties are able to participate in the food waste recycling scheme (where provided). Participation in the food waste scheme will be determined on an individual basis. An individual kitchen caddy and communal bin (normally located in a bin storage area) is provided. The size (normally



140l or 180l) and number of the communal bins will depend on the number of flats in the block. These bins will be shared between a number of properties.

#### **1.4 Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's)**

Bin capacity provided will be based on the number of Council Tax payers in the property.

Where there is only 1 council tax payer for the property 1 x 180l refuse bin will be provided.

Where there are a number of council tax payers, the property will be assessed for the provision of communal bins rather than individual bins using the capacity detailed in section [6.2](#) (flats)

#### **1.5 Larger Households**

For properties with 5 or more permanent residents or 2 children in nappies consideration will be given to providing additional refuse capacity free of charge if required. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis; a waste audit carried out and if an additional capacity is provided, will be subject to annual review and may be removed at any point if it is abused or the property is no longer eligible.

A second recycling bin may be provided before an additional refuse bin is provided if the additional waste is mainly recyclable.

#### **1.6 Places of Worship**

Waste and recycling arising from places of worship is treated as ordinary household waste and are entitled to the standard service as detailed in section [1.1](#) and collected on the same frequency.

If the premise hires out such buildings to other persons not connected with the conduct of religious worship (e.g. playgroup, social events), this is a commercial activity and a charge for collection and disposal will be made in these circumstances.

Examples of premises which are classified as places of worship are Anglican churches, Baptist churches, Buddhist temples, Congregational churches, Evangelical churches, Jehovah's Witness kingdom halls, synagogue, mission centres, Methodist churches, Roman Catholic churches, Salvation Army halls, United Reform churches.

### **1.7 Domestic properties also used for business**

Waste produced during any activity for gain or reward, whether on business or domestic premises, whilst self-employed or working for others is classed as commercial waste.

Waste which is generated by a business at a residential property will not be collected through the household waste collection service. A separate arrangement can be made for the collection of this waste through the commercial waste service for which charges for collection and disposal will be made.

### **1.8 Childminders**

If a childminder service is operating from any dwelling, the waste generated shall be contained within the bins and receptacles provided to the standard domestic service. If excess waste is generated beyond the standard collection capacity provided, then it shall be treated as commercial waste. A separate arrangement can be made for the collection of this waste through the commercial waste service for which charges for collection and disposal will be made.

### **4.0 Materials collected in the wheeled bins / caddies / other services**

There are slightly different collection arrangements in North Northamptonshire Council areas. The refuse, comingled recycling and garden waste collections have been harmonised and detailed below in section [4.1](#).

The following are collections are only carried out in some areas:

- Food waste – Corby and East Northamptonshire – see section [4.2](#) for details of the materials collected.
- WEEE – East Northamptonshire currently, Kettering and Corby will be introducing the service during 2021. It is intended that the service will be rolled out in Wellingborough at a later date. See section [4.3](#) for details of the items collected.

#### **4.1 Materials collected in the Residual, Comingled and Garden Waste bins**

This information applies all of North Northamptonshire (previously Borough Council of Wellingborough, Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council and Kettering Borough Council areas)

<b>RESIDUAL DOMESTIC (BLACK WHEELED BIN)</b>	<b>COMINGLED RECYCLING BIN (GREEN OR BLUE BIN)</b>	<b>GARDEN WASTE BIN (BROWN BIN)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General household rubbish which can not be recycled or composted</li> <li>• Cat and dog waste (in a bag)</li> <li>• Nappies &amp; incontinence pads (please wrap)</li> <li>• Polystyrene</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerosols (empty)</li> <li>• Cans (aluminium &amp; steel), tins (food, drink &amp; pet food)</li> <li>• Card / cardboard (including greetings cards)</li> <li>• Catalogues</li> <li>• Directories</li> <li>• Envelopes</li> <li>• Foil (clean)</li> <li>• Glass bottles and jars</li> <li>• Greeting cards</li> <li>• Junk mail / flyers / leaflets</li> <li>• Newspapers &amp; magazines</li> <li>• Paper</li> <li>• Plastic bottles</li> <li>• Plastic packaging (food trays, fruit &amp; vegetable punnets, ice cream tubs, yoghurt pots &amp; margarine tubs)</li> <li>• Wrapping paper (no foil)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flowers</li> <li>• Grass cuttings, plants and weeds</li> <li>• Hedge and shrub cuttings</li> <li>• Hutch bedding</li> <li>• Leaves</li> <li>• Plants</li> <li>• Prunings</li> <li>• Twigs / woody material (less than 300mm/12 inches thickness)</li> <li>• Weeds</li> </ul>

**4.2 Materials collected in the Food Waste Caddies (Corby Borough Council & East Northamptonshire Council areas only)**

**FOOD WASTE (23l caddy) – this can be contained within a biodegradable liner or loose in your caddy**

- Bread, cakes and pastries
- Cooking oils and fats (soak oils into newspapers)
- Egg shells
- Leftover food / out of date or mouldy food
- Meat and fish – raw and cooked including bones
- Nutshells
- Tea bags and coffee grounds

**4.3 WEEE (Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment) Collection Service (East Northamptonshire area only)**

**WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)**

The following small household WEEE items are collected:

- Hairdryers, hair straighteners, shavers, electric toothbrushes
- Kitchen appliances such as toasters, kettles, hand blenders
- DVD/CD players, radios, MP3 players and remote controls
- Clocks, watches, calculators and torches
- Kettles
- Telephones, cameras
- Laptops
- Small electrical DIY tools such as drills and electric screwdrivers
- Toys (remote control car or drone)
- Chargers

Items should still have the cables attached and all batteries removed.

Please leave any items for collection in a carrier bag by your wheeled bin on either your refuse or recycling collection day.

Only small household items can be collected such as those listed above.

It is intended to roll the service out to Corby and Kettering during 2021 and Wellingborough at a later date when operationally possible.

#### **4.5 Food Caddy Liners**

There is no provision for food caddy liners. Residents can use a fully biodegradable compostable liner which are marked as meeting the European standard for compostable packaging – EN13432. These are available for purchase in supermarkets and local shops. Alternatively, caddies can be lined with newspaper.

**5.0 Items prohibited from the wheeled bins, boxes and caddies in all areas.**

<b>RESIDUAL DOMESTIC BIN (BLACK WHEELED BIN)</b>	<b>COMINGLED RECYCLING BIN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCW – GREEN OR BLUE BIN</li> <li>• CBC – BLUE OR BROWN BIN</li> <li>• ENC – GREEN OR BLUE LIDDED BIN</li> <li>• KBC – BLUE BIN</li> </ul>	<b>GARDEN WASTE BIN</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCW -BROWN BIN</li> <li>• CBC – GREEN BIN</li> <li>• ENC – BROWN LIDDED BIN</li> <li>• KBC - GREEN/GREY BIN</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry recyclables and compostable organic waste (that is accepted recycling bins / boxes)</li> <li>• Hot ashes</li> <li>• Car parts</li> <li>• Builders rubble / stones</li> <li>• Corrosive materials and liquids such as oil and paint</li> <li>• Soil / Turf</li> <li>• Fluorescent tubes / low energy light bulbs</li> <li>• Electrical and electronic equipment</li> <li>• Pesticides</li> <li>• Batteries</li> <li>• Commercial / trade waste</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic sacks (with or without recyclable waste in them)</li> <li>• Nappies &amp; incontinence pads</li> <li>• Carrier bags</li> <li>• Textiles (clothes, bedding, duvets etc)</li> <li>• Egg boxes (plastic)</li> <li>• Flower pots</li> <li>• Cling film</li> <li>• Food waste</li> <li>• Polystyrene</li> <li>• Broken toys</li> <li>• Any other plastics not listed in sections 4.1 &amp; 4.2.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green waste or food waste contained in any type of plastic bag</li> <li>• Any type of degradable / biodegradable bag/sack (including corn starch bags)</li> <li>• Garden items such as plastic flower pots / trays</li> <li>• Any items that should be in the recycling or residual domestic bins / boxes</li> <li>• Soil / turf</li> <li>• Stones / hardcore / rubble</li> <li>• Large branches (over 10 cm, 4" diameter)</li> <li>• Pieces of wood or fence panels</li> </ul>
<b>FOOD WASTE (23I or 25I caddy - where provided)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging of any sort</li> <li>• Plastic bags</li> </ul>		

## **6.0 Frequency of collection**

### **6.1 Standard Collection Service for Domestic Properties and HMO's**

All domestic bins are collected on an alternate weekly basis unless alternative arrangements have been agreed or for operational arrangements e.g. to facilitate Christmas collections.

The garden waste collection service in the Borough Council of Wellingborough only runs for 9 months of the year on an alternate weekly basis. We are looking to harmonise garden waste collections across North Northamptonshire by 2022.

Food waste caddies are collected weekly.

### **6.2 Flats**

The standard collection frequency for flats is fortnightly (refuse and recycling) however it is recognised that due to limited storage in some locations; alternative arrangements may need to be agreed. These will be assessed and agreed individually.

## **7.0 Collection point**

Bins must be placed at the kerbside for collection. For the purpose of this policy the kerbside is where your property meets the public highway. If properties are located down a private driveway / access road then the bins must be presented where the private access road / driveway meets the public highway.

In a small number of cases due to the access or location of a property it may not be possible for residents to place bins near the public highway for collection. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis to agree suitable collection arrangements.

## **8.0 Collection time**

Any bins or boxes must be placed at the kerbside by 6.30am on day of collection, unless the resident is eligible for an assisted collection. They must not be placed out any earlier than 6pm the night before collection. After emptying they must be removed from the highway no later than 8am the following morning.

## **9.0 Collection day**

Information on your day of collection can be found on your Council website. Any changes to collection days will be notified to residents in advance of any changes.

## **10.0 Excess / Side waste**

The following arrangements apply in relation to excess / side waste

### **10.1 *Black residual domestic waste:***

Excess waste/side waste beside or piled on top of the black residual domestic wheeled bin will not be collected and will be recorded by the collection crew.

### **10.2 *Co-mingled recycling***

Additional recycling materials for the recycling bin will be collected as long as these are contained in a clear sack next to the bin, or in the case of cardboard flattened and placed next to the bin. Any excess waste put out for collection in black / or dark coloured sacks will not be collected. If you regularly produce excess recycling waste additional recycling capacity can be provided free of charge.

### **10.4 *Garden waste***

Excess waste will not be collected, with the exception of Christmas trees which can be placed next to your garden waste bin for collection.

### **10.5 *Food waste***

Excess waste is not collected and should be contained within your external food caddy.

## **11.0 Bin lids**

Wheeled bins will only be collected if the bin lid is closed otherwise it will not be emptied. This is to limit the potential for waste to fall or blow out of the bin when it is being lifted by the bin lift.

## **12.0 Missed collections**

We will only return for missed collections reported within 72 hours of your scheduled collection day. Any missed collections reported after this time will not be collected until the next scheduled collection day unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed at the discretion of the Operations Manager. Missed collections will be collected within 48 hours of report.

If the crew has reported the bin as not out at the time of collection or in the incorrect collection point we will not return to collect it before the next scheduled collection day.



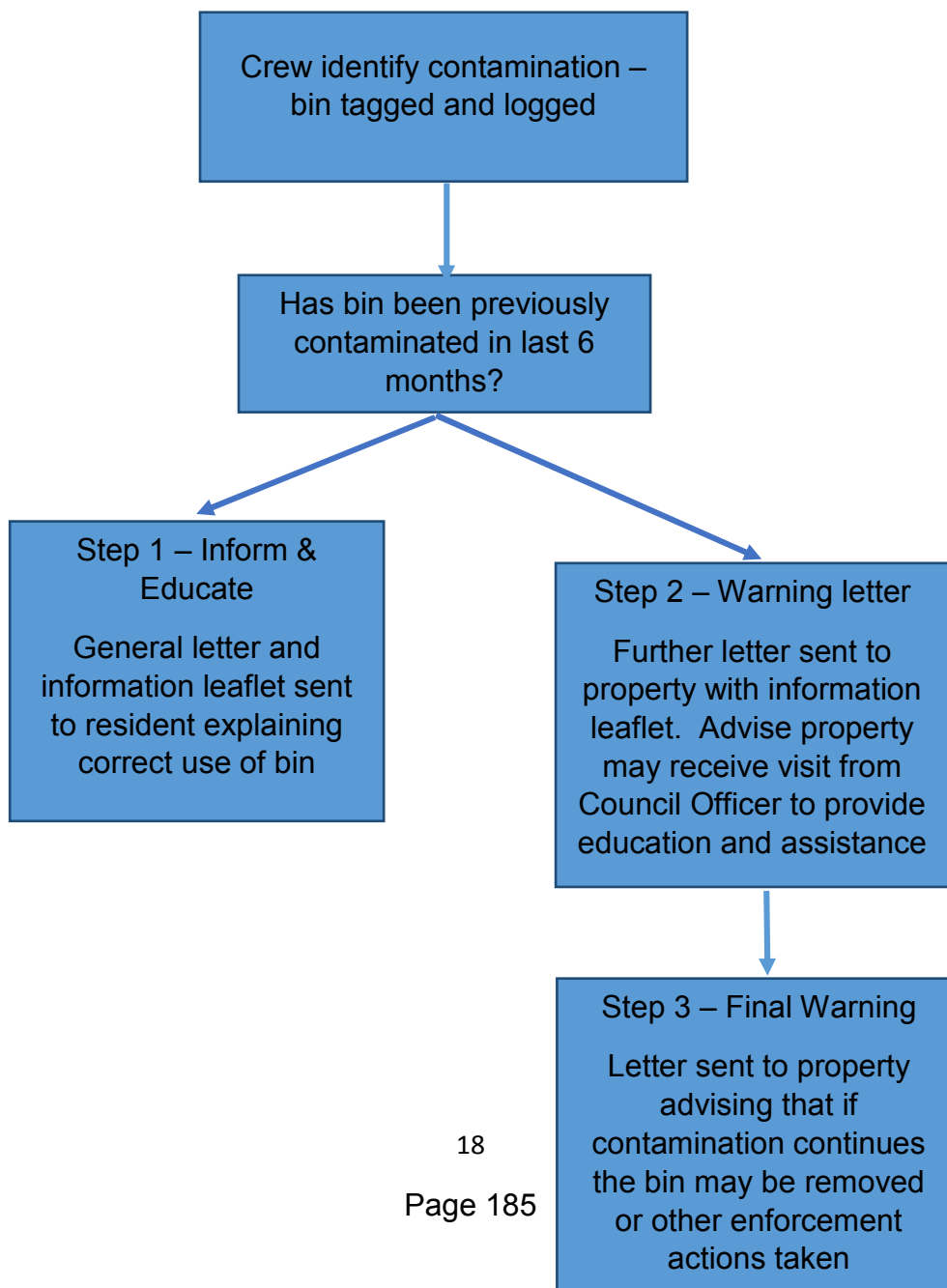
If the bin has been tagged or reported by the crew as too heavy we will not return to empty until your next scheduled collection day and the householder must have removed sufficient material to allow the bin to be safely emptied.

If the bin has been tagged or reported by the crew as contaminated we will not return to empty until your next scheduled collection day and the householder must have removed the contaminated material for the bin to be emptied. Please see section [13.0](#) for further information on contaminated bins.

### 13.0 Contaminated bins

The collection crew will tag and record contaminated bins. The resident will need to remove the contaminant and put the bin out for collection on their next scheduled collection day. We will not return to collect it before then. Where a resident continually contaminates a bin, the Council will provide information and education to the resident. Should the issue continue will consider restrictions / enforcement action.

The process for dealing with contaminated bins is detailed below:



#### **14.0 Assisted collections**

Residents who are unable to safely move a wheeled bin container or recycling box to the required collection point may qualify for an assisted collection by completing an application form, which is approved by an officer. Bins will be collected from your property, emptied and returned.

These collections are designed for those that live alone and are unable to present their waste for collection for one of the following circumstances.

- Permanent Infirmity
- Temporary infirmity (following operations)
- Disability
- Inability to use other available aids (neighbours assistance or wheels for boxes)

Where appropriate, evidence may be requested to prove eligibility to the service. As the service is specific to the applicant it will be necessary for the service to be periodically reviewed to ensure household circumstances do not change in a way that will affect eligibility. Customers no longer requiring assisted collections will be removed from the assisted collection list.

Residents that have an able bodied person living at the premises will be ineligible for an assisted collection. Information will be verified and if false information has been given the service will be removed with immediate effect.

#### **15.0 Overweight bins**

Where a crew member cannot safely manoeuvre and position a wheeled bin onto the vehicle, or where the vehicle cannot lift the bin due to the weight of the bin, then it will be left un-emptied and reported by the collection crew. The vehicle bin lifts have a safe working weight limit which crews cannot override.

Where any bin is found to be too heavy the householder will be required to remove sufficient material from the bin and dispose of it in a responsible manner.

Once sufficient weight has been removed, the bin should be presented on the next scheduled collection date. We will not return to empty the bin before the next scheduled collection date.

#### **16.0 Damaged, lost or replacement bins / caddies**

Any wheeled bin or caddy that is damaged or destroyed by the councils equipment or staff, or vandalised by another party during the course of their work will be repaired or replaced free of charge. The size of bin provided will be in line with this policy and may not be a like for like replacement.

Any wheeled bin or caddy that is intentionally damaged or destroyed by the property owner must be replaced at their cost.

Bins and caddies will not be replaced if they are in a serviceable condition and it is the householder's responsibility to clean them. Private companies are available to offer this service. The council does not offer a cleaning service or clean bins even if this was not the fault of the current resident.

Where residual bins are lost or stolen from a property they will be replaced with a 180 litre container, as appropriate regardless of whether a 240 litre bin was at the property previously.

Where bins are stored in communal areas and there are issues with people contaminating bins, locks can be provided. A charge will apply for the service for the fitting of the lock and replacement keys a charge will be applied for this service.

Replacement bins may not be new bins, as to encourage recycling and waste minimisation, bins which have been returned which are of an acceptable quality will be cleaned and re-used.

#### **17.0 Provision of smaller bins**

Where space is limited or a resident requests they can be provided with a smaller 180l wheeled bin for recycling or garden waste.

#### **18.0 Access issues**

Where we are unable to access a road for issues such as parked cars, roadworks, building works, road closures etc. we will attempt to return and collect the bins when we next have a collection crew in the area.

#### **19.0 Severe weather / extraordinary circumstances**

During severe weather / extraordinary circumstances (e.g. flooding, pandemics) we will:

- Continue to undertake the regular scheduled collection of waste wherever it is deemed safe to do so.
- The decision on whether it is safe for a refuse collection vehicle to access a specific location/street has to be determined locally by the driver of that vehicle. Among key factors that apply are: road conditions, weather conditions, access past parked cars, risks to public and/or the crew.
- We will try to return and collect missed bins as soon as possible after the scheduled collection date. If this is not possible due to continuing conditions we may suspend some collections to enable us to prioritise collection of residual domestic waste.

## **20.0 Bulky waste collections**

A bulky collection service is available to all domestic properties within North Northamptonshire. A maximum of 5 items can be collected on any one occasion. This is a chargeable service.

These collections are only for items that you would take with you when you move house not fixtures or fittings. A list of items that will be accepted as part of this service is available on the Council's website. All items due for collection must be placed at the nearest access point to the road within your property boundary. If items are left outside please ensure that they are covered in the event of rain.

When attending if items are considered too big or heavy for an operative we have the right to refuse the service.

Collection staff will not go onto private property to make collections unless there are exceptional circumstances, which have been agreed with the relevant department.

If items are not available for collection on the agreed date a fee may be charged for a return visit. 48 hours cancellation notice must be given for any unwanted collections. If notice is not given or operatives arrive at the premises and no items are presented for collection, refunds will not be issued.

## **21.0 Commercial / Trade Waste**

Any waste from a premise used for the purpose of a trade or business is classed as commercial waste and will be subject to a charge for residual and recycling waste. Further information on can be found on your Council website for the services offered. Information on your responsibilities as a business can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/managing-your-waste-an-overview>.

## **22.0 Waste from premises occupied by a club, society or other organisation**

Waste from these premises is treated as commercial waste and charges will apply to the collection and disposal of waste and recycling.

## **23.0 Waste from residential homes**

Waste from these premises is treated as commercial waste and charges will apply to the collection and disposal of waste and recycling.

## **24.0 Waste from a University, school or other educational establishment**

Waste from these premises is treated as household waste. A charge for the collection and disposal of this waste is made as allowed under the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 for waste and recycling.

### **25.0 Waste from Halls or premises used for public meetings (e.g. village hall, community centres)**

If the hall is used wholly or mainly for public meetings the waste produced is classed as “Household waste for which a charge for collection may be made”. Waste from these premises will be subject to a collection charge for waste and recycling.

### **26.0 Clinical waste**

Clinical waste is deemed as such by the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 or by a medical professional such as a Doctor, Consultant or District Nurse. This waste may be hazardous to any person coming into contact with it and therefore must be collected and disposed of appropriately.

#### ***26.1 Clinical waste produced by medical practitioners***

We are not responsible for the collection and disposal arrangements of clinical waste within the Council's area, if the health authority is undertaking treatment of patients in the home. The health authority must ensure the necessary arrangements are in place for the collection/disposal of this waste themselves or by using a third-party contractor.

Charges apply to these clinical waste collections and cover the cost of collection and disposal of this waste.

Where a medical body requests a clinical waste collection on behalf of a patient, they must provide details for invoices to be sent and charges will be made quarterly in arrears.

#### ***26.2 Clinical waste produced by residents***

The Council can offer a free of charge collection and disposal service to those residents that are self-administering their treatment and produce clinical waste, such as needles, in their home. A referral from the Health Care Authority will be required to provide the information needed to enable us to undertake the collections safely. This is to ensure the Council's have details of the types of waste to be collected and the likely hazards.

#### ***26.3 Clinical waste produced by residents***

Any other waste arising from medical, nursing, dental, veterinary, pharmaceutical, investigation, treatment, care teaching or research, or the collection of blood for transfusion, being waste which may cause infection to any person coming into contact with it will be required to be collected as clinical waste. Charges will be made at a commercial collection rate and will cover the cost of special disposal arrangements.

## **27.0 Hygiene / Offensive waste**

Hygiene / offensive Waste is non-clinical waste which can comprise of sanitary towels, nappies and incontinence pads (known collectively as sanpro waste). This waste is not considered hazardous when it originates from a healthy population. Such waste produced by a domestic household should be triple wrapped and placed in the general waste container.

If a large amount of offensive waste is being produced at a household an additional general 180l bin can be supplied. The need for an additional bin in these circumstances will be assessed by an officer and each case will be looked at on an individual basis. The following circumstances will be considered:

Where one or more adults in the household have a condition that causes them to produce a large amount of incontinence pads, adult nappies, soiled clothing and/or bedding.

There are two or more children in the household wearing disposable nappies.

There are one or more children in the household with a medical condition that causes them to produce a large amount of nappies, soiled clothing and/or bedding.

Householders or carers are required to complete an application form before the additional bin can be delivered, in order to have a record of why the additional bin is being supplied. Bins issued on medical grounds or for children in nappies will be reviewed on an annual basis and may require a visit from an officer for assessment, if deemed necessary.

## Schedule 2 – Household Waste Recycling Centres

### 1.0 Site Locations and Hours of Opening

There are four HWRCs in North Northamptonshire; Corby, Kettering, Rushden and Wellingborough.



All sites are open 5 days a week (2 days closed on a rota), all sites are open on a Friday, Saturday and a Sunday.

Centre	Address	● = Open ● = Closed						
		Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
Corby	Kettering Road, Corby, NN17 3JG	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kettering	Garrard Way, Telford Way Industrial Estate, Kettering, NN16 8TD	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Rushden	Northampton Road (on old A45), Rushden, NN10 6BW	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Wellingborough	Paterson Road, Wellingborough, NN8 4BZ	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

All sites are open 10:00 – 18:00 (summer and winter).

If residents arrive before a site opens, they may be asked to move their vehicle if a traffic queue forms which blocks the highway.

All sites are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and will close at 2 pm on Christmas Eve.

All sites are open on a bank holiday except where these fall on the centres closed days (see table above).

## 2.0 Safety at Household Waste Recycling Centres

The HWRCs are operational sites which are open to members of the public. Therefore appropriate health and safety rules are enforced to ensure the safety of staff and residents.

Site rules for residents / visitors to site require people to:

- wear suitable clothing (no open toe footwear);
- use gloves when handling sharp or heavy items;
- place all items in the correct containers;
- co-operate with staff and ask for assistance if needed;
- bring someone along to the site if they are bringing heavy or awkwardly sized items;
- keep children and animals inside your vehicle at all times;
- observe the 5mph speed limit;
- respect staff and other customers;
- comply with all policies such as the e-permit and DIY waste restrictions;
- pay for all commercial and chargeable household waste;
- only park in marked bays or as directed by staff;
- be alert when at a HWRC, and not to use mobile phones or cameras.

Site staff will assist members of the public who request assistance provided that providing assistance will not put either the member of staff, the member of public or other site users at risk.

## 3.0 Vehicles Access

Commercial-type vehicles and cars towing a trailer (under 1.8m in length) require a free waste e-permit to use waste recycling centres. Please see section [7.0](#) for more information.

All vehicles over 3.5 tonnes laden weight and trailers over 1.8m in length **are not allowed** at any of the recycling centres.



#### 4.0 Pedestrian access

For safety reasons pedestrian access is not permitted at any of the recycling centres.

#### 5.0 Materials Accepted at the HWRCs

The HWRCs are provided for the primary purpose of enabling Northamptonshire’s residents the free disposal of household waste from their homes (i.e. their normal place of residence).

The following waste types can be recycled at the HWRCs:



\*DIY restrictions apply – see section [6.0](#).

To reduce queues and to maximise recycling residents are asked to pre-sort their waste before visiting the HWRC.

Gas bottles and Fire Extinguishers can be accepted at Corby, Kettering and Rushden sites only.

Cooking oil - Small amounts emptied into a 500ml bottle can also be put into the general waste bin at home.

Residual household waste is any household waste that cannot be recycled. This waste will be sent to landfill or treatment which costs more money than recycling.

The HWRC site staff may require additional verification about the source of waste brought to site for free disposal and they may ask residents to completed a declaration form.

The site staff have discretion to refuse free disposal of waste at the HWRCs.

Intimidating, threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff or other site users will not be tolerated. Action may be taken to pursue offenders and prevent a recurrence.

## 6.0 Materials that are restricted or NOT accepted at HWRCs

The HWRCs do not accept asbestos, car tyres, whole cars, caravans, trailers, clinical waste and some types of hazardous waste.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Accepted at all sites</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Asbestos	No	See restrictions at household waste recycling centres (link to policy).
Plasterboard	Yes	Specific policies apply to DIY waste. See restrictions at household waste recycling centres (link to policy).
Chemical and radioactive hazardous waste*	No	Different restrictions for different waste streams
Paint	Yes	Not widely promoted but water based paint
Fire Extinguishers	No	Can be disposed of at selected sites only: Corby Kettering Rushden
Weed Killer	No	The recycling centres do not have the correct chemical storage facilities so cannot accept weed killer.
Antifreeze	Yes	Residents are advised to seek a member of staff for help. Must be domestic waste.
Oil Filters (automotive)	Yes	Residents are advised

		to seek a member of staff for help. Must be domestic waste.
Used engine oil	Yes	
Caravans and Trailers	No	
Car Tyres	No	Recycling Centres are not licensed to recycle tyres. Residents will need to find a private company to do this.
Gas Bottles	No	Can be disposed of at selected sites only: Corby Kettering Rushden
Clinical Waste and Sharps	No	Residents not able to dispose of sharps or hazardous clinical waste at the household waste recycling centres. Advised to contact doctor or local health authority for advice on disposal.
Landlord's waste	No	See restrictions at household waste recycling centres (link to policy).
Trade Waste	Yes – selected sites	See restrictions at household waste recycling centres (link to policy). Can be disposed of at selected sites only: • Kettering • Rushden
DIY Waste		See restrictions at household waste recycling centres (link to policy).

## 6.1 Asbestos

Asbestos and asbestos bonded materials cannot be disposed of at any of the HWRCs.

Asbestos is a dangerous substance that can cause severe respiratory illness and must be **disposed of with care**. If a resident discovers asbestos or asbestos bonded materials in their home during building work or DIY activities the general advice is to leave it and consult with specialist companies. If the material is damaged or you have to remove it, you must make arrangements for its **safe removal and disposal**.

There are licensed, specialist asbestos removal companies who will arrange for the safe removal and disposal of asbestos.

Alternatively small quantities of 'bonded asbestos', arising from household maintenance and repairs, can be taken by residents to the Council's waste transfer station operated by Suez, located on the Brackmills Industrial Estate (Liliput Road) in Northampton under the Asbestos Disposal Scheme.

Depending on the type of asbestos, a charge may be applied (see [Schedule 3 Section 1.0](#) for further details).

## 6.2 **Plasterboard**

There are plasterboard recycling facilities at all of the HWRCs. However there are restrictions about how this waste is presented.

Residents should ensure that any plasterboard brought to a HWRC for disposal is:

- stripped of any contaminating material such as wood, tiles and bricks;
- removed from bags and wrappers.

If plasterboard is not completely free of contaminating material it may be refused. Residents should use the checklist below:

<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>No thank you</b>
Plasterboard with wallpaper or paint Plasterboard with foil backing	Tiles Bricks and breeze blocks Batting and fixings

## 6.3 **Hazardous Waste**

Hazardous Waste is any liquid or solid material that may cause harm to people or the environment if not disposed of correctly. The following are examples of hazardous waste that people may have at home

<b>Household products</b>	<b>Garden products</b>	<b>Car products</b>
---------------------------	------------------------	---------------------

Paint	Weed killers	Antifreeze
Oven cleaner		Oil filters
Fire extinguishers		Used engine oil

Information on whether these are accepted at the HWRC's can be found in section [6.0](#).

#### **6.4 Clinical Waste and Sharps disposal**

Clinical waste classed as hazardous and clinical sharps cannot be accepted for disposal at the household waste recycling centres. Residents should contact their doctor or local health authority for advice on hazardous clinical waste and sharps disposal. The Council can arrange for the collection of clinical waste in certain circumstances as detailed in section [26.0](#).

#### **6.5 Landlord's Waste**

Landlords should note that any waste from a property that they own but do not live in, or if waste is created by someone who has been paid to complete the work, the waste is considered to be commercial / trade waste and must be paid for.

#### **6.6 Commercial / Trade Waste**

All residents should note that if waste is generated as a result of paying for a tradesperson to do work on their house, then the waste is considered to be trade waste and must be paid for (see <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/waste-and-recycling/Pages/trade-or-commercial-waste.aspx> for further information).

#### **6.7 DIY Waste**

The maximum number of trips permitted to dispose of DIY waste produced by residents as a result of DIY work on their own home is determined by the type of vehicle.

<b>Vehicle type</b>	<b>Number of free DIY waste trips per 2 months (60 days)</b>
Small cars	8 trips
Large cars Estate cars MPV's People carriers 4x4s without pickup Campervans or minibuses with rear seats and fittings (used for passenger transport)	4 trips

Vehicle type	Number of free DIY waste trips per 12 months (365 days)
Pick-ups and crew cabs under 3.5 tonnes gross laden weight	6 trips as per <a href="#">e-permit scheme</a>
Vans under 3.5 tonnes gross laden weight	
Campervans and minibuses with rear seats and fittings removed	
Horseboxes under 3.5 tonnes gross laden weight	
Any medium vehicle towing trailers under 1.8m in length	

DIY waste (or construction and demolition waste) is large amounts of waste that is generated through building or renovation work in a home or garden.

By law waste types, such as DIY waste, that may be produced through building or renovation work in a resident's own home or garden are classed as 'non-household waste' and the Council does not have to accept these waste types free of charge.

Examples of DIY waste (not a comprehensive list):

- Hardcore, rubble and bricks
- Tiles and ceramics
- Paving slabs
- Plasterboard
- Roofing materials
- Soil, turf and tree trunks from landscaping activities
- Baths, toilets and basins
- Fitted carpets and underlay
- Doors, windows and frames
- Kitchen units and work surfaces
- Built in wardrobes and cupboards
- Shed and fence panels
- Laminate flooring
- Timber and MDF hardboard
- Central heating system components

If a resident wants to make more than the permitted number of visits to dispose of DIY waste then they will be directed you to one of the HWRCs that has a weighbridge and the waste will be treated as chargeable.

The HWRC site staff may require additional verification about the source of waste brought to site for free disposal and they may ask residents to complete a declaration form.

## **7.0 HWRC e-permit scheme**

The electronic permit (e-permit) scheme which is in force at all HWRCs applies to residents taking household waste to the sites in a car towing a trailer or a commercial-type vehicle: residents will require an e-permit to access the HWRCs. The waste e-permit scheme limits a car towing a trailer or commercial-type vehicles to 6 visits over a 12-month period. Residents can apply for a free e-permit, or renew or edit an existing e-permit online at <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/waste-and-recycling/Pages/waste-e-permit-scheme.aspx>

Note as a part of the application process, residents must agree to the terms and conditions, of the e-permit scheme, which is strictly for household waste only.

## Schedule 3 – Other Waste Services

### 1.0 Asbestos Disposal Scheme

An asbestos disposal scheme is available for households which is subject to the guidelines and changes detailed below.

#### 1.1 Guidelines

There are strict guidelines for using the Asbestos Disposal Scheme which restrict the amount of asbestos waste that can be disposed using the scheme and the way in which it is presented. Waste will **not** be accepted if it does not fall within these guidelines:

- Only one trip per household is permitted.
- Each individual bonded asbestos sheet/pipe must be wrapped in clear thick gauge polythene sheeting (available from DIY stores) and sealed with tape to prevent the release of dust (maximum length per piece = 1.8 metres).

#### 1.2 Asbestos scheme charges

A subsidised charge is made for the following acceptable items:

- Up to an absolute maximum of 5 sheets of 900mm x 1.80 metres
- Up to an absolute maximum of 9.00 metres run of asbestos (pipe/guttering)
- 1 x asbestos water tank

Information on the applicable charges can be found at <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/waste-and-recycling/Pages/Restrictions-at-household-waste-recycling-centres.aspx>.

Items for which **no charge** is made:

- Ironing boards with asbestos iron rest pad (do not remove the pad from the ironing board)
- Small domestic asbestos fire blankets

If a resident has more than the maximum quantities shown, the whole amount is charged at the transfer station's commercial rate and none of the resident's waste will be eligible for disposal under the Scheme at any time.

This scheme is only available for asbestos removed by residents from their own home and is not for trade waste which includes asbestos that residents have paid to have removed from their home.



## 2.0 Charity Waste Recycling Permit (CWRP)

Organisations that meet the following criteria may request a Charity Waste Recycling Permit (CWRP) by completing an on-line application form issued by North Northamptonshire Council.

Criteria –

- A place of worship, or
- A charity shop selling donated goods originating from domestic property;
- A premises occupied by —
  - a community interest company (being a company which is registered as such with the registrar of companies) which collects goods for re-use or waste to prepare for re-use from domestic property, or
  - a charity or other not for profit body, which collects goods for re-use or waste to prepare for re-use from domestic property.

There is an administration fee for each application based upon the costs incurred by the Council and its contractors in administering this system. The current fee is available on our website at [\(Insert Link\)](#). Permits are linked to specific vehicles and a Permit is required for each vehicle that uses the site. Permits are valid for twelve months.

Only recyclable waste is permitted to be taken into either Kettering or Rushden Household Waste Recycling Centres in the North Northamptonshire area and it must be weighed separately. Non-recyclable waste must be taken to Sidegate Lane Waste Transfer Station (Sidegate Lane to be confirmed).

### Restrictions

Waste that **cannot** be disposed of using a Charity Waste Permit includes –

- Construction, demolition, maintenance or refurbishment waste,
- Packaging waste;
- Waste from garden clearances;
- Waste generated outside North Northamptonshire (will we require a Northamptonshire Charity to hold 2 permits? i.e. one for West and one for North?);
- House clearance waste;
- Any waste items that have been collected in return for a sum of money;
- Any items that have been donated by businesses or not directly from a householder; or
- Any waste that is being delivered to either an HWRC or Sidegate Lane Waste Transfer Station by a company that has been paid.

This list is not exhaustive but as a rule of thumb, no waste other than goods donated from domestic properties or from a place of worship will be accepted



# **North Northamptonshire Council**

## **Street Cleansing Policy**

## Document Control

The distribution of this document is controlled and the current version is available on the Council's website.

Any printed copies of this document will no longer be controlled.

### Document Details

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## **Introduction**

North Northamptonshire Council's Street Cleansing Policy aims to ensure that street cleaning services are provided in an effective and efficient manner in order to maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste disposed of.

## **Objectives**

The intention of this policy document is to ensure there are clearly defined policies and standards in relation to the delivery of the street cleansing service in North Northamptonshire to avoid uncertainty for residents, customers, Elected Members and Officers of the Council.

## **Legislative Requirements**

The Council is defined as a 'Principal Litter Authority' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and places a duty on the Council to ensure that its land (or land for which they are responsible) is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse.

These policies have been implemented to ensure we meet the requirements under the Environmental Protection 1990 and the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

## **1.0 Routine Cleansing Activities**

The Council has a range of street cleansing resources deployed across the council area to remove litter and detritus from the public highway. These include large and small mechanical sweepers and operatives for manual cleansing work. They are deployed across the area on the basis of need – typically, more resources and more frequent cleansing in town centre and urban areas, less in residential and rural areas. Cleansing schedules are designed to meet the standards set out in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse.

## **2.0 Cleansing of Major Roads**

North Northamptonshire is responsible for keeping high speed roads (but not motorways) clear of litter and refuse in accordance with Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. This operation is tightly regulated to avoid incidents and is carried out according to a cleansing schedule determined by need and the ability to work safely. On trunk roads (e.g. A14) we will work with the road operator, Highways England, to ensure a clean and tidy environment.

## **3.0 Dog Fouling**

Dog fouling is removed from pavements as part of the routine cleansing activities. It will not be removed from grass verges / park areas. Complaints of dog fouling will only be removed if there is a significant level of fouling along a stretch of pavement, otherwise it will be cleared as part of the routine activities.

## **4.0 Litter Bins**

Litter bins are provided and emptied by North Northamptonshire Council in locations near or next to the public highway or on land owned by the Council.

### ***4.1 Requests for new litter bins***

Requests for new litter bins will be assessed using the criteria in Appendix 1. This is to ensure bins are located in areas of greatest need and effectiveness.

The Council will not install litter bins on private land or areas falling under the responsibility of other public bodies including schools, colleges, bus stations and railways land.

### ***4.2 Emptying and maintenance of existing litter bins***

Only bins purchased and installed by North Northamptonshire Council will be maintained and emptied.

Bins will be emptied on a frequency to prevent them overflowing. This will be based on their location and related to intensity of use. The frequency can vary seasonally or

if special events are taking place. Monitoring and complaints will be used to re-assess the frequency of emptying if required.

All bins will be maintained to a standard that is fit for purpose and will not present a hazard to the general public. If a bin is damaged or stolen, it will be replaced only if it meets the criteria (appendix 1) for new bins.

#### **4.3 Replacement of existing litter bins**

Existing litter bins will be replaced if they are no longer safe and are being used sufficiently enough to warrant replacing. Any bins that have a history of vandalism or misuse will not be replaced.

If a bin is removed permanently the ground will be made good and any bolts / fittings removed.

#### **4.4 Emptying of litter bins on private land**

The Council does not normally empty litter bins on private land, however on occasions may undertake to do so if the bin can be incorporated into existing rounds and the owner of the bin pays for the service. The cost will depend on the location and frequency of emptying.

#### **4.5 Recycling on the Go (Dual purpose litter and recycling bins)**

The Council will consider the use of dual purpose litter and recycling bins when installing new or replacement bins. These will only be in areas of significant footfall to warrant the bin and may be removed if they are being regularly contaminated.

### **5.0 Dog Bins**

North Northamptonshire does not provide dog waste bins as bagged dog waste can be placed in an ordinary litter bins or taken home for disposal in the residual waste bin. However, some dog bins remain in place from previous arrangements and will be emptied where the Council is responsible for them. When the bin is past its useful life it may be replaced by a litter bin if there is a need for a bin in that location.

### **6.0 Removal of Fly-tipping**

The Council is responsible for the removal of fly-tipped waste located on adopted highways and other land areas managed by the council. Removal of fly-tipping located on private land is the responsibility of the land-owner.

Removal of fly-tipping will normally take place within three working days of report. Where hazardous waste has been fly-tipped, specialist removal may be required which may affect removal timescales.



Where evidence of who deposited the fly-tipping or where the waste originated is found then will be collected prior to removal and disposal of the waste. These incidents will be investigated and offenders may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or prosecuted. CCTV cameras may be used at fly-tipping “hotspots” and any evidence collected used in any investigations.

## **7.0 Leaf-fall / Tree Blossom**

At certain times of the year our cleansing schedules will be adjusted to respond to issues or leaf-fall / tree blossom on the highway.

Areas for clearance will be prioritised depending on amount of footfall, with resources concentrated on areas around town centres, shopping areas, schools and health facilities.

## **8.0 Needles / syringes**

Needles / syringes will be removed from the highway and Council owned land within 1 working day of being reported. Where these have been found out of normal working hours they should be reported to the Council's out of hours service.

## **9.0 Removal of dead animals**

Dead animals will be removed from the highway when reported to the Council where it is safe to practically to do and there is a safety risk.

## **10.0 Fly-posting**

Fly-posting will be removed from Council owned buildings and land and railings adjacent to high speed roads within 5 working days. Posters will be kept for 5 days and if not claimed in that time period will be disposed of.

## **11.0 Graffiti**

Graffiti will be removed from buildings and land for which the Council is responsible for under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Non-offensive graffiti will be removed within 3-5 working days.

Offensive graffiti will be removed within 1 working day.

The Council will assist in the removal of graffiti on private land in some cases subject to a charge, the completion of a disclaimer and where it can safety undertake the work.

## **12.0 Support for community litter picks**

The Council will support communities and local groups undertaking litter picks in their locality with the provision of sacks, litter pickers, hi-vis vests and collection of waste.

No large fly-tips or hazardous waste should be collected by groups undertaking community litter picks. The location and type of waste fly tipped should be reported to the Council to arrange collection.

The group undertaking the litter pick is responsible for ensuring the necessary risk assessment is in place.

## **13.0 Abandoned vehicles**

Abandoned vehicles should be reported to the ELVIS partnership on

Email: [elvis.recovery@northants.police.uk](mailto:elvis.recovery@northants.police.uk)

Telephone E.L.V.I.S on 08456 121 999

The vehicle will then be assessed to see whether it has been abandoned taking into account The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978. The following will be taken into account when assessing whether it has been abandoned:

1. Does it look vandalised and/or fire damaged?
2. Does it look unused and in poor condition?
3. Has it been there for over a week?
4. Is there a valid tax disc?
5. Are the wheels or petrol cap missing?
6. Have parts been removed or damaged? (e.g. broken windows or flat tyres)
7. Has it been parked or abandoned in an isolated or unusual location?
8. Is it a known area for abandoned vehicles?
9. Have you seen anybody use it or act suspiciously around it?
10. It is full of rubbish/hazardous material/ combustibles?

## Appendix 1: Bin Installation Scoring System

Each request for a new bin should be assessed using the scoring system below.

Category	Options	Score
Street Cleaning Zone	Zone 1 – High intensity of use, such as busy public areas	10
	Zone 2 – Medium intensity of use, such as mixed use and high density residential areas	5
	Zone 3 – Low intensity of use, such as low density residential housing	1
	Zone 4 – Rural roads and areas with special circumstances, such as health and safety issues	0
Proximity to existing bins	>100 metres to any bins	10
	<100 metres to 1 bin	5
	<100 metres to more than 1 bin	0
Proximity to facilities	<100 metres to educational establishment	5
	<50 metres to take away outlets	10
	<50 metres to shops	5
	<100 metres to sports facilities	2
	<50 metres to bus stops	2
	<100 metres to outdoor market/car boot sales	1
	<100 metres to other public facilities such as community centre, church, public hall	2
Established Dog Walking Route/Area	Route or area used by multiple dog owners daily (>20 dog owners)	10
	Routes are area used by a limited number of dog owners daily (10-20 dog owners)	5
	Route or area used infrequently by dog owners (<10 dog owners daily)	0
Number of requests for de-littering received within 6 months	0	0
	1-2	2
	3-5	5
	6-10	10
	Over 11	12
Number of requests for a bin received within a six month period (from different sources)	1	0
	2-10	10
	11-50	15
	51 or over	20

The overall score should be compared to the thresholds shown in the table below, to determine the success of the request.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
0-40	Unsuccessful
41 or over	Successful



# NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

## SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Borough Council of Wellingborough Street Scene Service – Future Strategic Level Options</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Iain Smith – CBC Head of Planning &amp; Environmental Services. Telephone 01536 464061 Email: <a href="mailto:iain.smith@corby.gov.uk">iain.smith@corby.gov.uk</a></b>

### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To seek approval of the Shadow Executive Committee to undertake a strategic level options appraisal on the future delivery of the Wellingborough Street Scene arrangements currently delivered by Wellingborough NORSE (WNORSE) using an external consultant.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The current street scene arrangements within the Wellingborough area are delivered via a joint venture partnership with NORSE as WNORSE which are due to expire on 28 February 2022.
- 2.2 Work now needs to be undertaken as a priority to review future options for service delivery due to the time needed to plan for and mobilise any changes against the time left remaining, circa 14 months.
- 2.3 A proposed programme of work to carry out a current state assessment, Strategic Case for Change and Options Identification and Appraisal to arrive at a preferred option prior to developing a business case is put forward for consideration.
- 2.4 The North Northants Place Board on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 considered the report, approved the recommendations and endorsed that the report be referred to the NIB for further consideration.

### **3. Recommendations**

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It is requested that the Shadow Executive Committee;

- 3.1 Authorises the North Northants Waste and Streets Officers Group to undertake a current state assessment, Strategic Case for Change and Options Identification and Appraisal (Stages 1-3 below) to arrive at a preferred option in relation to the future delivery of street scene services within the Wellingborough area, prior to developing a business case for consideration.
- 3.2 Advises on the potential source of funding for such work.
- 3.3 Notes that a future paper will be brought back regards a preferred option(s) following completion of stages 1-3 with a suggested approach to stage 4 (outline/full business case)

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Borough Council of Wellingborough's current street scene arrangements are delivered via a Teckal compliant joint venture partnership with NORSE (a company wholly owned by Norfolk County Council) as a subsidiary called WNORSE.
- 4.2 This arrangement is due to expire on 28 February 2022 and work now needs to be undertaken as a priority to review future options for service delivery due to the time needed to plan for and mobilise any changes against the time left remaining, circa 15 months.
- 4.3 The Wellingborough Service will be delivered as part of a future grouping of other similar services by the North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 going forward.
- 4.4 North Northamptonshire is currently comprised of 4 districts: Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough plus the relevant element of the County Council (NCC).
- 4.5 Street Scene Services in Corby and Kettering are delivered in-house under a shared service joint committee arrangement which started in February 2019 whilst similar services in East Northamptonshire are delivered via an externalised contract with FCC Environment (UK) Limited which started at the end of July 2018 and runs for 7 years. The Future North Northamptonshire arrangements will also include the waste disposal functions currently undertaken by NCC and their contractors for waste disposal, Household Waste Recycling Sites, Closed Landfill Monitoring etc.

### **5. Report**

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- 5.1 The approaching expiry of the current WNORSE partnership arrangement for the delivery of Wellingborough's street scene services necessitates a review of future service delivery options to ensure future service continuity for Wellingborough area residents is properly planned for, understood and maintained and best value for money is attained for the new North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority and local taxpayers.

5.2 It is important that any decision on future service delivery arrangements in the Wellingborough area is evidence driven and fully supported by local decision makers.

5.2 It is proposed that the following programme of work is undertaken to inform this decision.

5.2.1 Stage 1 - Current state assessment

Collation of key data on; service standards/specifications, performance data and complaints, budgets and costs and views via engagement with client officers, WNORSE and other key stakeholders and field observations/monitoring. This can be compared with standardised benchmarking and performance data, to produce a current state assessment/VFM type report.

This could be undertaken by Street Scene Service Managers within the North or via consultancy support and would essentially be a desktop exercise with some limited on site observations and monitoring to confirm standards and performance if deemed necessary.

5.2.2 Stage 2 - Strategic Case for Change (including identification of key strategic service objectives) and Preferred Service Design

This would involve a wider stakeholder consultation with key members and stakeholders i.e. Members of North Northants Shadow Executive and Borough Council of Wellingborough, Leadership Team of North Northamptonshire Council, North Northants Waste and Streets Group (including Client Officers of BCW), North Northants Place Board Chair and Union(s).

Consultation will be carried out with reference to the current state assessment report and will seek to identify what issues there are with current service performance and what stakeholders want the future service to look like in terms of key future service delivery elements including any non-negotiable elements and/or key risks.

This stage will also seek to identify what current key stakeholders including the NN Waste and Streets Group believe to be the key strategic objectives for the future delivery of the service e.g. cost, value for money, opportunity to harmonise services, capacity, control, external income generation, ability to innovate, agility, employment practice and ethos and resourcing etc. These strategic principles will be used to assess the service delivery options at the next stage.

5.2.3 Stage 2 - Strategic Case for Change (including identification of key strategic service objectives) and Preferred Service Design

This would involve a wider stakeholder consultation with key members and stakeholders i.e. Members of North Northants Shadow Executive and Borough Council of Wellingborough, Leadership Team of North Northamptonshire Council, North Northants Waste and Streets Group (including Client Officers of BCW), North Northants Place Board Chair and Union(s).

Consultation will be carried out with reference to the current state assessment report and will seek to identify what issues there are with current service

performance and what stakeholders want the future service to look like in terms of key future service delivery elements including any non-negotiable elements and/or key risks.

This stage will also seek to identify what current key stakeholders including the NN Waste and Streets Group believe to be the key strategic objectives for the future delivery of the service e.g. cost, value for money, opportunity to harmonise services, capacity, control, external income generation, ability to innovate, agility, employment practice and ethos and resourcing etc. These strategic principles will be used to assess the service delivery options at the next stage.

#### 5.2.4 Stage 3 - Options Identification and Appraisal

A high-level description of each of the main delivery options would be provided to key stakeholders and they would be asked to review the options against their key service strategic objectives already agreed to see what option(s) would be the best fit and to arrive at a preferred option(s) which would then forward to develop a costed outline/full business case.

The four main delivery options for the future delivery of BCW's arrangements would be;

- 1) To extend the current arrangement with NORSE (if this is possible)
- 2) To tender the services via competitive market (OJEU Process)
- 3) To bring the services in-house and join them with existing service provision covering Corby and Kettering areas
- 4) To combine the contract with that currently serving East Northamptonshire
- 5) Other form of JV/public: public provision

Any preferred option(s) identified should not negatively impact on the opportunity to harmonise future service provision for the new unitary in terms of their timing.

#### 5.2.5 Stage 4 - Preferred Option(s) Outline/Full Business Case;

Setting out strategic, financial, commercial, legal and operational issues including costings for preferred option(s) and opportunities for harmonisation with existing services.

#### 5.2.6 Stage 5 - Implementation Plan;

Plan setting out stages, timeframes, input requirements, full costings/budget and service standards/specifications to stand-up and mobilise service, including any necessary TUPE consultations and transfers.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 **Option One – Do Nothing** – and review future action(s) post vesting day after the new service grouping(s) are brought together under the new North Northants Unitary. This would further reduce the already short time period available to plan for and implement any changes to the service within the



Wellingborough area and would increase the likelihood of having to seek an extension to the current WNORSE arrangement to enable any other alternative preferred option to be implemented.

- 6.2 **Option Two – Carry out Current State Assessment, Strategic Case for Change and Options Identification and Appraisal (preferred)** – This is the recommendation of officers as it would allow work to commence to plan for the future service delivery options of the street scene service within the Wellingborough area to agree a preferred option(s) beyond the expiry of the current arrangement with NORSE. This would ensure future service continuity and best value for money is attained for the new North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority and local taxpayers.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.1 Quotations have been received from three providers and the cost is likely to be in the region of £9500. It is envisaged that stages 1, 2 and 3 can be undertaken with consultancy support, although stage 1 could equally be undertaken in house if capacity allows.

- 7.1.2 There are no funds remaining within the LGR Programme or the Waste Partnership to fund this work, so the four collection authorities in the North have agreed to share the cost between them, with Wellingborough bearing 50% of the cost and the other three equally sharing the remainder.

### **7.2 Legal**

- 7.2.1 There are no direct legal implications that result from this report although there is a need to ensure that value for money is attained with respect to procurement of the work programme proposed.

### **7.3 Risk**

- 7.3.1 A key risk results from failure to progress arrangements for the future delivery of the WNORSE service pre-vesting day as this would significantly reduce the already short time period available to plan for future changes prior to expiry of the current WNORSE arrangement and to implement any changes to the service. This would increase the likelihood of having to seek an extension to the current WNORSE arrangement or other hurried alternative, which may not present best value for money for taxpayers.

### **7.4 Consultation**

- 7.4.1 Internal consultation has been carried out with the NN Waste and Street Scene Officers group who have endorsed this report. Wider consultation with other key stakeholders will be carried out as part of the work programme proposed.

### **7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 Overview and Scrutiny have not commented on this report.

## 7.6 **Environmental Impact**

7.6.1 Whilst the service has a significant environmental impact, there is no new environmental impact arising from this report.

## 7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 There is no new community impact arising from this report.

## 7.8 **Equalities**

7.8.1 There are no negative equalities impacts arising from this report.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 There are no background papers that relate to this report.

## **NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE**

### **SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**3 February 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Elections- Scale of Fees and Charges</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Adele Wylie</b> <b>Director of Legal and Democratic</b> <a href="mailto:adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk">adele.wylie@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>

#### **List of Appendices**

##### **Appendix A – Scale of Fees**

#### **1. Purpose**

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- 1.1 To seek agreement for a scale of fees for the Returning Officer and note fees and charges in connection with unitary, town and parish elections, parish polls and neighbourhood planning referendums.

#### **2. Recommendations**

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- 2.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee;
  - 2.1.1 approves the Returning Officer fees listed at Appendix A to this report.
  - 2.1.2 Notes all other fees and charges within the Scale of Fees at Appendix A

#### **3. Reasons**

- 3.1 To ensure that there is a consistent and transparent approach to payments for administering elections within North Northamptonshire

#### **4. Background**

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- 4.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the council to appoint an officer of the council to be the Returning Officer in local elections; for North Northamptonshire the Chief Executive is the appointed Returning Officer. For all other elections, the appointment is by legislation.
- 4.2 The role of the Returning Officer is to prepare, plan and manage elections. It should be noted that it is distinct and separate from the substantive Chief Executive role and therefore when acting as Returning Officer, he is directly accountable to the courts as an independent statutory officer rather than accountable to the Council. A natural consequence of this is that should legal

- action be commenced due to actions taken in respect of the election, it shall be taken against him personally.
- 4.3 It is a legislative requirement that the Returning Officer's expenditure in delivering an election is met by the Council. Expenditure includes staff payments and any necessary disbursements.
  - 4.4 Although the Returning Officer may determine a scale of fees and charges which will enable him to deliver a successful election, it is considered prudent that the council note the proposed scales of expenditure to ensure that they are aware of the financial envelope that the Returning Officer will work within. It should be noted however that these may be changed by the Returning Officer should he require it.
  - 4.5 A Northamptonshire wide Scale of Fees is proposed to ensure that there is consistency across the whole of Northamptonshire and that staff know that there is no difference in remuneration between the electoral areas. There are similar arrangements throughout the country. It should be noted that proposed staff fees are not less than they have been in the sovereign Councils.
  - 4.6 The proposed Scale of Fees at Appendix A has been drafted following consultation with colleagues within Northamptonshire and an examination of best practice from around the country. Further, the scale was submitted to the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) which is the body that represents election professionals in the UK for comment, and the AEA agreed that they were fair and reasonable in comparison to other scales adopted by other Councils.
  - 4.7 Members previously agreed that Town and Parish Councils will be recharged for the cost of administering elections on their behalf and the proposed scale also helps to provide some indication to parish and town councils of the likely costs they will be liable to incur.
  - 4.8 Returning Officer fees vary throughout the country and there is not a standard approach or formula to determining them. The proposed fees are set out within the Scale of Fees at Appendix A. They were reached by consulting with the district and borough councils within North Northamptonshire, councils throughout the East Midlands and other councils of a similar electorate size to the new council.
  - 4.9 In relation to the proposed Returning Officer fees for administering the election of members of North Northamptonshire, they are based upon the agreed fee of £490 per ward for the 2017 Northampton County Council elections but with a small uplift of £60 based upon the complexity of delivering elections based on a 3 member electoral ward.
  - 4.10 In some instances, the proposed Returning Officer fees would mean that they would be lower than that payable for a three member ward for an existing Council, which would be for example £650 for Kettering Borough and around £850 for East Northants. In the other two areas, the fee would be largely the same.
  - 4.11 The proposed fees are considered to be reasonable and proportionate considering the geographical size of the area, electorate number and complexity of three member wards.

- 4.12 The fees for conducting Parliamentary and Police and Crime Commissioner elections are regulated by the Returning Officers' Fees and Charges Orders made by Government.

## **5. Resources and Financial**

- 5.1 Town and Parish Councils would be recharged for the administration of elections on their behalf.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 As outlined in the report, consultation has been undertaken with elections teams within the District and Borough Councils. The AEA was also consulted on the proposed staff fees.

## **7. Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Climate Impact**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. Community Impact**

- 9.1 The successful administration of elections is essential to ensuring democracy for electors within North Northamptonshire.

## **10. Conclusions**

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- 10.1 The proposals contained in this report seek to ensure that elections within North Northamptonshire are conducted in an efficient and transparent way.

## **11. Background Papers**

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- 11.1 None.

## APPENDIX A

### North Northamptonshire Council ELECTION OF WARD, PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILLORS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD REFERENDUMS

Scale of expenditure fixed under Section 36(4) and (5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983

Effective from 1 April 2021

<b>PART 1</b>			
<b>Returning Officer's Fees</b>			
The fees to be paid to the Returning Officer for conducting an election; giving the prescribed notices; preparing, supplying and distributing nomination papers and forms of consent; preparing for signature, verifying and adjudicating upon nomination papers; appointing deputy returning officers, including the deputy returning officers fee; issuing poll cards; issuing and receiving postal ballot papers; arranging for and conducting the poll; counting the votes; declaring the result and making a return of the same; generally performing all the duties which a returning officer is required to perform and for covering all disbursements and expenses other than those for which provision is made in Part 2, but excluding both the employees' and employer's share of superannuation and national insurance contributions where payable, shall be as follows:-			
<b>1</b>	<b>In a contested election</b>		
<b>Where the election is for unitary councillors</b>			
(a)	For each ward	<b>£550</b>	
<b>Where the election is for parish/town councillors or a Referendum to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan</b>			
(b)	i	For every 500 electors (or part thereof) in each parish, parish ward or town boundary (single election)	<b>£65</b>
	ii	For every 500 electors (or part thereof) in each parish, parish ward or town boundary (combined election)	<b>£20</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>In an uncontested election</b>		
<b>For unitary councillors</b>			
(a)	For each ward	<b>£150</b>	
<b>For parish/town councillors</b>			
(b)	For each parish or town council	<b>£25</b>	£15 additional fee for each parish ward

**PART 2**  
**Disbursements**

**POLLING STATION COSTS**

**Staffing**

(a)	Presiding Officer's fee	<b>£225</b>	Additional £25 for each combined election up to a maximum of 3
(b)	Poll Clerk's fee	<b>£155</b>	Additional £15 for each combined election up to a maximum of 3  Part time hours at a proportionate rate as determined by the RO
(c)	Polling Station Inspector's fee	<b>£250</b>	
(d)	Mileage rate for Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officers and Polling Station Staff  (Clerical fee- 8p per electorate- take it out of that pot)	<b>45p per mile</b>  <b>Flat fee- £15, £8</b>	To include travel to and from; face-to-face training sessions ballot box collection point polling station verification
(e)	Training Fee to train Polling Station Staff	<b>£50</b>	
(f)	Training Fee for Polling Station Staff	<b>£30</b>	

**Premises, printing and equipment related costs**

	The rental or statutory charges* in respect of providing permanent polling stations	Actual & necessary costs	
F8	The rental and other costs in respect of providing temporary polling stations	Actual & necessary costs	
	Heating and lighting (per polling station)	Actual & necessary costs	
	Conveyance of ballot boxes and voting screens	Actual &	

		necessary costs	
	The preparation of a room for the purpose of a poll, and of a count, and cleaning and reinstating the room (per station)	Actual & necessary costs	In the case of a school maintained by a local authority, which may be used free of hire charge, the caretaker's fee is to be paid in accordance with the allowances in force in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service; or any local agreement:  in any other building:
	Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as polling stations or places of count	Actual & necessary costs	
F9	Preparation and transport costs for polling station equipment	Actual & necessary costs	
F10	The provision of equipment for polling stations	Actual & necessary costs	
F11	The printing of all ballot papers, electoral registers, corresponding number lists, absent voting lists and notices (Annex E)	Actual & necessary costs	



## POSTAL VOTE COSTS

### Staffing

(a)	Postal Vote Manager	<b>£25:00 per hour</b> (Evening sessions) <b>£22;50 per hour</b> (Daytime sessions)
(b)	Postal Vote Supervisor	<b>£22:50 per hour</b> (Evening sessions) <b>£20:00 per hour</b> (Daytime sessions)
(c)	Postal Vote Assistant	<b>£17:50 per hour</b> (Evening sessions) <b>£15:00 per hour</b> (Daytime sessions)
(d)	Postal Vote Scanner	<b>£20:00 per hour</b> (Evening Sessions) <b>£17:50 per hour</b> (Daytime sessions)
(e)	Training Fee to train Postal Vote Staff	<b>£50</b>
(f)	Training Fee for Postal Vote Staff	<b>£30</b>

### Premises, printing and postage related costs

G4	Printing and stationery costs for postal voting	Actual & necessary costs
G5	Postal voting postal costs - outward	Actual & necessary costs
G6	Postal vote postage costs – inward	Actual & necessary costs
G7	Accommodation costs for postal voting (if any)	Actual & necessary costs
G8	Equipment costs for postal voting	Actual & necessary costs
G9	Cost of postal vote ‘sweeps’	Actual & necessary costs

## POSTAL VOTING COSTS

### Staff Costs

G1	Checking of postal vote papers	£150 fee plus travel fees
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### Premises, printing and postage related costs

G4	Printing and stationery costs for postal voting	Actual & necessary costs
G5	Postal voting postal costs - outward	Actual & necessary costs
G6	Postal vote postage costs – inward	Actual & necessary costs
G7	Accommodation costs for postal voting (if any)	Actual & necessary costs
G8	Equipment costs for postal voting	Actual & necessary costs
G9	Cost of postal vote 'sweeps'	Actual & necessary costs

## VERIFICATION AND COUNT COSTS

### Staff costs

(a)	Verification/Count Manager	<p><b>£35 per hour</b> for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£32.50</b> per hour for daytime</p> <p>No mileage payable</p>
(b)	Control Table Staff	<p><b>£25:00 per hour</b> for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£22:50</b> an hour for daytime</p>
(c)	Verification/Count Supervisor	<p><b>£25:00 per hour</b> for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£22:50</b> an hour for daytime</p>
(d)	Verification/Count Assistant	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£15:00</b> an hour for daytime</p> <p>No mileage payable</p>
(e)	Senior Verification/Count staff (as determined by the Returning Officer)	<p><b>£22.50</b> for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£20.00</b> per hour for daytime</p>
(f)	Media Team	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p>£15:00 per hour for daytime</p>
(f)	Car Parking & Buildings and general tasks as determined by the Returning Officer (incl. security)	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£15:00</b> per hour for daytime</p>
(g)	IT Support	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p>£15:00 per hour for daytime</p>
(h)	Front of House Assistants	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p> <p><b>£15:00</b> per hour for daytime</p>
(i)	Runners	<p><b>£17:50</b> per hour for night count (end of poll onwards), weekends/bank holiday</p>

		<b>£15:00</b> per hour for daytime
(j)	Training Fee to train Count Supervisors (when undertaken prior to Count)	<b>£50</b>
(k)	Training Fee for Count Supervisors (when undertaken prior to Count)	<b>£30</b>
<b>Count Accommodation, equipment, conveyance and security costs</b>		
	Transfer of ballot boxes from verification to count venue	Actual & necessary costs
15	Hire and associated verification/count premises costs	Actual & necessary costs
16	Equipment and stationery costs for the count (including count refreshments, if any)	Actual & necessary costs
17	Conveyance of count equipment etc	Actual & necessary costs
18	Security costs for the count	If employed by the Returning Officer, rates payable to other count staff apply. If provided externally – actual and necessary costs.

## OTHER COSTS

J3	Training courses	Actual & necessary costs
J4	Costs of materials and services	Actual & necessary costs
J6	RO's Superannuation costs	Calculated by payroll
N/a	Encouragement of electoral participation in accordance with the Electoral Administration Act 2006	Actual & necessary costs
N/a	Any other costs not allocated elsewhere	Actual & necessary costs

## POLL CARD COSTS

H2	Equipment costs for poll cards	Actual & necessary costs
H3	Printing and stationery costs for poll cards	Actual & necessary costs
H4	Postage or delivery costs for poll cards	2 <sup>nd</sup> class post or a staff delivery fee not exceeding 90% of 2 <sup>nd</sup> class post

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## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY

### SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

**3 February 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Approval for Delegated Authority – Intention to Tender for Complex Autism Services</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Catherine O’Rourke, Commissioning Consultant. Catherine.O’Rourke@nass.uk.net</b>

#### List of Appendices

**Appendix A – Background PowerPoint - the issues that need resolving**

**Appendix B – Draft Commissioning and Contract Framework**

**Appendix C – Draft Service Specification**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. This report seeks approval to give delegated authority to Katie Brown, Interim Director of Adult Social Services, for permission to proceed with a tender for complex autism services for autistic people over the age of 14 years. The tender is a joint tender between the Key Partners; NASS, The Children’s Trust and Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). NASS is acting as the lead Commissioner.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 Key Partners have been working to address system weaknesses in our ability to support very vulnerable autistic individuals with complex needs. Partners began working together in November 2019 to consider solutions and work through shared issues and common themes. Partners agreed to jointly tender for services suitable for a specific and identifiable cohort of autistic individuals whose needs continue to challenge all services and whose long term health and well-being outcomes will remain poor without a shared and combined approach to meeting care and support needs from the age of 14 years upwards. The progress of the Tender has been severely delayed whilst Partners have responded to the Pandemic, however we now have the opportunity to take this forward.

The provision of delegated Authority to Katie Brown will allow us to proceed with the procurement process with a single executive authority on behalf of the Councils.

- 2.2 This report provides a brief summary of the issues the Tender seeks to address and confirms the approach to tender agreed by all Partners. The report also indicates a timeline to contract award and the expected spend throughout the life of the contract.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:
- a) Approve delegated authority to Katie Brown, Interim Director of Adult Social Services to give permission to proceed with the tender for complex autism services for autistic people over the age of 14 years.
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations:
- a) The option aligns most closely previous decisions relating to Adult Social Service routes to procurement where procurement of care and support services is necessary to meet unmet need.
  - b) The future Council and customers will receive the maximum benefit from the option proposed and the proposal is aligned to the adult and children's care transformation agenda.

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 Our local priorities and intentions for autistic people are laid out in the Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy 2018-2021. The priorities and intentions represent the changes that need to take place to improve the experiences and health and well-being outcomes of autistic people in Northamptonshire.
- 4.2 Nationally health and social care systems are being asked to procure more creative and outcome focussed support solutions for autistic people whose care and support needs are generally not well met within standard care and support services. The tender of this new Contract Framework – the Commissioning for Brighter Futures Framework - seeks to inspire the provision of high quality and workable commissioned solutions for those individuals who are perceived to be at the 'top end' of need, that is; individuals who continuously lead highly fragile and vulnerable lives in environments that have lacked understanding and purpose and which have focussed on managing and holding risk rather than nurturing independence and opportunity through highly individualised support arrangements that work for each individual.
- 4.3 Following the introduction of the **Autism Act 2009**, the government's first strategy for autistic adults in England, **Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives** was published in 2010. This addressed the long term ambitions about how public services must reflect and adapt to the needs of autistic adults. It set out the



government's overarching vision; 'All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.' (Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England, 2010). The national strategy was refreshed in 2014 with the release of **Think Autism**. This set out a programme of action to improve the lives of autistic people and brings a renewed emphasis on involvement and awareness of autism within the local community, as well as ways to look differently at support and engagement. A series of 15 Priority Challenges for Action are identified to highlight the key themes that the strategy aims to deliver. The government announced in late 2018 that a national autism strategy review will be conducted during 2019, which will see the strategy extended to include children and young people. Statutory guidance was produced in 2010 (and updated in 2015) to accompany the national adult autism strategy. It sets out responsibilities and legal duties that Local Authorities and NHS bodies must achieve in line with the Autism Act 2009. It also specifies responsibilities that should be delivered and achieved to ensure autistic people are supported. **The Care Act 2014** provides a coherent approach to adult social care in England and sets out new duties for local authorities and partners and new rights of service users and carers. Some of the responsibilities placed on local authorities through the Autism Act 2009 and accompanying papers are strengthened by the introduction of the Care Act, as the new legislation highlights the need for improvement of services and support for autistic people. Similarly, the **Children and Families Act 2014** does the same and has an emphasis on personalisation, outcomes and integration of services. It provides a change in the way services provide support for children, young people and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and focuses on the best outcomes for each individual. In 2015, **Building the Right Support**, a national plan to develop community services and close inpatient facilities for people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition, was published. The document sets out a requirement for Clinical Commissioning Groups, Local Authorities and NHS England to work together to develop local Transforming Care Partnerships. **The NHS Long Term Plan**, released in early 2019, has highlighted learning disabilities and autism among the key priorities for NHS services over the next 5-10 years, and sets out a series of commitments to improve the services and support currently being provided.

- 4.3 The Senior Leadership teams in NASS and in Children and Young People's services gave approval to proceed with a Commissioning Framework and tender preparation in January 2020. The Commissioning Framework aims to inspire brighter futures for an identifiable group of autistic individuals with autism and/or attachment disorder, some of whom will also have diagnosed mental health problems, where we have found it consistently difficult to apply

the right support and mentoring arrangements by virtue of expecting 'one size fits all' services to be able to flex and work outside of the traditional commissioning approaches used to date.

## **5 Issues and Choices**

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5.1 The Government's vision is: "All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents".

These are unique individuals who require us to think outside of the box in order to apply consistent and stable services that have the tenacity and creativity to provide the platform for brighter futures. We fully acknowledge that these individuals have presented us, all statutory agencies as well as our care, support and education providers, with challenges associated with:

- Criminal behaviours
- High risk behaviours such as substance misuse
- Sensory needs fulfilled by regular contact and use of emergency services and which are soothed by self-harm
- Self-neglect
- Vulnerabilities associated with cuckooing/gangs/exploitation
- Hoarding and OCD
- Family/parental anxiety and dysfunction
- Frequent engagement and then disengagement
- Histories of failed/wrong support arrangements which can escalate risk and cause further problems
- Challenges that increase as they enter adulthood
- Childhood traumas that have been inadequately supported or are untreated therapeutically
- Child inpatient becoming an adult inpatient because needs have not been met

5.2 In identifying the intended recipients of the services that will be generated through this Contract Framework we have defined an absolute commonality across adult and children and young people's services:

- All individuals have been assessed under our statutory frameworks
- Individuals do not fit into mental health services
- Individuals do not fit into learning disability services
- The experience is that unmet need as a child becomes an unmet need as an adult – with serious consequences
- All Partners recognise the need to 'do something different'

5.3 The Framework and tender for specific services has been arrived at by considering the needs of those who are most vulnerable and in need of a different commissioning response.

## **6 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

6.1.1 The Contract is for a period of 4 years with an annual review cycle. Each package of care will be attributed as a spot/call-off package and as such there is no guaranteed contract value to each provider.

6.1.2 The total anticipated spend for the life of the contract is estimated as £20m. Spend is currently attributed across the Partners and this will remain so.

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 Proceeding with the Tender and Commissioning Framework responds to the extensive consultation and engagement period undertaken in 2018 in order to conclude the Northamptonshire Autism Strategy. The Framework and the commissioning objectives have been coproduced with autistic individuals and experts by experience and profession. Include the details of any statutory or other consultation undertaken with the public and/or agencies/interested parties. Also include the consultation results and any amended recommendations to draft policy or proposals that have resulted. If you have not undertaken any consultation please say so and explain why it was not appropriate to consult, or if you are about to consult, please explain how it will be done.

### **6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 None.

### **6.6 Environmental Impact**

6.6.1 None.

### **6.7 Community Impact**

6.7.1 None.

### **6.8 Equalities**

6.8.1 There are no negative impacts.

## **7 Background Papers**

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7.1 None.

# Joint Framework Tender approach for highly complex Autism needs STAGE ONE



**Children First**  
Northamptonshire

The new name for Children, Families and Education.  
Please make a note of my new email address.



Northamptonshire  
County Council



*Corby Clinical Commissioning Group*



*Nene Clinical Commissioning Group*

## Approval to progress - Joint Tender for highly complex Autism Services

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November representatives from CYP services and Adults Services; Health, Social Care and SEND, convened a workshop to look at a solution to supporting the complex needs of an identifiable cohort of individuals with autism and attachment disorder who present with the following system wide challenges:

- **Criminal behaviours**
- **High Risk behaviours – substance misuse**
- **Self harm**
- **Histories of disengagement**
- **Self neglect**
- **Vulnerabilities associated with cuckooing/gangs/exploitation**
- **Family/parental chaos and dysfunction**
- **Hoarding and OCD**
- **Child inpatient – adult inpatient**



## **These individuals:**

- **Are known to all statutory services**
- **Have frequent engagement and then disengagement**
- **Are frequently referred/known to all teams**
- **Have sensory needs fulfilled by regular contact and use of emergency services and which are soothed by self harm**
- **Are difficult to place appropriately**
- **Have a history of failed support arrangements**
- **Have a history of the wrong support arrangements which can escalate risk and cause further problems**
- **Have challenges that increase as they enter adulthood**
- **Have families/parents who may inadvertently perpetuate**
- **Are exceptionally vulnerable to sexual exploitation and gang influence**
- **Are likely to have childhood traumas that have been inadequately supported or are untreated therapeutically**

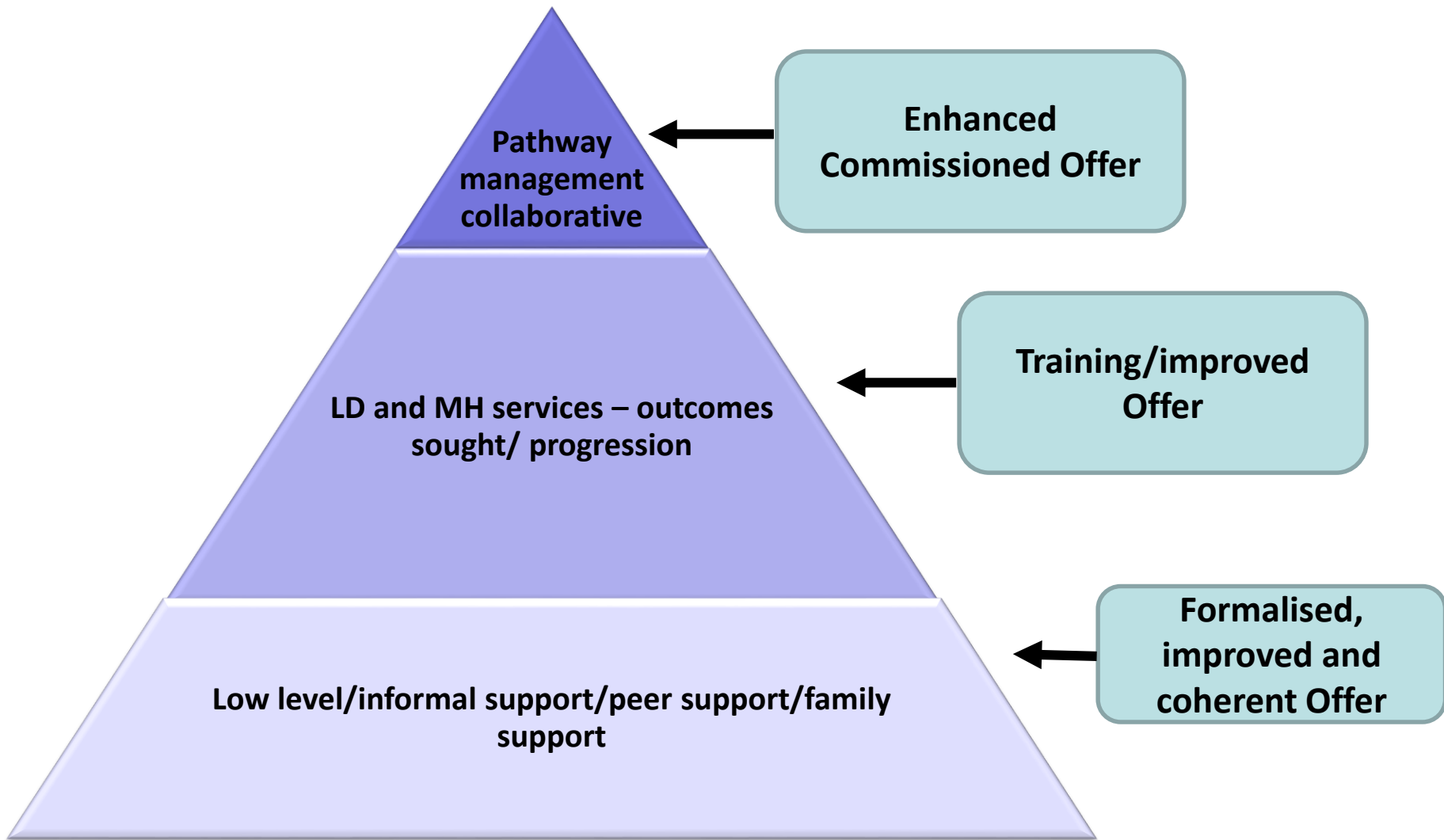


## **Commonality:**

- **All are assessed under our statutory frameworks**
- **All have failed support arrangements**
- **All have had expensive support arrangements (containment/minder)**
- **Unmet need as a child becomes an unmet need as an adult – with serious consequences**
- **Do not fit into MH services**
- **Do not fit into LD services**
- **All Partners recognise the need to ‘do something different ‘**



## To be - LA commissioned/developed Autism Provision



# Real People accounts

15 years old male, complex ASD, anxiety, challenging behaviour, difficulties with peer relationships, was living at home with mum step dad and 3 siblings, attending mainstream college. Family support from LA support worker. Average to higher IQ and vocabulary. Spent yr. 9 home schooled due to bullying and refusal of EHCP. Moved to college aged 14 doing catering course. Dad lives in New Zealand.

Family struggling with very challenging behaviour and 3 siblings at risk. Excluded from college following reports of sexual harassment of a female student (showed her lots of condoms in his bag and asked for sex). Challenging behaviour escalated, saying he wants to end his life and tying ligatures, mum took him to A&E (14 hours), LAEP - admitted to adult MH unit, transferred to adolescent unit a few days later where he was assaulted by another inpatient, transferred 2 weeks later to another adolescent unit. Is now more settled and accessing inpatient education and therapy sessions. Is enjoying learning Russian and badminton.

Is now fit for discharge but mum has said she can't have him home as it's not safe for her or the siblings, X is of the belief that now he's 16 he should be living independently. Parents want a residential special school (Cambian) but without an EHCP this isn't possible. Parents have asked LA to accommodate but didn't realise that as they both work they would have to financially contribute. X is considered too vulnerable for supported accommodation.

Parents haven't accessed any 3<sup>rd</sup> sector support groups or ASD courses. X does not fit criteria for LD services in health or social care. X finds CAMHS difficult due to concrete thinking and extent of ASD. There are concerns that he may enter the criminal justice system, become disaffected, not achieve academic potential or access employment.

We now have X who is fit for discharge but without suitable accommodation or education. The plan on admission 9 weeks ago was for him to return home. College had not at that point turned the suspension into a permanent exclusion although this was a risk.



**23 Yr old male. Was living at home with Mother. Had attended mainstream school but no ASD diagnosis. Excluded from school – no engagement, ‘didn’t fit’ – perpetual problems. After School mixed with gangs – stealing, drugs, trouble with law.**

**Initial MH assessment- not met criteria. YA team placed in OCS Davinci. Continued lack of engagement- lots of barriers, risky behaviours, wouldn’t let staff in. Advised of eviction. Continued association with ‘wrong people’ – sofa surfing. Arrested for stealing cars. Transferred to specialist hospital for 18 months. Given diagnosis of ASD.**

**Discharged on CTO. Placed in Bedford supported living with providers with ASD skills. Inconsistent staffing, poor levels of engagement, not letting staff in. Cuckooing began. Mother took him home.**

**MH assessed again. Mother complained about continued trauma of insufficient services to meet or recognise needs- multiple services commissioned. Lack of understanding of person- on paper ‘minimal needs’.**



**16 year old female with ASD and history trauma currently in St Andrew's hospital under Section 3 of the Mental Health Act and has been there for nearly 3 years. This is a high profile case locally and within NHSE.**

**Following numerous MDT meetings, all professionals involved feel that this is not the least restrictive environment for the young person. Her trauma and ASD impact on her presentation significantly in terms of self-harming behaviours. The young person has periods of being stable when she is able to access the community and periods of being unwell in presentation requiring the hospital environment. Due to the complexity of the young person it has been difficult to source a provider that is able to meet of both her ASD and MH needs as each time she has a stable period the time scales to follow the appropriate processes have been too lengthy. This includes process such as placement team exhausting their placement framework before being able to look at a bespoke package of care with health and assessments/legal frameworks that the young person will be discharged under. Currently we are trying to get the appropriate provision with a wraparound service to be able to meet all young person's needs in the community although this is proving extremely challenging.**

**NHSE have commissioned a service called 'Changing Our Lives' to work with the young person to complete a person centred plan for the future so that all professionals involved can be implementing their process so that when the young person is next in a stable period, she can be discharged from hospital to the community with a smooth transition. This would be a least restrictive option for the young person going forward. A service specification was completed in August 2019 when the young person was in a stable period which lasted approximately 10 weeks and she is currently in an unwell period but we are still try to progress for the best outcome for the young person.**

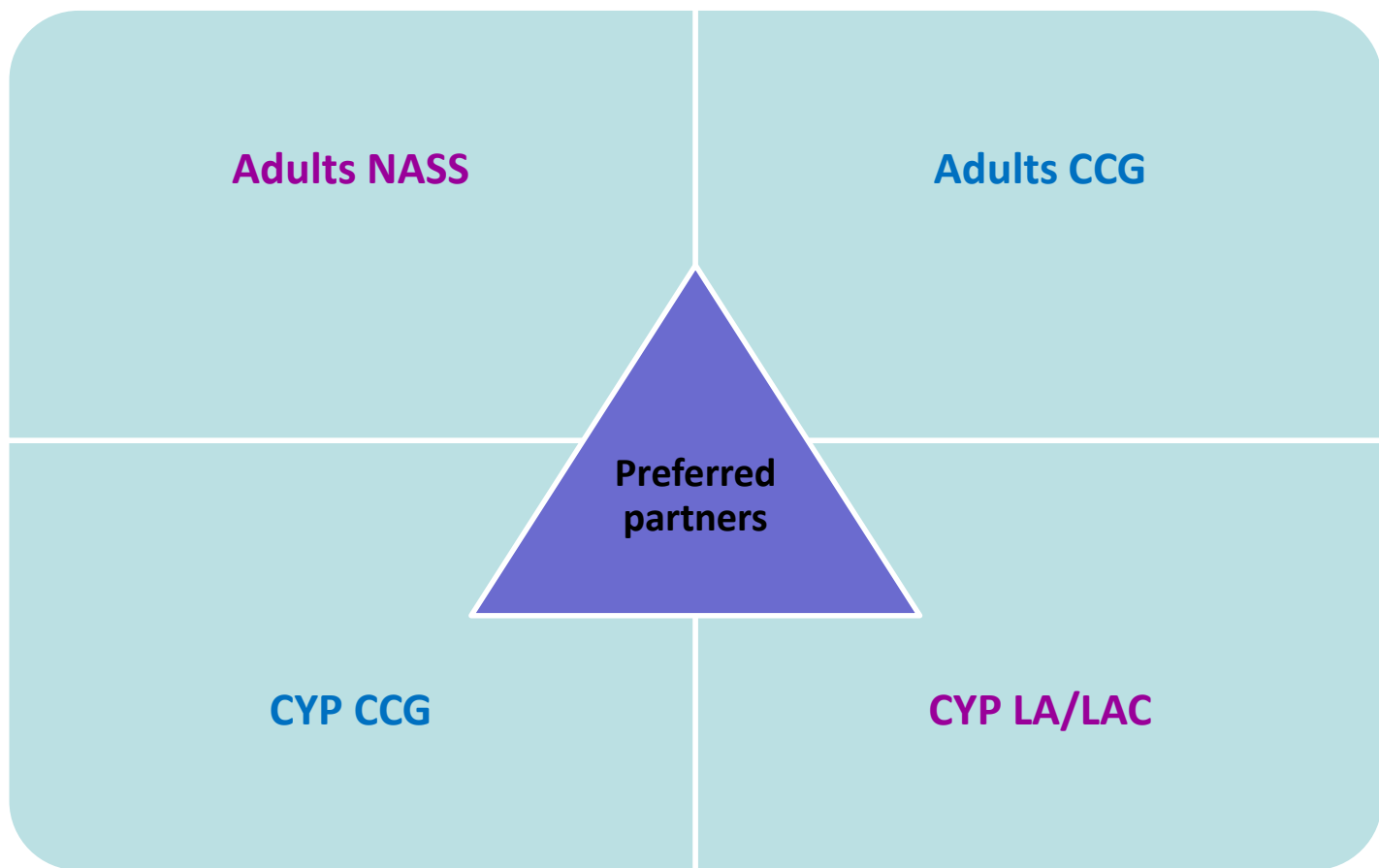


## Case for change

- **Costs of current/failing/containment support arrangements are likely to be an average of £4-£7k per week per individual**
- **Cohort estimates are between 20-30 for CYP**
- **Cohort estimates are between 20-30 for adults**
- **Current recording is too fragile/inconsistent to be precise – practitioner consideration is required**
- **Transition into adulthood is costly and problematic – cycles continue with higher risks**
- **Inter-directorate and inter-agency processes can be disabling**



- The workshop attendees agreed we should seek to progress a joint tender for CP and adults, health and social care
- LA the lead – joint CYP and Adults



## The Model

- **Small collection of providers who can work in partnership/pathways**
- **Expectations of outcomes focus and progression/step down**
- **High level of skill and trained expertise in:**
  - **Autism**
  - **Sensory needs**
  - **Trauma**
  - **Substance misuse**
  - **Progression and outcomes**
  - **Risk identification and management**
  - **Adaptability of interventions and approaches**
  - **Managing active chaos**
  - **Connecting to peer support**
- **Can facilitate a multidisciplinary approach/wrap around**
- **Can support family therapy**
- **Provision is Ofsted and CQC regulated**





## The Tender

- **Between 4 and 6 providers - collaborative**
- **Expectations of outcomes focus and progression/step down**
- **High level of skill and trained expertise - stated**
- **Short term and long term savings**
- **Improved outcomes – short and long term**
- **Step down and transfer**
- **Market prep/market interest statement – invitation to information session**
- **Statutory agencies will need to invest in training the providers**
- **KPIs**
  
- **Consideration of pooled budget for PoC – lead budget manager**
- **Savings equally disaggregated according to % contribution**



**We are requesting approval to proceed.**

**We will continue to meet as a group to work through details:**

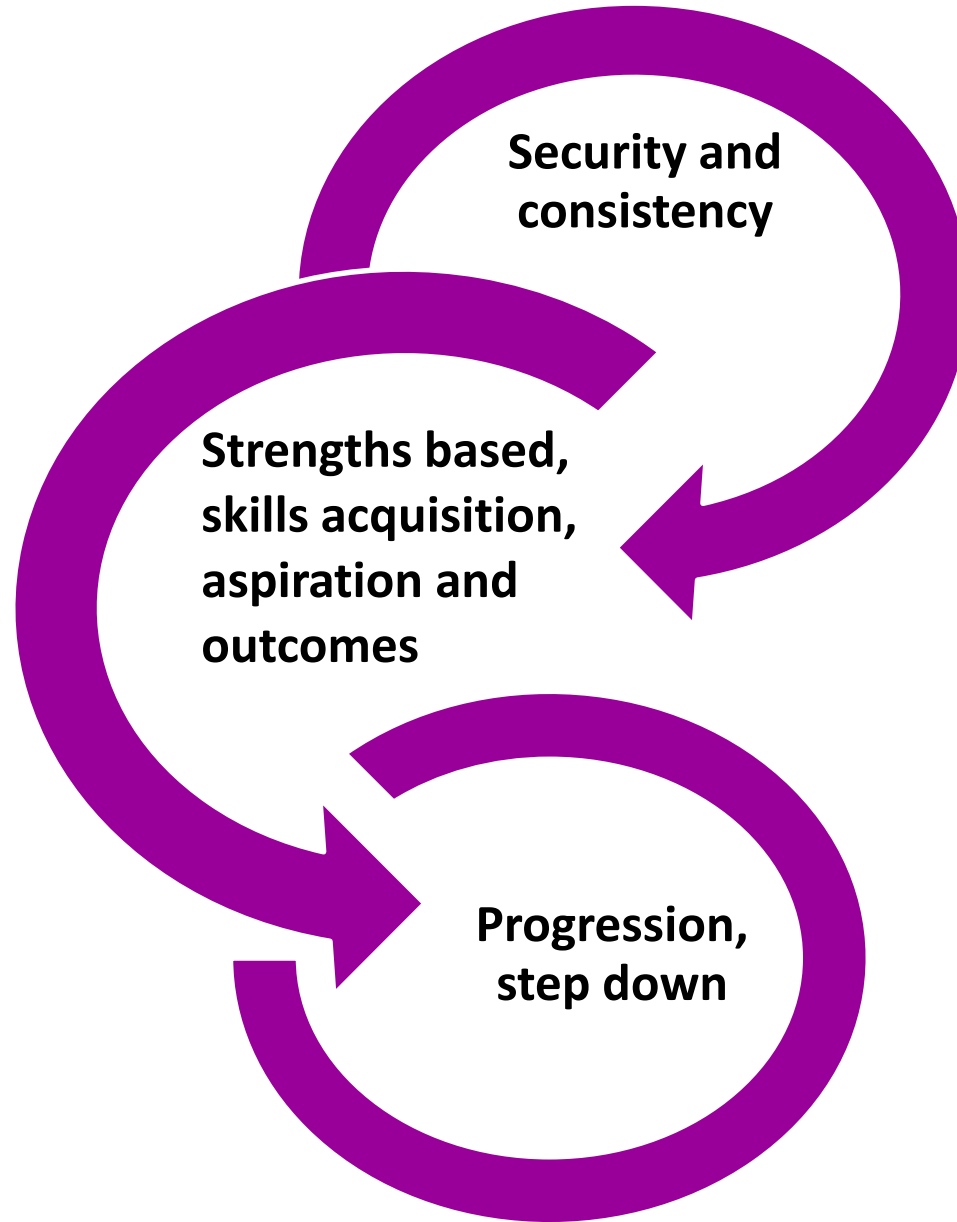
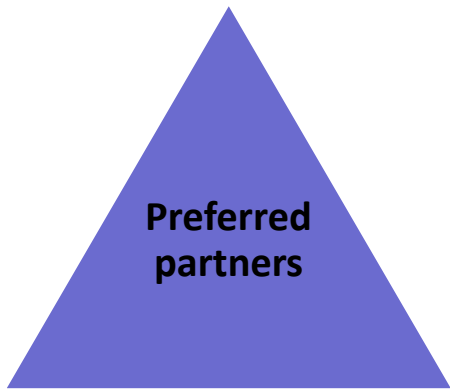
- **Confirm specifics on cohort – current and potential**
- **Specifications**
- **Outcomes and KPI Framework**
- **Profiling of Preferred Providers/Skills**
- **Potential pooled budget configurations**



**Approval to proceed given**  
**6th January 2020 meeting**



# Expectation



## Skills and delivery



## **Deliverables and Key Performance Indicators:**

### **Evidence of working in partnership for:**

- **Progression/step down**
- **Achievement of personal outcomes & Measures of wellbeing**
- **Management of Crisis/Evidence of effective Contingency**
- **Reduction in dependency (cost/outcomes)**
- **Numbers into employment**
- **Numbers into training**
- **Reduction in episodes of self harm (benchmarks required)**
- **Numbers stepping down into standard services**
- **Length of stay**



**Who are the key organisations/agencies the Providers will need to have a relationship with?**



- **Probation service**
- **Youth offending service**
- **Police (RISE- based with MASH)**
- **LA Adolescent team**
- **DWP and Access to employment**
- **LIVE/EADS**
- **Education: FE colleges, Post 16 plans, Schools – LAC/virtual schools**
- **S2S**
- **Housing**
- **SW services**
- **NHFT services**





# Market Testing

## Interest statement and market interest event





*Acting Together for Autism*

**Commissioning for Brighter Futures:  
The Commissioning and Contracting Framework for  
highly vulnerable autistic people with complex needs  
2021-2025**



## Contents

**Section 1** Introduction: Our ambition and our aims

**Section 2** The foundations of this Contract Framework - cultural competency and recognising autism as personal

**Section 3** Flexible Contracting: enabling bespoke arrangements and innovation

**Section 4** Expected good practice and tools that enable good practice

**Section 5** The contract in action: Individual Service Funds

**Section 6** Contractual obligations and monitoring

## 1. Introduction: our ambition and our aims

This Commissioning Framework should be read in conjunction with the Northamptonshire All Age Autism Strategy 2018-2021. Our priorities and intentions are laid out in the Strategy and represent the changes that need to take place to improve the experiences and health and well-being outcomes of autistic people in Northamptonshire.

The Health and Social System in Northamptonshire has been in a difficult place but we are resolute in driving through stepped change in improving the service and community offers available and accessible to autistic individuals and their families who often experience extreme barriers to participating in community and family life. An active autism champions network and steering group continue to work through and exploit opportunities for improved and accessible community services as well as ordinary life opportunities through campaigns for change and reasonable adjustments in the County. However, as commissioners we are also passionate and committed to very specific actions that will change the future direction and life chances of specific autistic individuals through a concerted effort to focus, innovate, and inspire the provision of high quality and workable commissioning solutions for those individuals who are perceived to be at the 'top end' of need, that is; individuals who continuously lead highly fragile and vulnerable lives in environments that have lacked understanding and purpose and which have focussed on managing and holding risk rather than nurturing independence and opportunity through highly individualised support arrangements that work for each individual. Quite simply - we need to raise the bar in our commissioning aspirations, and we need to raise the bar in our contractual expectations.

**Throughout this Framework the term 'autistic people', 'autistic individuals' and 'individuals' are used purposefully to describe individuals 'who are' autistic rather than 'who have' autism. This is a fundamental point in improving care and support understanding of autism and its impact on people. Many individuals want to recognise 'being autistic' as an element of who they are, alongside of and inherent in a multitude of other characteristics and personality nuances that make each and every one of us unique.**

## **What matters**

Autistic people in Northants have made it clear what matters to them the most – they have told us they want to lead ordinary lives and do the things that most people take for granted. They want to study at college, get a job, have an income, have relationships and friendships, enjoy social activities and have a place they can call home, have the right connections when things aren't going well, have choices and make choices. As providers you are integral to making 'what matters' become the reality – to do this we must give each individual the opportunity to be heard, give you the opportunity to listen well, and give you the contractual permission to respond as creatively as is necessary to what you hear.

The 'What Matters' have been defined by autistic people, their families and social circles – these descriptions form the overall aim of the Autism Strategy:

### **Outcome 1**

People feel educated, equipped and able to respond to individuals with differing needs

**Priority 1: Raising awareness and understanding regarding the complexity of autism**

### **Outcome 2**

People get the right help at the right time

**Priority 2: Providing effective, quality assured pre and post diagnosis support**

### **Outcome 3**

Autistic People have a sense of self-worth and social equality

**Priority 3: Enhancing education, employment, accommodation, social and leisure opportunities**

#### Outcome 4

Changes are anticipated, understood and supported

Priority 4: Promoting seamless progression throughout periods of transition

#### Outcome 5

Autistic people feel supported, safe and able to make progress in their life

Priority 5: Providing effective and enabling care and support

Following the introduction of the **Autism Act 2009**, the government's first strategy for autistic adults in England, **Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives** was published in 2010. This addressed the long term ambitions about how public services must reflect and adapt to the needs of autistic adults. It set out the government's overarching vision; 'All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents.' (Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: the strategy for adults with autism in England, 2010). The national strategy was refreshed in 2014 with the release of **Think Autism**. This set out a programme of action to improve the lives of autistic people and brings a renewed emphasis on involvement and awareness of autism within the local community, as well as ways to look differently at support and engagement. A series of 15 Priority Challenges for Action are identified to highlight the key themes that the strategy aims to deliver. The government announced in late 2018 that a national autism strategy review will be conducted during 2019, which will see the strategy extended to include children and young people. Statutory guidance was produced in 2010 (and updated in 2015) to accompany the national adult autism strategy. It sets out responsibilities and legal duties that Local Authorities and NHS bodies must achieve in line with the Autism Act 2009. It also specifies responsibilities that should be delivered and achieved to ensure autistic people are supported. **The Care Act**

**2014** provides a coherent approach to adult social care in England and sets out new duties for local authorities and partners and new rights of service users and carers. Some of the responsibilities placed on local authorities through the Autism Act 2009 and accompanying papers are strengthened by the introduction of the Care Act, as the new legislation highlights the need for improvement of services and support for autistic people. Similarly, the **Children and Families Act 2014** does the same and has an emphasis on personalisation, outcomes and integration of services. It provides a change in the way services provide support for children, young people and those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and focuses on the best outcomes for each individual. In 2015, **Building the Right Support**, a national plan to develop community services and close inpatient facilities for people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition, was published. The document sets out a requirement for Clinical Commissioning Groups, Local Authorities and NHS England to work together to develop local Transforming Care Partnerships. **The NHS Long Term Plan**, released in early 2019, has highlighted learning disabilities and autism among the key priorities for NHS services over the next 5-10 years, and sets out a series of commitments to improve the services and support currently being provided.

The Government's vision is: "All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it, and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them make the most of their talents".

As Providers you should already be aware of some of these mandates that come from national bodies down to local systems and you should certainly be familiar with the Acts and Policies that drive improvements in health and well-being for autistic people and their families. Specifically, you should familiarise yourself with the **2020 Care Quality Commission** reports **Out of Sight – Who Cares?** and **Right Support, Right Care, Right Culture**.

Locally we continue to make progress in amplifying the voice of autistic people through training programmes and programmes that focus on enabling access through reasonable adjustments and training for better awareness. The local strategy and implementation plan has been

coproduced and the champions forum continues to grow and hold local systems to account. An important output from our coproduction activity is the following set of autism standards agreed and published for Northamptonshire:

Northamptonshire Autism Standards

<p><b>Knowing the individual</b></p>	<p><b>As autism affects every individual differently it is essential to know the person you are working with and how their autism impacts on them. Knowing their preferred method of communication, what they like doing, what they find difficult and any sensory issues will assist you in developing a relationship that supports interaction, independence and participation</b></p>
<p><b>Environment</b></p>	<p>Providing physical structure to the environment should reduce anxiety by enabling the autistic individual to anticipate what should happen where Visual structure, e.g. schedules and task systems should also make expectations clearer. Reasonable adjustments should be made to accommodate sensory preferences e.g. attention given to lighting, noise and proximity of others.</p>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>Working together and communicating closely with the autistic individual, family and support staff as well as other services and teams should ensure joined up working within the support circle. This should facilitate seamless transitions and reduce the negative impact of change</p>



## Time for Change

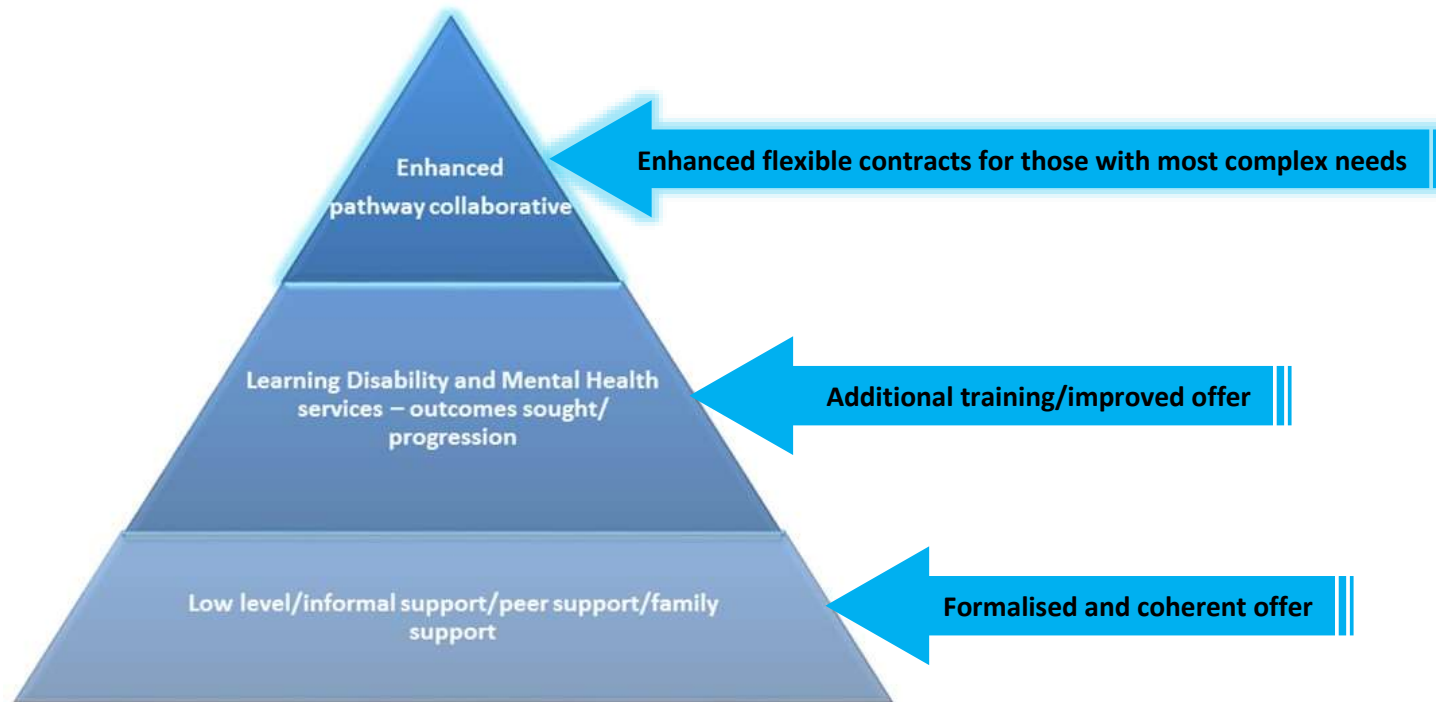
This Commissioning Framework aims to **inspire brighter futures** for an identifiable group of autistic individuals with autism and/or attachment disorder, some of whom will also have diagnosed mental health problems, where we have found it consistently difficult to apply the right support and mentoring arrangements by virtue of expecting 'one size fits all' services to be able to flex and work outside of the traditional commissioning approaches used to date. These are unique individuals who require us to think outside of the box in order to apply consistent and stable services that have the tenacity and creativity to provide the platform for brighter futures. We fully acknowledge that these individuals have presented us, all statutory agencies as well as our care, support and education providers, with challenges associated with:

- **Criminal behaviours**
- **High risk behaviours such as substance misuse**
- **Sensory needs fulfilled by regular contact and use of emergency services and which are soothed by self-harm**
- **Self-neglect**
- **Vulnerabilities associated with cuckooing/gangs/exploitation**
- **Hoarding and OCD**
- **Family/parental anxiety and dysfunction**
- **Frequent engagement and then disengagement**
- **Histories of failed/wrong support arrangements which can escalate risk and cause further problems**
- **Challenges that increase as they enter adulthood**
- **Childhood traumas that have been inadequately supported or are untreated therapeutically**
- **Child inpatient = adult inpatient**

In identifying the intended recipients of the services that will be generated through this Contract Framework we have defined an absolute commonality across adult and children and young people's services:

- All individuals have been assessed under our statutory frameworks
- Individuals do not fit into mental health services
- Individuals do not fit into learning disability services
- The experience is that unmet need as a child becomes an unmet need as an adult – with serious consequences
- All Partners recognise the need to ‘do something different’

Many of the needs and challenges described above lead individuals into restrictive settings. There is so much more we can do to stop this happening. This Framework is intended to lay down the basis of a set of contracts that will help us ‘do something different’ and is part of a system wide commitment to improving our response to autistic people and their families. In the diagram below these individuals fall within the ‘top tier’ of the response pyramid:



## 2. The foundations of this Contract Framework - cultural competency and recognising autism as personal

This Framework is not about helping providers 'fit' individuals into their services – it is intended as a guide to thinking, behaving and responding differently. If we do not think and behave differently then we will always continue to fall short of what is needed.

Because we are all unique, it is difficult to describe every nuanced consideration that should be made when supporting autistic individuals – the whole point of doing things differently is to acknowledge that we cannot and should not tell providers how an autistic individual should be supported - **it is for the individual to describe that to you**. At best we can ensure that we lay down the foundations for an individual to experience commitment and hopefulness that Commissioners are asking for the right things - in this case the principles, thoughts, considerations and cultural approach required to establish successful supportive relationships that mean that many autistic individuals can re-define or confirm their future goals and aspirations, and that there is a genuine focus on achieving them.

### Areas for thought and for examining cultural competency

**The following sub sections are intended to make you think and act** – they do not at all describe the experience or thoughts of every autistic individual, but they are common themes, experiences and feelings expressed by autistic individuals who are in and out of statutory support services at various or continuous points in their lives and/or are contributing to improving our understanding of life as an autistic individual. Many of the issues will resonate for us all as human beings, doubtless you will have 'read and learnt all about autism' but there are very few mass produced learning tools that help connect that sense of humanity and individuality to managing an 'autistic view' at the same time. This is because **every autistic view is different** – absolutely in the same way that our thoughts and feelings are created uniquely and manifest themselves in different ways. Much of what is written about autism, including health and social care contracting documentation, describes deficits or difference, severity of need and challenges, usually because they are designed to prepare support services for how they should train staff, or how a particular issue ought to be managed. Those guidelines have their value, but they do not substitute **listening** well.

## Listening well

We need to be much better at listening to each and every autistic individual we work with. For many individuals, we are listening to body language and what isn't being said verbally, just as much as we are listening to what is actively verbalised to us. **Listening is an art that is described as 'the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process'**. There are 4 types of listening:

### Appreciative Listening

When you listen for appreciation you are listening for enjoyment. Think about the music you listen to. You usually listen to music because you enjoy it. The same can be said for appreciative listening when someone is speaking. Some common types of appreciative listening can be found in sermons from places of worship, from a motivational speech by people we respect or hold in high regard, or even from a stand-up comedian who makes us laugh.

### Empathic Listening

When you listen empathically you are doing so to show mutual concern. During this type of listening you are trying to identify with the speaker by understanding the situation in which he/she is discussing. You are stepping into the other's shoes to get a better understanding of what it is he/she is talking about. Usually during this type of listening you want to be fully present in the moment or mindfully listening to what the speaker is saying. Your goal during this time is to focus on the speaker, not on yourself. You are trying to understand from the speaker's perspective.

### Comprehensive Listening

If you are watching the news, listening to a lecture, or getting directions from someone, you are listening in order to understand or listening to comprehend the message that is being sent. This process is active. In class, you should be focused, possibly taking notes of the speaker's main ideas. Identifying the structure of the speech and evaluating the supports he/she offers as evidence. This is one of the more difficult types of

listening because it requires you to not only concentrate but to actively participate in the process. The more you practice listening to comprehend, the stronger listener you become.

### **Critical Listening**

Have you ever had to buy an expensive item, such as a new appliance, a car, a mobile phone or tablet? You probably did some research beforehand and listened closely to the salesperson when you went to compare brands. Or perhaps your best friend is telling you about some medical tests he/she recently had done. You listen closely so you can help your friend understand the results and the possible ramifications of the findings. Both of these scenarios are examples of critical listening. Critical listening is listening to evaluate the content of the message. As a critical listener you are listening to all parts of the message, analysing it, and evaluating what you have heard. When engaging in critical listening, you are also critically thinking. You are making mental judgments based on what you see, hear, and read. Your goal as a critical listener is to evaluate the message that is being sent and decide for yourself if the information is valid.

### **Growing up and risk activities**

Between the ages of 18 and 25 individuals are engaged in a prolonged period of (self) exploration. During this period the need for security and stability is coupled with the desire for exploration and spontaneity, as such, emerging adulthood can provide a fertile ground for developing risk behaviours such as substance misuse or sexual behaviour and for some autistic individuals the period of emerging adulthood can last well into mid-life. We know that all transitions bring with them some uncertainty and for some autistic individuals 'risk activities or behaviours' are often triggered by feelings of not fitting in or of feeling different. These feelings can be linked to difficulties in identity formation, which are often exacerbated by a protracted process of diagnosis. The compounded impact can be enduring anxiety, depression and a much reduced sense of self-worth. Individuals describe various ways of coping with these emotions; for some, there is a thin line between what they considered to be 'coping' and 'failing' mechanisms, namely risk behaviours.

Research – based on listening to personal accounts – tells us that a lack of service provision, social support and guidance can be a contributory factor in risk behaviour. Parents and carers of autistic people discussed in great detail the difficulties, frustrations and anxieties associated with the process of obtaining and coming to terms with a diagnosis of Autism and the impact that this had on the family as a whole. Several parents spoke about their own problems in their personal relationships, which were often caused by the stress and added responsibility of raising an autistic child and trying to obtain appropriate professional help and support for them and for the rest of the family. Some parents believed that these difficulties were to blame for the breakdown of their relationships. Such problems were also multiplied if one of the partners was considered to be on the autistic spectrum as well.

Such tensions, combined with lack of the ‘right’ support, are often catalysts for engagement in risk behaviour by parents of people on the autistic spectrum. The ‘normalisation’ of such behaviour in families affected by ASD might have an impact on the behaviour of young autistic adults growing up in this environment but it is not a question of attributing blame, but of noting the complex interpersonal dynamics in families under pressure.

Parents also described how their children vented their frustration in response to stress or anxiety, and the negative impact of these outbursts on family life and on the physical fabric of the home; for some a great deal of patience and effort were required in order to avoid situations or topics that triggered aggressive or anxious reactions in autistic family members. The practical and financial consequences of incidents of aggression, anxiety or violence need to be acknowledged – parents, for example, who report being concerned about how the state of their households, with the marks of wear and tear born out of frustration and aggression, would impact upon other people’s perceptions of how they were coping, or failing to cope, with the challenges of raising an autistic child or young person. The cumulative effect of these diverse pressures has a potentially very significant impact on the family environment of an autistic person. It is perhaps not surprising that in some cases they, and indeed their parents, are prone to seek refuge in risk behaviours.

## On 'being different'

As a society we like to think we celebrate 'difference' - it is a common mantra we use collectively and individually, in our interactions and in our personal thinking. Human nature dictates that whilst difference is and should be celebrated we still need to be able to 'place' things or people into a perception framework of some description that enables us to make sense and accept and therefore make the choice to relate and include. Whilst we are all unique, we also have what might be considered to be 'majority or societal norms' – social norms are the unwritten rules of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are considered acceptable in a particular social group or culture. They provide us with an expected idea of how to behave and function to provide order and predictability in society. For example, we expect students to arrive to a lesson on time and complete their work. Social roles are the part people play as members of a social group. With each social role we adopt, our behaviour changes to fit the expectations that we and others have of that role. Each social role carries expected behaviours called norms and each social situation entails its own particular set of expectations about the way we should behave. There is considerable pressure to conform to social roles. Social roles provide an example of social influence in general and conformity in particular. Most of us, most of the time, conform to the guidelines provided by the roles we perform, but to do that we must be able to have absorbed and interpreted what the expected norms are and have a sense of the roles we play in society as a whole. Frequently, we all have influencing factors that may take us outside of what is construed as a 'norm' for a particular situation or setting although as a society our ability to recognise and 'celebrate' different norms evolves all the time – for the large part we all want to be considered as 'different' at least some of the time - whether that's at work or at home or in our social circles, for what we achieve or for what we do for others.

We know that recurring mental health problems or making dangerous or unconventional choices can result in a person being perceived as odd, different or extravagant in some way. These experiences could in turn negatively shape one's self-perception and so serve to intensify the severity of risk behaviours. Having very few close friends and experiencing exclusion, social isolation or rejection by potential friends or colleagues are frequently identified in the accounts of autistic adults and young people - feelings of anger, hopelessness and acts of self-harm were identified as

common responses to such incidents and often individuals find support outside their conventional peer groups. We also know that the experience of having been bullied can be associated with engagement in various forms of risk behaviour. Although it is difficult to determine whether there is a causal relationship between risk behaviours and the experience of being bullied by peers, colleagues or even service providers, it is reasonable to consider that being bullied can be a contributory factor in substance abuse, depression and anxiety.

Some autistic individuals are more prone to undertake risk behaviours than others. We know that human nature can predispose us to sensation seeking – the thrill of a new experience whereby the outcome may be certain but new, or a new experience with an uncertain outcome that is just a bit ‘scary’ but probability is understood. As we mature and make decisions and take actions based on learnt experiences, and on what we know about risk and we become tuned-in to ‘calculated’ sensation seeking. For some individuals a core feature of their autism includes a variety of sensory needs that can manifest in what appears to be the novelty or intensity of sensory stimulation that describes ‘high sensation’ seekers, but a more probable explanation for undertaking risk behaviours is a lack of understanding of social norms and the desire to fit in rather than thrill-seeking per se.

### **Self-harming**

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. It is usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. Sometimes when individual’s self-harm there is an underlying intention to die, but the intention is more often to punish themselves, express their distress, or relieve what has escalated as unbearable tension – or a mixture of all of these things. Self-harm should always be taken seriously, no matter the reasons behind it. Being autistic can mean that you find it hard to communicate with and understand others, which incorporates being able to make sense of feelings, being able to communicate what those feelings are and being able to interact and socialise with others. These challenges frequently manifest themselves into a higher (than non-autistic) incidence of anxiety and depression, which in turn can increase a vulnerability and predisposition to self-harm.



It is thought that between 10 and 20% of young people self-harm - This means it is likely that at least two young people in every secondary school classroom have self-harmed at some time. Someone's reason to self-harm can be very different from other people who self-harm. Some of the reasons that young people report as triggers or reasons that lead them to self-harm include:

Difficulties at home

School pressures

Bullying

Arguments or problems with friends

Depression and or Anxiety

Low self-esteem

Transitions and changes such as changing schools or leaving school

It is important to try and understand why a person might be self-injuring. What are they trying to do or say with their actions? Self-injury may be caused by stress, anxiety or sensory problems or it may be an attempt to communicate. There are many articles and accounts from autistic individuals who have self-harmed. Providers may find the following literature helpful in understanding and working with autistic individuals who self-harm:

Greenwood, G. (2017) [Autism and self-harm. Seeing double, understanding autism](#)

Jubaris, M. (2019) [Bleeding: An Insider's Account](#). Spectrum Life Magazine

Sam (2017) [Autism and Mental Health: Proving Everyone Wrong](#). Young Minds

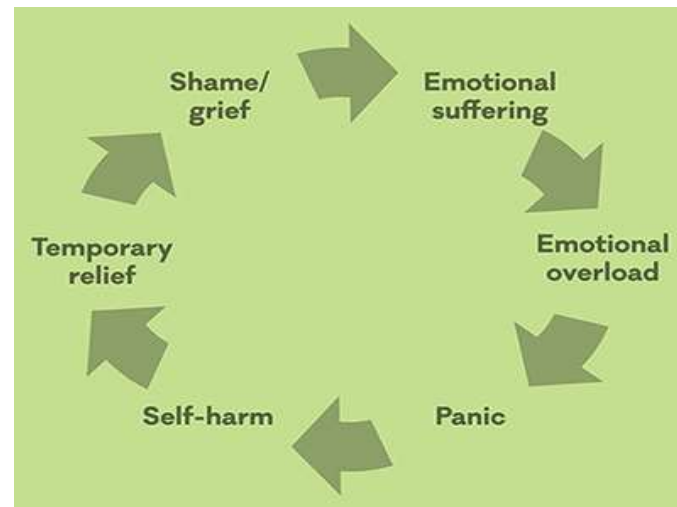
SwedishRebornMum (2012) [My life story - self harm](#), Aspergers, anxiety, suicide attempts. YouTube

You may also wish to follow 'Life Signs' – a user led organisation set up by individuals who self-harm, and who provide a range of guides and offer a network of support: [Lifesigns user led](#)

Some of the most common causal factors in self-injury are:

- Reacting to illness or pain
- A high pain threshold or being under-sensitive to touch
- Sensory problems – trying to block out or reduce an uncomfortable sensation
- Continuing behaviours that are usually seen in younger children - such as hand mouthing, which is common in babies and toddler
- Demand avoidance
- Habit or learned behaviour
- Repetitive behaviour or routine

Self-injury could be caused by a combination of these issues, or they could originally have been caused by one thing and become a habit or routine. It is important to try to tackle these issues as quickly as possible to prevent the behaviour from becoming habit. For many, self-harm usually starts as a way to relieve the build-up of pressure from distressing thoughts and feelings. This might give temporary relief from the emotional pain the person is feeling but it is important to know that this relief is only temporary because the underlying reasons still remain. Soon after, feelings of guilt and shame might follow, which can continue the cycle:



## Autonomy and the freedom to make choices

Decision-making under uncertainty is central to daily functions, because our lives are filled with incomplete, ambiguous, and unpredictable components.

Personal autonomy and empowerment are defined as the opportunity to make choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from interferences. These choices and decisions are central to the principles of self-determination and the ability to be autonomous in terms of making meaningful life choices, however, in reality people do not make life choices entirely free from external influences or interferences; they are influenced by a variety of enabling *and* constraining factors enmeshed in a web of human relationships. For autistic individuals, the latter can be often more problematic than lack of autonomy, as difficulties with deciphering complex meanings and connections of social aspects of life are part of being autistic. In addition, perceived loss of control has negative implications for self-esteem and self-concept, which are fluid, overlapping and integrated with consciousness, memory and self-awareness - how we come to see ourselves is partly a reflection of how others perceive us. The 'self' can be conceptualised as the 'fundamental organiser of a person's social world, providing the conceptual means to establish a unique and distinctive personal identity' and yet our general orthodoxy of service provision emphasises the importance of integration with the local community, irrespective of the challenges this may present to autistic people. As we have seen from the examples above, the perceptions of other people are not necessarily positive, and this can negatively impact on the perception of self and compound any pre-disposition on the part of the autistic person to engage in behaviour that is ultimately self-harming or destructive. The autonomy of autistic individuals can also be limited for other reasons; lack of control over simple aspects of daily life, such as sensory environments, and limited ability to plan for the future can be associated with an increased risk of mental health problems.

It seems that the more autistic individuals are aware of their differences, the more likely they are to negate or compensate for them by modifying their appearance and behaviour in attempts to match their subjective perception, which is not always accurate, of how others expect them to behave i.e. conform. Clearly these kinds of compromises can have a negative impact on an individual's mental wellbeing and self-esteem and many autistic individuals see themselves as sacrificing their own integrity for the sake of social acceptance. It is common for individuals to establish

behaviours as strategies for coping with these difficulties with others learning to accept their differences and to embrace them by following behaviour patterns, routines and establishing mechanisms that help them to function in everyday life while allowing them to maintain their sense of identity.

### Trust and Unity

Trust is an essential element of supportive relationships for all of us but is particularly essential for autistic individuals with complex needs and their supporters – if relationships generally can be difficult, then knowing you can trust the person supporting you is vital to growth and stability and having a sense of unity. Only with this trusting relationship as a foundation do individuals and their supporters feel they can give and receive support successfully. If trust is not developed or if it is violated in any way, unity within the relationship is prohibitive or at best is strained. Trust usually develops naturally over time but for many relationships, especially in relationships involving paid support staff, the development of trust is often established in a different manner – for example, often the need for constant support is strong, and many individuals find that they do not have time to develop trust slowly with their supporters. Instead, there is an asserted ‘forcing’ or speeding up the development of trust so that support can be seen as successful. This is particularly the case when there are changes in staff. The sense of urgency to develop trust does not diminish the importance of establishing trust, nor make the process any easier. Autistic individuals often emphasise that trust within a supportive relationship involved much more than it does in a typical relationship because there is an awareness of vulnerability – i.e. they know they are the vulnerable member of the relationship and have more at stake than the other person does. In this sense trusting is vital, but also involves risk – supporters often have responsibility for daily assistance and the individual is ‘taking a chance’ that the supporter is actually ‘responsible enough.’

*“Trust is extremely important in a relationship especially when someone has been through traumatic or extremely stressful life situations or has had a large range of professionals and services who don’t seem to know how to support them. When they have been moved around from pillar to post without people seeing their perspective of what that might be like. Also trust and unity is important with what support someone needs or when understanding their needs, communications styles or how to build a relationship with them. Trust is important to ensure they*

*can be safer because it means they have a trusting relationship with someone they can reach out to but who will also reach in for them.*

*Trusting someone means that you think they are reliable; you have confidence in them and you feel safe with them physically and emotionally and without that how can you build a relationship because that relationship will be quick to topple or be unstable.”*

Many individuals develop often unconscious strategies to **test for trust**, so that the process can be moved along faster while still ensuring that trust can be established - in order to build a relationship, an individual must know that they can trust the person who is going to support them. In order to know this, the supporter may be put through a ‘test’. Where individuals are aware of testing, they describe the test as a way to know how that person will react to them when they are pushed to their limits - ‘I can’t trust them until I know how they will treat me when they are mad’. Often these tests are used when an individual is managing emotional responses, such as being fearful of a transition of staff. Some individuals are not aware of testing:

*“Do I test? Possibly, but if you are unaware of that then you don’t know you have done it. It’s possible that the tested stage has long gone, and it isn’t even worth testing professionals anymore as they can’t be trusted. However, if the testing is happening it’s probably by seeing if they break my trust or say they will do something and don’t or how they respond to my actions and behaviour or if they will give up on me or say I’m not a good person and treat me with no respect and like a lower class citizen.”*

*“I have been reading a book called “Living with PTSD on the autism spectrum”.....and I’ve never read something that literally feels like my brain and I’m only halfway through but it has given me a lot more clarity about a lot of my responses and traumas that I will have been told weren’t traumas..... but to me it was. I can literally see the lines between that and my social interactions and relationships with others and the knock on effect into my daily life and wellbeing with greater anxieties and social isolation and of course trust in others. And in addition to the usual expected events which can cause PTSD, for the autistic population it includes things like social relationships, support, professional*

*interactions, offhand comments, challenges finding support, social neglect, invisibility etc. And it's true - the way you are treated by those around you and those who support you is just vital. Support needs to be offered from the perspective of the person it is being given to, i.e. in an accessible way for them "*

*"It's not 'testing' and while I understand the need for the question I also felt very triggered by it because it puts the onus onto the person being difficult on purpose which is something I was frequently told and accused of when those trying to support me did not understand me, my presentation or autism and I did not feel safe with them. So many have tried to assert they know, only to show they don't at all and I just want people to be honest about what they know. I have in fact been told to think differently [by services] several times, cultural competency is not treating me as stupid or challenged - support has always failed when my intelligence has been underestimated or I have been treated as though I don't know what I want or need and someone tries to take over my life. These things all happen so much and so often that any recognisable hint of it means game over - it's not testing"*

*"I told him [psychologist] there was no point to living as everyone dies in the end so who cares when that happens - this was a genuine feeling, not a test, but the response to this was as important as if it had been a test, the response was one that validated my view even though it wasn't agreeable and was presented with logic which my brain will accept. My psychologist knows I will accept opposing views from myself more readily than others so he will ask questions that prompt me to respond in a way that disagrees with whatever I have asserted. Everyone has tests for others just often it's more searching for "markers" in people than explicitly testing what they know. "*

**Unity** is identified as an essential component of supportive relationships from both individuals and their supporters. In fact, feeling a sense of unity was so critical that many argued that it was not possible for them to give or receive support successfully if that unity did not exist. Unity can be described as a ‘deep connection’ that involves common interest, and action, whereby the relationship is productive and comfortable.

*“If I can’t trust someone it’s game over. If I don’t trust you, you won’t be able to help me or step into my world. If I trust you I will show you what my world is like and explain it to you. Trust is essential. Collaboration and flexibility - I need a person to come to me and where I am and not expect me to go to them. I have to feel valued as a person and seen as a person, I don’t want to be seen as a client or a patient. I can’t cope with those formal relationships. Possibly due to trauma. I need to feel like it’s a team and we are working together but not in a patronising way in an equal sense. There are times that I am less capable and I need my supporter to step in. I need to be encouraged and taught how to reward myself.”*

### **Read the person, not just the book**

For all autistic individuals it is essential for their supporters to presume their competence and to see their personhood – a person with thoughts, emotions, a sense of humour, and a personality. There is a critical balance in play in understanding each individual personality and also understanding the impact autism has in that person’s life – **knowing the individual and not just knowing about autism**. No autistic individual is the same as the next – you must work with each individual to learn and talk about all you need to know about them as a person. **Knowing about ‘autism’ does not mean you know the individual.**

*“Yes you might have worked with autism or know about autism but you haven’t worked with me and you don’t know me...my brain works differently, it’s set up differently - it’s never going to work like yours, you can make me try to act like you but it won’t be natural, it will wear me out and make me feel stupid while denying my strengths and reinforcing that being me isn’t ok or good enough. I find life more tiring because I’m constantly having to try and think how the things I do would be perceived by NTs in order to do things. I need a support person*

*that I don't need to do that with, a support person who tries to think how I would think or see something and to not force things on me because it's "the way to do it", it has to be about what meets my need in a way that makes sense to me and using the strengths I already have. I need validation and acceptance. And if a support person cannot be expected to "think differently" in order to support me, how can I be expected to in order to get support and live?"*

## Collaboration

Although it is important that individuals have control over their lives and the support they receive, for many, support has to be delivered through collaboration. In a lot of instances individuals may not be able to describe or know what kind of support they need; and input alongside of insight may be needed from people around them. Equally supporters may not always be sure how to provide support and will need feedback from the individual. Essentially these relationships involve a great deal of collaboration and teamwork and constant dialogue. This has been described as **talking a lot and figuring things out together**; a support worker describes a typical starting conversation as 'how do you think we ought to approach this or what do you think we should do? I'll do whatever you think is important? What do you want me to do?' Sometimes he doesn't know and I tell him what I see us doing and we talk about that. We talk about support together, but it is always his choice. I always ask him first.'

For all individuals, support is a constant negotiation that requires both the supporter and individual to work together as a team. **Support providers do not need to have all the answers, nor do the individuals, but the relationship should be such that both are willing to work together at figuring it out. What makes a supportive relationship work?**

*"Listening, doing what you say you will do, helping me achieve, understanding my perspective, having compassion, care and empathy, non-judgemental, believing, understanding needs, patience, time, respect, trust, no persecution, support not hate, no pressure"*



*“Confidentiality. Being valued and believed in and an equal human with something to offer. Being able to see the real you even when you have lost yourself.”*

*“The best supportive relationships tap into aspects of my personality, I use a lot of humour to deflect stress and so humour is important in support. Acknowledgement and validation are essential, honesty with me and about what you know. I can’t stand those who think they know it all as in my experience all of those people have ended up letting me down. Support taking the time to get to know who I am as a person and what I value and where I want to go in life. There is no point me having any support if the goal is to take me for a cup of coffee every week to access the community if I don’t like coffee and I’d rather be accessing the community by exploring interests and social opportunities. I want social opportunities with people I can be friends with not just going out with a support person. The goals need to be my goals that make a difference to my life.”*

### **3. Flexible Contracting: enabling bespoke arrangements and innovation**

The purpose of contracting more flexibly is to allow an organisation to meet someone’s needs with truly unfettered bespoke support. The council’s fundamental duty is to meet the person’s needs and to advance their well-being and this duty is part-cascaded through contractual arrangements for care and support but in addition Providers are agreeing with the key partners to work flexibly in the person’s best interests and according to an agreed set of rules. Our recent joint Contract Frameworks have sought to move away from the consideration of provider organisations predominantly in relation to the services supplied, this implies a rather static role, and instead encouraging and requiring organisations to think about the full range of roles that can be transacted in supporting people within the community and towards their stated personal outcomes. Creativity and responsiveness can be difficult to drive through contracting or tendering arrangements and since the early 1990’s contractual

relationships between commissioners and providers have tended to dictate both the kinds of services provided and the organisations that have provided them. However, the Care Act 2014 describes the task of shaping diverse local markets as a ‘shared endeavour’ in which providers and community organisations have a real contribution to make – this means that **the individual *and* their support provider should be treated, not as a passive recipient, but as a dynamic partner.** The **focus on achieving individual outcomes, stability and progression** (whatever this might mean for each individual) allows us to evaluate the success of a support arrangement without hindering the ability of providers to agree with individuals nuanced or inspired changes to support arrangements in order to make achievement of outcomes real and tangible. With this in mind, you are being asked to:

- **Play an active role in promoting innovation and in developing appropriate individual support solutions**
- **Form meaningful relationships with the people you work with and these should form the basis of new understandings and possibilities**
- **Accept authority to agree changes or improvements in the support you offer the person**
- **Offer significant expertise or insight that is used to guide the individual with decisions**

### **What do we mean by flexible support?**

There are 5 key elements to flexible support:

1. **Accountability** - Flexible support means ensuring that you make your services accountable to the person. Each individual should know their personal budget and also their rights to terminate services and to seek alternatives. Service providers should be clear about how they are co-managing someone’s personal budget, any rules that apply and how they will keep the individual or their representatives informed and active participants in decisions.
2. **Individualisation** - Flexible support means individualising support and ensuring that someone’s needs are met in the most effective way possible - to fit them, their life and their community. Providers of flexible support will tailor the overall design of the support, the staffing

arrangements, technology, adaptation, housing, policies and procedures - anything necessary - so that the person's needs are met and their wellbeing is advanced.

3. **Responsiveness** - Flexible support means being able to change, innovate and be creative. It means not restricting the use of the funding to some narrow range of services but building on all the capacities and capabilities of the person and the community to maximise the outcomes the person can achieve. It means responding as quickly and as sensitively as possible to help people improve their own lives.
4. **Partnership** - Flexible support means working in partnership with the person, their family, friends or other representatives. It means sharing power and control and finding the right balance of responsibilities for the person. Some organisations are now established to provide Shared Management in this way – which is a formal way of agreeing the right balance of responsibilities with each person.
5. **Empowerment** - Flexible support means working to enhance the power and connectedness of the person. The best support links people to peers, enables people to learn from others and to exercise collective power. Increasingly forms of peer support or 'cooperative care' enable people to collaborate and influence the wider system and community.

#### Having policies and procedures that are a help and not a hindrance

It is essential that your policies and procedures are tuned into creating a **culture of flexibility**. The fundamental principle of good health and safety practice is to make proportionate judgements of risk and act accordingly. Despite this it is quite common for health and safety policies to specify a standard approach to a whole range of daily life issues: how best to lift someone, how best to manage medication, how to avoid risks in relationships, how to help people if they become angry. The unfortunate side effect of this kind of generalised approach is that it can increase risk overall. This is because it cannot be sensitive to the full range of individual factors involved. It is for this reason that some service providers are taking a very different view of how best to manage risk. For example, you should develop specific working policies which help everyone in a team understand how best to support someone. These policies are called working policies because they are constantly reviewed and changed in the

light of what is being learned. The focus needs to be on talking about good lives\* and the natural worries that are part and parcel of them – in a typical approach to planning, ‘risk management’ and ‘risk enablement’ are often so cumbersome and complex that they frustrate people’s natural desires for a good life, this then leads to further problems, including damage to the relationship between the person and their supporters, whereas the key to good support is to **focus on ongoing planning as a natural part of the support relationship**.

\*(defined by each individual, a life that has meaning to that person, that holds choice and control when needed, that allows us to think and feel and that brings out the best in us).

#### 4. Expected good practice and tools that enable good practice

An overarching **ethos of ordinary life** forms the basis of all outcomes and their measurements. This is the basis on which we commission services – your role as Providers is to work with individuals to ascertain what is important to them, what their aspirations are, what you are going to achieve together and how are you going to do this. The written plan that describes the outcomes is a key document - you will need to agree intervals to check back on that plan and monitor how far along the described journey an individual is progressing, making adjustments as required. This **outcomes plan is never static** – we expect to see changes and progress and a number of practical descriptions on the ‘how’. Achieving the things we set out to do are rarely defined by one action – getting from a) to b) is a journey that requires thought and steps and often requires trying things out that help us learn and adapt.

**Be prepared to have conversations about taking risks** – what is the risk? Is it real or perceived? How can you or others help manage that risk? What is gained by taking the risk? We all take risks every day – most of them are considered and known risks – your role is to talk through the what ‘might happen’ and ‘will happen’ and help individuals take risks safely and in a well managed way. Ultimately the conversations will be about whether a risk is worth taking; a lot of the time it will be. Be creative with individuals – think outside of the box.

We expect all providers to deliver **strengths and progression based services**. Progression and independence means different things to different people – small steps and big steps. **Independence is not at all considered as meaning being without or free from support** because all services should be enabling ordinary living and citizenship and should only be there for the period they are required. As an individual grows in confidence and ability services should ‘step away’ in a graduated, planned and safe way in order to allow that individual to flourish.

Contingency plans and plans that describe the ‘in case of..’ should be discussed and understood by all; safety nets are important in understanding and managing risk but also in reducing anxieties and in managing our statutory responsibilities.

Historically, and traditionally, most statutory health and social care assessments of need highlight what people have difficulty with, or cannot do; eligibility criteria is based on assessing the ‘gaps’ and the statutory role is to understand the deficit and establish whether the impact of that deficit makes an individual eligible for support and our support arrangements are asked to ‘plug’ the deficit; help ‘fix’ a problem or make something ‘better’. **Strengths based approaches**, on the other hand, concentrate on an individual’s assets, not deficits, what is right, not what is wrong:

- **Utilising strengths, resources and support networks - Assessments must be narrative based, a holistic picture of the individual’s life**
- **Risk is an enabler, not a barrier (or something to be avoided)**
- **Community, as well as ‘self’, is a resource not a hindrance**
- **Using multi-disciplinary support – health & social care in the widest sense – right skills right time right place**
- **Person centred, not service centred**
- **Listen - let the person speak, help to form a narrative, don’t focus on form-filling**
- **Agreeing a way forward, with achievable, measurable goals**
- **About stabilising the present, planning for the future - progression**
- **Questions (i.e. 3 conversations) “what would a good life look like for you”?**

Conversation	Needs assessment and Support Planning questions
1. Initial contact	How can I connect you to things that will help you get on with your life –based on your assets, strengths and those of your family? What do you want to do?
2. If people are at risk	What needs to change to make you safe and regain control? How can I help make that happen?
3. If long-term support is needed	What is a fair personal budget and what are the sources of funding? What does a good life look like? How can I help you to use your resources to support your chosen life?

As commissioners we will be monitoring how well providers are defining outcomes with individuals, how they are supporting individuals to achieve those outcomes and how individuals are supported to progress and ‘fine-tune’ their use of formal services. Our lives change and evolve all the time – your role is to help individuals be everything they can be and to shift support around an individual as changes occur and needs evolve. There are a range of services to help with understanding why changes in an individual’s presentation are happening - make use of them and make sure you talk to those people who know the individual best. We expect all support staff to have received and absorbed this document - use it in training and in inducting staff.

### Embedding an enabling framework of support for people who challenge us and our services

Providers must embed proactive frameworks for supporting people who exhibit behaviours that present a challenge. Providers have a responsibility for ensuring that staff have the appropriate skills to assess people’s needs and behavioural responses on an individual basis and develop positive behaviour support plans with **the aim of reducing the need to use any and all physical interventions**. The term 'physical

interventions' refers to 'any method of responding to challenging behaviour which involves some degree of direct physical force to limit or restrict movement or mobility' (Harris et al, 2008). Three broad categories of physical intervention are identified:

- Direct physical contact between a carer and a person with challenging behaviour (e.g., self-protective 'breakaway' techniques for escaping from grabs and chokes or minimal restraint to briefly immobilise the person)
- The use of barriers, such as locked doors, to limit freedom of movement
- The use of materials or equipment to restrict or prevent movement (e.g., the use of arm splints to reduce self-injury)

**Proactive Frameworks and Positive Behaviour Support Plans** deliver dignified prevention strategies to avoid any need for physical restraint. As a contracted provider you must keep up to date with current best practice. It is highly likely that restraint in any form will become regulated in due course. The following guidance will help you improve your knowledge and skills and stay up to date:

### **Restraint Reduction Network Standards**

We expect Providers to develop models of support that focus on the **prevention of behaviours that challenge** rather than the management of such behaviour. This can be done through:

- √ Improving skills within the workforce and delivering focussed training
- √ Implementing and supporting an appropriate culture and ethos which places people at the centre of their care
- √ Improving communication and access to interpreters and accessible information
- √ Emphasising good practice and sharing good practice across services
- √ Offering appropriate support to employees
- √ Delivering care within a framework that acknowledges and protects people's human rights. Including the rights of employees
- √ Implementing procedures to reduce and eliminate the use of restraint and seclusion

Complementing strengths based approaches and the use of outcomes in evaluating the impact of services is **Positive Behaviour Support** (PBS).

PBS is accepted internationally as current best practice and is specifically recommended by key national government and professional organisations in numerous guidance documents. You can find a lot of information about PBS at the Centre for Positive Behaviour Support affiliated with BILD: [PBS](#)

PBS is in full accord with current adult and child legislation in that it:

- Promotes physical and emotional well-being,
- Addresses physical and mental health issues,
- Emphasises personal and skill development,
- Supports and encourages family and personal relationships,
- Provides opportunities for social well-being and inclusion,
- Promotes human rights, dignity and respect,
- Emphasises the 'fit' of an individual's living accommodation and the environment.

**The Environment needs to be considered in its widest sense:**

- **Communication & body language**
- **Preferred activity or object or person**
- **Predictable routine and structure**
  - **Feeling well and happy**
- **Interaction styles – how do you talk to the person?**
  - **The built environment**
    - **Sensory needs**

**Our preferred partners for this contract will be supporting the discharge and step down of individuals over the age of 14 from specialised units.**

**It is important that you are up to date with current legal and good practice approaches in reducing restrictive practice. It is also important that staff of all grades are aware of the impact of restrictive practice. Read the following CQC report: [Out of Sight - Who Cares?](#)**



## 5. The Contract in action: Individual Service Funds

In recent years an increasing number of people have used direct payments to manage their own support, while others have received council managed services, organised using contracts with private or third sector organisations. While both can work well, there is often an unnecessarily wide gulf between direct payments, which have high levels of choice and control, plus high levels of responsibility; and council managed services, with low levels of choice and control, and where responsibility remains with the council. There is a middle option, which although much less used, will suit individuals who need flexible support, but without all the responsibilities that come with managing a direct payment. This option is called an **Individual Service Fund (ISF)** and refers to an arrangement where the service provider works with the person to provide flexible support.

An ISF is an internal system of accounting by a key service provider that makes the personal budget transparent to the individual or family. This helps provide flexible support by making the organisation accountable to the person. ISFs were developed in 1996 as an alternative to direct payments and originally they were used by people who were unable to take advantage of direct payments (Fitzpatrick 2010). At its simplest an ISF is a commitment by a service provider to respect the integrity of the funding that they receive on behalf of someone they work with, and to make themselves accountable to them or their representatives for how that funding is spent. The Individual Service Fund offered service providers a different way of thinking about their role. Instead of providing fixed support to a predetermined specification, their role was to provide flexible support, and this included making best use of someone's available budget. Instead of being accountable only to the council, their role was to be accountable to the person and family, and this includes ensuring they were accountable for how any available budget was spent.

Providing **flexible support means working with the person to design, develop and manage the best possible support, and being able to alter that support with minimal fuss when changes are needed.** Using an ISF is a way in which a service provider can work in partnership with the person – to respect their needs and wishes - but also to respond intuitively and spontaneously to opportunities and challenges in every-day life.

## Why use an ISF?

**Decision-making:** is located with someone who has the right information, motivation and expertise to make the best possible decisions – the people closest to the individual.

**Responsive services:** decisions can be made quickly and easily, as problems and opportunities occur. There is no undue delay or contractual restrictions. When service providers have used ISFs and begun to provide more flexible support there have been multiple advantages for the person; evidence suggests that flexible support can improve well-being, efficiency and trust within local communities.

**Resources:** can be used flexibly and creatively in order to build on the person's assets and community. Resources are not tied into particular kinds of service or support. The contract is such that a nominated provider has delegated responsibility to design, deliver and change the support necessary to meet someone's needs

**Clarity:** can be established about everyone's rights and responsibilities. There is no confusion, unnecessary dependence or undue complexity in the arrangements.

## The evidence in support of flexible contracting using ISFs

As it stands, the available evidence on ISFs supports the following hypotheses about why their use, and the use of flexible support, seems to create such significant improvements in outcome and efficiency:

**1. Clearer focus** – When people have more control over their own support they are able to agree exactly what support is most helpful, and also when less support might be possible. An ISF enables people, families and professionals to develop a more trusting and positive conversation about how to make best use of someone's available resource

**2. Greater capacity** – When people know what they are entitled to, and can use it flexibly, then it encourages self-development and greater independence, especially when this is in the context of some reasonable degree of security about the future. Support which is conditional on

immediate need can encourage people to become unnecessarily dependent on others. It is more empowering to know that support will not be immediately withdrawn, even if you start to increase your independence; this then gives you security and an incentive to test out greater independence. There is an important balance that needs to be struck here, to encourage independence without creating uncertainty and insecurity

**3. Stronger relationships** – Most support is not provided by social care services, but by family and friends. However, people who are entitled to social care are often fearful that they will lose their entitlement to state support if friends or family start to increase their role. This can often lead to a vicious circle where people become more dependent on paid support than is ideal, simply to ensure they remain entitled to it. ISFs provide a more secure framework, where budgets can be used flexibly, and where the support of friends or family does not lead to the immediate withdrawal of resources. In the long-run this strengthens relationships and can increase efficiency.

**4. Greater inclusion** – traditionally commissioned care services can sometimes be segregated and leave people with only limited access to ordinary community opportunities. Such services are not in the best position to make use of the support that is available in the community or in mainstream services. ISFs open up opportunities for greater social inclusion or greater collective action, for example, when people pool their budgets.

### Evidence of who can benefit from an ISF

The available evidence suggests that some groups of people will particularly benefit from ISFs, these include:

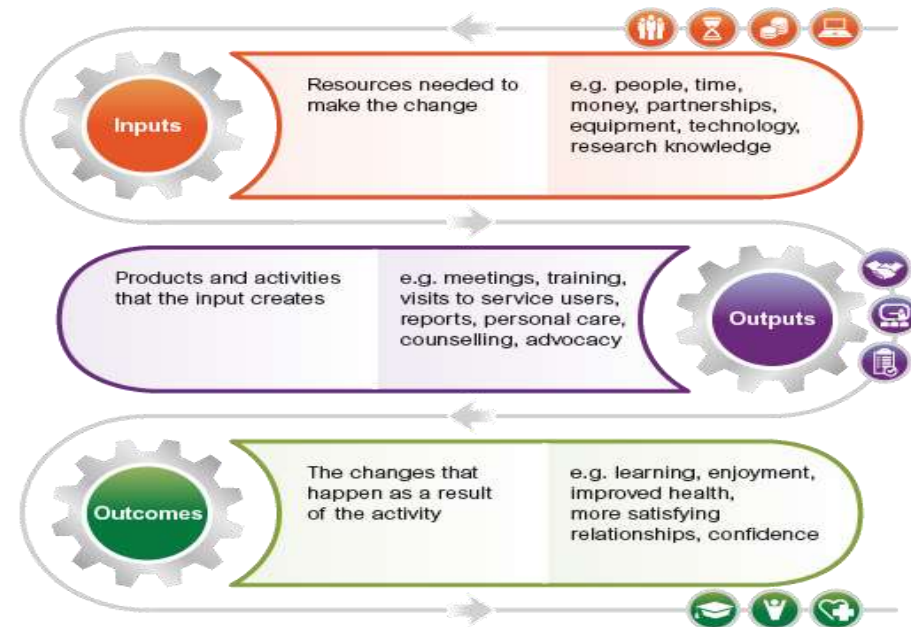
- **People who want to change things** – Many people do not want rigid support, they want to be able to react quickly to problems or opportunities, their lifestyle may be quite flexible and they do not want to work to a fixed care and support plan. Flexible support would allow them to change their plans as needed, and without seeking permission from the funding body
- **People who want choice over who provides support or what the support is** – Sometimes people have a strong preference for a particular support option. Contracting flexibly with a provider who can deliver an ISF can give people who receive services more choice over who provides support or what the support is, and the right to terminate any sub-contracted arrangements that aren't working for the individual

- **People who want specialised support** – Sometimes people will benefit from support from a particular organisation, perhaps because they have just the right expertise or perhaps because they are in just the right location. Often practitioners know which organisation, or a particular service type would suit the person best but current contracting arrangements can make it hard to put the person and the right organisation together.
- **People who want or need their support to be simplified** – Sometimes people may be getting support from several sources and this can create confusion, communication problems or bureaucratic restrictions which can lead to mistakes being made or problems being missed. Using an ISF can be useful to integrate funding from different sources, and to enable one service provider to take primary responsibility for coordinating any necessary support.
- **People who don't want burdensome responsibilities** – Sometimes people want flexible support at home, but do not want to become an employer or to take on responsibility for managing support or funding. Using an ISF ensures that one individual or organisation can take the lead and work in partnership with the person to minimise stress, but give them control over what really matters.
- **People with complex needs** – Sometimes people need support that is highly personalised, responsive and creative, to be safe and to avoid the hazards of institutional care. For example, those people currently inappropriately placed in specialist units require highly personalised support to thrive in the community. Using an ISF maximises the chance of success, combining flexibility with clear leadership from a skilled provider. Indeed, there is an opportunity to implement ISFs for people receiving personal health budgets and 'integrated personal budget holders'.
- **People who want to work in partnership** with a service provider – Often family and friends want to be part of providing support or people want to save their budget when they are with family or friends. Using ISFs gives people the security that their budget will still be safe when they do, and it provides people with greater incentives to build on these relationships when people know that their budget won't be lost when this happens (Greenwich 2015).

- **People with creative ideas about how to get support** – Sometimes people want to find imaginative new ways to meet their needs and they seek a ‘partner’ to do this, not so much to provide services, but to broker good solutions for their needs by building on people’s skills, interests and natural resources. Service providers can also act with more freedom, for example, replacing paid support with technology or using the available funding more creatively in order to support individuals achieve their outcomes.
- **People who want to pool funds and have different experiences** – Sometimes people still want to meet up with friends and social contacts and do things together. Using an ISF can allow people to pool their resources, pay for someone to coordinate things, find community options and make best use of all the available funding. Sometimes people want to be part of giving and sharing care of support arrangements together – participating in collective and cooperative care, rather than purchasing a service.

### Individual Service Funds, care and support plans, and outcomes

Firstly- understanding outcomes. An outcome is the impact of an activity or action, and should be defined and understood as what matters to the person, so the starting point is to work with the individual to define what is important to them, and to plan activities and support from there. Do not confuse Outcomes with inputs and outputs.



To make ISFs work, a change in thinking is required - in allocating an ISF the Commissioner is delegating a budget for service provision that meets assessed needs to the service provider and the individual. **This is distinct from delegating care and support planning** which is legally different. An ISF contract will use clauses that enable providers and individuals to be flexible in how they meet needs; the Commissioner responsibility is to provide a care and support plan that is outcome focused and which enables providers to respond in creative and innovative ways. The following practices, which are quite common, **are not** consistent with flexible support:

- A care and support plan which is passed onto the provider, and which specifies the services to be delivered (for example, by reference to a number of hours, a model of service etc.) rather than outcomes that need to be achieved
- A provider needing permission from the council to change how support is provided

**The flexibility of an ISF should allow people to try things out, make mistakes, change their mind and learn from each of these opportunities - an ISF must enable the support arrangement to change as the person's life changes.**

The benefit for service providers of implementing ISFs is that they will be able to improve the quality and efficiency of their work, by focusing on needs and well-being, in partnership with the individual and the people who are important to them. The rules around the use of the ISF will be transparent and simple enough so that everyone understands how it will work and what their role is. The provider and the individual will be given the freedom and flexibility to apply creative solutions to sometimes complex, emotional and intimate situations. **We will use a very simple rule of thumb, if it meets an agreed outcome, doesn't harm anyone or place a person at unreasonable risk and it's legal, it should happen.** If a person chooses to work with a service provider, they should be able to tailor the support they receive in a way that makes sense for them. The cost of any service provided should be clear and transparent; this does not mean it needs to be broken down into an hourly rate. Many of the services we value are not broken down into hours, nor do they use hourly rates - a visit to the hairdresser, a meal in a restaurant, a visit to the dentist, going to the cinema, joining a club, are all assessed on the outcome they achieve, not on how long it took and what it cost by the hour. It is

important for a person to know what outcome they want to achieve and what this may cost. Support arrangements designed using an ISF should focus on every day, community and experience-based mainstream options, in addition to specialist services. The purpose of an ISF is to ensure that the person at the heart of the plan has choice and control over the support arrangement, the purpose of which is for them to remain healthy and well and live a good life.

### **General Principles:**

- 1. Having an ISF means that people don't fit into services, they have the kind of support that suits them, when they want it**
- 2. The starting point for service design should be consideration of the individual's skills, gifts and aspirations, their assets and the resources available to them in their existing relationships and community**
- 3. The person must always be at the heart of the thinking, planning and doing**
- 4. Support must change as the person's life changes**
- 5. The person can use their individual budget to access a range of additional resources**
- 6. If the person uses the money to purchase the services of a provider organisation they should have the opportunity to tailor how they get their support, in a way that makes sense to them**
- 7. Costs for services must be clear and transparent. The service designed for each person should be tailored to them, be creative and offer the chance to use ordinary, everyday solutions as well as specialist supports**
- 8. Every service design and plan must support the person to remain healthy, safe and well**

Many of what are considered the most important things in life cannot be bought: love, health, friendship, trust, happiness... the list goes on. That said, money, in the form of an individual budget, can make life significantly easier for people with additional support needs. It is however important

to recognise that an individual budget (whether or not it's managed through an ISF) should be used for the person to achieve a good life - not just to purchase a service. It should help individuals to have higher aspirations and assist them in getting the help they need to achieve this.

Historically 'traditional types' of services have tended to regard those who make use of services as 'passive recipients of support' who have things 'done' to meet assessed need. ISFs provide the opportunity to co-create a support arrangement that works for each unique individual. ISFs also harness the opportunity to draw on a far wider range of resources and opportunities that exist within the individuals own skills and gifts, within their families, neighbourhoods and communities at large. This enables creative thinking beyond what 'service land' can offer. It is important that plans for a good life draw on the widest range of resources and clearly detail how the person's individual budget will be used to achieve their desired outcomes.

**For the purposes of accountability, to the funding authority and the individual, the use of a nationally recognised outcomes tool will be required in order to chart the progress of each person's very specific and personal and wellbeing outcomes.** Working in this way ensures transparency and accountability without restricting the flexibility that is a key component of an ISF. This level of openness and accountability also ensures that people who have previously been in receipt of support delivered through more traditional approaches can be assured that their support needs will continue to be met and that they will remain safe and well. **Using an ISF enables more creative solutions - these can often be simple in their application, but life changing in the affect they have on an individual's quality of life.** There are many outcomes measurement tools available, including some specific tools relating to autistic people such as the 'Spectrum Star'™. The Spectrum Star covers nine key areas: Physical health, Living skills & self-care, Well-being & self-esteem, Sensory differences, Communication, Social skills, Relationships, Socially responsible behaviour and Time and activities. The Spectrum Star meets what is being asked for in the Autism Act and in the NICE guidelines on Autism:

[DH Guidance implementing the Autism Strategy](#) [NICE guidance - Autism](#)



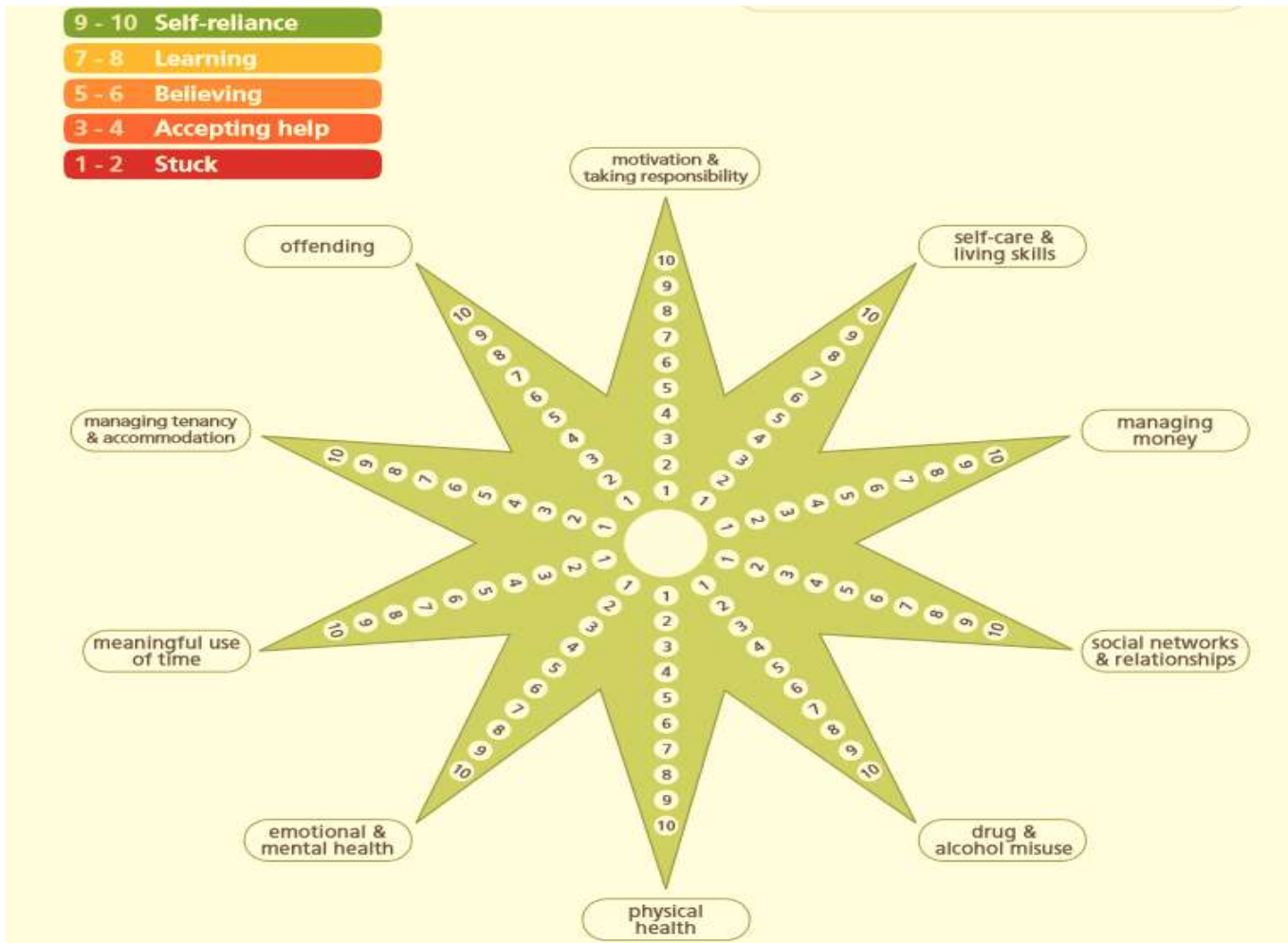
## WELLBEING WHEEL MOVING INTO ADULTHOOD



This is an example of a well-being wheel used for young adults. It can be translated into specific outcomes themes to plot progress for each individual. Each section, or domain, can be adapted to ensure they are relevant for each individual. Older adults for example may wish to use different life domains.

The outcomes measurement tools will provide a more interactive and visual method of goal setting and progress monitoring





Each area of 'wellbeing' can be plotted using an outcomes star which supports showing progress and goals through each aspect, allowing for which aspect is most important to the individual.



This diagrammatic aims to depict a support journey – it could be any kind of support journey for all of us; using friends as the support system, or indeed using support systems that are commissioned.

The concept of self-reliance will mean something different to all of us - it could mean having better coping mechanisms or being in receipt of the right type of support that allows us to focus on getting on with life or moving forward with our goals.

Accepting help can be the biggest barrier – consider what has been said earlier about trust and unity and our difficulties in providing the right type of support to many autistic people.



Our explicit intention is to establish a contracted set of providers who have evidenced their ability to work collaboratively to meet the core aim of the contract:

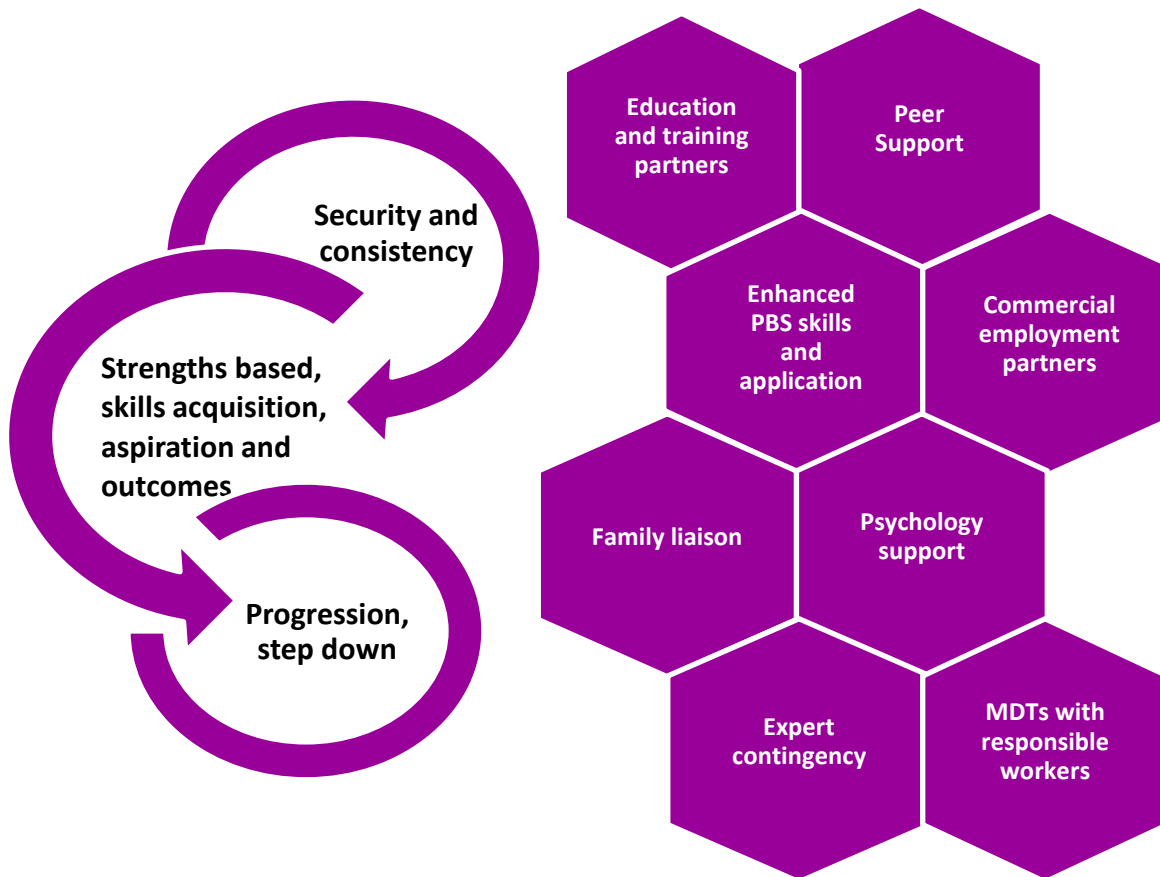
- Working together creatively and uniquely to pursue achievement of the stated outcomes for each and every individual determined as benefitting from support under this contract framework

This will be achieved through:

- Maintaining integrity to the contractual and practical intentions of Individual Service Funds
- Committing to a shared ethos of focussing on solutions and of sharing creative or innovative practice
- Teaching and learning in equal measure, with autistic individuals and with all key partners

**There is a contractual expectation that the preferred partners will**

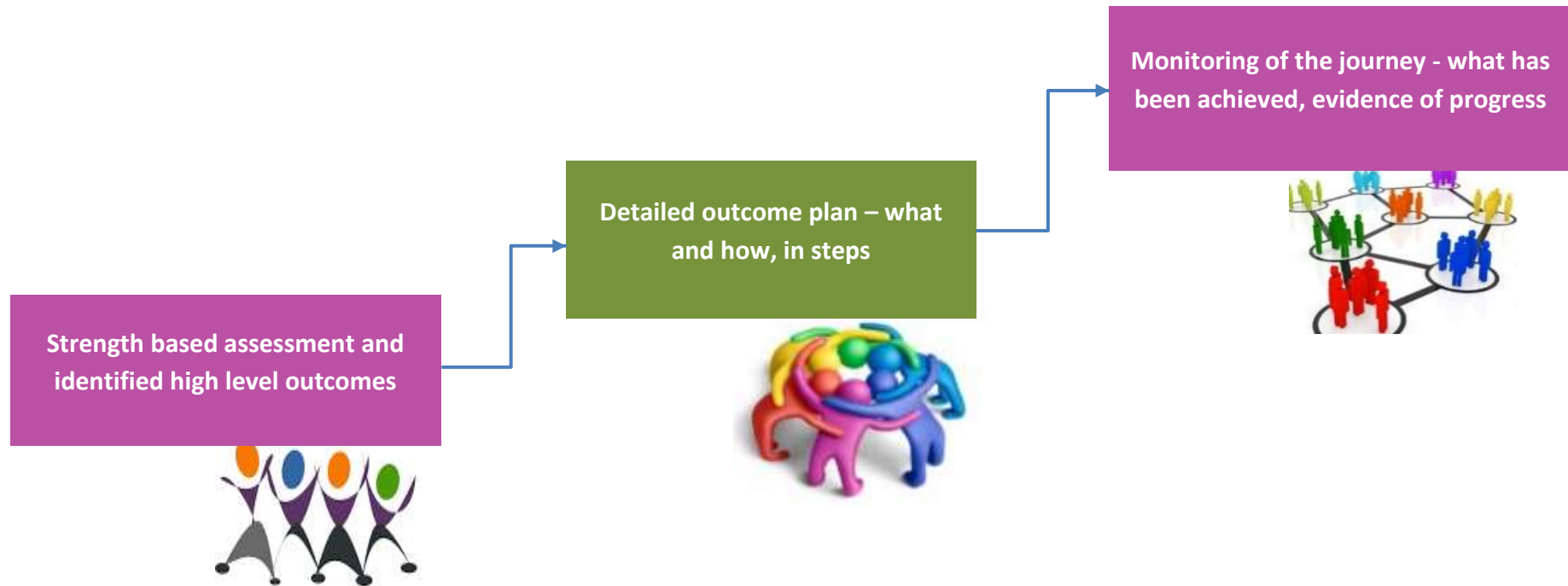
**care and support** – the key aim is to focus on progression and ‘step down’ and enabling self-reliance and self-management. For many individuals this will mean maximising the skills and experience offered under this contract framework in order to enable a step down to a life-long support arrangement that is determined as suitable and of value to each individual in maintaining a good life. Step downs will be evaluated against progress with the outcomes and in discussion with the individual and their support systems. Changes will be personalised and managed with due care and attention to the individual.



The contracted providers will be required to participate in a fortnightly 'Brighter Futures Forum' that will meet to discuss and establish:

- Individuals who will benefit from being recipients of the contract approach
- The progress and outcomes of the individuals supported
  - Solutions and suggestions for overcoming barriers or sticking points
- Whether an individual would benefit from specific clinical support
  - Agree the additional support or response requirements where an individual is at risk of admission to a specialised unit with an explicit aim of preventing avoidable admissions
  - Learning from good practice
- Opportunities to influence the wider support and care network

## The Outcomes Thread



The Outcomes Thread will be embedded by using approaches that are fundamental to the use of Individual Service Funds.

**Needs Assessment:** Strength based, Conversational, Outcome Plan

**Support plan:** Aspirations, Strengths, Areas of focus, Design, Goals and Steps, Outcomes

**Delivery:** Bespoke, Flexible, Creative, Innovative, Team

**Monitoring:** Outcomes progress and achievement, quality of experience, key performance indicators

## 6. Rules of the Flexible Contract and Contract Monitoring: Individual Service Funds (ISF) and what is expected

This Commissioning and Contract Framework is a joint endeavour between the Local Authority - Northamptonshire Adult Social Services and Northamptonshire Childrens Trust - and Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group Adult and Children and Young People Complex Care. It is supported by Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust. The Framework is intended for individuals who are 14 years +.

**Our stated ambition with the Northamptonshire Autism Strategy:**

**Ambition: Care and support will meet need and support autistic people to progress.**

**Success will look like: Person-centred care and support focuses on positive outcomes, autistic people are better able to manage their own lives**

**Our stated Children First Northamptonshire Vision:**

The vision of Children First Northamptonshire is that every Child in Northamptonshire will live in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by caring and responsible families and strong communities.

**Children First Northamptonshire wants the best for all of Northamptonshire's Children and is specifically dedicated to supporting vulnerable Children.**

**Children First Northamptonshire values a highly skilled workforce that is passionate about making a difference for Children. Families are the best place for Children to develop.**

**Children First Northamptonshire will support families to understand and consider Children's needs and put them first.**

### Key principles:

An individual budget managed using an ISF should support a good life not just the purchase of a service. In a time of reduced funding and increased demand providing the same traditional services with less money is not feasible. We need to be prepared to think differently, be creative and consider responses that are not about services; by using an ISF, resources can go further by thinking differently. Solutions can be sought that may be simple but make a real difference to people's quality of life.

The use of money from the Individual budget must be clearly related to the outcomes specific to the person and their plan. Support planning needs to be clear and transparent, people need to be assured that their support needs will still be met and that they will be safe and well. Relatively small creative solutions can have a significant positive impact on a person's quality of life.

The purpose of contracting more flexibly is to clearly transfer the responsibility to meet someone's needs, and to do so in a way which enables the service provider to provide bespoke support – in doing this the Provider is agreeing with the Council to work flexibly in the person's best interests and according to an agreed set of rules. **An ISF is not a contract, it is an arrangement, developed by a service provider, to make itself more accountable to the person, as part of providing more flexible support. However, without the right contractual agreements, service providers may believe that they lack the necessary authority and flexibility to work in this way:**

### What the Provider must have in place in order to offer an Individual Service Fund:

1. Clarity about what you can and cannot offer
2. Transparency about all the costs attached to the services provided
3. Capacity, experience and skill in personalised planning and service design
4. Recruitment and employment processes that are personalised
5. Flexibility to respond quickly and appropriately to the person's life changes
6. Creativity to work with individuals and families and about different ways of doing things



7. The facility to identify each person's Individual Service Fund and systems to track how it is spent
8. The ability to routinely report to the person on how their budget has been spent and what is being achieved
9. The ability to think creatively and draw on resources outside of its own organisation
10. Resources to ensure an ongoing process for planning with people, budgeting and changing things with people as their life changes

**What commissioners must have in place if they are contracting for and funding an ISF:**

1. An awareness of the connection between how the budget is used and the personal outcomes achieved
2. Flexibility and a reasonable measured response to changes in people's lives, their outcomes, plans and how money is spent to achieve this
3. A case management approach that is based on drawing up the intended outcomes for a good life
4. A transparent system for the allocation of the annual Individual budget
5. A least restrictive set of rules about how a budget can be spent
6. A contract that clearly delegates the authority to change how support is offered to the Provider in discussion with the individual
7. Assurance that the safety and wellbeing of the person is explicitly addressed
8. An agreement on efficiency sharing
9. Clarity about how decisions are made and by whom
10. Sensible systems to help explore conflicts of interest without undue bureaucracy.
11. Practitioners have a role in ensuring that decisions are made based upon the persons will and preferences

ISFs are similar to Direct Payments because:

- The personal budget is clear to the person and/or their representative.
- People have a high degree of flexibility in how support is defined and provided.
- Decisions can be made and changed immediately, without the permission of the funding body.
- Rights and responsibilities of the person are clear.

ISFs are unlike Direct Payments because:

- The Commissioner is delegating service provision, auditing and management of the personal budget that meets the persons assessed needs to the ISF managing organisation.
- An ISF must be contracted for by using clauses that enable the organisation to be flexible in how they meet a person's outcomes i.e. they must not specify how and when support will be delivered each day.

### What should you see if an ISF is being managed well?

If an ISF is genuine and is being delivered in a flexible and adaptive way that is controlled by the person and their close family, you should expect the person being supported to be able to make the statements illustrated below:

<b>What</b>	I can use my budget flexibly and can choose what I am given support with
<b>Where</b>	I am supported where it makes sense for me, at home and out and about
<b>Who</b>	I choose who I want to support me. My support workers know me and I know them
<b>When</b>	I get support on the days and at the times that are right for me
<b>How</b>	I choose how I am supported and my support workers know this is important to me
<b>Coproduction</b>	I and the people important to me are fully involved in decisions about my own support and how the budget is used

### **Choosing to take an ISF**

An ISF agreement should not be seen as a complex or legally binding contract (as usually accompanies Direct Payments) it can therefore be presented as more of a simple yes or no decision around whether a person wants to have more choice around their daily support options - mental capacity regarding the management of an ISF is therefore far less of an issue. As the provider organisation holds the ISF budget for the person and is responsible contractually to the Commissioner for how it is spent and accounted for there isn't a great deal of risk presented to an individual in choosing to have an ISF in terms of what can go wrong for them or the commissioning authority. Unlike Direct Payments should there be any issues regarding use of the ISF, the local authority is able to pursue the ISF organisation, as a business entity, via its contractual arrangement.

The ISF agreement should always be tailored to the person individually and should describe in plain English (or easy read) how the person will be supported by their ISF organisation to make any decisions around using the budget. If the person (or their deputy if there is one in place) isn't able to sign the agreement or understand the decision to take an ISF then a best interest decision can be made and the persons circle of support could be used to sign off the ISF agreement.

### **Working out the ISF budget**

It is important to note that ultimately an ISF is still a commissioned service, albeit far more flexible, and the ISF holding organisation remains accountable at all times for the delivery of the person's outcomes.

**Commissioners are adopting a tiered approach to the allocation of the ISF. That is, a small range of budget amounts aligned to the extent of an individual's needs and commensurate with the expected input required to work with an individual in achieving the intended outcomes. A separate document will describe the tiers and the commensurate budget allocation.**

### **ISF administration charges**

We intend to provide an upfront administration contribution to the Provider in order to acknowledge the costs of managing the person's support as detailed in their ISF agreement and administering the budget in terms of management time, support planning, accounting for expenditure and auditing systems. The ISF administration fee will be set and apportioned dependent on individual circumstances.

### **Support planning using ISFs**

As with Direct Payments, ISFs can be used in a much more versatile way than traditionally commissioned services, of particular benefit is the ability to undertake 'costed support planning' that can be done with the person and their circle of support. The planning will then attach a budget to the individual steps and goals agreed in order to meet the identified outcomes and this can be done by any means that work for the person (rather than traditional time and task based approaches). Creative approaches using ISFs are starting to be used more widely for example buying personalised technology, such as iPads to help support people at home, this has empowered individuals to take more control of their support and provided the flexibility for them to decide how best to meet their identified outcomes. ISFs work really well for people who have a fluctuating need and where traditional inflexible commissioned services are unable to be tailored adequately to the needs of the person. In these scenarios the budget can be left to accrue over periods when it is not needed and can then be utilized more intensively when necessary. As with any unspent budget, if it is not required it can be returned to the commissioning organisation or, if necessary, held as contingency for future use.

### **Managing unspent ISF funds**

Unused ISF funds that have accrued with the provider organisation, or on a prepaid card if we implement this system, will be returned to the Commissioning Body by the provider organisation. It is important for the Commissioning Body to discuss reasons for the underspend and understand this prior to requesting a return – for example where a sum is being accrued in order to achieve a specific outcome.

## The Key Performance Indicators

We asked autistic people who have used, or are using, commissioned support services “How do you know a service is a good service?” and this is what they said:

- They listen to the voice of the autistic person, family, professionals involved that the autistic person trusts
- They ensure a well-planned transition is in place before a move and access any training they need before the move
- They complete a one-page profile or similar
- They make reasonable adjustments and don't see it as a bother
- They follow person centred procedures-checking interests, what a good/bad day might look like etc.
- They communicate in the way that is needed
- They don't assume the autistic person or family can move forward as easily as them due to traumatic history
- They understand trauma from past support [services] is real
- They have understanding of comorbid diagnoses and how they may impact
- They have a range of quality qualifications not just tick box stuff
- They don't assume their needs come first – [their] own agenda of what needs to be done rather than the best interest of the autistic person
- They contact other specialist services or the MDT, or arrange a Review if any issues arise etc. (they ensure they have contact details as part of the transition)
- They don't assume or judge
- They work to build relationships and understand that this group may take time or be more 'complex' to build relationships
- The ethos should not be a paper exercise it should be caring and empowering a quality of life throughout the service
- The care staff and housing staff have to be on the same agenda and have the same understanding and compassion
- Clear assessments, transition process, care plan, understanding behaviour or communication should all be recorded and on file
- There will not be a quick turnaround of staff or lots of duty staff
- Have a good understanding of the disparities of expressive communication to receptive communication (vice versa)
- The manager and/or staff will be involved in the local autism professional groups to ensure they are learning/sharing up to date information
- They don't blame if things aren't working - they use a solution focussed approach
- They have clear care plans that are person centred and meaningful to the person not just them
- They build relationships with the family
- They understand how to monitor and respond to risk/safeguarding
- They will have a clear understanding and be able to describe the person's interests, care plan and dislikes etc.
- The care plan and support should clearly promote dignity, interests, human rights etc.

- They should respond to complaints appropriately and with kindness
- They should have clear procedures of how they will identify the correct interventions and strategies
- There should be clear weekly plans so all staff know what to do if anyone is absent
- They have clear knowledge of different strategies that might be used
- When speaking with autistic people, family or staff it is clear they are happy or feel they can speak out to complain/raise something
- The building is sensory friendly
- They gain valuable advice from those with lived experience (sensory, reasonable adjustments etc.)
- They don't use language such as the person is challenging, choosing etc. and have a good level of understanding of why things might happen or why someone might do something etc.
- They are part of the autistic community and know what is happening in that community
- They don't take the funding and do nothing!!!!
- The monitoring process is thorough and they passed not just by a paper exercise

The stated key performance indicators represent the measures we will use across the life of the contract. They give the Commissioner, and Providers, an indication of the quality and success (impact) of services commissioned. We will tell you how to report these performance measures to us. The Commissioners may wish to make changes to the Performance Indicators during the contract period. Any changes will be discussed with the Contracted Providers.

<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Measurement</b>
<b>Effective and mutually beneficial partnership work across Preferred Partners</b>	<b>Evidence of cross fertilisation of training and learning opportunities</b>
	<b>Attendance and contribution to Brighter Futures Forum</b>
	<b>Cross-Provider peer group formation</b>
	<b>Evidence of collective purchasing</b>
<b>Effective partnership working with other disciplines and Agencies</b>	<b>Evidence of multi-disciplinary working to reduce risks</b>
	<b>Evidence of effective and appropriate use of CTRs and CETRAs</b>
	<b>Evidence of appropriate admission avoidance</b>
	<b>Evidence of effective contingency planning and crisis support plans</b>
<b>Enabling progression and step down</b>	<b>Progress in individual goal attainment</b>
	<b>Progress in individual outcome attainment</b>
	<b>Individuals report that they have gained skills in self-management</b>
	<b>Numbers stepping down into less intense support arrangements</b>
	<b>Reduction in spend**</b>
<b>Enabling independence and autonomy</b>	<b>Numbers accessing education</b>
	<b>Numbers returning to education</b>
	<b>Numbers accessing vocational training (including voluntary work)</b>
	<b>Numbers accessing employment</b>
	<b>Numbers reporting having a sense of choice and control</b>
	<b>Numbers actively engaged in designing their support plan</b>
<b>Improving well-being</b>	<b>Reduction in episodes of self-harm</b>
	<b>Reduction in episodes of crisis</b>

	<b>Individuals are able to self- report feeling unwell</b>
	<b>Individuals report having a 'tool-kit' for managing feelings</b>
	<b>Individuals report having improved confidence and self-worth</b>
	<b>Individuals report feeling a sense of ongoing achievement</b>
	<b>Numbers maintaining positive relationships with family</b>
	<b>Numbers maintaining positive relationships with friends and peers</b>
	<b>Numbers reporting positive and trusting relationships with supporters</b>
	<b>Numbers accessing annual health checks</b>
	<b>Numbers with a Health Action Plan</b>
	<b>Numbers accessing primary care universal services</b>
	<b>Numbers accessing secondary care services where this is needed</b>

\*\*Research indicates that over a period of 3 years the cost of support reduces by approximately 44% when Individual Service Funds are offered and used with integrity and that there is a significant improvement in the quality of people's lives with multiple outcome improvements/achievements reported by individuals, families and professionals. Improved efficiency was achieved by working with individuals to help them achieve better lives.

**In order to fully understand the performance of the Contract, The Commissioners Representative will agree with the Provider the relevant Performance Indicators for each individual. For example, some individuals will not have a history of self-harming, others will be looking at employment rather than education.**



## 6. Contractual obligations and monitoring

### What we expect from you

- The Commissioning and Contract Framework, Service Specifications and Outcome Based Support plans lay out the detail of our expectations. These documents form the basis on which a contractual relationship is established and in which we will monitor and hold providers to account.
- Any provider experiencing difficulties in either the provision of care to an individual or in the viability of care to a group of individuals must make those issues known to Commissioners as soon as is practicable, being mindful of the risks of continuing to provide those services where the safety, well-being and best interests of an individual/s is compromised.
- The Provider will facilitate access to the individuals using services under this Contract for the purposes of carrying out any and all of our statutory responsibilities as the Commissioning Body, including well-being checks. We will require representatives of the Provider to make themselves available to us for the purposes of assuring the safety and well-being of an individual/s and in respect of progress in delivering against the requirements of the contract.
- You will work with us to deliver high quality, cost effective services as a continuous cycle – bringing to our attention potential efficiencies, options for development and improvement and opportunities for collaboration across the provider market.

### What people using your services should expect from you

- Commitment, transparency and creativity
- Respectfulness, integrity and honesty
- Open communication and accessibility as required by the individual and/or their family
- Due care and attention to all legal and policy requirements
- To be asked, and for you to listen well

### What you should expect from us

- We will listen to concerns and act responsively and responsibly.
- We will be transparent and collaborative in communicating the commissioning needs of our population; supporting development and innovation, celebrating good practice, defining service improvement requirements and being fair in provider opportunities.
- We will hold provider forums specific to care and support of autistic people and provide opportunity for learning and the show-casing of good practice; sharing knowledge about what works well and what doesn't work well.
- We will have an annual dialogue with those providers in receipt of a contract under this Framework in respect of uplift provisions.

***N.B. 'We', 'our' and 'us' refers to any officer of the Council, Trust or Clinical Commissioning Group or their delegated representatives.***

### The Contract will be monitored by

- Asking for the insight and experience of autistic individuals and their close contacts as to the success of the arrangements and what is working well as well as what is not working well
- Evaluating progress against goals and outcomes, paying particular attention to evidenced experiences and goal achievement
- Evaluating the outcomes measurement tool for each individual and the goals that have been defined to achieve the overall outcomes
- Evaluating the numbers of individuals who have been supported through periods of ill-health and who have been supported to remain in the least restrictive setting with positive outcomes
- Evaluating success against the Key Performance Indicators agreed as relevant for each individual and assessed across the whole cohort

## Contract mobilisation

The Commissioners intend to award Contracts under this Framework to a small group of Preferred Providers evaluated as suitable following Contract Tender. On Contract Award the Preferred Providers will work with the Commissioning Bodies for a period of contract development and mobilisation which will include action learning sets led by Experts by Experience and training sessions focussed on the application of Individual Service Funds. All Preferred Providers must participate in this development and mobilisation phase.

A key intention of the Contract is to formulate a set of Providers who have evidenced a commitment and enthusiasm to work collectively and dynamically with each other to support individuals and their outcomes. It is expected that the relationship between this network of Preferred Providers will be strong, productive and mutually supportive and will act in accordance with the requirements and ethos as laid out in the totality of the Contract. This Commissioning and Contract Framework document is a key contract document.



*Acting Together for Autism*

## Commissioning for Brighter Futures:

Highly vulnerable autistic people with complex needs

2021-2025

Overarching Service Specification



## INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the requirements relating to the provision of services for highly vulnerable autistic people over the age of 14 years who have complex needs and have been assessed by any and all of the Key Partners as having care and support needs that meet statutory eligibility thresholds and who are deemed to be the responsibility of the Partner Commissioning Body. The key partners are defined as:

Northamptonshire Adult Social Services (NASS)  
NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group  
Northamptonshire Children's Trust

For the purposes of the Contract, Northamptonshire County Council is the lead commissioner. The term 'Commissioner' is used to describe any one of the key partners and their representatives.

This Service Specification must be read in conjunction with the following contract documents, which are considered to be 'Documents to be Relied Upon'.

- The All Age Autism Strategy for Northamptonshire 2018-2021
- Commissioning for Brighter Futures: The Commissioning and Contract Framework for highly vulnerable autistic people with complex needs 2021-2025
- Commissioning for Brighter Futures: the allocation of Individual Service Funds
- 'Raising Aspiration' – the Strategy for Children and Young People 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- The Pledge: A pledge to children in care and care leavers (Northamptonshire County Council)
- The Terms and Conditions of the Contract

This Service Specification does not describe the types of services delivered to individual recipients. This is expressly determined in accordance with the **Commissioning for Brighter Futures: The Commissioning and Contract Framework for highly vulnerable autistic people with complex needs 2021-2025**

### 1. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1 The Provider must be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and/or Ofsted dependent on the type of provision and the age-intended provision.
- 1.2 If for any reason relevant registration (CQC or Ofsted) is suspended or withdrawn during the life of the Contract, the Commissioner shall terminate the Provider's contract.

- 1.3 The Provider shall promptly inform the Commissioner of the outcomes from a CQC inspection and provide them with a copy of any resulting report.
- 1.4 Providers are required to comply with the law that currently relates to the operation of their business or as amended or implemented at a future date. The service must be delivered in accordance with recognised, current and accredited good practice.
- 1.5 It is a requirement that all Providers who are registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or Ofsted, or any regulatory successor organisation, maintains registration throughout the duration of this Agreement and or any Service Order.
- 1.6 The Council requires Providers to base their policies, practice and standards on CQC and/or Ofsted guidance in respect of compliance and to comply with this guidance and any relevant successor guidance.
- 1.7 The Provider must demonstrate adherence to all best practice in manager and staff training requirements, including subsequent measures, set down by the relevant registering and regulatory body, Skills for Care, and adherence to minimum training standards and Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England (Skills for Health) and current and subsequent legislation for registered Providers.
- 1.8 It is a requirement that the Provider possesses the type of CQC and/or Ofsted, or any subsequent successor organisation registration required under this Agreement and the requirements of any Service Order.
- 1.9 This Service Specification shall be met by Providers who wish to contract lead Commissioner to provide Services to individuals who are the responsibility of Northamptonshire Adult Social Services, Northamptonshire Children's Trust and NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 1.10 The purpose of this specification is to set out the minimum standards that the Commissioners expect from Providers delivering statutorily commissioned care and support to individuals.

## **2. ROLE OF THE PROVIDER**

- 2.1 The Provider shall have suitable premises from which to manage the contract, staffed between the hours of 9am-5pm. Appropriate emergency contact arrangements shall be in place outside of core office hours including robust on-call 24/7 management support. All contact details must be shared with the Commissioners representative.
- 2.2 The premises must be equipped with, or the Provider must have access to, appropriate training facilities for support workers in order to provide them with ongoing training and development opportunities.
- 2.3 The Provider and Partners will work in partnership to deliver services which are outcome focussed and have integrity to the nature of the contract, helping them to be:
  - a. Safe – protected from abuse, neglect or harm

- b. Healthy – experiencing the highest standards of good physical and mental health and supported to make healthy, safe choices
  - c. Achieve – Receive support and guidance in their learning- boosting their skills, confidence and self esteem
  - d. Nurtured – Having a nurturing and stimulating place to live and grow
  - e. Active – offered opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities-helping them to build a fulfilling and happy future
  - f. Respected – to be given a voice and involved in decisions that affect their wellbeing
  - g. Responsible – taking an active role within their communities
  - h. Included – receiving help and guidance to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities; accepted as full members of the communities in which they live and learn applicable outcomes at an aggregated level across all individuals from each care group.
- 2.4 Each Provider must ensure that it has the ability to provide the necessary services with a trained and competent staff group as necessary to provide support to each Individual.
- 2.5 The Provider must ensure that each person responsible for the delivery of care is fully aware of the requirements of the Contract Standards as well as the Essential Standards of Quality and Safety and be able to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and delivering high quality services for individuals with a variety of needs and/or conditions and provide services where all identified outcomes are met.
- 2.6 The Provider will supply services that meet the needs of the individual and are provided by competent staff in a way that supports the safety and security of the individual. The service shall at all times be responsive, reliable and maintain a person’s dignity and respect. The services shall be accessible and delivered with compassion, understanding and without discrimination.
- 2.7 Services must always be provided in a way that enables the individual to maximise their independence, health and wellbeing and in a way that supports their social, spiritual, emotional and healthcare needs.
- 2.8 When supporting adults, the Provider shall have regard to the Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 by the Department of Health and ensure that their Services comply with The Care Act 2014 and the requirements of the 7 principles as detailed and explained in "A Vision for adult social care: capable communities and Active Citizens" (November 2010) namely:
- **Prevention:** empowered people and strong communities will work together to maintain independence. Where the state is needed, it supports communities and helps people to retain and regain independence
  - **Personalisation:** individuals not institutions take control of their care. Personal budgets, preferably as direct payments, are provided to all eligible people. Information about care and support is available for all local people, regardless of whether or not they fund their own care

- **Partnership:** care and support delivered in a partnership between individuals, communities, the voluntary and private sectors, the NHS and councils - including wider support services, such as housing
- **Plurality:** the variety of people's needs is matched by diverse service provision, with a broad market of high quality Providers
- **Protection:** there are sensible safeguards against the risk of abuse or neglect. Risk is no longer an excuse to limit people's freedom.
- **Productivity:** greater local accountability will drive improvements and innovation to deliver higher productivity and high quality care and support services. A focus on publishing information about agreed quality outcomes will support transparency and accountability.
- **People:** we can draw on a workforce who can provide care and support with skill, compassion and imagination, and who are given the freedom and support to do so. We need the whole workforce, including care workers, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and social workers, alongside carers and the people who use services, to lead the changes set out.

2.9 When supporting individuals under the age of 18 years, the provider shall have regard to the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance under the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2015 by the Department for Education and its guiding principles:

- The participation of children, their parents and young people in decision making
- The early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- Greater choice and control for young people and parents in respect of support
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support
- High quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment

2.10 The Provider must also ensure that their services are delivered in a manner which is compatible with the **duties** placed on the Local Authority under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014

2.11 The Provider must ensure that its staff have regard for equality and diversity and uphold people's human rights (in line with the guidance outlined in the Report of the Equality and Human Rights Commission inquiry) and does not discriminate against people for any reason. Its policies will incorporate respect for both staff and the Individuals supported.

2.12 The Provider must ensure that all staff work in an enabling way that allows individuals to increase or maintain their level of independence, develop skills to self-care and move to a reduction in care and support, where appropriate.

2.13 Providers must recognise the role they play in ensuring that autistic people experience the good health and wellbeing necessary to live a meaningful life.



### **3 ENABLING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY**

#### **3.1 General Principles:**

- a. Personalisation, choice and control
- b. Supporting carers and families
- c. Multi-agency and partnership working
- d. A skilled and confident workforce
- e. Person-centred, strengths based and outcome focused
- f. Best use of technology where appropriate
- g. Positive risk taking
- h. Creativity and innovation

#### **3.2 Specifically:**

- a. Guiding and supporting aspirations
- b. Responsiveness to ill-health, promoting good health
- c. Enabling access to annual health checks
- d. Promoting and facilitating access to ordinary life experiences
- e. Working with services and suppliers to facilitate and reconcile reasonable adjustments
- f. Promoting positive relationships
- g. Promoting a family life and establishing/re-establishing a sense of family life
- h. Accessing education, skills training and additional learning
- i. Accessing paid employment
- j. Accessing relevant benefits and grants

### **4 INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES**

4.1 The Commissioner will work in partnership with the provider in defining the outcomes which are relevant for the individual and within the context of the intentions and ambitions stated in the Commissioning and Contract Framework.

4.2 As part of a statutory review the commissioner's representative will be evaluating an individual's support plan to ensure it is meeting the individual's support needs and the identified goals and that they are working towards achieving the outcomes that matter as defined by the individual and the commissioner's representative.

4.3 The overarching outcomes described as being the outcomes that matter to autistic people and their families/carers are:

1. People feel educated, equipped and able to respond to individuals with differing needs
2. People get the right help at the right time
3. Autistic people have a sense of self worth and social equality
4. Changes are anticipated, understood and supported
5. Autistic people feel safe, supported and able to make progress in their life

4.4. Providers should take note of the approaches described in the Commissioning for Brighter Futures Commissioning and Contract Framework.

## 5. SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

- 5.1 The following are outcomes that Providers will be required to evidence in addition to those described above:
- a. Individuals as active citizens.** The Provider will recognise that each individual will have their own interests and preferences and that these should be respected and supported.
  - b. Healthy individuals.** The Provider will support individuals to access an Annual Health Check that will improve and maintain their health through the planning of regular consultations with the appropriate generic service agencies (registration with GP, Dentist, Optician, Audiologist, etc.) A recommendation should be followed up and recorded in the Health Action Plan. The provider will support the individual to attend health care appointments and ensure routine healthcare checks are made available and accessed. The Provider will support the individual to receive regular medication reviews.
- 5.2 The Provider shall notify the Commissioner's representative of significant risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of the individuals that are identified in the course of providing the service and also, where appropriate, with the individual's consent, make referrals to other agencies who may assist in minimising these risks.
- 5.3 If the Provider encounters any discrimination when accessing health care or other services on behalf of individuals it will challenge the discrimination and share the details of the discriminatory practice with the Commissioner in the aim of both organisations working together to tackle prejudice and injustice.

## 6. PERSON CENTERED SUPPORT

- 6.1 Providers of Services shall provide support to individuals to enable them to live as full and independent a life as possible. The Services shall also encourage individuals to be active participants in their community whenever they so choose.
- 6.2 The Services shall be delivered in such a way that is consistent with the individual's status and rights as a citizen and which gives the individual as much control as possible over their own life whilst protecting them and others from unnecessary harm.
- 6.3 The Provider will ensure that the Service is offered in an individualised and personalised way.
- 6.4 All types of support should be delivered in such a way that they are in line with individual needs, choices and preferences and are subject to appropriate risk evaluation.

## 7. INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE PLANNING

- 7.1 The Provider will work as a team with each individual in making any decisions about their own support and how support is delivered. The Provider will involve the individual in overall service design and future developments, particularly in the promotion of greater choice in how services are delivered. This includes involving advocacy representatives where appropriate.

7.2 The Provider will ensure that cultural, religious, spiritual, gender preference and sexual orientation are fully acknowledged within the Support Plans they agree with each individual and their families or circles of support.

## **8. KEY ELEMENTS OF SERVICE PROVISION**

8.1 The Provider shall help support the individuals transition in and out of the support arrangement being commissioned.

8.2 All providers must evidence engagement/feedback and co-production in service improvement/delivery.

8.3 All providers must record evidence of involvement with other agencies/organisations in meeting needs and outcomes.

## **9. TRANSPORT**

9.1 Please see the Council's Transport Policy for all transport related issues:

[Children and Family transport policy](#)

[Post 16 travel assistance](#)

[Adult Services Transport Policy](#)

9.2 The Clinical Commissioning Group will determine eligible transport support on a case by case basis.

9.3 It is the Provider's responsibility to ensure it is following the most up to date policy and procedural guidance.

## **10. WORKING WITH OTHER KEY TEAMS AND AGENCIES**

10.1 The Provider will at all times work in partnership with other agencies to avoid duplication of effort and maximise the benefits and outcomes for each individual. The agencies considered as particularly pertinent to this contract (but not limited to) are:

Probation service

Youth offending service

Police (RISE- based with MASH)

DWP and Access to employment

LIVE/EADS

Education: FE colleges, Schools, LAC teams and virtual schools

Substance to Solution (S2S)

Housing authorities

Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust services

- 10.2 The Provider will be conscious of the limits of its own responsibilities with respect to the support of individuals and will actively seek external professional support from the relevant multi-disciplinary team or Agency in situations where these limits are reached.
- 10.3 The Provider must maintain open and honest communication with the Commissioners representatives and others members of a multi-disciplinary team or Agency and should alert the Commissioner to any operational difficulties that could cause risk for individuals or the Service as a whole.
- 10.4 Providers will play an active role in and regularly attend the fortnightly **Brighter Futures Forum** (see Brighter Futures Commissioning and Contract Framework) any multi-agency meetings that relate to the individuals they are supporting. Examples of these may be Care Programme Approach (CPA), Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA) planning meetings, adult support and protection meetings and professional meetings. **Please note this list is not exhaustive.**
- 10.5 Providers may be required to supply reports and updates at these meetings, as well as contribute to any multi-agency care plan or risk management plan.

## **11. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 11.1 The Provider will ensure conditions of safety for individuals and others through effective risk evaluation and management. This includes ensuring the provision of competent and confident staff.
- 11.2 The Commissioner will endeavour to inform the Provider of any relevant information concerning the individual including any changes to any perceived or known risks which the Commissioner considers relevant to the provision of support that the Provider is required to deliver. Information regarding next of kin and emergency contact details will also be shared by the Commissioner with the Provider.
- 11.3 If the individual is between the ages of 14 to 18 years old the risk assessment and risk management plan should reflect the requirements of children and young people's policy and legislation and will include consultation with parents/carers/guardians.
- 11.4 The approach to risk should be proactive and supportive. Assessment should include guidance for Staff around minimising risks and contingency planning in the event of an emergency.
- 11.5 Risk evaluations should be carried out by the Provider prior to the commencement of the Service. Where commencement is urgent risk evaluation must be carried out within 3 working days of the commencement of the Service.
- 11.6 Through the process of risk assessment the Provider should report to the Commissioner any actual or perceived risks identified that relate to Adult or Child Protection.

## 12. EXPECTED DOCUMENTATION

- 12.1 The following documents should be completed for all individuals:
- a. Outcome focussed care and support plan with agreed goals
  - b. Risk assessment
  - c. Risk management plan
  - d. Contingency plan
  - e. Health Action plan
  - f. Positive Behaviour support plans
  - g. EHC plans (14-25 yrs.)
  - h. Accounting book – expenditure, outgoings, purpose
- 12.2 Records and reports of any serious incidents of violence, aggression, or use of restraint or any other serious incidents must be reported and shared with the commissioner's representative.

## 13. SAFEGUARDING

- 13.1 The Service will have policies and procedures in place to deal with Safeguarding and Protection issues as appropriate.
- 13.2 The written policies and procedures safeguard individuals from any form of abuse or exploitation and staff must be familiar with and follow these procedures.
- 13.3 There are procedures for responding to suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect which reflect multi agency policies and procedures, including the involvement of the Police and other appropriate parties:

[Adult Safeguarding Procedures](#)

[Child Protection Procedures](#)

[Child Safeguarding and Welfare](#)

[Child Welfare Procedures](#)

[Child Safeguarding Board Procedures](#)

- 13.4 It is the Providers responsibility to ensure it is following the most up to date policy and procedural guidance.
- 13.5 The Provider shall ensure that it has up to date and appropriate Child and Adult Safeguarding policies and procedures in place which reflect and adhere to the multi-agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures. Such Provider policies and procedures must give clear guidance to support workers on how to recognise and refer safeguarding concerns to a person with lead responsibility within their organisation. All contracts of employment shall include an explicit responsibility for safeguarding adults and children according to Northamptonshire protocols, policies and procedures.

- 13.6 The Provider must have clear whistle-blowing policies and staff must feel confident that as a result of whistle-blowing their concerns will be acted upon without reprisal. The Provider shall have someone appointed to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and that officer must be aware of their responsibilities to analyse and refer appropriately any concerns to which they are alerted.
- 13.7 The Provider will limit the use of Agency Staff in the provision of care and support packages and at all times will evidence appropriate induction and shadowing/training relevant to the individual being supported where agency staff are being used. Providers should use a 'staff bank' of known and experienced staff as an alternative to agency use.
- 13.8 The Provider shall cooperate with the relevant Commissioner's representative and Local Authority representatives in the event of safeguarding issues that require further investigation and reporting. Any recommendations resulting from Safeguarding Boards or Serious Case Reviews shall be acted upon appropriately by the Provider.
- 13.9 The Provider must have in place a robust audit programme to assure itself that safeguarding processes are working effectively. Any support worker employed by the Provider who is found to be at fault following a thorough safeguarding investigation shall be subject to the rigour of the Provider's robust disciplinary procedures even where that support worker has already resigned from their post.
- 13.10 The Provider shall ensure that all staff undertake Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 training, including Deprivation of Liberty (DOLS) Safeguards training commensurate with their level of responsibility.
- 13.11 Where it is relevant, it is the Provider's responsibility to ensure that all front line staff be immunised against known infectious diseases that will have a detrimental effect on an individual with specific health conditions. Basic childhood immunisations should have been given in accordance with the current UK NHS guidelines, **Immunisation Requirements** in addition to Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and seasonal influenza, unless there have been contra-indications for the support worker. It is the Provider's responsibility to complete a risk assessment where a support worker has not been vaccinated and inform the Commissioner's representative accordingly. The Commissioner's representative shall have the discretion to refuse to allow the support worker to provide care and support to the individual if this is considered to pose a health risk to an individual.

## **14 ACCESS TO THE SERVICE**

- 14.1 All Providers will participate in the fortnightly Brighter Futures Forum held with commissioners and members of a multiagency network who are brought together to support autistic individuals access the right support at the right time under the auspices of the Brighter Futures Commissioning and Contract Framework.
- 14.2 The Brighter Futures Forum will determine the best individual-provider 'fit' in pursuit of meeting needs and achieving individual outcomes. Capacity, competency and delivery will

be discussed at this Forum. There will be occasions where a speedy response is required and Providers are expected to comply with 'out of Forum' discussions and agreements.

- 14.3 Providers will be expected to flexibly respond to any request for a Service and to work with the Commissioner to agree a mutually acceptable service start date and schedule of agreed review periods for the year ahead. This start date will vary depending on the needs of each individual but will range from within 24 hours up to a maximum of 28 calendar days. The key is that any agreed start date is acceptable and manageable for the individual and in keeping with the nature and complexity of a needs assessment.
- 14.4 A number of individuals who have been residing in specialist units will be referred into the Forum and the Forum will be required to agree the step down and transition plans whereby Providers are asked to be flexible and sensitive to the particular difficulties these types of changes may present to both the individual and their family.
- 14.5 Providers will ensure that there is the necessary workforce capacity to accept and commence care packages over weekends/bank holidays
- 14.6 Providers will encourage reductions in care and support needs where safe to do so and/or where independence permits
- 14.7 Providers will minimise the number of different workers delivering care and support to the individual, unless through individual choice, in order to promote consistency, continuity and the sense of 'team'.
- 14.8 Providers will always ensure that there is a match between an individual's needs and aspirations and the skills set, knowledge, personal attributes and competency of support workers. Individuals will be involved in choosing support staff.
- 14.9 Providers will ensure the Service is delivered in accordance with the individuals Care and Support Plan and personalised outcomes

## **15 DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES**

- 15.1 Providers will be expected to support individuals who have a range of needs. At times where emergency situations arise the Provider will be required to manage these effectively. In these circumstances the Provider will:
  - a) Immediately seek the help of the emergency services or appropriate health agency (e.g. the GP) where there is an urgent risk to the health of an individual
  - b) Have in place a system of easily accessible back-up to support front-line staff who need assistance when emergencies arise, including access to a manager and extra staff support if required
- 15.2 In response to an emergency, the Provider's staff will:
  - a. Have their own internal systems for recording events and supporting staff
  - b. Inform the appropriate Council's Representative of events as soon as is reasonably practical.
  - c. Plan jointly with the Council to respond to a recurrence of the emergency

- 15.3 The safety of the individual must be paramount in an emergency and the Provider must act accordingly, even if there is an apparent conflict with Service principles described in the Framework Agreement.
- 15.4 The Provider will inform the Council's Representatives of any hospital admission at the earliest opportunity and Commissioners will confirm any required support arrangements during that stay.

## **16 PROVIDERS PREMISES**

- 16.1 The Provider should have available premises that are well maintained, appropriately furnished and suitable for the purpose of which it is intended. The Provider is responsible for maintaining all aspects of the physical environment to the appropriate regulatory standards.
- 16.1 The Provider will have access to premises which will:
- a. Allow issues of confidentiality to be discussed at short notice
  - b. Provide a meeting place for staff
  - c. Provide facilities for staff training
  - d. Provide for the secure accommodation of all office materials including all Customer data
  - e. Provide access to relevant documentation by the Commissioners contract monitoring officer or other representatives
- 16.3 Providers should ensure that any equipment that is required to facilitate the Service is available for use by individuals e.g. mobile phones

## **17 PROVIDER OBLIGATIONS**

- 17.1 Providers will be expected to work proactively with the individual and their families/circles of support to arrange introductions and establish an effective relationship between all parties.
- 17.2 Prior to the Service commencing the Provider shall notify the individual of the time and date that the service will commence. Individuals will have met and agreed their support staff and will have participated in detailing the start plan.
- 17.3 The Provider will make every effort to form a staff team based in the individual's preferences and choices with a staff team with attributes that are important to the autistic individual and/or their family, e.g. gender of worker, interests and skills. Any difficulties that cannot be resolved should be referred to the commissioner's representative for resolution.
- 17.4 The Provider will have explicit values and policies that promote inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice.
- 17.5 The Provider shall discuss and prepare the individual in advance of any change in an allocated key worker where this is unavoidable and notwithstanding the requirement to maintain consistency in support staff generally. The Provider should take advice from the



individual, their family and those that know the individual on how to do this sensitively. The Provider should discuss this potential occurrence at a suitable time early in the support arrangement with the individual, their family and those that know the individual well. An agreed approach to managing such an occurrence must be documented and understood by all staff.

- 17.6 Individuals and their families must be given access, including telephone numbers, to the relevant Manager during the hours of the Service. The Provider shall ensure that outside of normal office hours (09:00 – 17.00) an out of hour's service operates and that it is accessible to each individual and the Council.
- 17.7 It is the Provider's responsibility to stay informed about changes in legislation and regulation as well as policy and approach. Providers must ensure internal policies and procedures reflect current requirements and thinking. It is also the Provider's responsibility to submit updated and amended policies and procedures to the Commissioner when requested.
- 17.8 The Provider will inform the commissioner's representative of any changes in an individual's presentation or circumstance that indicates an increased risk or potential signs of crisis.
- 17.9 The needs of each individual will be identified through an assessment completed by a commissioner's representative in conjunction with the individual, their family and their social circle. If an individual is deemed to be likely to benefit from services provided under this contract the representative will produce a personalised and outcome focused plan - the individual and their representative will identify what is important to them and set out the outcomes to be achieved.
- 17.10 The Provider will work in partnership with the individual and their family/social circle to agree and document a detailed support plan that describes needs, aspirations, goals and the outcomes sought. The support plan will include a Positive Behaviour Support plan describing both proactive and reactive strategies to assist the staff team and the individual in pre-empting and responding to heightened need. The positive behaviour support plan should be shared with relevant persons and professionals involved in the individual's care and support, as agreed with the individual and their family.
- 17.11 The Provider must inform the Commissioner of the need to review the Support Plan if there is a material change in the individual's needs.
- 17.12 Changes to the nature and types of services or arrangements accessed in order to meet need and achieve the stated outcomes are made in agreement between the Provider and the individual as part of the focus on goal achievement and in keeping with the integrity of Individual Service Funds as described in the Commissioning for Brighter Futures Commissioning and Contract Framework.
- 17.13 A Review of needs, the support plan and the agreed outcomes will be held as and when the commissioner representative considers it appropriate or necessary, or as requested by the individual and/or their family or representative, or by the Provider. A schedule of reviews will be agreed on an individual basis as standard practice.
- 17.14 The Review will involve the individual and/or their family or representative, the commissioning body's representative and where appropriate, the Provider or designated

representative. Consideration will be given to ensure reasonable adjustments, convenience and adequate notice for all participants wherever possible.

- 17.15 Where it is necessary to transfer an individual to an alternative care setting, it is incumbent on the Provider to cooperate with the authorised representatives of the organisation to whom the individual is being transferred in order to share with them any pertinent information that will assist them in on-going care which must be communicated in written format.
- 17.16 For every individual; the following information must be prepared and accessible for the purposes of managing a planned, unplanned or sudden admission to hospital:
- a. A completed and up to date A&E grab sheet which should accompany them on any admittance
  - b. A completed 'helping me in hospital/hospital passport'
  - c. Support workers who accompany an individual to hospital must have an in-depth knowledge of the individual and their on-going health needs, medication, and knowledge of how to involve the individual in decisions about their care
  - d. A completed communication passport

## **18 STAFFING**

- 18.1 The Provider will limit the use of Agency Staff in the provision of care and support packages and at all times will evidence appropriate induction and shadowing/training relevant to the individual being supported where agency staff are being used. Providers should consider the use of a 'staff bank' of known and experienced staff as an alternative to agency use.
- 18.2 The Provider's recruitment and selection procedure shall be based on the principles and obligations of 'Safer Recruitment'. Where agency staff are used, assumed as in exceptional circumstances, the Provider should ensure that the employing agency have used principles of Safer Recruitment. Through this the Provider shall ensure the protection of vulnerable individuals and meet the terms of this Framework Agreement.
- 18.3 The Provider should ensure they have Staff who can support Customers with communication difficulties including sensory impairment, or those whose first language is not English.
- 18.4 The Provider will have a Staff Code of Conduct or policies which specify the standards expected of Staff when on duty. These policies should include:
- Appropriate standards of dress
  - Alcohol and smoking
  - Communication with Customers
  - Dealing with Customers finances
  - Confidentiality
  - Gratuity or gifts from Customers
  - Assuming legal powers on behalf of a Customers
  - Conduct when dealing and communicating with the public

**Please note this list is not exhaustive**

- 18.5 The Council requires the Provider to have an established and comprehensive staff induction programme, which staff will complete within two [2] months of commencing employment with the Provider. The induction programme needs to match the aims and objectives of the particular Service being delivered to ensure that all Staff has a good understanding of the needs of Individuals and a rapport that will facilitate goal achievement and positive outcomes.
- 18.6 The Provider will ensure that all their employees receive:
- a. A workload appropriate to their level of skill and competence
  - b. Full and appropriate Induction to provide the best care and support
  - c. Access to line management during the course of their working day and management support out of office hours
  - d. Individual support and supervision on a minimum two [2] monthly basis
  - e. Access to all relevant policies and procedures including emergency procedures at all times
  - f. Clear instructions regarding the management structure, their roles and responsibilities
  - g. Training from suitably qualified, competent experienced trainers.

**Please note this list is not exhaustive**

- 18.7 The Provider will ensure the provision of ongoing staff training and development in accordance with the Best Practice, Safe Practice and Regulatory Legislation.
- 18.8 The Provider will support Staff to attain any skills and qualifications required of them in order to provide the Service outlined in this specification.
- 18.9 The Provider will ensure that all Staff have the necessary training, competencies, personal qualities, attitudes and commitment to enable them to build effective and trusting relationships with the individual/s they are supporting.
- 18.10 The Provider will have a training programme accessible to all staff members and will also ensure that additional training will be offered to meet the needs of specific individuals. The Provider is expected to fulfil the requirements of the following:

## **19 TRAINING STANDARDS**

- 19.1 Training Standards are sets of key learning outcomes and other relevant information around specific areas of training for Care and Support staff.
- 19.2 Good quality training is a key means of enabling staff to develop the knowledge and skills required to deliver high quality, person-centred services to individuals in order to maximise their health, safety, well-being and independence.
- 19.3 In addition to any statutory training required by CQC as part of your registration, the following is standard training that all support staff must receive:

### **Basic training**

Moving and Handling

Fire Safety  
Basic Life Support/Emergency First Aid at Work  
Infection Prevention and Control  
Food Safety  
Fluids and Nutrition  
Medication  
Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children  
Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty  
Mental Health Awareness, including anxiety and self-harm  
Autism awareness  
Epilepsy training  
Premature Mortality, Annual Health checks and Health Action Plans  
EHIC Plans  
GDPR  
Whistleblowing  
Safeguarding  
Dealing with Complaints

#### **In depth training**

Understanding Learning Disability in combination with Autism  
Understanding Autism as a 'world'  
Enablement and Systematic Instruction  
Understanding behaviours that challenge as a function and safe techniques for re-direction and Positive Behaviour Support  
Enabling skills and supporting skill acquisition – building on strengths  
Goals and Outcomes  
Suicide and self-harm  
Behaviours as a form of communication  
Domestic Violence  
Bullying  
Hoarding and OCD

19.4 Commissioners will implement a 'skills-exchange' portal for Providers to offer subject matter expert training to each other, without cost, as a skills exchange programme.

19.5 In addition:

**All Providers will have a nominated Training and Development Lead.**

Commissioners will require the names of Leads for communication and records.

## **20 SPECIFIC TRAINING AND GUIDANCE**

20.1 All Provider and staff should have an in-depth knowledge of autism and the social, physical and environmental barriers that are often presented specific to this customer group.

20.2 In recognition of the needs of the individuals and the nature of the contract it is required that the Provider's staff will have an awareness level and in-depth knowledge in the following areas:

An understanding of the principles of the Care Act and the Children and Families Act

An understanding of the 'Social Model of Disability'

Understanding and applied expertise in Person Centred Planning

Awareness of particular conditions affecting that may influence and individual's day to day support e.g. Epilepsy

An Understanding of the principles of Self Directed Support and the importance of maximising an individual's choice and control

Risk evaluation and effective proactive support in the context of providing positive support including support to safely manage difficult behaviour and de-escalation techniques

Knowledge of Mental Health legislation and its implications e.g. Section 117, Compulsory Treatment Orders and an awareness of a range of mental health conditions from mild to severe and how they impact on an individual E.g. Mental Health First Aid

Understanding of outcomes focussed support and how to assist individuals to identify and achieve their outcomes

Listening skills

Enabling positive change and transitioning into adulthood or old age

Sexuality and Relationships and positive reinforcement

Supporting Individuals to connect to their communities

Knowledge of good practice in Adult Safeguarding

Suicide awareness and prevention e.g. 'Safe Talk'

Promoting mental and physical health wellbeing

Managing and supporting individuals who self-harm

An understanding of enablement and outcome focused practice

An applied understanding of working within a multi-disciplinary approach

Long term physical conditions

Administration of medication and supporting self-administration

Health and safety

Fire precautions

Food hygiene and preparation

Basic first aid & CPR

**Please note this list is not exhaustive**

20.3 In line with the contract nature the Commissioner requires the Provider to have an annual training plan that specifies what training is available and how it will be delivered to the Provider's Staff.

20.4 In addition, the Provider will meet any reasonable requirements that the Council may seek to introduce in relation to training and support in order to improve the quality of the

Service provided. This will include participation to commissioner-led training and development.

### **Maximising Health and Wellbeing**

- 20.5 Staff members will have the specific knowledge and skills to work with individuals to achieve optimal wellbeing. Members of staff will be expected to demonstrate to the Commissioner their understanding of health promotion and how they work with individuals to maintain health and wellbeing.
- 20.6 The provider will ensure that staff have access to learning and development opportunities that include public health messages and an understanding of the local and national provisions that can support them. Delivery of training courses should include self-advocates and family carers.
- 20.7 Any organisational learning needs analysis will include consideration of staff understanding of how to maintain good health, local health services and initiatives, and an overview of common health conditions and health risks for autistic individuals and vulnerable individuals.
- 20.8 **Staffing - Standard Skill Base:** Needs are such that support workers will be experienced in this particular customer group and have the appropriate values and training to deliver high quality care and support. Risk and complexities can be managed with reasonable consistency as recorded in the care and support plan.
- 20.9 **Staffing - Enhanced Skill Base:** Needs are such that individual may require a higher level of skill due to unpredictability, risk or transitions management. The expectations are that individuals will require regular risk evaluation and as such frequent decision making that may at times go beyond that stated in the care and support plan.
- 20.10 For individuals who severally challenge, with or without mental illness, this will require a frequent level of complex risk assessment and decision making to ensure the individual is supported in the least restrictive environment. Environment is defined as the entirety of a care and support arrangement as well as influencing factors such as family, friends and peers.
- 20.11 At times where other approaches have failed and risk are such that there is no other alternative, there may be the need for brief physical interventions. In all circumstances best practice must be followed and be supported by robust recording and review.
- 20.12 For individuals who may have profound and complex needs and who may be at the End of Life, or require clinically determined support with delegated nursing skills assessment will be required over and above what would be expected of usual. An enhanced level of care and support will be required to continuously prevent and/or reduce the need for admission to a hospital setting.

## **21 MEDICATION MANAGEMENT – LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR GUIDANCE**

### **21.1 Level 1: General Support, also called Assisting with Medicine**

General support needs should be identified at the care assessment stage and specified in the care plan. Ongoing records will also be required in the care record when care needs are reviewed.

General support is given when the individual takes responsibility for their own medication. In these circumstances the care worker will always be working under the direction of the person receiving the care.

The support given may include some or all of the following:

- requesting repeat prescriptions from the GP
- collecting medicines from the community pharmacy/dispensing GP surgery
- disposing of unwanted medicines safely by return to the supplying pharmacy/dispensing GP practice (when requested by the individual)
- reminding or prompting by the care worker to an individual to take their medicines. (A persistent need for reminders may indicate that an individual requires a review of the approach)
- manipulation of a container of prescribed medicine under the direction of the individual, for example opening a bottle of liquid medication

Individuals can retain independence by using compliance aids, including monitored dosage systems. These should be considered if packs and bottles are difficult to open or if the individual has difficulty remembering whether he or she has taken medicines.

The monitored dosage system (MDS) will normally be filled and labelled by the community pharmacist or dispensing GP. The individual may qualify for a free service from a community pharmacist if they meet criteria under the Equality Act 2010. If a pharmacist or dispensing GP does not fill the MDS, the provider should clarify that the arrangements are suitable and minimise the potential for error.

## 21.2 **Level 2: Administering Medication**

The need for medication to be administered by care and support staff should be identified at the assessment stage and recorded in the support plan. Ongoing records will also be required in the care record.

The care assessment or the Medicines Risk Assessment may identify that the individual is unable to take responsibility for their medicines. This may be due to impaired cognitive awareness such as a lack of concentration or could be due to a physical impairment.

The Individual must agree to have the care worker administer medication and consent should be documented in the care plan. If an Individual is unable to communicate informed consent the provisions of the Mental Capacity Act must be followed.

Administration of medication (Level 2 support) may include some or all of the following:  
When the care worker selects and prepares prescribed medicines for immediate administration

- When the care worker selects and measures a dose of prescribed liquid medication

- When the care worker applies a medicated cream/ointment/patch; inserts drops to ear, nose or eye; and administers inhaled medication
- When the care worker selects and puts out (prepares) medication for the individual to take themselves at a later (prescribed) time to enable their independence, in accordance with the care plan

The provider should have a system in place to ensure that competent and confident staff are supporting individuals who require help with their medicines. The provider's procedures should enable care workers to refuse to administer medication if they have not received suitable training and do not feel competent to do so.

Workers should only administer medication from the original container, dispensed and labelled by a pharmacist or dispensing GP. Care staff **must** be able to identify each individual medication against the MARS chart and **must** have an overview of side effects which should be documented clearly for all staff. It is a **legal requirement that medication is issued with accompanying information about the medication including potential side effects.**

Individuals discharged from hospital may have medication that differs from those retained prior to admission. The provider should issue additional support to care workers when this occurs.

### 21.3 **Level 3: Administering Medication by Specialised Techniques**

In exceptional circumstances and following an assessment by a healthcare professional, a Worker may be asked to administer medication by a specialist technique including:

- Rectal administration, e.g. suppositories, diazepam (for epileptic seizure)
- Insulin by injection
- Administration through a Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG)
- Buccal midazolam for epileptic seizure
- Assistance with oxygen

If the task is to be delegated to a support worker for a specified individual the healthcare professional must train the care worker and be satisfied they are competent to carry out the task. The provider's procedures must include that care workers can refuse to assist with the administration of medication by specialist techniques if they do not feel confident or competent to do so.

## 22. **MENTAL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

### **Needs-group specific outcomes**

- 22.1 Some Providers will be working with autistic individuals where there may also be needs relating to mental illness. We expect those Providers to work in line with the principles of good practice in mental health and use a recovery model.



- 22.2 The principles of recovery are defined by the Recovery Network as follows:  
**“Recovery is being able to live a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by each person, in the presence or absence of symptoms. It is about having control over and input into your own life. Each individual’s recovery, like his or her experience of the mental health problems or illness, is a unique and deeply personal process.”**
- 22.3 The Commissioners representatives alongside of NHS staff will work with Providers to deliver the following:
- a. A reduction in avoidable hospital admissions
  - b. Support individuals, in partnership with families and social circles, to manage their mental health and any relapses they experience
  - c. Actively work with individuals to reduce levels of self-harm and prevent suicide
- 22.4 For providers who are working with individuals with additional and on-going mental health needs staff are expected to have training and skill in understanding the mental health of individuals who will have a range of conditions e.g. depression, personality disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar and anxiety.
- 22.5 Providers will maintain up-to-date care and support plans that reference presentations, triggers, precursors, and antecedents and support individuals to seek the support of their CPN or Psychiatrist when they are showing signs of deterioration in their mental health.
- 22.6 Providers may work with some individuals who are subject to legislated restrictions where offences and risks could be serious. Many of these individuals will be supported in partnership with the local Forensic Service.
- 22.7 The terms of engagement with individuals will be the Provider-documented support plan that is focused on outcomes and a comprehensive risk assessment that takes account of any public protection or safety issues.

## **23 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 23.1 The Provider will employ sufficient and suitably qualified managers to ensure that the work undertaken by the Provider’s front line Staff is appropriate, effective and safe.
- 23.2 The Provider must operate a robust quality assurance system to ensure the continued delivery of a high standard of service.
- 23.3 The Provider’s management team will be responsible for:
- a. Appropriate allocation and management of requests for Services made by the Commissioner
  - b. Conducting risk assessments within the context of the overall support plan to ensure staff adhere to appropriate health and safety guidelines
  - c. Creating staff rotas which take account of maintaining consistence in teams as well as the gender requirements of individuals and ethnicity requirements of individuals
  - d. Allocating a consistent team of workers to each individual
  - e. Ensuring that a daily and weekly plan of care and support takes place as agreed and specified with the individual and/or family

- f. Advising and discussing with each individual any changes which could affect their planned activity or care, including the need to make adjustments for annual leave and sickness
- g. Ensuring that all reasonable actions have been taken to assist an individual in emergency situations
- h. Ensuring Staff conduct is appropriate at all times
- i. Notifying the Commissioners Representatives of any changes

**Please note this list is not exhaustive.**

## **24 MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES**

- 24.1 Where there is a particular concern for any individual's welfare, the Provider's staff may be asked to participate and play a key role in the multi-disciplinary approach.
- 24.2 In these circumstances the Provider will be asked to attend and/ or submit a report to any relevant meeting such as a Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and specifically Care and Treatment Review (CTR), (CETRs) or Care Program Approach (CPA) etc.
- 24.3 If required to attend, the Provider will be expected to actively contribute to support planning and risk management plans.
- 24.4 The Provider's staff will be expected to work with and liaise regularly with health staff, Police and the Commissioners Representative over any matters of concern about the person's welfare, wellbeing or risk they present to themselves or others.

## **25 HEALTH/MEDICAL CARE**

- 25.1 The Provider is required to ensure that Support Workers have access to the contact details of the GP with whom the individual is registered. The GP, the NHS 111 service or 999 (depending on and appropriate to the circumstances) must be contacted without delay whenever an individual requests assistance to obtain medical attention, or appears unwell and unable to make such a request. The individual's family and/or next of kin must be informed as soon as possible.
- 25.2 The Provider will need to support the health care of the individual under the direction of their GP, Community Nurse or other health care professional or Community Health Team where this has been specifically agreed and the workers have received the appropriate training and have been deemed competent by a health care professional. This will not ordinarily include any care requiring a medical or professional qualification, but will require appropriate training. A record of all applicable training shall be maintained by the Provider.
- 25.3 The Provider may be required to work with a range of health care professionals to support individuals who require end of life care. The Provider must work within the common

principles set out by Skills for Care and also take account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) 'End of life care for adults' and 'end of life care for children' standards when supporting individuals who may be at this stage of their lives.

- 25.4 The care and support delivered by the Provider will be enhanced with good cooperative working relationships with numerous people and agencies which may include some or all of the following: the individual's family, circle of support and wider networks, the Commissioner's Continuing Healthcare Team, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Case Managers/Care Managers and Social Workers, local specialist Autism and ADHD, Mental Health or Learning Disability services, primary, secondary and acute health services, other primary healthcare care services, voluntary and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, learning and occupational services, landlords and housing associations including the Borough Council, housing management agencies, benefits agencies. There is an expectation that Providers will work closely and collaboratively with such agencies for the benefit of each individual.
- 25.5 It is important to ensure that in addition to the funded care and support budget, the individual is engaged with local specialist services to prescribe and give advice and guidance on interventions or treatment where this is identified as a need. This is important in order to reduce the possibility of duplication, omission and poor or inappropriate care. Whilst it is expected that Providers can deliver health interventions at the level identified, Providers are not expected to be the specialist prescribers of healthcare. This is provided and monitored by local health services as required.

## **26 HOLIDAYS/SHORT BREAKS**

- 26.1 The Commissioner will not pay over and above the allocated Individual Budget when an individual chooses to go on holiday. The Individual Service Fund is allocated to meet all needs, goals and outcomes. An individual may top up the allocated budget if choosing to do so.
- 26.2 The provision of Individual Service Funds allows providers to work with individuals and their families to forward plan the requirements of a break.

## **27 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 27.1 The Provider will ensure conditions of safety for individuals and others through effective risk assessment and management.
- 27.2 The Commissioners representative will endeavour to inform the Provider of any relevant information concerning the individual including information the Commissioners representative considers relevant to the provision of support that the Provider is required to deliver.
- 27.3 Information regarding next of kin and emergency contact details will also be shared by the Commissioners representative with the Provider.

- 27.4 The Provider must undertake a thorough assessment of risk in conjunction with the individual, their families and/or their representatives and members of the multi-disciplinary team/other relevant agencies.
- 27.5 The approach to risk should be proactive and supportive. Assessment should include guidance for Staff around minimising risks and contingency planning in the event of an emergency.
- 27.6 Staff should receive training in positive risk taking.
- 27.7 Risk assessments should be carried out by the Provider prior to the commencement of the Service. Where the referral is urgent the risk assessment must be carried out within three (3) working days of the commencement of the Service.
- 27.8 Through the process of risk assessment, the Provider should report to the Commissioners representative any actual or perceived risks identified that relates to Adult or Child Protection.

## **28 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

- 28.1 Providers will be expected to maximise the use of Assistive Living Technology and other aids to promote independence and control for the individual and their family/carers.

## **29 IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ALL**

- 29.1 The following outcomes which have been traditionally poor for individuals with complex needs should be emphasised and included in the support offered:
- a. Respond flexibly to changes in an individual's circumstances
  - b. Achieve a balanced approach to risk which gives the individual control and the right to make mistakes without serious implications to their security and safety.
  - c. Reduce social isolation, promoting social inclusion and community integration
  - d. Ensure transition plans are drawn up and agreed with all stakeholders when individuals are transitioning to new services
  - e. Where an individual is at risk of inpatient admission, the provider will work with the Commissioners Representatives to ensure support involves the multi-disciplinary teams and is tailored to prevent admission, and that support plans are updated to reflect this change. This will include robust management and on call structures with teams and individuals involved in these systems having a sound and up to date knowledge of the individuals supported.

## **30 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 30.1 As part of this Contract the Commissioners will periodically monitor the Service delivery to ensure compliance with the Contract Standards, the Commissioners Service Outcomes

and Standards of Care, its Terms and Conditions as well as the Contract Schedules, and to assess the quality and performance of the Services being delivered to individuals in relation to meeting their outcomes.

30.2 The Commissioners Representatives are responsible for monitoring the quality of the Services provided and for reviewing an individual's needs.

30.3 Monitoring will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Feedback from individuals and/or their families and circles of support on the standard of Services being provided
- b. Feedback from staff on the standards of Services being provided.
- c. Feedback from the Reviewer regarding whether or not the Service is meeting the individual's assessed needs and meeting the agreed outcomes in the best possible way.
- d. Systematic monitoring of the Provider by the Commissioner, in order to evaluate and record the Services delivered against the Specification.
- e. Consulting with individual recipients and/or their representatives.
- f. Investigation of complaints and / or safeguarding instances.
- g. Reviewing written procedures and records for both Customers and staff.
- h. Written contributions from local Experts by Experience quality checkers
- i. A review of the Accounting evidence for the Individual Service Fund

30.4 A statutory review will consider the extent to which the outcomes set out in the Support Plan are being met and will assist in identifying future objectives. The individuals Support Plan will be amended as appropriate following the review

30.5 The Support Plan is an iterative tool and it is expected that changes will be made to the support plan to reflect individual goals, achievements and aspirations and allowing for pace and detail in how goals are achieved. Changes to the support plan must be evidenced as taking place through 'team' involvement with the individual at the centre.

## **31 BROKERAGE**

31.1 Referrals for support services under this contract will be made through the Brighter Futures fortnightly Forum.

## **32 CHANGES IN NEED OR CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES**

32.1 The Provider must inform the Commissioner of the need to review the Support Plan if there is a material change in the Individual's needs, or in the way that an individual would prefer to have their Services provided (e.g. a move from current accommodation or a move to a different core Provider)

- 32.2 The Provider will be responsible for notifying the relevant commissioner or commissioner representative as soon as it is practical to do so, if any of the following occur:
- a. Any circumstances where the individual has consistently refused provision of the Services, medication, or medical attention
  - b. Serious accident, serious illness or serious injury to the individual
  - c. Death of the individual if a death occurs during service delivery and when a death occurs as a result of service delivery
  - d. Outbreak of notifiable infectious disease in the Services
  - e. Any emergency situation e.g. fire, flood
  - f. Legacy or bequests to Provider and/or staff
  - g. Unplanned absence of the individual
  - h. Hospital admission
  - i. An investigation related to Safeguarding of a Vulnerable Person
  - j. Where the Provider has been unable to gain access to the individual's home

### **33 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES**

- 33.1 The Provider will have a Policy detailing how the Provider and its support workers will support individual's with their personal finances including the process for assessment in determining the amount and type of support an individual will need to manage their finances.
- 33.2 Any involvement to support an individual with any aspect of their finances must be clearly documented in a financial plan and be explicitly expressed in the Care and Support Plan.
- 33.3 The following basic requirements and safeguarding controls will underpin all financial support provided by the service to individuals:
- a. Provider's will support individuals to access all appropriate benefits
  - b. Assisting individuals to access their finances as agreed in the Care and Support plan. This may involve advocates, appointeeship, or Court of Protection where appropriate
  - c. The individual will have their own/a designated bank account. Any transaction undertaken by a support worker will be clearly documented and the bank account will be reconciled on a monthly basis.
  - d. Accurate and clear recording of any transactions credit and debit and any agencies/departments involved
  - e. Vouchers to record transactions (income and expenditure) will be signed by two members of staff wherever possible and this will be rigorously monitored by managers
  - f. Individuals are expected to fund their own day to day living expenses (e.g. food and utilities) except in registered residential care. This assumes income from Benefits.
  - g. Individuals are not expected in principle to pay for staff meals (where there are exceptions to this e.g. a special occasion, the provider should ensure a documented

agreement is in place with the individual and/or representatives and where appropriate a best interest decision is recorded)

- h. Where a large purchase is required (for example an item of furniture or entertainment equipment) it is to be paid for out of an individual's capital monies, (or the Individual Service Fund) a best interest decision should be conducted to ensure the purchase meets the needs and is best value for money//and or will best help the individual achieve the stated goals and outcomes.
- i. Where items of equipment, furniture or effects are disposed of, a best interest decision should be undertaken and a clear record made of how and where the item has been disposed
- j. Any loss or damage to property, accommodation or effects shall be reported to the commissioner's representative
- k. The Provider, their staff or families will not become involved in any personal financial transactions with the individual including goods, services or loans
- l. The Provider must have a clear policy and guidance for staff on the acceptance of hospitality and gifts which should detail those of a token value and those which should be declined
- m. The Provider will only be responsible for, or have custody of any documents or items of value (for example bank or building society passbooks, pensions books, cash, credit cards, wills, title deeds, tenancy agreements) where this has been agreed and recorded on the individual's Care and Support plan and only such times as these items are needed and not at any other times.

33.4 The Provider will maintain an inventory of all such items and ensure that these are kept securely.

33.5 Where any member of a Provider's staff financially abuses an individual, the Provider shall investigate the incident and take suitable disciplinary action, report the incident in line with local Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and notify the Commissioners representative. Where appropriate the Police will be informed.

#### **34 MANAGEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL SERVICE FUND – FLEXIBLE CONTRACTS**

34.1 The fundamental feature of flexible contracts must be the necessary space for the person and the service provider to use the person's personal budget flexibly. The starting assumption is that, together with the person and their representatives, the Provider has the most relevant expertise to help the person achieve the outcomes that are important to them and meet their own needs in their own way.

34.2 The Provider, in partnership with the individual, has freedom to sub-contract. To achieve the Outcomes, the Provider can use resources flexibly and as such is free to sub-contract to any other person or organisation that they believe will help meet needs most effectively.

- 34.3 The Provider will not be issued with a detailed support plan. Working to a rigid pre-defined support plan can be restrictive, dictating to someone how they should live, rather than enabling them to make changes and respond to opportunities or problems. Any care and support plan issued by the Commissioners Representative to trigger a flexible contract should set out the outcomes important to the person rather than the service to be provided.
- 34.4 Each individual and or their representative will be advised as to their allocated Individual Service Fund, which is the money that the commissioner/s has agreed as being necessary to meet their needs. This Service Fund is determined by a set of criteria which describes complexity of need, risks and outcomes sought. The actual cost of providing a service that meets that need is incurred by the provider.
- 34.5 A clear and detailed support plan containing who, what, where and how must be costed by the Provider and aligned to the Outcomes for each individual. The provider can change the services delivered (innovatively and creatively) within that budget amount, without recourse to the Commissioner but in partnership with an individual and their family/or representatives. Each individual must be evidenced as being active participants in the design and spend of their support plan.
- 34.6 The Individual Service Fund must be subject to specific and individual accounting - accounts for each individual must be held securely and kept up to date and be discussed as part of ongoing planning and review cycles and be supplied to Commissioners representatives on request.
- 34.7 Under the terms of this Flexible Contract the resources that are provided to the core Provider and the Individual are made in order that they meet the needs of the person and progress the Outcomes sought for that person. Where an individual is deemed to need less support than is assumed within the Individual Budget allocated (The Service Fund) then the contract will need to be varied to allow for a revised Budget.
- 34.8 The amount specific as the Individual Service Fund will be reviewed at least annually and as agreed at the point of Service commencement. Where an individual is making such progress as to warrant a reduction in an allocated Service Fund before an annual Review, the Provider will notify the Commissioner. Some Individual Service Funds will be allocated in 6 monthly instalments i.e. a starting budget that changes mid year to a revised budget. This is most likely to be used for individuals who will immediately benefit from consistency and continuity. As such a reduction in the budget allocated can be predicted as expected and commensurate.
- 34.9 The Core Provider has a responsibility to meet needs where it becomes evident that the initial allocated Individual Service Fund appears inadequate. In these circumstances the Provider should liaise with the Commissioner Representative in order to seek an evidenced re-evaluation of need against a determined Individual Service Fund. However, Providers are expected to manage fluctuations of need within reasonable parameters, and the Individual Service Fund is allocated on the basis of these expectations.
- 34.10 The Provider is accountable to the Commissioner and the Individual/s they are supporting. The Provider should be prepared to provide information on the following:



- a. **What is my overall budget?** – In most cases it is reasonable and necessary to help people understand what budget is allocated to meet their needs and their outcomes
- b. **Is the budget restricted?** The Individual Service Fund is restricted to the benefit of the named individual.
- c. **Can I change my core Service Provider?** Individuals must be made aware of how to complain about the Provider or how to end support from their service provider. This will require conversations with the Commissioners Representative, usually a Case manager, Care Manager, or Social Worker. It is the Commissioners Representative who has the right to terminate the Contract between the Commissioner and the Provider. The individual does have the right to refuse support from the Commissioning Body and therefore a contracted provider.
- d. **How will you keep me informed?** Most individuals will benefit from knowing what is in their Individual Budget and will therefore need to know what is being spent against that budget. Providers will therefore need to set up an accessible system of accounting and reporting and agree with each individual the information that will be provided and at what intervals.
- e. **Can I use my budget flexibly?** Providers must work with individuals to use their budget flexibly. Some individuals will want to decide how all of their budget is spent. The Provider is required to guide the individual in decisions about how they might achieve their goals, aspirations and outcomes.  
The person receiving services will not be able to dictate to a provider what salaries are agreed for support staff or be involved in any other decisions pertaining to the Terms and Conditions of employment. However, when particular sub-contracting arrangements are put in place by the Core Provider such issues may be of reasonable interest to the person receiving services.
- f. **Can I have my own staff?** – One of the most important factors for people is to identify, trust and like the person who actually provides them with support. Providers should note their ability to employ people as personal assistants for named individuals with specific job descriptions, recruitment processes and contracts. Providers are expected to support each individual with their choice of support staff.
- g. **Can I have my own policies?** Best practice in health and safety dictates that risks are personalised and generic health and safety practices avoided. Often an imbalanced and bureaucratic approach to risk management can be avoided by a different, person-by person approach, keeping decision making flexible and close to the person.
- h. **Can I save money/hold back money?** The Provider can work with an individual to put aside some of their budget for holidays or to account for fluctuating need for example. Commissioners will however ensure that needs are not ‘over-funded’.
- j. **What happens if I overspend?** Sometimes circumstances change and it is impossible to meet somebody’s needs without spending more money than may be budgeted. This may mean a reassessment by the Commissioners Representative however if a change is likely to be short-run the Provider is expected to meet those needs. Providers should work with individuals to plan for fluctuations in spend, paying for extra support from

the allocated budget, or to pay into an 'insurance fund' or 'reserve fund' which allows the individual and the Provider to manage occasional extra costs. These arrangements need to be set out clearly and it is for the Provider and the individuals accessing their support to develop their own agreed systems and approaches.

- 34.11 The Provider may determine, or the individual may wish to, use part of their budget on equipment, adaptations, capital, travel, costs of community involvement or anything else that improves their well-being.
- 34.12 The Provider will at all times maintain Accounts relating to the use of the Individual Service Fund which will be made available on request.
- 34.13 The Commissioners reserve the right to 'clawback' allocated Individuals Service Funds in the event of complete or intentional mismanagement or misappropriation of such Funds. This is a distinct occurrence and one that will incur full investigation by the Commissioning Bodies.

## **35 VOIDS**

- 35.1 For the avoidance of doubt, the Commissioners do not pay any void costs, unless this has been agreed on an exceptional basis.

## **36 COMPLAINTS**

- 36.1 Providers will ensure that complaints information is made available to the individual in an easily accessible format.
- 36.2 Where care is made in arrangement with the NHS (i.e. where the NHS is funding care e.g. Continuing Healthcare for Adults and Continuing Care for Children and Young people) the Providers complaints process and procedures for those individuals must follow the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. In brief this comprises the following elements:
- a. Advising complainants of the right to complain to the Commissioner of their care if they so choose
  - b. Their right to complaints advocacy
  - c. Publicise complaints procedures and how further information about the complaints process can be obtained
  - d. Each Provider should have an identifiable person who handles complaints
  - e. Complaints can be received verbally, electronically or in writing. Verbal complaints should be written down and the complainant provided with a copy to confirm the complaint details
  - f. A complaint must be acknowledged within three working days, giving the complainant the opportunity to discuss how the complaint will be handled. A timescale for handling the complaint should be agreed with the complainant

- g. A complaints response must be in writing and should provide details of what the investigation found, what will be put right as result, and details of the complainants right to approach the Ombudsman if they remain unhappy and want to take the complaint further
- h. Providers must monitor their complaints activity to include the numbers of complaints received, the subject and outcome of each complaint, and whether timescales agreed were adhered to
- i. Each Provider will compile an annual complaints report which should be available to any person on request and should include which complaints investigated under the complaints regulations were well founded. This should be produced in an accessible format.
- j. Each Provider must send its annual complaints report to the Commissioner

## 37 KEY DELIVERABLES

### 37.1 Deliverables and Key Performance Indicators:

Key Performance Indicator	Measurement
<b>Effective and mutually beneficial partnership work across Preferred Partners</b>	Evidence of cross fertilisation of training and learning opportunities
	Attendance and contribution to Brighter Futures Forum
	Cross-Provider peer group formation
	Evidence of collective purchasing
<b>Effective partnership working with other disciplines and Agencies</b>	Evidence of multi-disciplinary working to reduce risks
	Evidence of effective and appropriate use of CTRs and CETRs
	Evidence of appropriate admission avoidance
	Evidence of effective contingency planning and crisis support plans
<b>Enabling progression and step down</b>	Progress in individual goal attainment
	Progress in individual outcome attainment
	Individuals report that they have gained skills in self-management
	Reduction in Spend**
	Numbers stepping down into less intense support arrangements
<b>Enabling independence and autonomy</b>	Numbers accessing education
	Numbers returning to education

	Numbers accessing vocational training (including voluntary work)
	Numbers accessing employment
	Numbers reporting having a sense of choice and control
	Numbers actively engaged in designing their support plan
<b>Improving well-being</b>	Reduction in episodes of self-harm
	Reduction in episodes of crisis
	Individuals are able to self- report feeling unwell
	Individuals report having a 'tool-kit' for managing feelings
	Individuals report having improved confidence and self-worth
	Individuals report feeling a sense of ongoing achievement
	Numbers maintaining positive relationships with family
	Numbers maintaining positive relationships with friends and peers
	Numbers reporting positive and trusting relationships with supporters
	Numbers accessing annual health checks
	Numbers with a Health Action Plan
	Numbers accessing primary care universal services
	Numbers accessing secondary care services where this is needed

\*\*Research indicates that over a period of 3 years the cost of support reduces by 44% when Individual Service Funds are offered and used with integrity and that there is a significant improvement in the quality of people's lives with multiple outcome improvements/achievements reported by individuals, families and professionals. Improved efficiency was achieved by working with individuals to help them achieve better lives.

### **38 CONTRACT MOBILISATION**

38.1 The Commissioners intend to award Contracts under this Framework to a small group of Preferred Providers evaluated as suitable following Contract Tender.

38.2 On Contract Award the Preferred Providers will work with the Commissioning Bodies for a period of contract development and mobilisation which will include action learning sets

led by Experts by Experience and training sessions focussed on the application of Individual Service Funds. All Preferred Providers must participate in this development and mobilisation phase.

- 38.2 A key intention of the Contract is to formulate a set of Providers who have evidenced a commitment and enthusiasm to work collectively and dynamically with each other to support individuals and their outcomes. It is expected that the relationship between this network of Preferred Providers will be strong, productive and mutually supportive and will act in accordance with the requirements and ethos as laid out in the totality of the Contract.

## **39 POPULATION COVERED**

- 39.1 Individuals are excluded where they are under the age of 14 years' old
- 39.2 Individuals are excluded if they do not have autism or ADHD. A diagnosis is not necessarily required.

## **40 RELEVANT LEGISLATION and POLICY**

- 40.1 It is the Providers responsibility to ensure it is up to date with relevant legislation, policy and practice relating to the provision of care and support and the approach to that provision incumbent within this Contract.
- 40.2 Where a specific piece of legislation is unclear, or where the Provider is unable to ascertain the relevant policy, the Provider should seek advice from the relevant Body.
- 40.3 The following list of legislation is not exhaustive, but merely seeks to indicate areas a Provider must be responsive to:
- The Children and Families Act 2014 [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- The Care Act 2014 [Care Act 2014](#)
- The NHS Plan 2020 [NHS Plan 2020](#)
- The Education Act 2011 [Education Act 2011](#)
- The Autism Act 2009 [Autism Act 2009](#)
- Think Autism 2014 [Think Autism](#)
- Homes not Hospitals (Transforming Care) [Homes not Hospitals](#)
- The Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010](#)

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# **NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**

## **SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Eclipse: Contract and budget changes</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Anna Earnshaw – CX West Northants</b>

### **List of Appendices**

#### **Appendix A – Detailed Report**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1. To set out the rationale for contractual and budget changes to the Eclipse system project within the Adults transformation programme.

##### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 Appendix A to this paper sets out contractual and budget changes to the Eclipse system project within the Adults transformation programme and seeks endorsement of recommendations set out below.

##### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee endorse the following:
- a) To proceed with a new contract on a 2+1+1 G Cloud framework with OLM;
  - b) To proceed with change control procedures with Northamptonshire Children’s Trust to manage the impact of the changes;
  - c) To note the impacts to the Capital Programme and ongoing revenue impacts.
- 3.2 Reason for Recommendations –
- Consistency with previous decisions.

## **4. Report Background**

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4.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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5.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

6.1.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

### **6.2 Legal**

6.2.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

### **6.3 Risk**

6.3.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

### **6.4 Consultation**

6.4.1 No consultation is required.

### **6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 No consideration is expected.

### **6.6 Environmental Impact**

6.6.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

### **6.7 Community Impact**

6.7.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

### **6.8 Equalities**

6.8.1 Please see the attached appendix to this report.

## **7. Background Papers**

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7.1 None.



## **Eclipse: proposed contractual changes and budget summary report**

### **1. Purpose of this report**

The planned rollout and costs of the Eclipse system across childrens and Adults has been impacted by both COVID, delays in the creation of the Childrens Trust and a change in the Eclipse system roadmap. These have resulted in a re-phrasing of our plans and resources and challenges from an information governance (IG) perspective. Together they have led to the need for a comprehensive review of the plans, solutions and timings across the project.

This report provides a summary of the what has changed and the resulting proposed contractual changes as well as the revised budget requirements ahead of Vesting Day. Together changes now proposed will also ensure that we can future proof the system in terms of IG and operability for the two new authorities.

This report sets out the rationale for this change, details of the additional capital and revenue budget required, and recommended next steps for approval by JIE and ratification by the Shadow Executive in February 2021.

### **2. Background**

The Social Care case management system, CareFirst, used by Children and Adults Social Care within Northamptonshire County Council is being replaced with a new product, Eclipse both being products from the same provider, OLM.

The NASS (Northamptonshire Adults Social Services) Eclipse implementation successfully went live on 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020 and is now in its stabilisation phase of the project, this was one month later than originally planned.

Now, the planning and focus for this programme has moved to the remaining key projects.

- Vesting Day readiness by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021;
- Children's Social Care Eclipse implementation and;
- Finance implementation for both Adults and Social Care with a current go-live date of April 2022.

#### **Childrens case management system**

Originally it was envisaged that the Adults and Childrens implementation would overlap supporting the shared use of internal and external resources and reduced cost of implementation. The events of 2020 and COVID has meant that the Adults and Childrens programmes have had to separate and have been elongated in terms of activity and timescales to complete.

The delay has also resulted in a review of how the Childrens Trust can maximise the benefits and efficiency it can get from the wider system solution. The review and replanning work for the Children's project has focused on how Childrens can improve their systems, management information capability and make use of the Finance module.

Lessons learnt from the NASS implementation have also been used to review the resources and the time frame of the Children's and Finance module projects.

#### **Data management issues**

In addition, there significant new issues were identified with regards to the splitting of data within the Adults system between North and West Northants and the security and accessibility of this data.

The initial scope of the project was to deliver one instance of the Eclipse software that would be used by all the three new organisations with identifiers added to each client record that ensured client data and financial care package costs could be split within Eclipse by West and North Councils and/or the Childrens Trust organisation.

During 2020, OLM the system supplier announced a delay to the Eclipse Financial model go live date to April 22. This added further complexity as it led to the need to retain the Care First Financial model to process care costs and as this system was never planned to be split by the new authorities/Trust. That in turn introduced an inability to split key personal and financial data creating a risk of data sharing and financial controls for the new Councils until the new financial module was implemented. These issues have required further due diligence work to be undertaken with the provider, OLM to ensure we are safe and legal on Day 1, taking into account their responsibility for this aspect created by their delays in implementing the financial module,

The initial review focused on the ability to temporarily split and control data through operational protocols and coding. But there were significant operational impacts in this work around and limited protection. Further reviews of the technical workarounds and negotiation with OLM led to the development of a proposal that would allow for the split of client data and care costs by implementing three separate instances of Eclipse for North Northants, West Northants and the Childrens Trust.

This solution provides not only a resolution of the data sharing and control issues, but also provides a future proofed solution with each organisation having a stand-alone system and security/administration. As part of the solution the Council has also negotiated to include the ongoing hosting and maintenance but also the archive solution required under data retention requirements. As the solution is all hosted in the Cloud it will also ensure resilience across the platform and services.

There is also an impact on the reporting infrastructure which has been setup for Northamptonshire Adults Social Care which will also require separate instances to provide robust MI on care demand, clients, cases statutory returns and analytics.

## **Conclusion**

The programme resources and costs have now had to be reprofiled to reflect the change in the plan and timing for the actual costs of the Adults implementation and the revised childrens rollout plan, which will now be delivered much later than adults.

The outcome of the due diligence work on the data sharing resulted in a revision of the technical solution that not only makes the solution safe and legal for Day 1, it also makes provision for a stable platform that puts in place separate instances that governs data more effectively and brings forward future development that would have had to be implemented at a later date and additional cost.

The result of these decision is a revised proposal from OLM that requires a new contract and subsequent impact to the current revenue and capital budgets and ongoing revenue budgets.

It also needs to be noted, that the projected associated benefits realisation from this programme of work is expected to deliver £1.390m savings over the period of the contract, including £140,000 savings in licence costs.

### 3. Capital Spend

The original Capital budget (which include the capitalisation of programme costs as well as set up IT assets) was approved by the NCC Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019. This provided a budget of £2m, £1.5m for the programme and set up and £0.5m contingency. The current status of the budget is outlined below:

Project Budget	19/20	20/21	21/22
Approved Investment	£1,200,000	£800,000	
Actual Spend to date	£604,776	£553,224	
Forecast Spend*	£662,107	£1,206,040	£1,492,729

\* Forecast spend profile is not fully aligned to actual spend due to outstanding internal re-charges.

**3.1** Based on the revised programme plan across all remaining projects with the revised solution, the projected spend for the programme for 20/21 is £1.85m and an overall total forecast spend for the programme is now £3.36m.

**3.2** The proposed revised £3.36m budget is an increase of £1.36m against the original approved budget. The additional implementation, resources and system set up costs can be capitalised in line with the previous approach and approvals. A breakdown of the increased budget areas and revised capital costs is provided in Appendix A.

**3.3** The programme is currently forecast to exceed the budget in Qtr1 2021/22. A request for approved additional Capital will be progressed through the Capital Approvals Board, subject to the Joint Implementation Executive (JIE) and Shadow executives due to the ongoing cost to the new Unitary Councils.

### 4. Revenue Spend

4.1 The current ongoing revenue costs for system support and maintenance are £207,000 and the shortfall for the revised case management system over the next four years starting 21/22 is £545,000. These cannot be capitalised as they are ongoing. Details of the impact on the revenue has been included in Appendix B.

4.3 The potential requirement to also implement separate instances of the reporting tools for the North and West Adults services are also shown in appendix B but we are currently assuming that a shared instance will continue to be used (with appropriate data sharing protocols in place with the system admin teams) while a review of the cost and benefit of separate BI/reporting instances is reviewed. The current revenue shortfall for the additional reporting capability is £52k a year, however this will require further consideration and is not included in the proposal at this stage.

## 5. Contract

5.1 It is proposed that there is a new contract to support the technical changes, which will be up to four years, on a basis of a 2-year agreement with the option to extend for an additional 2 years with an annual review (2+1+1), as per the standard G-Cloud procurement framework.

## 6. Planning assumptions

Assumptions were made at the start of the programme and formed the basis of the application for Capital funding. These have been included as part of Appendix B, which includes an explanation of their impact on the budget.

In order to forecast future, spend on the project and the request for an uplift the following assumptions have been made:

- Project, reporting and IT resources utilised during the NASS implementation will continue to be available. Without these resources there could be an impact on the timeline due to extra time required for training on system training.
- The Eclipse finance module will be available to implement in April 2021 and can be undertaken in the timeframe included in the resource profile.
- The Eclipse finance module implementation requirements (process and pathways) will be the same for both North and West authorities; if this is not the case more resources will be required to undertake the project.
- Training costs for the Children's and Finance implementation have been included, where the assumption is that this will be delivered via e-learning and supported through the delivery of quick cards. Production of training materials will be developed by L&D as well as the project team. The delivery of training will be an additional revenue cost.
- Resource profile can be delivered through the new Transformation Directorates in North and West Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- The resource profile for the Children's Trust implementation is based on the scope of work identified in conjunction with the Children's Trust and any changes to the scope will require further re-profiling of resource and may have an impact on the project budget.
- The forecast does not include any further changes to the scope of the work including the need for a managed service from the provider, OLM for Carefirst and Eclipse.

## **7. Further considerations**

### **6.1. Reporting Capability and Funding**

Through the implementation of the project a new reporting infrastructure was put in place to allow Eclipse and Carefirst reporting to be accessible through a data warehouse and reporting capability called Searchlight v2. This replicates the NASS reporting capability provide through Searchlight v1.

The capital costs for NASS Searchlight v2 were funded through the Eclipse project. Ongoing revenue costs were funded through the current revenue funding stream. Costs for Searchlight v2 are revenue and will be paid for by the BIPI service until it is decommissioned and currently this will be June 2021.

In the Capital forecasting for the project some estimated costs have also been included for Searchlight setup costs for the Children's Trust, however the service does not have a Searchlight infrastructure in place currently and this would be a change in the scope of the project. This new capability will give childrens the opportunity for the first time to have detailed MI on the cost, volume and type of care demand it gets and the ability to analyse and predict the cost drivers. It will also provide the ability to track cases, team performance and data quality.

If this capability is required, then this should be undertaken as a separate project once requirements are understood. As the current reporting for Children's is available through Business Objects and some Carefirst Accurate reporting, the assumption has been that these will continue to be utilised. Any new Business Objects costs have not been included. There may be further work required and an impact on funding for delivering reporting.

Although the reporting resources have been reviewed with the current BIPI manager, due to changes to the BIPI team structure as part of Future Northants, resources may be limited to assist with the implementation. If external resource is required to support the reporting implementation this will need to be funded separately.

### **6.2. Governance post Vesting Day**

Budgeting and project governance after April 2021 will need to continue and be overseen within the Transformation portfolio.

### **6.3 Managed Service Option**

To help manage the contract, there is a managed service option available, which provides direct account management and helps de-risk the overall contract and is an additional £70,000 per annum. Further details can be provided upon request.

## **8. Next steps and recommendations**

In order to progress in line with timescales to be safe and legal by Vesting Day, it is recommended that following next steps are approved.

- a) To proceed with the new contract on a 2+1+1 G Cloud framework with OLM
- b) To proceed with change control procedures with Northamptonshire Children's Trust to manage the impact of the changes

c) To advise the Shadow Executive of the impacts to the Capital Programme and ongoing revenue impacts in a paper for February 2021.

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## Appendix A

	Revised Budget	Original Budget	Comments
<b>TOTALS Systems &amp; Resources</b>	3,360,873	2,000,000	
Legal advice	19,030	-	data protection advice
Reporting infrastructure	111,520	-	Upgrade & additional licensing
OLM totals	492,500	435,000	
Nass Total Forecast	1,077,137	446,100	Addition resource & longer programme
CFN Total Forecast	1,088,417	365,863	Delayed programme/no shared resource with adults
Finance Total Forecast	357,729	253,036	additional work to configure Abacus while OLM delayed
Vesting Day - resources	81,540	-	Additional Testing resources
Vesting Day - software	73,000	-	Additional OLM software
Contingency	60,000	500,000	

## Appendix B

Year	20/21	21/22	23/24	24/25
<b>Eclipse: Support and Maintenance</b>				
Children's Trust	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000
Adults North	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Adults West	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000

<b>Eclipse: Hosting and Carefirst</b>				
Carefirst hosting Adults West/ North (capital cost removed)	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
Children's Trust: Eclipse	£0	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000
Adults North: Eclipse	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000
Adults West: Eclipse	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000	£55,000

<b>Combined Total</b>	£285,000	£360,000	£360,000	£360,000
<b>Current Total Maintenance</b>	£205,000	£205,000	£205,000	£205,000
<b>Revenue Shortfall</b>	£80,000	£155,000	£155,000	£155,000

<b>Total Per Authority Breakdown</b>				
Children's Trust	£60,000	£135,000	£135,000	£135,000
Adults North	£105,000	£105,000	£105,000	£105,000
Adults West	£105,000	£105,000	£105,000	£105,000

### Funding stream requires further clarification

#### Searchlight: Support and Maintenance

Searchlight V2 North	£33,500	£33,500	£33,500	£33,500
Searchlight V2 West	£33,500	£33,500	£33,500	£33,500
<b>Searchlight: Hosting</b>				
Searchlight V2 North	£18,327	£18,327	£18,327	£18,327
Searchlight V2 West	£18,327	£18,327	£18,327	£18,327

Combined Total	£103,654	£103,654	£103,654	£103,654
Current Total Maintenance Searchlight V2	£51,827	£51,827	£51,827	£51,827
Revenue Shortfall	£51,827	£51,827	£51,827	£51,827
Business Objects licence cost current	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000



## Appendix B - Assumptions

Assumption not met	Impact of Assumption
<p><b>Changes to Model Office:</b> SRO's had agreed that Model Office (standard templates) would be implemented by both NASS and CFN with limited bespoke elements requiring development by NCC.</p> <p>A significant amount of changes have been made to Model Office resulting more resources required for the project.</p>	<p>The SME resource and LGSS IT support has been more than originally estimated. Furthermore, the need for thorough testing is needed due to the number of areas amended for NCC. A testing manager is required for the test of the build, this role will be an externally recruited resource as the skills set was not available within the current project resource or within IT.</p>
<p><b>Timescale:</b> NASS, CFN and Finance each would be implemented within 9 months. The system would be implemented by March 2021.</p> <p>The NASS go-live date was extended from April 2020 to Nov 2020, taking the implementation period from 9 months to 15 months. This allows for a longer period to design and build processes, testing and training.</p>	<p>As an example, the SME resource required for NASS has been extended from 9 months for the SME lead to 15 months. The two SME's resources have been extended from 6 months allocated to the project to 9 months.</p>
<p><b>Reporting IT Requirements:</b> Technical support has been required as there was significant setup required for the reporting which was unforeseen. The reporting was an unknown and it was envisaged that any extra requirements could be funded through the contingency budget set aside for the project.</p>	<p>Costs for LGSS IT support and infrastructure have been more than initially estimated.</p> <p>Costs that are attributed to LGSS IT will need to be reviewed if/when there is a repatriation of roles into NCC.</p>
<p><b>Resource Estimation:</b> The resource requirements for NCC were based on resource requirements requested from OLM during procurement. The resource requirements were greater than the supplier had suggested. Model office was amended and numerous changes were made to ensure the design of processes would meet the NASS needs.</p> <p><b>Use of Internal resources</b> for delivery of the project so in the</p>	<p>Cost of resources has increased due to the resources required to work through each part of the implementation. The NCC resource time spent on the project has been significantly more than the supplier suggested. OLM stated that data cleansing would be resourced by the Authority, the data mapping requirements were not outlined and a significant amount of time has been spent in mapping data from Carefirst to Eclipse. External resources have been used for the project increasing</p>

<p>main they were on NCC pay grade however a number for contractors have been assigned to project which was not included in the original budget.</p>	<p>the costs of some resources due to specialisms not available internally.</p>
<p><b>Reporting Capability:</b> Existing reporting requirements would be delivered predominantly by the in-system reporting capability.</p>	<p>The dashboard within Eclipse is limited in its reporting capability, therefore a separate reporting infrastructure has been setup to create NCC specific reports. This has required Vertex to setup a separate version of Searchlight to replicate current reporting capability as well as an NCC on-site reporting infrastructure.</p>

**END OF DOCUMENT.**

CONFIDENTIAL

**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW AUTHORITY**

**SHADOW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**3 FEBRUARY 2021**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Future Northants Corporate Work stream – Human Resources</b>  <b>Delegation of responsibility to the Head of Paid Service for employment matters.</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Marie Devlin-Hogg (HR Enabler, Future Northants)</b>

**Appendix A – List of Day 1 Employment Policies**

**1. Purpose**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive to delegate responsibility for the negotiation of Day 1 employee pay arrangements, terms and conditions and employment policies to the Head of Paid Service.
- 1.2 The report also provides a brief update on the work that has been completed to date.

**2. Recommendations**

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It is recommended that the Shadow Executive Committee:

- 2.1 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid of Service to negotiate with the Council’s recognised Trade Unions regarding “Day One Terms and Conditions” (including pay);
- 2.2 Note that the finalised “Day One Terms and Conditions and associated financial considerations shall be considered by the Shadow Executive Committee in late March 2021(excluding those relating to the Chief Officers);
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve the employment policies listed in Appendix A to this report.

### **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council has terms and conditions of employment and necessary policies in place for the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to enable it to recruit and manage staff.

### **4. Background**

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- 4.1 On 1 April 2021, approximately 3300 directly employed sovereign council employees will transfer into North Northamptonshire Council (NNC).
- 4.2 The new Council will also need to ensure that it is able to recruit new starters to fill vacancies in the workforce from Day One and allow for transformation. In order to do this, the Council will need to ensure that it has an agreed set of pay arrangements and contractual terms and conditions of employment. These are referred to as "Day One Terms and Conditions". This does not include the pay and terms and conditions applicable to the Head of Paid Service and Chief Officers, which where applicable is governed by the Pay Policy agreed by Council and is otherwise a function of the Executive.
- 4.3 Work is already underway with regards to negotiation with our recognised trade unions; with a view to reaching a collective agreement to Day One Terms and Conditions from 1 April 2021. These Negotiation meetings commenced at the end of last year and are now held on a weekly basis with the Head of Paid Service, recognised trade unions and HR officers supporting this workstream.
- 4.4 In addition to negotiating new pay and conditions, the Council will also need to ensure that it has clear and transparent employment policies and procedures in place to manage and support its' workforce. These HR policies provide written guidance for employees and managers on how to handle a range of employment issues; including areas such as performance management, sickness absence, how to raise concerns and how to deal with organisational change. All sovereign councils currently have a suite of workforce related policies; and although legally compliant, there are a number of operational variations between them. Moving forward, it is not viable or practical for employees and managers to try and navigate several different versions of a certain policy; as this would be inefficient and likely to lead to challenges due to inconsistent application.
- 4.5 The HR workstream, which sits within the Corporate Programme, is currently developing a set of common employment policies and procedures for North Northamptonshire Council. A list of priority employment policies that are being developed for Day One can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.6 High level policy principles have been discussed at a series of policy working groups (these have been operating on a regular basis since the end of July

2020). These groups include trade unions representatives and HR colleagues from across the sovereign councils.

- 4.7 A number of draft priority policies have now been developed and are being formally consulted on with the trade unions for their feedback.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Subject to the Shadow Executive Committee agreeing the recommendations in this paper, it is proposed that the draft employment policies are approved by the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team.
- 5.2 There is a relatively short period of time until vesting day and the Corporate Leadership Team meet on a regular basis which will allow time to agree the HR policies that will be adopted to manage the workforce.
- 5.3 The exception to this will be the North Northamptonshire Pay Policy Statement; which must be approved by Full Council and will need to go to the Shadow Authority meeting in February 2021.
- 5.4 The Head of Paid Service will continue to ensure that Shadow Executive members are kept apprised of the progress of the pay and conditions negotiations with the trade unions following which a formal recommendation paper regarding Day One Terms and Conditions, including financial considerations, shall be presented to the Shadow Executive in late February / early March 2021.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Financial and other Resources and Risk**

- 6.1.1 The absence of Day One Terms and Conditions presents a risk to the Council in terms of its ability to recruit new employees and deliver transformation; particularly in critical roles and those roles that require specialist skills and knowledge.
- 6.1.2 Similarly, there is an increased risk of potential employment claims and challenges from the workforce if policies and procedures are inconsistent. These can be costly both in monetary terms and also on resources, as managers have to allocate time to resolve issues and concerns that could have been avoided with a clear and open policy and procedure.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 Under the Structural Changes Order all matters which are not reserved specifically by legislation to the full Shadow Authority are matters for the Executive Committee. Staff matters would usually be non-executive but during transition fall to the Executive to decide. This is to enable the number



of decisions required to deliver effective transition to be made. The Head of Paid Service already has powers directly from statute to set out to members the arrangements and number of staff required under s4 Local Government and Housing Act 1989. These delegations are therefore consistent with the transitional legal framework.

6.2.2 The requirement for Full Council to approve the Council's pay policy statement is set out in the Localism Act, 2011.

### 6.3 **Equality and Health**

6.3.1 Transparent pay arrangements and employment policies and procedures that are applicable to all employees support a more inclusive and equitable culture and approach; as they set clear parameters on the 'what' and the 'how' to manage workforce matters in a consistent way.

List of priority HR/ Employment Policies currently being developed for Day 1

Policy
Pay Policy Statement – Full Council Sign off
Job Evaluation
Travel, Mileage and Subsistence
Sick Pay
Apprenticeship Pay
Pension Discretions
Organisational change / redundancy <b>drafted</b>
Recruitment <b>drafted</b>
DBS <b>drafted</b>
Performance management / capability
Probation
Grievance resolution <b>drafted</b>
Disciplinary <b>drafted</b>
Alcohol and drugs <b>drafted</b>
Dignity at work <b>drafted</b>
Volunteering
Long Service
Leave arrangements
Flexible and Agile Working
Flexi-time
Managing Absence <b>drafted</b>