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**North
Northamptonshire
Council**



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Meeting: Joint Children's Trust Committee
Date: Tuesday 16th January 2024
Time: 2.30 pm
Venue: Mill Room, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD

To members of the Joint Children's Trust Committee

Councillor Fiona Baker (Co-Chair), Councillor Scott Edwards (Co-Chair), Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Councillor Matt Golby, Councillor Jonathan Nunn and Councillor Jason Smithers

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02	Notification of requests to address the meeting		
03	Members' declaration of interests		
04	Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023		3 - 4
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07	Approval of Changes to Support Services SLA's	David Watts/ Rebecca Wilshire	103 - 112
08	Urgent Business		

Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer
North Northamptonshire Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adele Wylie'.

Proper Officer
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This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Committee Administrator: Raj Sohal

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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.

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North Northamptonshire Council – Decisions taken by the Joint Children's Trust Committee on Wednesday 6 September 2023

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
Item 5	Review of Progress to deliver NCT Savings 2023/24	<p>That the Children's Trust Joint Committee notes Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT)'s current forecast to deliver agreed savings as reported at Period 3 to Operational Group in August 2023.</p> <p>Reason for Decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Councils have established the Children's Trust Joint Committee to discharge the functions of the Councils that relate to ownership of NCT, the provision of support services to the Trust and consider relevant matters arising in relation to the delivery of children's early help and social care services and their financial position. • Consideration of the report provides the Joint Committee with oversight of the delivery of NCT's agreed savings for 2023/24 which contributes to the overall financial position. <p>Alternative Options Considered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing - Not allowing the Joint Committee appropriate oversight of the delivery of NCT's agreed savings for 2023/24 would prevent them from discharging the Councils responsibilities to monitor NCT's financial position.
Item 6	NCT Annual Review and Report 2022/23	<p>That the report not be noted.</p> <p>Reason for Decision:</p> <p>The arrangements to complete the Annual Review and Annual Report are set out in the SDC and provide a procedure through which the Councils can review the Service Delivery Contract and NCT's performance in delivering its functions. Due to it not including the Children's Trust audit report, it was not considered appropriate to note the annual report at this time.</p>

North Northamptonshire Council – Decisions taken by the Joint Children's Trust Committee on Wednesday 6 September 2023

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p><i>Alternative Options Considered:</i></p> <p>Do nothing - Failing to complete the Annual Review or produce an Annual Report would not be compliant with the SDC and would not allow the Councils to formally review the contractual arrangements with NCT and agree changes. It should be noted that the SDC contains a process for the Councils to propose changes outside of the Annual Review if required.</p> <p>Note the annual report – It was not considered appropriate to note the report at this time, for the reasons outlined above.</p>

Children’s Trust Joint Committee Tuesday 16th January 2024

Report Title	Approval of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Business Plan 2024/25 - 2027/28
Report Author	<p>David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS) & Director of Children’s Services (DCS) (interim), NNC, David.watts@northnonthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children’s Services (acting), NNC, Rebecca.wilshire@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Richard Woodward, Head of Business & Performance (NNC)/Intelligent Client Function Programme Lead, richard.woodward@northnonthants.gov.uk</p>
Executive Member	<p>Cllr Fiona Baker – Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education, WNC</p> <p>Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills, NNC</p>

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Business Plan 2024/25 - 2027/28

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek approval of the Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Business Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The contractual agreements between Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), including the Service Delivery Contract and the Articles of Association for Northamptonshire Children's Trust Ltd state that NCT must submit a copy of their Business Plan annually. NCT's Board are required to submit a Business Plan by 30th November including details of any amendments agreed by the Board and the Councils to the version initially submitted.
- 2.2. The Northamptonshire Children's Trust Business Plan 2024/25-2027/28 sets out the vision and strategic objectives for the NCT as well as their financial strategy. The approval of the Business Plan is a matter reserved for both Councils as owners of the NCT and should be considered alongside the Contract Sum provided by NCT, as set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
- 2.3. The Business Plan builds on the most recent Inspection of Local Authorities Children's Services (ILACS) inspection in October 2022, which moved both North Northamptonshire (NNC) and West Northamptonshire (WNC) out of the 'inadequate' judgement and graded both WNC and NNC 'requires improvement to be good'.
- 2.4. The Business Plan is set out in three sections and appendices:
 - Introduction
 - Who we are
 - Partnerships and Trust Overview
 - Appendices:
 - Outcomes Framework
 - Northamptonshire Children's Trust Improvement Plan
 - Trust Board Members
 - Trust Executive Management Structure
 - Governance arrangements
 - Contractual Key Performance Indicators
 - Projected Profit and Loss
 - Strategic Risk Register
- 2.5. The foreword of the Business Plan sets out the shared ambition of NCT, NNC and WNC to 'Help children and families stay together, live together, and thrive together where it is safe to do so. Where support is needed we will work with partners to deliver the right help from the right person at the right time'. It also sets shared commitments to support the delivery of the shared ambition.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note that the Business Plan at Appendix A was completed in line with the Service Delivery Contract and Articles of Association.
- b) Approve the Northamptonshire Children's Trust Business Plan for the 2024/25 – 2027/28.

3.2. Reason for Recommendations

For the Councils to discharge their functions as owners of NCT and meet the requirements set out in the Service Delivery Contract and Articles of Association regarding approval of the Business Plan as a Reserved Matter by the Councils.

3.3. Alternative Options Considered

To do nothing – however this is not recommended. The recommendations set out in this report will allow the Councils to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in the Articles of Association and the Service Delivery Contract.

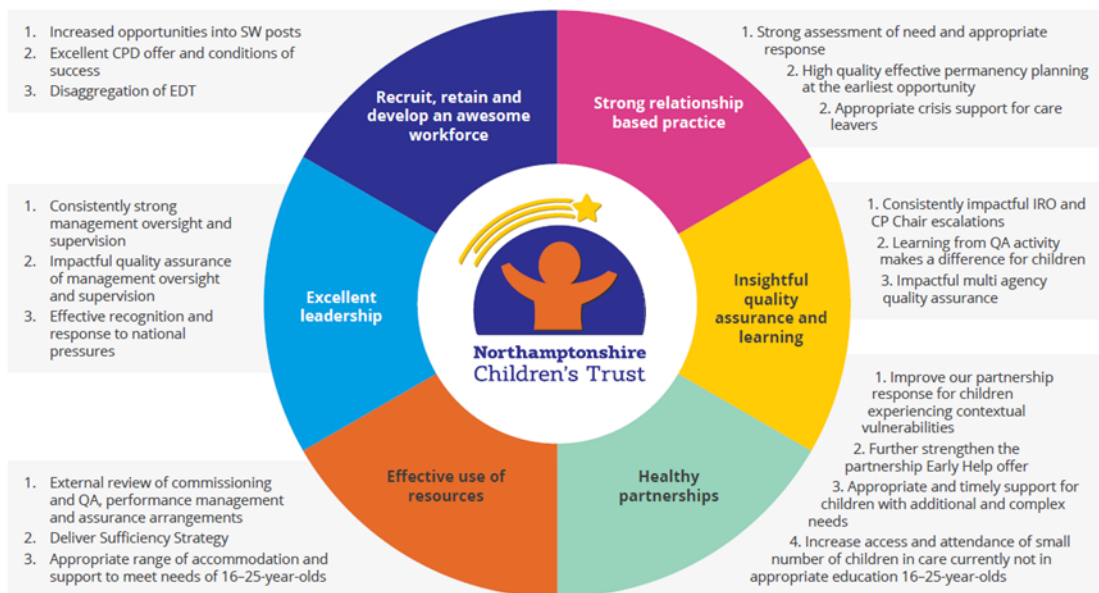
4. Report Background

- 4.1. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) are committed to supporting Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) to deliver Children's Social Care and Targeted Early Help services across Northamptonshire. Both take their corporate parenting role very seriously and want to support children, young people and families to thrive in their community.
- 4.2. Children's Services in Northamptonshire were judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2019.
- 4.3. Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) was partially formed on 1st November 2020 and fully launched on 1st April 2021.
- 4.4. From 1st April 2021, after the abolition of Northamptonshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) became joint owners of Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT). Whilst NCT is operationally independent of the Councils, the Councils still retain significant control over NCT and are responsible for making decisions on a number of 'reserved matters' that are set out in the NCT's Articles of Association.
- 4.5. Ofsted conducted inspections of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Local Authority Children's Services between 3rd-14th October 2022 and were both judged as "Requires improvement to be good".
- 4.6. One of the reserved matters is the annual approval of NCT's Business Plan. The Articles of Association set out that on or before 15th September, NCT should prepare and submit a draft Business Plan to the Councils for the 3 preceding years. On or before 30th November in each year, NCT should submit a Business Plan for approval by the Councils including any amendments agreed by the Board and the Councils.

- 4.7. The Business Plan should include relevant information under the following headings:
- Introduction
 - Strategic Framework
 - Working with Partners
 - Priorities and Objectives
 - Financial Strategy and Plans
 - Profit and Loss Account
 - Cash Flow Statement
 - Revenue Budget and Working Capital Requirements.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. NCT have provided their Business Plan for 2024/25 - 2027/28.
- 5.2. The overall strategic framework and key priorities remain the same as previous Business Plans, which were developed in consultation with both Councils as well as children, young people, and key partners. The strategic framework and key priorities align with updates to the Social Care Improvement Plan following Ofsted Monitoring Visits.
- 5.3. The Business Plan sets out the shared ambition of NCT, NNC and WNC to 'Help children and families stay together, live together, and thrive together where it is safe to do so. Where support is needed we will work with partners to deliver the right help from the right person at the right time'. It also sets shared commitments to support the delivery of the shared ambition.
- 5.4. The Business Plan also states NCT's strategic priorities which are based on NCT's vision, ambitions, quality assurance, Ofsted feedback and discussions with children, young people and families. These are contained in the diagram below.



5.5. The Business Plan details how the Trust will deliver these priorities and what this will mean for children, young people and families.

5.6. It should also be noted that per the terms of the Department for Education intervention, the Secretary of State for Education has consultation rights over the contents of the Business Plan.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The Business Plan will be taken to North Northamptonshire full Council on the 7th March 2024.

6.2 The Business Plan will be taken to West Northamptonshire full Council on the 21st March 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

7.1.1. When the Trust was being developed, detailed work was completed to calculate how costs would be split between North and West Northamptonshire Councils. This was based on the relative populations and demand for children's social care services in each council area. It was agreed that WNC would contribute 56% and NNC would contribute 44% exclusive of any specific grants that are given directly to NNC or WNC to passport to the Trust.

7.1.2. To support the Trust to deliver their business plan the Councils and NCT have agreed a provisional Contract Sum of £180.009m made up of block 1 core funding (£177.429m) and Block 2 transformation individual items (2.580m).

7.1.3. Block 2 transformation individual items funding of £2.580m includes £2.363m which is non-recurring.

7.1.4. WNC and NNC have made provision for a block 3 transformation costs totalling £3.291m. Use of this funding will be subject to business cases being presented to and approved by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The relationship between NCT and the Councils is governed by a series of contractual and legal agreements.

7.2.2. The recommendations set out in this report will allow the Councils to fulfil their responsibilities as set out in the Articles of Association.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. NNC has identified 'Brighter, Better Futures' as a key priority in its Corporate Plan recognising that children, young people and their families may need help at different stages in their lives. They will aim to provide help as early as possible and provide the right support, at the right time in the right way to ensure that children are safeguarded and get the best start in life.

7.3.2. WNC has identified 'Improved life chances: Best Start in Life' as a key priority of its Corporate Plan, including a focus on early help services to ensure children have the best start in life and parents have the right support at the right time from the right service, to enable families to thrive.

7.3.3. Both NNC and WNC's identified priorities will be achieved by supporting NCT to provide higher standards of support.

7.3.4. The Business Plan enables NNC and WNC to gain further oversight of the services delivered by NCT and to help the Councils to understand how better support for children, young people and families can be delivered.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. There is a risk that the strategic direction as detailed in the Business Plan becomes misaligned with those of NNC and WNC. However, the approval of the Business Plan is a reserved matter for NNC and WNC which gives the chance for both Councils to provide feedback and ensure the strategic direction of NCT is aligned with that of the Council's. Additionally, in developing the Business Plan NCT have engaged with both Councils senior officers and lead members.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. This Business Plan was considered by the Children's Trust Operational Group and Children's Trust Strategic Group in November 2023. These governance

groups are the key contractual review meetings between the NNC, WNC and NCT.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel (NNC)

7.6.1. This report has not been considered by NNC's Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7. Consideration by Executive Leadership Team (WNC)

7.7.1. This report has been considered by SLT

7.8. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.8.1. This report has not been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees of either NNC or WNC.

7.9. Equality Implications

7.9.1. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

7.10. Climate and Environment Impact

7.1.1 There is no specific climate impact arising from this report, however as NNC and WNC committed to considering impact on the environment which is managed via the individual strategic lead partnership organisation via organisational policy and commitments.

7.1.2 NNC, WNC and NCT are aware there are emissions associated with publishing web content and will seek to minimise the impact where possible.

7.11. Community Impact

7.11.1. There is no specific community impact arising from this report.

7.12. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.12.1. There is no specific crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. None

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Northamptonshire
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Business Plan 2024/25 - 2027/28



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Section 1

Introduction

Foreword

Our shared ambition

“ Help children and families stay together, live together, and thrive together where it is safe to do so. Where support is needed we will work with partners to deliver the right help from the right person at the right time. ”

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Northamptonshire Children's Trust



Julian Wooster, Chair

Colin Foster, Chief Executive

North Northamptonshire Council



Cllr Scott Edwards, Lead member, Children's Services

George Candler, Interim Chief Executive

West Northamptonshire Council



Cllr Fiona Baker, Lead member, Children's Services

Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive

Our shared commitments

Our ambition relies on commitment from all members of our team, colleagues in both councils and our partners to achieve our ambition;

- Support families to live together well – Empower responsibility across the partnership to identify and meet the needs of all children and families through a true partnership approach to Early Help and Targeted Support.
- Keeping children safe from significant harm – Provide the right level of care and support where all children feel and are safe and support children to stay within their family network wherever possible.
- Support children in care and care leavers – Provide effective support across the partnership to enable children and young adults to thrive and be empowered to reach their full potential.
- Listen to those we support and act on what they say – Capture the voice of the child and the family, and ensure they have the consistency of service and are involved in all the decisions that will affect them.
- Recruit and retain an awesome workforce – Ensure the workforce is well resourced, trained, supported to follow identified processes, in order to build positive relationships with families for sustainable change and decision making that is informed by good evidence and data.
- Deliver the best possible quality services – Make sure Managers are supported, highly skilled and lead their teams with confidence using effective data, intelligence information and quality assurance. Deliver on the improvement plan.
- Effective use of resources – Through robust systems and effective challenge alongside a transformation and efficiency plan

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1.1 Children's Services improvement journey

Children's Services in Northamptonshire were judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2013, whilst this judgement improved to 'requires improvement to be good' in 2016 but by 2019 they were judged 'inadequate' again.

Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) was partially formed on 1st November 2020 and fully launched on 1st April 2021.

Ofsted now do two visits under the ILACS framework. One visit to NNC and one to WNC. To date they have been at the same time but this can change.

In October 2022 Ofsted visited and moved both NNC and WNC out of the 'inadequate' judgement and graded both WNC and NNC 'requires improvement to be good.' There were positive comments about practice improvement, workforce and culture. In August 2023 HMIP inspected the Youth Offending Service which received a rating of 'Good.' This also included positive comments about impact of practice and workforce.

There are also a number of regulatory inspections on Children's Homes, Fostering and Adoption.

The DfE statutory intervention notice remains in force for both NNC and WNC. All three organisation are working together to drive further improvements. This relies on the best possible people delivering the best possible services as part of the best possible partnership with the voice of the child at the centre of practice.

Our six strategic priorities for improvement are detailed within the improvement plan, these are:

Effective leadership - Improvement will be driven by a stable NCT senior leadership team that provides strategic leadership and direction, clarity of the vision for the service and sets clear priorities and expectations.

Recruit, retain and develop an awesome workforce - Staff are our most valuable resource. We need to recruit, develop and retain committed, skilful and child-centred staff and provide them with the environment in which good practice will flourish.

Strong Relationship-based practice - Ensuring our practice model is child-centred at its heart and evidenced through all that we do.

Insightful quality assurance and learning - We know ourselves and our practice well through rigorous quality assurance.

Healthy partnerships - We will work strategically with our core partners to share responsibility for driving our improvement plan, and all our staff will pursue effective multi-agency practice.

Robust and effective resource management - We will be an effective, high performing Trust with high standards of resource management.

1.1 Children's Services improvement journey (cont)

Overview of Trust requirements and characteristics

The Trust has been established as a company limited by guarantee, wholly owned by North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils, to provide a long term and sustainable platform to realise improved performance and deliver high quality and innovative social care services to children, young people and their families within Northamptonshire.

NCT is a non-profit distributing 'Teckal' compliant company that demonstrates day-to-day operational independence in the management and delivery of children's social care services in Northamptonshire through a strong board of executive and non-executive directors.

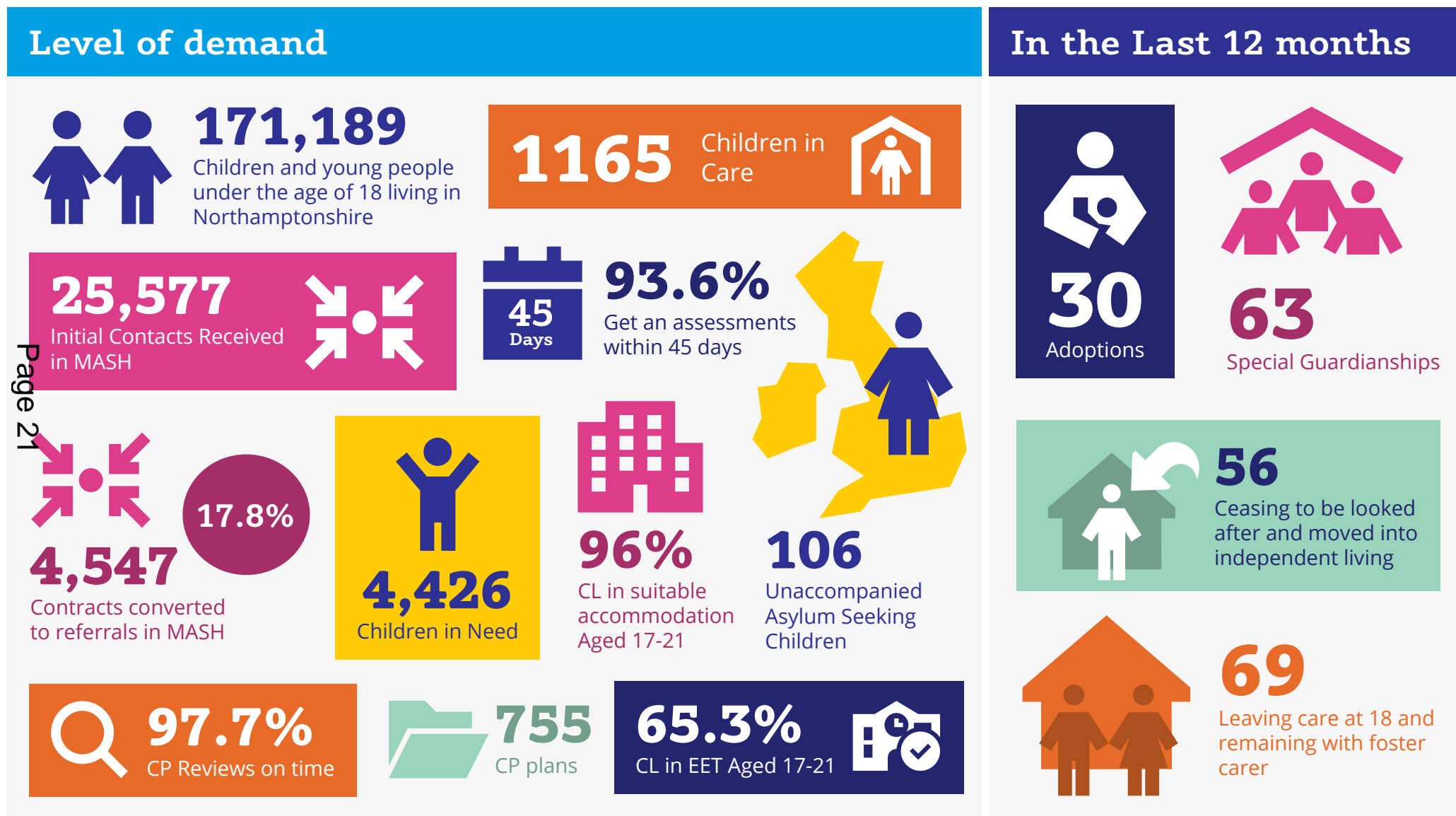
In conjunction with partner agencies, North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council and the Trust will work together collaboratively to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguard children in line with key children's legislation and statutory guidance;
- provide family support to vulnerable children and their families to enable them to cope with difficulties;
- support children to live safely with their immediate and extended families wherever possible;
- meet the needs of looked after children and those leaving care; and support disabled children and their families.

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1.2 Local Context



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Section 2

Who we are



Northamptonshire Children's Trust

2.1 Our Vision

Our vision, strategic framework, outcomes framework and conditions for success were developed through extensive consultation with children, young people, parents, families, staff and our strategic partners. It has

included feedback from several '58 minute' sessions led by the Chief Executive of the Trust who discussed ideas with the workforce.

Our Vision is:

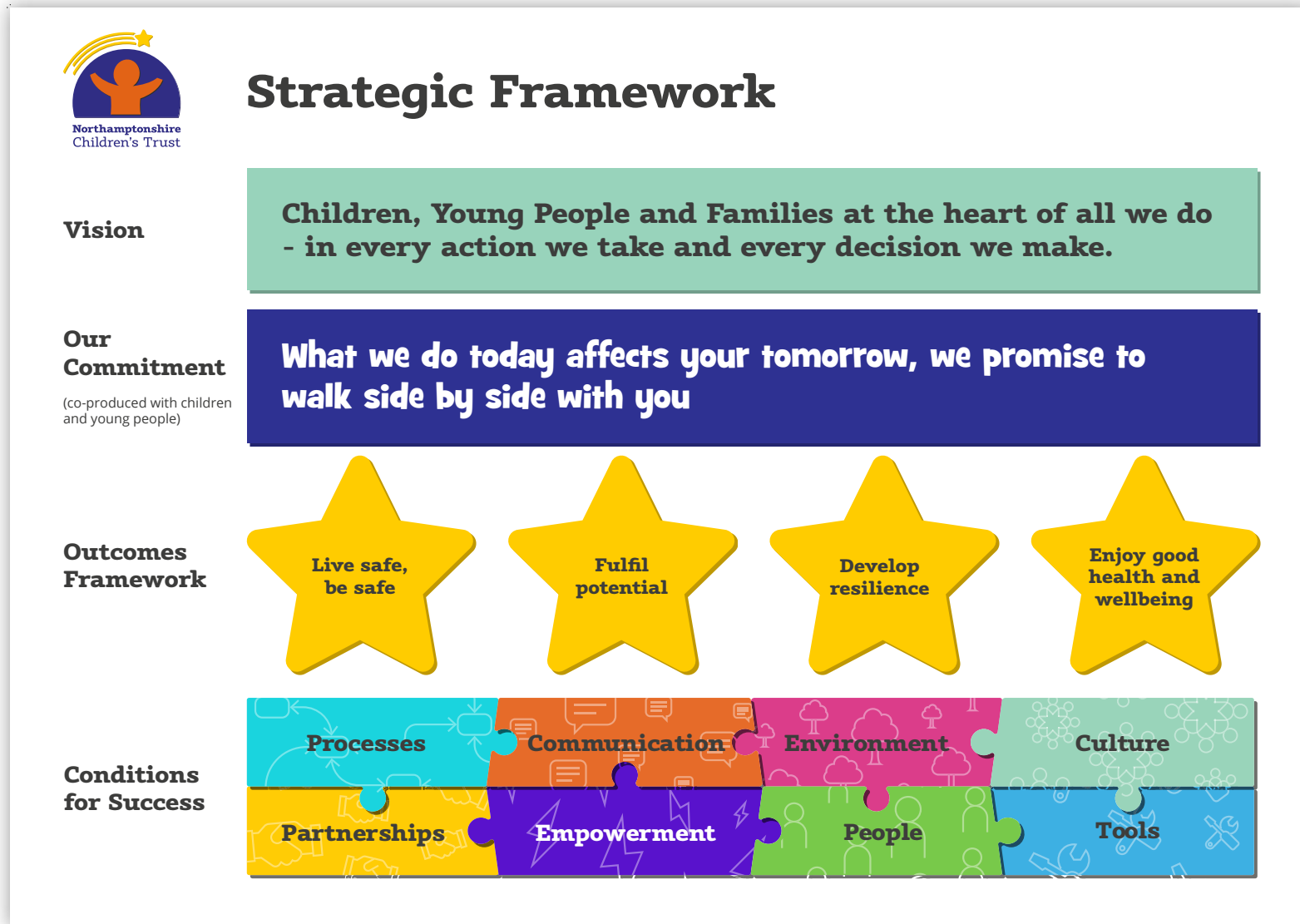
“ Children, Young People and Families at the heart of all we do - in every decision we make and every action we take ”

2.2 A Poem

hurt, abuse, pain. I feel alone.
They took me away.
Scared, worried, nervous.
I don't want to do this on my own.
It's hard to concentrate and feeling like
I fit in.
I always feel different. I never settle in
My Education fell behind.
I just existed. Although they were kind.
Day by Day hour by hour
I missed my mum and my dad and
the fun we had. Although the abuse
made me sad.
They say I can't see them. I know why.
But what they don't know. Is that it
hurts like mad. My tears are on my
pillow even though they were bad.

This young person is supported by a member of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust team - enabling and empowering practice supports children and young people to understand their thoughts and feeling and express themselves in their own way and on their own terms.

2.3 Our Strategic Framework



Our strategic framework overview encapsulates what matters to us on one page. It includes our vision, our commitment to children and young people, our outcomes framework and our conditions for success.

2.4 Our Commitment to Children and Young People

Our commitment to children and young people was written by them, they asked us to make this commitment which we will.

“ What we do today affects your tomorrow, we promise to walk side by side with you ”

2.5 Our Objectives and Outcome Framework

Northamptonshire Children's Trust outcomes framework is co-ordinated into four areas.

We are committed to enable children, young people and their families to:



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The objectives of Northamptonshire Children's Trust to provide social care, youth offending and other related services and support to children, young people and their families for the advancement of the community, and in particular:

- a. to provide high quality and coordinated services in connection with children, young people and their families, including in relation to children's safeguarding, children in care and at the edge of care, children leaving care and adoption and fostering services;
- b. to innovate and to secure improvements in the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to children, young people and their families in respect of social care, family support and youth offending service and (subject to the Company's overriding duty to keep children and young people safe from harm) to demonstrate

- c. value for money considerations;
- c. to advance and promote social care, family support and youth offending services available to children, young people and their families;
- d. to work collaboratively with other agencies to identify the individual social care needs of children and young people and to establish suitable arrangements to prepare for and meet such needs;
- e. to make a positive and effective contribution to multi-agency early intervention support for children, young people and their families to avoid the need for more intensive social care support;

Outcomes framework details can be found in appendix 1

2.6 Our Conditions for Success

Our conditions for success were developed by our workforce through '58 minute' sessions with the Chief Executive and developed further by our practitioners group and equalities group. Our conditions for success are all about how we operate as a whole system and they fit together like a jigsaw – each piece is reliant on every other piece to make a full picture.



We will work together meaningfully with openness towards shared goals.
Children, Young People and Families will benefit from us working side by side with them.



We will enable all to be the best they can be and develop an awesome workforce.
Children, Young People and Families will benefit from a highly skilled, motivated workforce.



We will ensure that all voices are listened to, heard and valued.
Children, Young People and Families will benefit from clear communication at all times.



We will create accessible and welcoming spaces to work collaboratively and privately with colleagues.
Children, Young People and Families will benefit from the best work environment we can create.

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2.6 Our Conditions for Success (cont)

Processes

We will empower our system to deliver the best support by having clear, up to date policies which enable slick processes.

Children, Young People and Families will benefit from a system that works effectively, efficiently and is delivered with care.

Tools

We will support a confident and competent workforce who have the tools they need to aspire to excellence.

Children, Young People and Families will benefit from everybody having the right toolkit to do their best work.

Empowerment

We are all leaders and will strive at all levels of the organisation to build respect, trust and a positive learning culture where diversity is celebrated and equality is embedded.

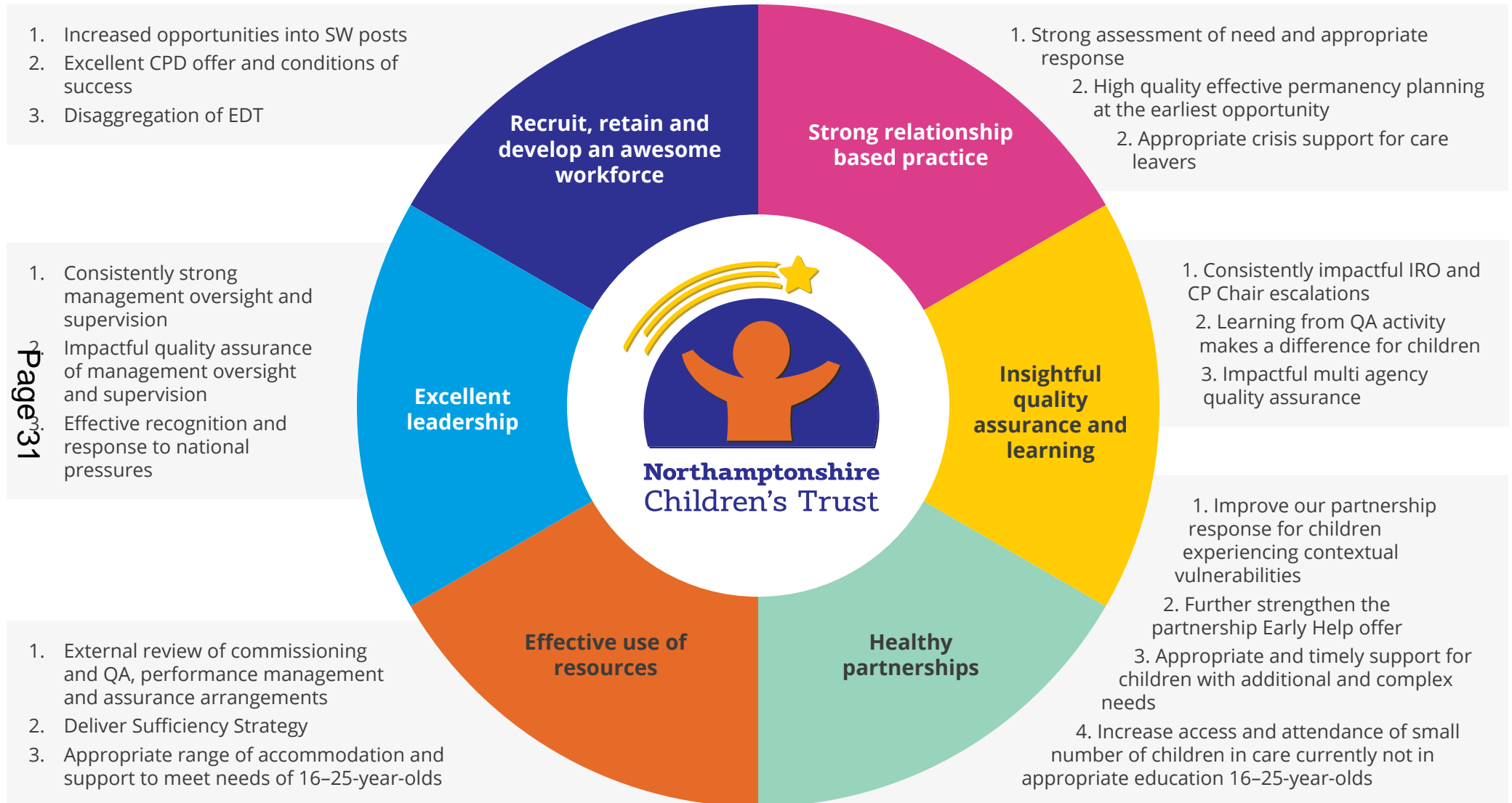
Children, Young People and Families will benefit from a confident and empowered workforce who are culturally competent and understand social graces.

Culture

We will treat each other with kindness, compassion and respect.

Children, Young People and Families will benefit from everybody giving their very best, every single day.

2.8 Strategic Priorities April 2022-March 2026



2.9 Our Quality Assurance

Northamptonshire Children's Trust has a very clear Quality Assurance (QA) framework and collaborative learning process which enables a strong understanding of the quality of practice and continuous improvement.

Our focus can be described as taking a 'so what' approach: Everything must relate fundamentally to seeking to improve our four key outcomes for children, young people and families and to demonstrate how these are met. Our measure of quality is the impact we have on children's lives, therefore our focus is on children's experiences and outcomes.

The voice of the child, family and our workforce are essential elements of the QA framework. They help us to understand the difference we make and ensure that we are delivering child centred support. Quality assurance and improvement is everyone's business and is part of our day to day work.

The focus for our quality of practice are:

- Child centred: The experiences, progress and outcomes of the child or young person on their journey with us is central to our approach
- Restorative: Instead of a top down, critical approach, our quality assurance work takes place with and alongside practitioners as an opportunity for reflection and learning. It is characterised by both high support and high challenge.
- Outcomes based: In line with our core approach, our focus is on outcomes rather than processes.
- Positive: Our approach to quality assurance is a positive learning experience – looking at informing and encouraging improvement
- and supporting the development of practitioners, services and systems

- Reflective: Our Quality Assurance framework is designed for reflective practice and shared learning.

Quality Assurance activity and findings are monitored on a monthly basis through the Quality Assurance Board. By quantifying the qualitative we are able to see the overall and service/ team level of quality, areas of good practice and for improvement. The Quality Assurance reporting and governance structure has been established to ensure clear oversight, sign off of recommendations as a result of Quality Assurance activity, and monitoring of progress to promote continued learning across Northamptonshire Children's Trust.

NCT's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is responsible for not only endorsing findings, recommendations and future development work but also for ensuring that information is disseminated effectively to the workforce. SLT provides assurance to the Trust Board and the Councils in relation to the Quality Assurance processes that are in place, their effectiveness, the impact on services and improvement, and ultimately ensuring that children of Northamptonshire are receiving high quality services and good experiences when receiving support from us.

2.9 Our Quality Assurance

The framework below sets out how Northamptonshire Children's Trust assures itself about performance, governance, and other key matters.

Practice Assurance

- ✓ Quality Assurance Board
- ✓ CRPDs
- ✓ IROs
- ✓ LADO
- ✓ Ofsted
- ✓ Feedback from children, families, and other professionals
- ✓ PPQ Committee

Governance Assurance

- ✓ Scheme of Delegation
- ✓ Financial Regulations & Policies
- ✓ Internal Audit
- ✓ External Audit
- ✓ Audit of accounts
- ✓ FR&A committee

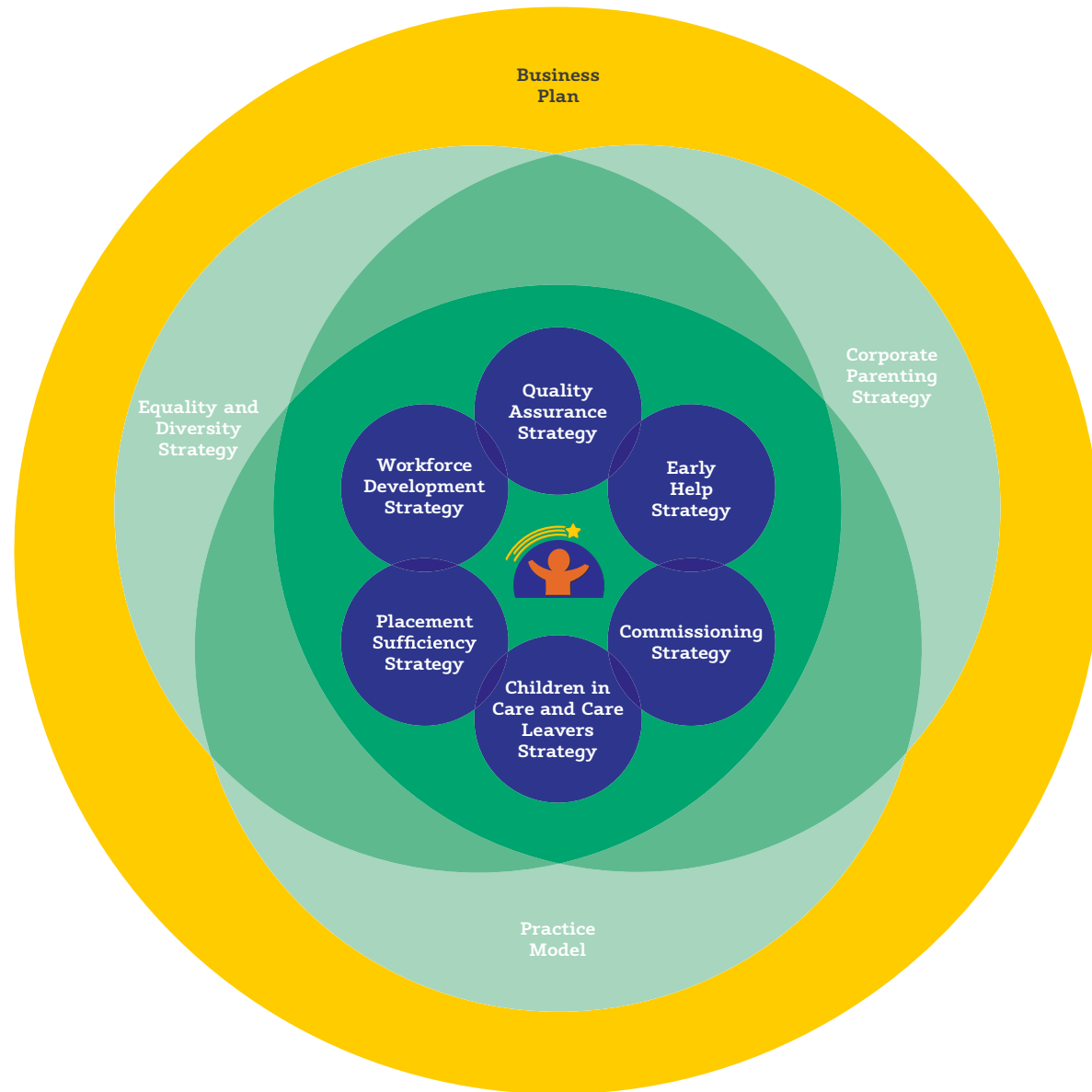
Strategic Assurance

- ✓ NCT Board
- ✓ Annual Review
- ✓ Development Plan
- ✓ Business Plan
- ✓ Contractual Management – ICF, OCG, SCG
- ✓ Integrated Care Board
- ✓ Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Risk Management

- ✓ Information Risk Policies
- ✓ NHS DPS Toolkit
- ✓ Information Commissioner
- ✓ Complaints Management
- ✓ Risk Register
- ✓ FR&A committee

2.10 Our plans and strategies





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Section 3

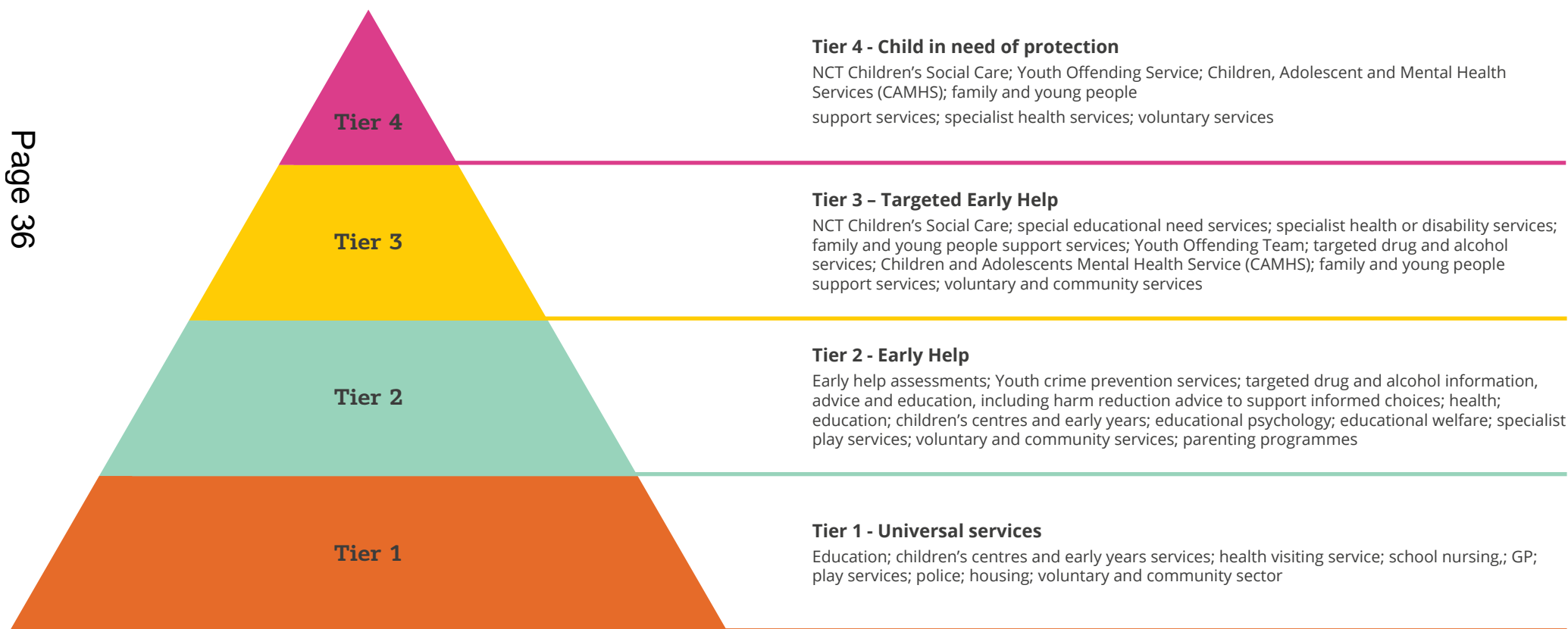
Partnerships and Trust Overview

3.1 Our Relationship with Strategic Partners

We believe that keeping vulnerable children and young people safe from harm is everyone's responsibility and that collectively we will only be successful if all partners work together across the county. everyone who works with children, families and young people in Northamptonshire shares responsibility for improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and families.

WNC and NNC alongside partners are developing 'a sense of place' through local area partnerships (LAPs), family hubs to give children 'the best start in life.' Given this collective responsibility and NCT commitment to collaborative and integrated working, the Trust is committed to being fully involved and playing an active role working alongside our strategic partners in the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and integrated care system (ICS).

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3.1 Our Relationship with Strategic Partners (cont)

Our relationship with North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council

A strong strategic partnership is emerging and the Trust will be a reliable and effective partner. This will help each organisation achieve their priorities. Improved outcomes for children, young people and families depend upon the Councils and the Trust

The Councils retain statutory accountability for children's services, and they continue to provide and commission all those services for children that are not within the Trust; Corporate parenting, education support, school safeguarding, special educational needs and disabilities co-ordination (although support for children with SEND is certainly our business too), school admissions and place planning, virtual school for children in care, and early years services. The 'dependencies' have been set out in the Service Specification of the Trust Service Delivery Contract. These reflect arrangements and services for children that the Council must put in place to enable the Trust to achieve its priorities and performance targets.

The Councils' Corporate Parenting Role

Elected members are the corporate parents for Northamptonshire's Looked After Children and have a collective responsibility across services and local authorities to safeguard and promote their life chances. North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council will ensure the appropriate contribution from education and other retained children's services, housing services and the Councils universal services in supporting Looked After Children.

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council will support the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting

Board. The Trust will provide professional expertise and advice to the Corporate Parenting Board, in order to help the Councils discharge their responsibilities. This includes (but is not limited to) the provision

In addition to the dependencies listed above, the Trust is supported by North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council in relation to a number of key strategic and operational dependencies that include (not an exhaustive list):

Strategic dependencies

- **Working in partnership**
The Councils will work in partnership with the Trust to implement and maintain ways of working and cooperative arrangements in relation to retained services, consulting and working in partnership with the Trust in respect of any proposed changes to retained services that will impact on the Trust.
- **Acting on inspection findings**
Following any regulatory inspection, the Councils are responsible for implementing certain actions in relation to the services/other statutory functions for which the Councils are responsible/which have a direct impact on the performance by the Trust.
- **Access to grant funding**
The Councils will support the Trust in making applications (including providing required information) for grant funding relating to services that the Trust is required/contracted to provide.

Operational dependencies

- **Support Services Board**
The Trust will hold the Councils to account for the performance of all

3.1 Our Relationship with Strategic Partners (cont)

the support services that they deliver under service level agreements in accordance with the Support Services Agreement.

- **Property**

The Councils are required to ensure that the Trust has access to properties required to deliver the services. This includes both Councils' owned properties and those owned by third parties.

- **Information transfer**

The Councils will ensure that the Trust has access to all available information required by the Trust to deliver the services and functions identified within the contract.

- **Assets and supply contracts**

The Councils will ensure the Trust's access to the assets and supply contracts, in accordance with the agreed schedule.

Joint working protocols

The Trust and the Councils have agreed a series of protocols covering the areas that fall outside of both the Service Delivery Contract and the Service Specification – in essence a framework for how people will work together and set the parameters for expected ways of working.

Our relationship with Strategic Partners

The Trust is committed to working collaboratively with partners to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Early engagement between the Trust and strategic partners has taken place; further and ongoing engagement will be undertaken to ensure that children receive high quality and joined up services.

- **Early help**

The Trust, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council will promote and create opportunities for co-operation with local partners to build the best possible Early Help Offer to improve the well-being of children and young people. Families should be supported to stay together where it is sage to do so.

- **Schools**

The Trust will maintain constructive and cooperative relationships with all schools who are an essential partner in safeguarding children and young people.

- **Early Years providers**

The Trust will maintain constructive and cooperative operational relationships with early years' providers.

- **Adult Social Care**

The Trust will ensure that an effective working relationship is maintained with adult social care services within the Councils. Communication, cooperation and collaboration between the Trust and adult social services is critical to achieving the service outcomes, particularly as related to children's transition to adulthood, children at risk of parental mental health, substance misuse, children with disabilities and domestic abuse.

- **Health Providers (including Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health)**

The Trust will work through the Integrated Care System (ICS) to carry out their duties as strong and effective partners in respect of safeguarding and delivering children's care in an integrated way.

3.1 Our Relationship with Strategic Partners (cont)

- **Police**
The Trust will ensure that an effective working relationship is maintained with police services. This includes multi-agency front door arrangements and safeguarding services. Communication, cooperation and collaboration between the Trust and police services is key to achieving the service outcomes.
- **Voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners**
The Trust will manage relevant operational relationships with the VCS, playing an active role in promoting a healthy and engaged voluntary sector that provides good quality services for local people and to engage with the VCS as partners in the development of services.

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3.2 Our Resources and Services

The Trust is commissioned by the North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council to deliver services relating to the following:

- **Early Help Services**
- **Children’s Social Care Services**
- **Children’s residential homes**
- **Fostering**
- **Adoption**
- **Care Leaver Services**
- **Youth Offending Services**
- **Business Support**
- **Corporate parenting alongside all partners**

Commissioning of services relating to the functions above, for example legal services

For the Trust to succeed in its ambition to make a sustainable improvement to the lives of children, young people and families, the Trust will be reliant upon the strong partnership with the Councils and of their performance of a number of support services which they are responsible for. The following support services are provided to the Trust by the Councils through ‘service level agreements’ whose performance are routinely monitored through a joint Support Services Board:

Finance services	HR services	IT services	Customer services	Miscellaneous business support
Internal Audit	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	ICT	Complaints team	Procurement
Finance operations	HR Policy & projects	Business systems and change	Customer services	Property services
Payments team and direct Payments team	Learning & Development	Report development		
Insurance	Payroll & HR transactions	Web team		

3.3 Our Financial Strategy and Plans

Northamptonshire Children's Trust Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) focuses on achieving financial sustainability over the business plan period and explain how the business plan programmes align with financial priorities. In setting the medium term budget, we have focused on making informed recommendations that align with our commissioning Councils' affordability objectives as well as making best use of available funds to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.

The financial implications, in terms of spend and savings will be carefully monitored over the plan period. It is clear that the coming years will be financially challenging, given the ongoing pressure on wider public sector budgets and national increases in levels of need for children's services. It is of paramount importance that the organisation continues to work with commissioning partners to ensure a mutual understanding of existing and emerging pressures and reaches agreement on the level of funding available and how that funding should be prioritised to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children and young people we support.

The organisation will be following three overarching financial principles over the coming years. Our aims are to;

1. Achieving value for money

The Trust will deliver good quality services and is working proactively towards improving services in line with inspection findings. The Trust will maximise the economies of scale through both the delivery and procurement of services. Key priorities will be the effective commissioning of placements and the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled workforce, Benchmarking will be undertaken with statistical neighbour's and throughout the social care sector to ensure services are delivered efficiency and effectively, exploring the use of innovative models and best practice.

2. Maximise resources available to frontline services

Regularly reviews budgets to ensure that resources available to frontline services are maximised and there is a sufficient balance to ensure that frontline services have the infrastructure to ensure they can continue to support children and families.

The following four aspects are important in achieving this objective.

- Adequate needs-led budget growth and achievement of savings
- Maximise income generation
- Periodic review of emerging priority areas
- Business plan programmes facilitate the effective use of resources

3. Shared budget responsibility

The Trust will develop a culture of shared budget responsibility with all staff being responsible for ensuring that every pound spent is maximising positive outcomes for children and young people and is in line with budget control processes. The newly established Transformation and Efficiencies programme board will provide a management framework to ensure projects are identified, monitored and delivered and support resources are deployed effectively. Progress against the plan and on the associated spend and savings implications will be monitored on an ongoing basis with the relevant leadership team having overarching oversight.

3.3 Our Financial Strategy and Plans (cont)

Financial Planning

Northampton Children's Trust is now in its third year of operation. The financial position remains extremely challenging both locally and nationally with a rise in the care population and increases in placement costs and the impacts of inflation. During the 23/24 financial year a rebasing of the initial contract sum has been undertaken to reflect the significant demand inflation pressures. These pressures will continue to be monitored to establish its final year end position. NCT continues to look to achieve savings through the delivery of efficiencies across the Trust's activities working with partners.

Budget Description	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Initial Contract Sum	150.938	177.429	181.944
Demographic Growth	25.815	2,857	1,919
Inflation	9,721	8,342	7,427
Total Trust funding	186.474	188.628	191.290
Less Savings	9.045	6.684	5.326
Total Contract Sum (excluding invest to save/ Transformation)	177.429	181.944	185.964

Invest to save/Transformation

The table below sets out the invest to save proposals to deliver the aspirations in the social care Improvement Plan, the challenges in the MTFs and the services pressures. The invest to save bids are a combination of both capital and revenue expenditure. This funding has not been included within the initial MTFs as it is in addition to the contract sum and of a time limited nature. This will be reviewed annually.

Invest to Save/Transformation	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2024/25 £m
Revenue			
Additional social work capacity	1.083	TBC	TBC
Circle to Success	1.280	TBC	TBC
Service Improvement	0.085	0.085	0.085
Practice Model	0.132	0.183	0.156
Transformation Reserve	3.291	TBC	TBC
Total Invest to Save/ Transformation	5.871	0.268	0.241
Capital			
Refresh IT Programme	0.234	0.234	0.000
Fostering Developments	0.300	0.300	0.300
Minor Works	0.050	0.050	0.050
Total Capital Programme	0.584	0.584	0.350

3.4 Risk Management

Our risk management framework helps to ensure we identify and manage those risks that could affect our ability to deliver the company's objectives. The management of risk is embedded in our day-to-day business activities, and well-established processes and policies are in place. All of our employees have a role in reducing risk through our internal control framework. Risks are recorded in a Trust risk register which is regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and reported to the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee of the Board of Directors.

The risk register includes strategic and operational risks.

- Strategic risks are the direct responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team and concern the overall direction of the Company and its sustainability.
- Operational risks concern day-to-day activities which need to be managed in order for services to be delivered. They are managed by individual service managers and are regularly reported to service directors.

The detailed risk register is shown at Appendix 8.



3.5 About Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and our Business Plan

Local Government Reorganisation

Local government in Northamptonshire is facing its biggest change in over 40 years. On 1st April 2021 North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council replaced the eight previous councils in Northamptonshire. They are unitary authorities and are responsible for all public services provided to residents in their areas.

Our Governance

- **Owned by the North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils**

The Trust was established as a company limited by guarantee on 1st November 2020, with the sole member at the point of contract commencement being Northamptonshire County Council. At this point only, core children’s social care services had been transferred to the Trust. On 1st April 2021 (vesting day), the County Council ceased to exist. At that point, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council became the two members (owners) of the Trust, and the remaining infrastructure staff were transferred to the Trust.

- **Operational independence**

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council, as the owners of the Trust, agree that Trust senior leadership team (which is accountable to the Trust Board) have unfettered operational independence in respect of the day-to-day management and performance of the services and functions that transfer at the point of contract commencement. The Councils will commission the contract and the performance of the Trust via the Director of Children’s Services. The Trust will also hold the Councils to account for the delivery and performance of support services and related Council dependencies.

- **Reserved powers**

Although operationally independent of North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council, the Councils retain ‘reserved powers’ for certain significant matters including, for example, any appointment and/or removal of the Chief Executive or a Council appointed Director and/or any changes to the terms of such appointments; any changes/amendments to the Articles; the entering into by the Trust of any new third party contracts for the provision of services etc.

- **Governance Side Agreement**

A Governance Side Agreement is in place between the DfE, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council, describing those areas of the Trust’s governance over which the DfE retains some control, or influence, whilst children’s social care services remain subject to Government intervention.

- **Role of the Trust Board**

The role of the Trust Board is to set the strategic aims of the Trust, oversee the management of the Trust and hold the executive team to account. It is the responsible body for the performance of the Trust in terms of delivering its legal and contractual obligations and achieving outcomes for children and young people in Northamptonshire.

For the period during which children’s social care services remain subject to Government intervention, the Chair of the Board is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education.

- **Structure of the Trust Board**

The Trust Board contains a wide portfolio of expertise and

3.5 About Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and our Business Plan (cont)

knowledge in children’s services, commercial, financial and other disciplines. The Board provides support and challenge on the direction and strategy of the Trust. The Board comprises of:

- A non-executive Director selected as Chair;
- the Chief Executive of the Trust;
- up to 3 additional Executive Directors appointed by the Board; up to four Independent Non-Executive Directors appointed by the Board;
- up to four Council Directors nominated by the North Northamptonshire Council / West Northamptonshire Council and appointed by the Board.

The number of Council Directors shall not exceed the number of Independent Non-Executive Directors at any time.

4.5 Board committee structure

The Trust Board has established two supporting committees; one covering finance, resources and audit, and a second covering practice, performance and quality. The membership of each committee is three independent Non-Executive Directors, a Council appointed Non-Executive Director, and an Executive Director.

- Both boards report into the Trust Board. All boards and their inter-dependencies can be seen in appendix 9

How we have developed the business plan

The priorities in our business plan are based on a sound understanding of the local needs of children, young people, and families across the county. We have developed a strong evidence base for our plan using

demographic trends, performance data, needs analyses, and feedback from Ofsted (though inspection and monitoring visits), alongside more qualitative feedback about the effectiveness and impact of our services. Additionally, the content of the business plan has been informed through extensive consultation with: Children, young people, and families; staff; and strategic partners. The feedback from these engagements has helped to shape the Trust’s vision, values and conditions for success.

How we will measure our progress?

We will monitor progress in two ways. Firstly, by being clear about our priority activities, when we expect these to be delivered and monitoring our progress against our improvement plan. Secondly, through a set of key performance indicators (Appendix 5). These have been agreed with the Councils as part of our contract with them and by the Trust Board of Directors to monitor and assure that the Trust is improving outcomes for children and young people. There is regular monitoring and scrutiny of our performance, with progress against the key performance indicators reported publicly to each of the owning Councils.

Annual Review

Each year the business plan priority areas will be reviewed and updated. The annual review of the contract between the Trust, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council provides the opportunity to consider: The quality of practice and outcomes for children; how the Trust discharges the Councils’ functions; and if any Changes are required to the contract.

The annual review will also assess our progress at implementing priorities in the previous year, as well as refreshing our priorities and activities for the year ahead.



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Section 4

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Outcomes Framework



Outcome 1

- 1a) Children in need of support and protection are identified early and have their needs assessed in a timely and effective way
- 1b) The level of intervention is always proportionate to the assessed level of risk and need and children are supported to remain with their families where it is safe to do so
- 1c) When children become looked after they do so at the right time and are cared for in the right placement
- 1d) Children, young people and their families are able to access local services

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Outcome 2

- 2a) Children in Care access high quality education and training and feel motivated and ambitious about their future
- 2b) Children in Care and Care Leavers are able to make the most of the choices available to them after leaving school, engage positively in post 16 learning and successfully transition to adulthood

Appendix 1 – Outcomes Framework (cont)



Outcome 3

- 3a) Children and Young People have strong relationships with their family members and the whole family builds resilience, feeling part of and pride in their community
- 3b) Strong community partnerships reduce the risk of exploitation and abuse

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Outcome 4

- 4a) Children receive timely support and intervention to promote health and wellbeing
- 4b) Children, young people and their families are encouraged and supported to lead a healthy lifestyle

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan

Key Improvement Priorities

October 21- December 22

Effective Early Help offer with better step down from social care - meaning children and families receive the right support at the right time and preventing escalation of needs

High quality social care referrals at our front door - resulting in children and families receiving the right support in a timely way and reducing unnecessary social work intervention





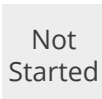
The best Social Workers join and stay - meaning children and families benefit from consistently good quality social work practice built on strong and continued professional working relationships. Social workers have reduced caseloads and high quality supervision

Consistently good quality assessments and plans - so our practice makes a lasting difference for children and families

Placements that provide excellent care and support - they must meet the needs of our children and be available when we need them

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RAG Criteria

	Not on track to meet delivery date, mitigation or escalation required
	Work in progress, some risk to delivery and/ or delivery date and mitigation applied
	On track to meet delivery date or completed
	Successfully completed
	Not yet started

Partnership improvement priorities are shown in orange

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

1. Excellent Leadership

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Children's experiences and outcomes are improved as a result of consistently good quality management oversight and supervision	<p>1.1 Consistently strong management oversight and supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the consistency of quality and timeliness of recorded management oversight and reflective case supervision across front line services, which includes trajectory planning, and evidences safety, progress, and impact for children Review supervision recording template Support and training for managers Refocus performance clinics on qualitative measures as well as quantitative 	1; 2	AD Corporate Parenting AD Safeguarding AD CFSS & YOS	Mar 24	NCT Service Plans QAB action log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA activity shows improved scaling for management oversight and outcomes for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 68% CRPDs scaled 6 and above out of 10 management oversight; 79% scaled 6 and above out of 10 outcomes Timeliness of supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 48% Findings from Valuing Care assessments are referenced in supervision records lead to a greater focus on children's needs to inform care planning rather than responding to behaviours 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision and management oversight included in Performance Clinics Safeguarding performance clinics being reviewed to ensure focus on quality Changes made in Children in Care Performance Clinics to ensure focus on QA is priority New model for IFA performance clinics in place from March with greater focus on children IFA compliance notice visit Apr 23- verbal feedback from inspectors re positive progress in all areas since inspection. This was further noted in monitoring visit in July 23 when Ofsted concluded that compliance notices had been met. Supervision timeliness 68% Jun23 Q4 22/23 IROs saw improvements in management oversight and comments within My Care Plans, case recording and assessments. 67% CRPDs scaled 6 and above for management oversight and 80% scaled 6 and above for overall outcomes June 23 YOS inspection outcome identified management oversight and supervision as consistently good also use of case reviews and quality assurance work identified as positive. 98 Social workers and managers trained in using Valuing Care Assessment Tool

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
	<p>1.2 Impactful quality assurance of management oversight and supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on quality and impact of management oversight and supervision throughout QA programme Improve robustness of senior management oversight of children in unregistered placements 	1; 2	AD QA & Commissioning AD Corporate Parenting AD Safeguarding AD CFSS & YOS	Mar 24	NCT Service Plans QAB action log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of NCT operational managers consistently completing QA activity QA moderation shows improvement in quality of QA activity Senior management oversight of unregistered homes evidenced on child's records 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23/24 QA programme in place. Reflective moderation sessions with managers to improve QA quality Focused QA support in IFA following inspection; IFA QA programme in place Weekly review of unregistered placements by senior managers which include consideration of welfare needs and efforts to secure suitable registered placement, and improving recording of oversight on children's records Review completed by DfE Advisor to strengthen QA impact on practice, recommendations currently being considered
Efficient resources are allocated and managed to enable effective delivery of NCT services	<p>1.3 Effective recognition and response to current and emerging national pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased complexity of need and increased demand on statutory services - Valuing Care ability of fostering and children's homes market to meet needs Social care workforce shortages Increased costs (i.e., staff, transport, homes for children) 		NCT/ WNC/ NNC Operational Commissioning Group	Mar 24	OCG action log		Amber	

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

2. Recruit, retain and develop an awesome workforce

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Children are supported by consistent practitioners who have the capacity and skills to develop effective relationships and undertake good quality work with them	2.3 Increased opportunities into social work posts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step Up, Frontline, NQSWs, SW Apprentices, Social workers recruited from abroad 		Director of Finance & Resources AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	Mar 24	NCT Workforce Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced SW vacancies Baseline 17.1% 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15.4% SW vacancies Aug 23 NCT Frontline team shortlisted for awards Frontline cohort 1 students preparing to move into SW posts from Sept 23. Quality of students has been excellent. 6 x SW apprentices started in Sept 23 12 NQSWs started in May; 13 in Sept 2nd Frontline cohort started in Sept; 10 students in total Unfilled vacancies in corporate parenting service reducing with 25% less vacancies achieved in period of April – August 23
	2.2 Excellent CPD offer and conditions of success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the effectiveness and capacity of support services and business support to enable frontline practitioners and managers to focus on practice Progress new case management system to meet practice needs Refresh the practice model. Fully embed Signs of Safety and implement systemic practice 		AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	Apr 23 – Mar 24	NCT Workforce Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA activity shows improved scaling for outcomes for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 79% CRPDs scaled 6 and above out of 10 outcomes Training take up and feedback Reduced turnover rate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 17.1% Practitioners report work is manageable, and they are well supported (annual social work health check) 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 78% CRPDs scaled 6+ for outcomes June 23 16.2% turnover Aug 23 Service plans 23/24 completed incorporating improvement plan priorities and SoS implementation DfE bid for systemic practice agreed; match funding to be agreed IFA case management system in procurement
Children and families receive an appropriate response in an emergency out of hours	2.3 Complete disaggregation of EDT and ensure appropriate capacity		NNC/ WNC DCS Director of Finance & Resources AD Safeguarding	Mar 24	OCG action log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDT will deliver services for children only 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work being progressed between NCT and councils. Report has been submitted to both councils for consideration and project working group commenced Aug 23

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

3. Strong Relationship based practice

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
<p>Children and families receive the right specialist and timely response that meets their needs and improves their outcomes</p>	<p>3.1 Strong assessment of need and appropriate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement systemic practice and Valuing Care assessment alongside embedding of Signs of Safety Ensure effective practice in transfer of cases from MASH to DAAT to increase timeliness of response for families Ensure good quality direct work is used to inform assessment and plans for all children, including through increased use of Mind of My Own app 	1; 3; 4	<p>AD Safeguarding AD Corporate Parenting AD CFSS & YOS AD QA & Commissioning</p>	Mar 24	<p>NCT Service Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate and timely screening, decisions with robust rationale and transfer evidenced via performance data and QA activity (including multi agency practice review). Reduce re-referrals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 29% Reduce assessments with NFA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 38% CRPDs scaled 6+ out of 10 for voice of child, identity, and culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 73% CRPDs scaled 6+ for care planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 71% Increase in percentage of children who receive IHA and RHA within statutory timeframes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IHAs baseline 83.7% RHAs baseline 73.8% QA activity evidences good quality initial and review health assessments. 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuing Care assessments completed for 88% of identified cohort 75% CRPDs scaled 6+ for outcomes June 23 and 25% scaled 6+ for care planning quality (of 4 CRPDs total) Re-referrals 25.8% (YTD August) Assessment with NFA 34% (YTD August) Action plan in relation to health assessments has been in place and strengthened processes within NCT has led to more timely referrals for IHA. Decrease in CiC with IHA in timescales 49.2% YTD Aug 23. 83.5% of CiC have an up-to-date review health assessment at Aug 23. Range of communication styles used to gain children's voices within Disabled Children's Service to inform assessments of need Process of multi-disciplinary team meetings has been embedded within Disabled Children's Service and Children in Care Service to ensure multi-agency response to children's needs Development day planned with NHFT for June to help strengthen partnership working to improve outcomes, and quarterly development sessions going forward Partnership review of front door & MASH competed by Hertfordshire with DfE funding has taken place in July, action plan is being developed with partners Review of processes to improve timely transfers between MASH and DAAT has been undertaken. Close working with midwifery and improvement in pre-birth assessments 'Awesome practice' increasingly seeing good practice evidenced and shared
<p>Page 53</p>	<p>Efficient processes and sufficient resource in place to ensure children and young people in care, including those living out of county, receive timely initial and review health assessments. Continued dialogue with regional and national NHS leaders regarding the revision of statutory guidance of initial health assessments</p>		<p>ICB Head of Safeguarding/ Designated Nurses NHFT AD C&YP</p>		<p>CYP Transformation Programme</p>			

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
<p>Children are well cared for in a permanent and safe home at the earliest opportunity</p>	<p>3.2 High quality effective permanency planning at earliest opportunity</p> <p>Improve effectiveness of planning for children to come into care, including appropriate use of Police Powers and joint planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Family network meetings occur in every case where there are concerns about safety and welfare of a child Clear trajectory and contingency planning Good quality life story work with all children in care throughout their time of being looked after All children in care have effective SMART permanence plans which consider all options for permanency 	1; 2; 3; 4	<p>AD Safeguarding AD Corporate Parenting</p> <p>Ivan Balhatchet – Crime & Justice NPCC Lead</p>		<p>NCT Service Plans</p> <p>LFJB Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of emergency admissions to care Increased use of PLO QA activity evidences effective joint planning and families are clear why we are involved and the changes they will be supported to make Families are supported to achieve and sustain change and more children remain in or return to their family's care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline children in care rate 71 Baseline children in care returning home 9% (rolling 3 months) Baseline children leaving care due to permanence 20% 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Strategic Manager post in place to oversee case progression and consistent chairing of legal gateway panel Standard practice to review family options before foster care. Increased use of Family Network meetings and connected carers 24% children leaving care due to permanence YTD August; 38% returning home in the same period. Average length of proceedings reduced from 67 weeks in June 22 to 37 weeks in Aug 23. 30 children subject of Valuing Care assessment identified as having potential opportunity to return home with 8 having achieved this since April 23 Additionally, 18 children have been identified as being able to step across from residential care to foster care with this having been achieved for 1 child since April 23 First family finding event with 11 children discussed. 9 EOI across 4 of the children. Permanency tracking panels take place on monthly basis with dedicated panels for children living at home under placement with parent regulations. Dedicated social work post in place to complete Schedule 3 assessments. Long term matching process has been reviewed for children living in connected person's placement Adoption tracking is embedded and with adoption service manager also engaged with pre-birth tracking to ensure early permanence options are considered where appropriate to do so. Average number of days between placement order being granted and children being matched with their adoptive family has reduced from 184 in 2021/2022 to 120 in 2022/2023. This is currently at 156.1 (Aug 23).

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Page 55 Care leavers have access to support that meets their needs and improves their outcomes								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanency and Edge of care have been identified as priorities for Valuing Care. • Conference on permanence planned for early next year • Providers now part of placement planning which facilitates early identification of support packages for edge of care • Increased focus on life story work for every child in care. FSWs in children in care teams undertaking life story work. Expectation all wishes and views captured at assessments and ongoing work. Focus on SSW seeing children every 8 weeks (74% Aug 23) • Developing model for dynamic life story work for practitioners – started June 23
	<p>3.3 Appropriate crisis support for care leavers</p> <p>Review and develop multi-agency local offer for care leavers including access to crisis support</p> <p>Explore opportunities to develop a hub for care leavers living in North Northamptonshire</p>		AD Corporate Parenting NHFT AD CYP WNC & NNC Adults Services & Housing ADs ICB Senior Transformation Manager	Mar 24	Corporate Parenting Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA activity and feedback from young people shows access and impact 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Offer for care leavers continues to be developed. Event held in March 2023 with local businesses and partner agencies who pledged their support to care leavers. This has led to increased apprenticeship opportunities, social activities, donations of food and clothing and mentoring. This work continues. • Housing and transitions panel has strengthened multi-agency working and support packages for care leavers. • Partner agencies attend Russell House every Wednesday for drop-in sessions attended by care leavers who need support, advice, and guidance. • Drop-in services now in place for care leavers in North Northamptonshire. Identification of a building to develop a hub is in progress but not yet achieved.

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

4. Insightful quality assurance and learning

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Children's outcomes and experiences are improved as a result of improving practice	4.1 Consistently impactful IRO and CP Chair escalations		AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning AD Safeguarding AD Corporate Parenting	Sept 23	NCT Service Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely responses to escalations QA activity to evidence impact of escalations 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89% of all issues raised were resolved within 5 working days compared to 71% the previous quarter (Jun 23) 75% of issues raised were resolved within 1 working day compared to 51% the previous quarter. (Jun 23) Use of thematic approach to raise formal escalations by IROs is having a positive impact on practice by highlight specific areas Changes will be made to Chair's report on CareFirst to capture care plans, assessments, decision forms completed before reviews Issue raised directly with Asst Director of Education by IRO for child aged 13 who did not have school place identified resulted in the school being directed to offer place and young person starts school after easter. Persistent informal challenge by IRO on use of section 20 not being purposeful for 2 siblings resulted in care proceeding being instigated and court granting ICOs 10 teams did not have any escalations in Q4. Review of all open cases on Section 20 completed Oct 23

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Page 57	<p>4.2 Learning from QA activity makes a difference for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions and learning from individual CRPDs are progressed through supervision and evidence on child files of progress made • Thematic learning from QA activity is shared through training and communications and impact is measured and demonstrated 		Director of Social Care All ADs	Mar 24	QAB action log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA activity to evidence impact 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA Intranet page in development • QA Manager reviews managers responses to CRPD actions • Training programme informed by QA learning
	<p>4.3 Impactful multi agency quality assurance</p> <p>3x multi agency practice reviews (MAPRs) per year; thematic learning shared through NSCP</p> <p>Implement a process to enable review, learning and improvement of young people detained in police custody</p>		<p>NSCP Quality and Governance sub-group chair</p> <p>Ivan Balhatchet – Crime & Justice NPCC Lead</p> <p>Director of Social Care</p>	Mar 24	NSCP business plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on practice and outcomes as a result of QA activity • QA evidence that needs of children in police custody are closely monitored to ensure decision making conforms to current statutory guidance; good practice shared 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAPR process in place through NSCP Q&G group • Neglect MAPR completed • NSCP Independent Chair review of neglect in progress • Multi-agency review in relation to front door activity under the governance of MASH strategic group

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

5. Healthy Partnerships that improve outcomes for children

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
<p>Risks for children who are experiencing contextual vulnerabilities are effectively managed and the impact on them is minimised</p>	<p>5.1 Improve our partnership response for children who are experiencing contextual vulnerabilities</p> <p>Improve our partnership response to domestic abuse</p> <p>Improve our partnership response to exploitation</p> <p>Improve quality and impact of our response (including return home interviews) to children who go missing.</p> <p>Improve our partnership response to neglect</p> <p>Skilled workforce able to identify neglect factors; Increased use of GPC 2 tool</p>	2	<p>Director of Social Care AD for CFSS</p> <p>WNC and NNC Community safety ADs</p> <p>Director of Social Care AD Safeguarding AD CFSS</p> <p>Ivan Balhatchet – Crime & Justice NPCC Lead</p> <p>ICB Head of Safeguarding/ Designated Nurses representing health as a system</p> <p>WNC and NNC Public Health children's leads</p> <p>NSCP Neglect Sub-Group Chair</p> <p>NSCP Strategic Leads</p>	Timescales as per partnership action plans	<p>Domestic abuse strategy West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)</p> <p>Domestic abuse strategy North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)</p> <p>NSCP exploitation strategy and action plan</p> <p>NSCP Neglect Strategy and action plan</p> <p>NCT Service Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on child reduces evidenced by QA activity, supervision and MO. Timely access to DA services including for perpetrators Reduction of children coming into care due to exploitation Reduction in the numbers of children who go missing; and numbers who go repeatedly missing. Children in care have fewer missing episodes. Timely decision making in neglect cases evidenced by QA activity and reduced repeat CP plans for neglect 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSCP Neglect steering group established Jan 23 and workgroups in place Neglect delivery plan co-developed GCP2 training being rolled out across partnership; also focus on EHA training Neglect Campaign is being produced with support of the NSPCC to raise further awareness, will include GCP2 video Neglect Scorecard will enable progress to be seen and monitored Work being completed to reduce repeat CP plans following a review completed in July 23 104 children had missing episodes In August, with 29% of these being repeat episodes in month. The rate was 42.5% last year. Children missing from care make up 65% of all missing episodes. This is a 5% reduction from last year when it was 70%. Serious Violence Duty focusing on Early Help Prevention and intervention Support. To include initiatives supporting the reduction of Child exploitation. Exploitation peer review completed, recommendations considered, and actions being taken forward via CE subgroup. Strategic partners progressing work to develop a multi-agency hub and new pathway for exploitation to be launched Dec 23

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 59</p>								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunity for multi-agency exploitation initiatives to be applied for • 2 Consultant Social Workers now embedded who specialise in exploitation – practitioners report positive impact in improving knowledge base, skill, expertise, and practice. Plans to increase these to 6 • Missing Children Steering Group working together on the Application of Children’s Society evaluation tool in regard to missing has led to identification of priorities areas that have been taken forward. Including impact of return home interviews. • Quality Assurance of RHI assessment undertaken and learning embedded in practice • Consideration of impact of serious violence duty • NCT represented on partnership DA and serious violence board and task and finish groups • CYP DA high-risk pathway review in progress • CFSS supporting the implementation of Reducing Parental Conflict information and training. • CPD offer for NCT staff includes Domestic homicide training delivered by NCT CP Chair, research in practice, making research count, NSCP training. Further advanced DV training for NCT being explored

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for exploitation is available developed by exploitation subgroup. Workshops with NCT staff arranged Oct 23. • Good practice example shared re: young person and his family moving out of the area together to keep the young person safe – family complimented the consultant social worker and all partners worked effectively in care planning. • Practice is generally improving and becoming more consistent.
<p>Children and families in need of additional help receive the right support at the right time which makes a difference to their lives</p>	<p>5.2 Further strengthen the partnership Early Help offer</p>		<p>Director of Social Care AD CFSS & YOS</p> <p>ICB Head of Safeguarding/ Designated Nurses representing health as a system</p> <p>WNC/ NNC Ads for Public Health Commissioning</p>	<p>Timescales as per NSCP Early Help action plan</p>	<p>Early Help Partnership Strategy and action plan</p> <p>CFSS Service Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased EHA submissions from schools, GPs and Health Visitors • Better outcomes for children evidenced in more families receiving help early from a range of professionals 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help Partnership Board in place • Early Help Improvement Strategy has been finished and signed off by all partners. Delivery plan developed in draft to agree operational leads. Next steps to focus on EH definition; process; embedding of EHAs in partnership practice; parenting (strategy to be developed) • Agreement made for WNC and NNC to produce local Early Help Strategies in line with EHPB improvement Strategy and Plan. • NNC in process of commissioning Early Parenting pilot for Family Hubs, CFSS contributing to the development and implementation of Family Hub network in NNC • WNC Youth Offer Development • YOS and Serious Violence Duty focusing on Early Help Prevention and intervention Support.

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-19 and edge of care needs assessments underway Aligning WNC and NNC SEND Strategies and plans to the Early Help Partnership Board Improvement plan.
Children with additional and complex needs receive the right support at the right time which makes a difference to their lives	<p>5.3 Appropriate and timely support for children with additional and complex needs</p> <p>Implement short breaks redesign</p> <p>Children with disabilities receive suitable education commensurate with their needs</p> <p>Local offer to meet the needs of children</p> <p>Every disabled child aged 14+ has a transition plan developed with their family</p> <p>Children have good quality EHCP informed by thorough assessments of need which are reviewed on an annual basis</p> <p>Appropriate treatment and support response for children who are addicted to substances</p> <p>Appropriate support and response for children who are exhibiting self-injurious behaviour, suicide ideation, disordered eating, gender dysphoria</p>						Amber	

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Page 62	Improve the consistency and quality of multi-agency decision making and ownership for children with complex needs to achieve positive outcomes for children		NCT AD QA & Commissioning; ICB Senior Transformation Manager WNC/ NNC ADS Commissioning AD Corporate Parenting WNC and NNC ADS Adults Social Care WNC and NNC ADS Education Director of Social Care AD QA and Commissioning ICB Senior Transformation Manager WNC/ NNC AD Public Health Commissioning CYP Transformation Board Healthy Minds Healthy Brains pillar chair AD Corporate Parenting AD Safeguarding ICB Head of Safeguarding/ Designated Nurses Ivan Balhatchet – Crime & Justice NPCC Lead	Mar 24	West and North SEND Strategies and action plans CYP Transformation Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in the number of children with disabilities who become looked after and/ or require acute care EHCP and EHC reviews shared in a timely manner with child/ families and considered by professionals involved with the child Pathway for accessing substance misuse, emotional well-being and mental health support is understood by all Swift access to appropriate support for children and support plan developed with family, network, and professionals Multi agency QA activity (via NSCP Q&G subgroup) shows multi agency case discussions are used appropriately and have positive impact 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short breaks 6-week NCT and ICB public engagement currently in progress; on track for redesigned service to be in place by Apr 24 Development of moving into adulthood strategy Strong practice in regard to transitions in disabled children's team – actions to embed this across all services Combating Drug Partnership Forum now live, NCT active participant Draft guidance and S117 pathway has been developed MDT model in place. Close working relationships with ICB Continuing Care Team in place meaning timely assessments and joint health/ social care funded packages of care for children with disabilities and complex health needs are in place. Short Breaks Panel has multi-agency representation including ICB, SEND Commissioning and adults' social care. This has led to greater understanding of children's needs, more timely responses from different agencies, informed commissioning, and reduced number of requests for residential short breaks due to needs being met through community-based support packages.
			Sept 23	CYP transformation programme NCT Service Plans				

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Children in care and care leavers reach their potential in terms of educational attainment	<p>5.4 Increase access and attendance of small number of children in care currently not in appropriate education</p> <p>Increase sufficiency and quality of in county special school and alternative educational provision</p> <p>Care/Education pathway to be developed for children entering care and when moving placement to ensure that education needs are considered in timely way, prior to and immediately after children become looked after and moving placements</p> <p>Develop range of education, training, and employment opportunities for post 16 children in care with additional needs, and care leavers</p> <p>Assessments for specific needs e.g., ASD/ADHD and SEND needs assessments are available to children in care and undertaken in a timely way</p>		<p>Director of Social Care AD Corporate Parenting</p> <p>NNC & WNC ADs for Education & for Commissioning</p> <p>Head of Virtual School</p> <p>ICB Senior Transformation Manager</p>	Sept 23	<p>Children in Care Strategy</p> <p>NCT Service Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce length time in which any child in care is not in receipt of appropriate education Maintain at national average % of young people in care achieving 5 GCSE grade A*-C Maintain above national average care leavers who are EET Increase in numbers of apprenticeships, traineeships and employment opportunities for care leavers within NCT, NNC, WNC and partner agencies 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings in place for strategic leads in education, Virtual School, and Social Care Draft tracker developed within Virtual School to track children's education provision and individual progress 63.3% care leavers in education, employment, and training Aug 23. This is consistently above the national average. Care leaver considered protected characteristic with ring fenced interview process in place for care leavers applying for jobs within NCT/WNC/NCT Engagement with local businesses at event hosted by NCT has led to offers of apprenticeship for care leavers Paid work experience for 2 care leavers in place through Valuing Care project

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

6. Effective use of resources

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
NCT commissioning and performance management has the best possible impact on outcomes for children	6.1 External review of commissioning and QA, performance management and assurance arrangements	2	NCT Chief Exec	May 23	QAB action log	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive outcomes and value for money achieved 	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Recommendations considered and shared with councils through realignment report.
Children in care are cared for in a home which meets their needs and improves their outcomes	<p>6.2 Deliver sufficiency strategy action plan ensuring we have the right homes to meet the needs of our children and young people</p> <p>Children and young people who live within residential care are provided with homes that are registered with a regulator appropriate for their needs</p> <p>Ensure cost of care is met appropriately</p> <p>Our ISA providers are registered with Ofsted (post 1st April 2023)</p>		<p>Director of Social Care AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning AD Corporate Parenting NNC/WNC DCS NCT CEX</p>	Aug 25 (project timescales in sufficiency strategy action plan)	Sufficiency Strategy and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in number of in house foster placements Increase in occupancy of in-house residential homes Reduction in use of unregistered provision Improved placement stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline 3+ moves in 12 months: 11% Baseline same placement 2+ years / placed for adoption: 64.1% Placement funding contributions are in line with other areas 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership in place with Sanctuary to recruit resilience foster carers Engagement with IFA/Residential/ISA partners through Circle to Success project is taking place. Early days in terms of outcomes but positive discussion in relation to recruitment initiatives for foster homes for children with disabilities has taken place 2 new emergency children's home have opened and have had an impact on the use of unregistered placements. New children's home for children with complex needs including mental health issues will open in November 2023. Additional external emergency foster carer secured and commissioning in progress to secure more emergency and short-term carers YMCA training flats for care leavers due to open summer 24 Support to ISAs and unregistered placements re Ofsted registration Unregistered placements reduced from 22 in Apr 23 to 16 in Oct 23

Appendix 2 – Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Improvement Plan (cont)

What will good look like	Improvement Priorities	ILACS action ref*	Responsibility	By when	Linked plans	How will we know if we've made a difference? (Baselines Jan 23)	RAG	Progress Update
Older teenagers receive the right support and accommodation to meet their needs and help transition into adulthood	<p>6.3 Appropriate range of accommodation and support is available and meet the needs of young people 16-25 years old</p> <p>Work in partnership with Housing Needs to support accommodation requirements of 16/17 Youth Homelessness</p> <p>Views of young people who have experienced the Housing protocol to inform further developments and plans</p> <p>Housing support offer for care leavers 18+ and ensure any gaps in provision have actions to address</p>		<p>NNC/WNC DCSS</p> <p>Director of Social Care</p> <p>WNC and NNC Housing Ads</p> <p>AD CFSS & YOS</p> <p>AD Corporate Parenting</p> <p>AD QA& Commissioning</p>	Sept 23	<p>16-17 homeless action plan</p> <p>NCT Service Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QA activity shows Care leavers are able to move into their own suitable accommodation at time that meets their needs 16-17 homeless young people receive an appropriate and timely response in accordance with their needs and views 	Amber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback from DHULC visit 19/4/23 re 16-17 homeless action plan progress 16/17-year-old protocol embedded Information sharing agreement in place Improvements in shared dataset Joint needs assessment and commissioning strategy in progress NCT/NNC/WNC identifying potential properties to support 16-17 homeless Multi agency QA tool developed for 16-17 homeless QA work being undertaken and further joint meeting to ensure robust communication pathways in times of crisis.

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Appendix 1 – Northamptonshire ILACS October 2022 action references

Ref. no.	ILACS actions – what needs to improve	North/ West
1.	The effectiveness of how managers support social workers to ensure that assessments and plans are focused on children's experiences and progress.	North and West
	The development of clear and effective systems, together with increased management oversight, to improve the overall quality of practice in areas such as the use of unregistered children's homes, children at risk of exploitation and those who go missing from home and care, children who experience chronic neglect and domestic violence, and confirmation of permanence plans for children in care.	North and West
	The effectiveness of planning when children come into care.	North and West
	The quality of direct work to ascertain children's views about their experiences, and life-story work for all children in care to help them to understand their care history.	North and West

Appendix 3 – Trust Board Members

The Trust Board comprises of directors and Non-Executive Directors. The Executive Directors are responsible for running the organisation and for making sure that it delivers on its statutory obligations. They are also responsible for making sure that the Trust performs at the

highest possible level – offering the best possible services to children, young people, and families within Northamptonshire. The Non-Executive Directors are appointed for their expertise and take part in decision making at Board meetings.



Julian Wooster, Chair to the Board

Julian grew up in West London. He has always had an interest in strengthening disadvantaged communities and his first degree was in urban planning. He joined the social work profession after volunteering in a drugs crisis rehab centre, starting as a social work assistant. He has been involved in the social work profession for 34 years.

He says that his toughest social work job was in the East End of London well before the redevelopment. He recalls the level of material poverty and violence: “the friendly East End by then no longer existed”. This was before the profession became specialist, so Julian worked with all need groups including carrying out mental health assessments: “my favourite role was that of a frontline team manager, where I learnt most about team work and about how I can support others by changing my approach”.

Julian has extensive senior managerial experience, 10 years a Director of Children’s Services in Somerset and Portsmouth, 8 years as deputy director in Hillingdon and Wandsworth and 3 years leading Cambridgeshire’s social work teams.

On a personal level he has three adult children and reflecting how families have become more dispersed his eldest son and grandchildren are permanently resident in the USA, his daughter is in Liverpool and he has a brother in New Zealand. He relaxes by enjoying the natural environment, including through photography.

Appendix 3 – Trust Board Members

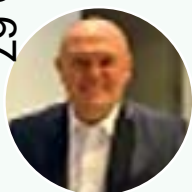


Colin Foster, CEX of Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Colin is an experienced Director of Children's Services and has 18 years public sector experience in Children's Services. In Nov 2023 Colin will have been at NCT for 3 years. Before this he changed career from commercial management where he undertook a number of roles in the UK, USA, Europe and then Asia. He was inspired whilst doing voluntary work in Asia and the UK, when he decided to commit his career to helping children and then qualified to MA level. Colin has a proven track record in improving Children's Services and gets up in the morning to make a sustainable difference to the lives of children, young people and families through enabling colleagues and ensuring delivery of the best possible services. He asks everyone in the Trust to do the best job of their life, every single day, because children, young people and families deserve nothing less.

Colin has two teenage children who keep him busy at home and is volunteer football coach in the community and has been doing that for over 10 years which is very rewarding. He has enjoyed working with the players and he says it has been great to watch them grow and develop their skills since they were 5 years old.

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Andrew Tagg, Director of Finance & Resources

Andrew joins the Trust with over 30 years' experience within Local Government holding a number of senior management roles. Previously he was the Bi- Borough Children's Services Director of Operations and Programmes for Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea and was part of the team that created the innovative Tri-Borough children's services model.

Within the Trust he provides financial expertise and leads the Trust's strategic operations and business planning processes through the management of a range of support services.

Andrew is passionate about developing high quality, efficient and effective services for children, young people and their families and maximising the use of resources.

Appendix 3 – Trust Board Members



Cornelia Andrecut, Director of Children’s Social care

Cornelia’s particular strength is her drive for improvement and the ability to create the conditions for high aspiration, high performance and a highly effective working environment. Cornelia is very passionate about improving outcomes for children and families and has contributed to better children’s services in Northamptonshire; initially as an Improvement Director for Lincolnshire County Council and the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance, prior to joining Northamptonshire on a permanent basis. Having extensive leadership experience in public services, which includes social care, early help and the integration of Public Health into the Local Authority, Cornelia is both a qualified nurse and a registered social worker. Cornelia brings a ‘can do’ attitude and approach to everything she does and is determined to use her energy and passion to continue improving outcomes for children and families in Northamptonshire Children’s Trust.

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Lou Williams, Independent Director

Lou Williams is a qualified social worker with over 30 years’ experience of working in children’s services in London, Essex, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, most recently as Director of Children’s Services across both Peterborough City and Cambridgeshire County Councils. Lou’s areas of expertise include strategic leadership in delivering services that enable children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes on a sustainable basis. Lou oversaw implementation of this model as Director of Children’s Services in both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Lou is also currently supporting the improvement programmes in three local authorities, two as an Improvement Adviser appointed by the Department for Education.



Rebecca Purnell, Council Nominated Director

Rebecca is Assistant Chief Exec for West Northants. Rebecca has previously held senior leadership roles for the London Borough of Sutton, Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames and Milton Keynes Council, leading on areas including digital, transformation, customer service and statutory children’s complaints. Rebecca is a Northamptonshire resident and is passionate about transforming local public services. Rebecca will be working with the Trust Board to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Appendix 3 – Trust Board Members



Joshua Imuere, Council Nominated Director

Joshua is an experienced charity chief executive who has directed successful transformation programmes across the UK, in order to strengthen the voice of underrepresented groups and forge perennial alliances; recovering charities from risk of closure, re-aligning their core purpose and embedding the right operational systems for sustainability. Over the last 17 years he has developed expertise in change management, informal education, place-based approaches, and youth leadership, using them at the helm of youth charities such as Art Against Knives and SYLA, both of which he substantially grew in terms of their reach and scale. Joshua is the vice chair of the Practice, Performance and Quality committee and represents the Trust at the West Northants Corporate Parenting Board.

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Samantha Fitzgerald, Council Nominated Director

Samantha is the Assistant Director for Adult Services in North Northamptonshire's Adult, Communities and Wellbeing Directorate. She is a registered Social Worker and has worked in adult services for over 23 years, both as a practitioner and manager. She has experience of working within Mental Health, Health Partnerships and wider Adult Social Care. Her roles to date have involved working closely with other statutory partners and the voluntary sector to improve outcomes for adults in Northamptonshire.



Darren Hickman, Council Nominated Director

Darren is a qualified accountant and worked in banking for 37 years, where he held a variety of senior executive positions including operational management, marketing, IT, and change management. Whilst working for the bank he undertook several non-executive and pension trustee roles. After finishing his full-time career, he has continued to focus on non-executive and board advisory roles. In addition to the role with the Children's Trust, he currently holds positions on an Integrated Care Board for the NHS and a Local Building Society. He is very committed to using his skills to assist the Trust deliver enhanced children's services in Northamptonshire.

Appendix 3 – Trust Board Members



Colin Cross, Independent Director

Colin brings over 30 years of experience of leading service delivery organisations serving clients in the public and private sector, both nationally and overseas.

He has worked for major international companies such as IBM and Capgemini, drawing upon his financial management, service delivery, operational improvement and strategic planning expertise to help improve the lives of Northamptonshire's children and young people. Colin is Vice-Chair of the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee, a member of the Practice, Performance and Quality Assurance Committee and represents the Trust on the Youth Offending Service Management Board. Colin lives on the Northants/Bucks border and is married with two grown-up children. He has a keen interest in sport and travel.

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John O'Brien, Independent Director

John is chair of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board, working closely with health, local government and wider parties. He served as Chief Executive of London Councils – the organisation that supports the 33 London local authorities – between 2007 and 2021, working closely with elected members, senior officers and a range of partners across London, including health, police, business, the voluntary and community sector and Transport for London. He previously worked in central government at the former DCLG, in the private sector, within local government directly and on behalf of the sector at the IDeA and LGA.

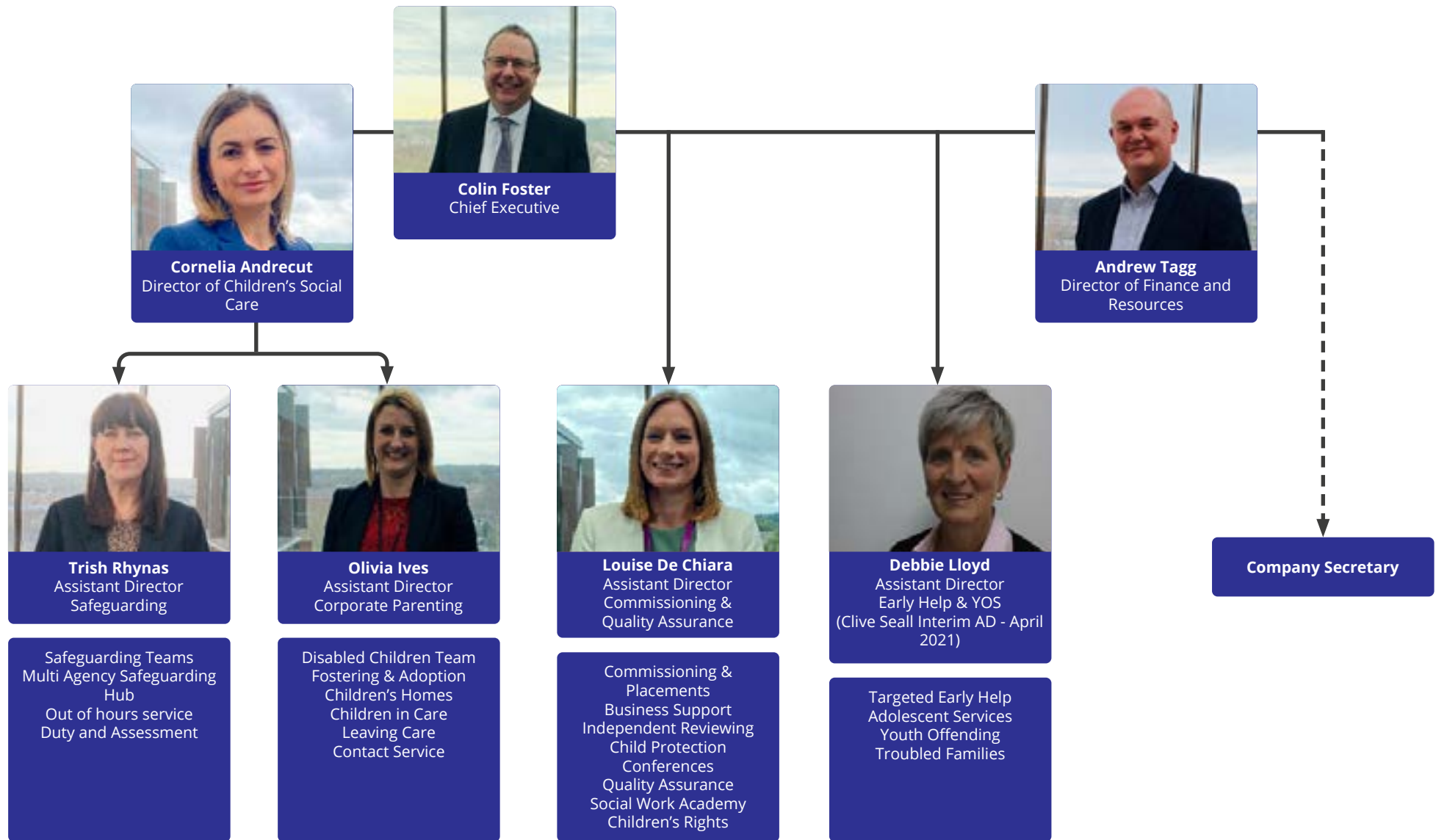


Hilary Daniels, Independent Director

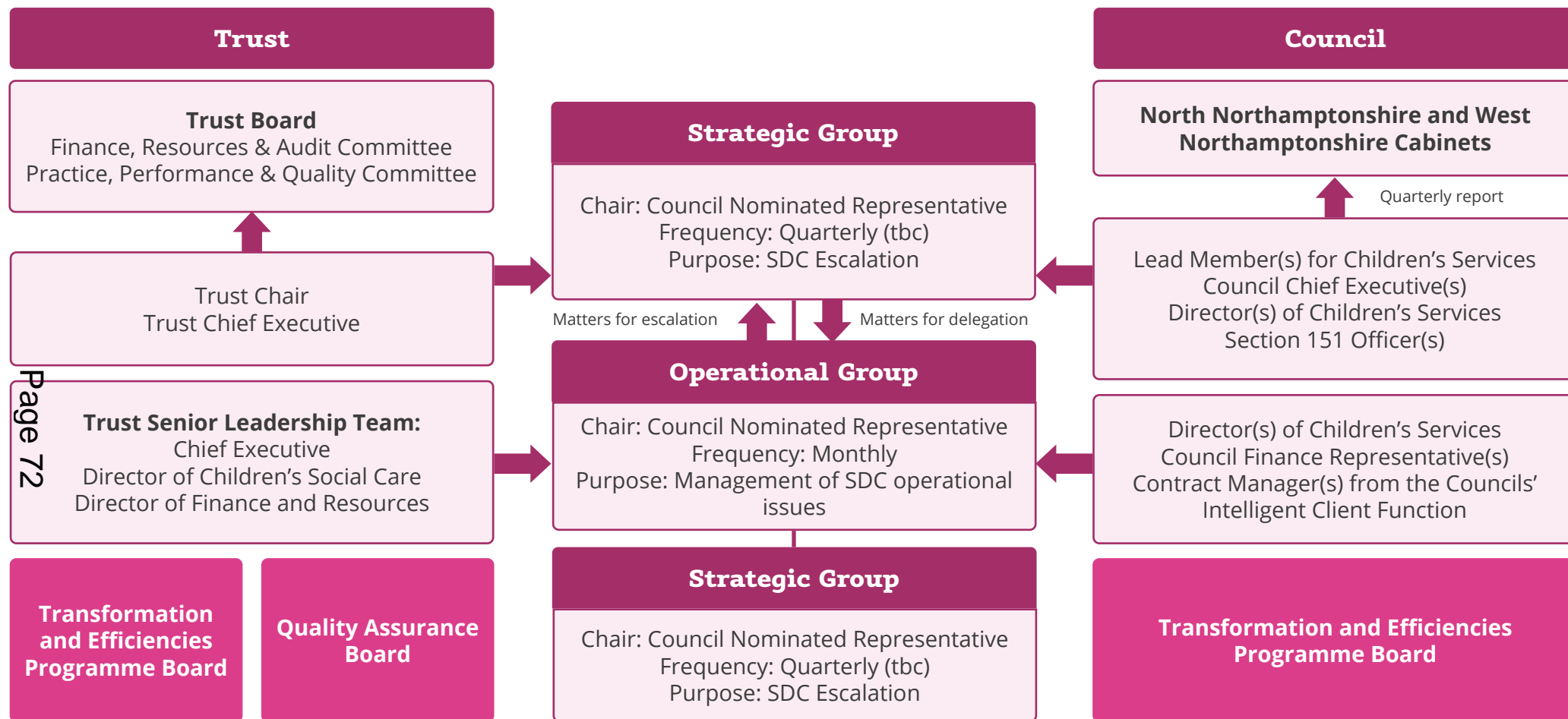
Hilary is a qualified accountant who has worked as a Director of Finance in Local Government and as a Finance Director and Chief Executive in the NHS, where she both commissioned and managed significant provider services including CAMHS and other children's services. She is an experienced Non-Executive Director, usually taking finance, audit and governance leads. Hilary is the chair of the Finance, Resources and Audit committee and represents the Trust on the Virtual School Advisory Panel. Hilary has lived in Northamptonshire for 25 years and is passionate about providing quality services. A keen gardener, Hilary also enjoys walking in the local countryside. She is a bell ringer, and over the last few years has enjoyed teaching others to do so.

Appendix 4 – Trust Executive Management Structure

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Appendix 5 – Governance arrangements



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Strategic Partner engagement
Northamptonshire Children's Safeguarding Partnership Board; MASH Strategic Group and MASH Partnership Meeting; Northamptonshire Health Care Partnership Strategic Executive and NHCP Partnership Board; Northamptonshire Integrated Care System (ICS); Health and Wellbeing Board; Northamptonshire's Disabled Children and Young People's Delivery Group; Community Safety Board/Partnership; Youth Offending Board; Local Family Justice Board; Corporate Parenting Board; East Midlands Regional DCS Meeting and sub-groups.

Appendix 6 – Contractual Key Performance Indicators

At the time of writing the targets are still being discussed, the table below shows the last complete year of data available which is 2022/23.

	KPI	Year end 2022/23 Performance
KPI 1	Percentage of all referrals with a decision within 2 working days	68%
KPI 2	Percentage of referrals with a previous referral within 12 months	29%
KPI 3	Percentage of Single Assessments authorised within 45 working days	94%
KPI 4	Percentage of Single Assessments closing with no further action	36%
KPI 5	Percentage of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 days of a strategy discussion being initiated	60%
KPI 6	Percentage of children that became the subject of a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time	30%
KPI 7	Children who have been in care 2.5 years or more, and of those, who have been in the same placement for 2+ years/ placed for adoption (%)	65%
KPI 8	Percentage of Children in Care with three or more placements in the previous 12 months	11%
KPI 9	Percentage of young people now aged 17-21 and in employment, education or training who were looked after when aged 16	63%
KPI 10	Percentage of young people now aged 17-21 and living in suitable accommodation who were looked after when aged 16	95%
KPI 11	Percentage of qualified social workers with caseloads above target	17%

Appendix 6 – Contractual Key Performance Indicators (cont)

	KPI	Year end 2022/23 Performance
KPI 12	% of children placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside LA boundary	20%
KPI 13	Percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 working days.	63%
KPI 14	Stage 2 investigations as a % of stage 1 complaints received within the year	7%
KPI 15	budget % variances (forecast to budget)	16%
KPI 16	Percentage of social worker vacancies	18%
KPI 17	Percentage of Social Worker posts filled with agency staff	120%
KPI 18	Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and deciding on a match	120
KPI 19	Percentage of children in care who were placed for adoption within 12 months of an agency decision that they should be adopted	86%
KPI 20	Numbers of data breaches reported or self-reported to the ICO per quarter	1
KPI 21	Percentage of children leaving care due to permanence (Special Guardianship Order, adoption, residence order)	19%

Appendix 7 - Projected Profit and Loss Account

Budget Description	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Initial Contract Sum	150.938	177.429	181.944
Inflation (note 1)	-	-	-
Staffing	3.037	3.289	2.815
Placements note (2)	4.781	3.400	3.255
Other	1.903	1.653	1.357
Total Inflation	9.721	8.342	7.427
Demand led Pressures	-	-	-
Staffing	1.924	0	0
Placements	22.946	2.550	1.702
Other (note 3)	0.945	0.307	0.217
Total Demand	25.815	2.857	1.919
Less Savings	(9.045)	(6.684)	(5.326)
Net Contract Sum	177.429	181.944	185.964

Budget Description	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Service Improvement (Note 4)	2.580	0.268	0.241
Transformation (Note 5)	3.291	TBC	TBC
Total Savings/Transformation	183.300	182.212	186.205

Note 1: Individual inflation factors are detailed in the medium term financial strategy. These will be subject to review and tracked against RPI, CPI and pay announcements.

Note 2: Agreement that the financial payment mechanism in the contract will be amended such that if actual demand exceeds the forecast then this will be dealt with via a contract variation agreed via the Operational Commissioning Group.

Note 3: Additional demand for children in care placements, legal provision of transport and support services.

Note 4: Additional investment to support transformation and Improve services (Circle to Success, Additional Social work capacity and Practice model) – Subject to annual review

Note 5: Transformation reserve subject to business cases and annual review

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
Corporate Risk																			
CR 01	01/04/2021	Chief Executive	Long term sustainability	Stakeholder engagement - unitarities and other strategic partners Many of the KPIs are dependent on good partnership working with North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire and other agencies including Health (PEPS, educational outcomes, health outcomes, missing from care)	Poorly defined shared objectives Collaborative advantage for working together not clearly defined Policy changes within local authority and / or partner organisations Partnership initiative is incompatible / does not align with other local initiatives	Performance targets are not met.No strategic approach to issues of risks, costs, benefits.	2	5	10	1. Clear vision and conditions for success developed and shared with all partners and colleagues 2. Children's Trust business plan strategy with clear priorities 3. Development of strong relationships with both councils and partner organisations	1. Consultation with staff through 58 minute sessions and additional forums 2. Children's Trust strategy in development through the forums above - complete 3. Member engagement sessions 4. Operational and Strategic commissioning groups have developed well with appropriate resources	2	5	10	Maintain strong relationships with workforce, owners and partners	2	5	10	
CR 02	01/04/2021	Chief Executive	Quality of services / contractual	Service Delivery Contract: A persistent breach in the provision of the Services persisting for one or more Quarters during the term of the Agreement; Monthly KPI falls outside of Tolerance for three (3) consecutive Months; Quarterly KPI, falls of Tolerance for two (2) consecutive Quarters or more	Insufficient progress made against planned improvements and performance indicators	Step In Notice	2	4	8	1. Regular monitoring against contractual KPIs 2. Improved reporting through OCG and SCG 3. Improvements in Business Intelligence and demand forecasting	1. Baselines agreed, together with reporting templates 2. ILACS Inspection "Requires Improvement" 3. Key focus on local and national demand pressures post covid and during cost of living crisis 4. Delivered 12 month leadership development programme for all NCT leaders	2	4	8	1. Improved business intelligence systems. 2. Continued focus on permanent recruitment 3. Social Care Improvement Board 4. Increased workforce training	2	4	8	
Social Care Risks																			
SCR 01	01/04/2021	Director of Children's Social Care	Quality of services / contractual	An emergency occurs that has: - a significant adverse impact on the welfare of, and there is a serious increased risk of harm to, children and/or young people in the county of Northamptonshire; or - has a material adverse effect on the Trust of the Services such that there is, or will be, a long-term increased risk of harm to children and young people in the Northamptonshire if the Trust continues to perform the Services	Business continuity failure in critical services Death or injury to a child or young person under the responsibility of the Trust, through inappropriate care or attention	Step in notice Child Safeguarding Practice Review	2	5	10	1. Regular quality assurance and audit activity along with management supervision and oversight to identify and address any risks in relation to practice	1. There are no cases currently where concerns of this type have been identified	2	5	10	N/A	2	5	10	
SCR 02	01/04/2021	Director of Children's Social Care	Inspection / Regulatory	Improvements seen by Ofsted in the ILACS 2022 are not sustained or built on.	Failure to improve services for children	Failure to maintain and build on improvements results in difficulty with future recruitment and retention and have negative impact on outcomes for children, and reputational risk	2	5	10	1. Effective leadership and oversight to ensure services are operated at an effective level 2. Monthly Improvement Board to monitor progress 3. Peer review of SEF summer 2022	1. Ofsted ILACS recognised progress and NCT status is now "Requires Improvement" 2. Updated Improvement Plan currently in Draft Form including input from partners and will be reviewed at the March Social care Board	2	4	8	1. Updated improvement plan to be sent to Improvement Board	2	3	6	
SCR 03	01/04/2021	Director of Children's Social Care	Service delivery	Ongoing impact of Covid-19 on service demand and related budget pressures	Insufficient apportionment of national monies to cover incurred Covid-19 related Trust costs. Additional financial pressure on the Council. Covid-19 affecting staff members / foster carers / residential homes	Service delivery constrained - reduced service provision; workforce reduction. Need to find additional funding for services. Some non-essential services may be affected.	3	5	15	1. Baseline report produced detailing Trust position as at 1st November. 2. Continuation of targeted funding for additional SW capacity, early help and fostering 3. Placement and performance monitoring in place"	1. Increase in pressure and complexity with particular impact on certain service areas 2. Weekly demand level report showing pressure on placements budget. 3. Early warning systems in place alongside analysis of patterns and trends	4	4	16	Monitoring impact, potential impact on service demands post March. Additional request for additional funding through contract as part of Invest to save.	2	5	10	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
SCR 04	09/05/2022	Director of Children's social care	Service delivery	Increase in safeguarding referrals and complexity of need leading to an increase in numbers of children in care	Impact of Covid 19 pandemic, combined with legacy of unmet needs and underdeveloped early help offer.	Impact on capacity to manage the workload and to deliver quality services potential impact on budgets and placement cost alongside complexity of young people needs to be met	3	3	9	1. early help steering group and action plan and ongoing work with the wider partnership to ensure right help at the right time and reduce escalation of needs 2. system approach to ensure appropriate levels of intervention for families 3. continue to improve quality of services and ensure sustainable plans at closure	1. Increase in demand and complexity as the effects of the pandemic are more prevalent. 2. Increase in separated children and fewer children leaving care over the last year. Therefore, increase in children in care and placement challenges adding to capacity issues and budget pressures.	3	4	12	ICS engagement to address system challenges Safeguarding partners working collectively on priorities, one being early help Neglect steering group to develop action plan and monitor impact	3	3	9	
SCR 05	09/05/2022	Director of Children's social care	Service delivery	Unregistered placements that are illegal	THE CARE PLANNING, PLACEMENT & CARE REVIEW (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2021 came into force on 9 September 2021 - demands that Looked after children under the age of 16 must be placed in foster care or a registered children's home The Statutory guidance published in April 2023, supported accommodation is a provision for young people aged 16 and 17 years-old who have been placed by a Local Authority and require support. Placements with unregistered providers for supported accommodation for 16 and 17 years old will become illegal from 28th of October 2023	risk of prosecution/ judicial review/ insurance/ reputational/ Ofsted inspection unintended impact where we see regulated providers that refuse complex cases as they may negatively impact their Ofsted rating and increase in solo placements There will be providers deciding not to register and only offer 18+ accommodation, impacting on sufficiency. This also means that any 16 and 17 year olds placed in these provisions after the 28th of October will need to be moved to a registered provision.	4	5	20	Unregulated placement is made only when no other alternative is available. Decision at AD/ Director level. Checks prior and after the placement is made ensuring risks are mitigated and the needs of the young person are understood. All unregulated placements are monitored on a weekly basis by senior managers to ensure all children living in unregistered children's home placements are safe and children's needs are met, and that timely action is taking place to secure a registered placement that meets their needs or so that they can safely return home. Fortnightly reports to councils/ DCS and ICF. Regular reporting to Ofsted is in place. We report to our Social Care Improvement Board and OCG on a monthly basis. Quality assurance in regards to this area of work in place.	Unregistered placements procedure devised to ensure consistency. Senior management oversight and regular review. Learning from Ofsted inspection has been implemented. Reporting to council and Ofsted in place. Sufficiency strategy and action plan agreed. Work with our providers for 16 and 17 years-old to register and understand where they are in the process, and what support they require. Contingency planning in the event the providers make decision not to register and deemed in the child's best interest to look for alternative accommodation.	4	3	12	implementation of sufficiency action plan, implementation of capital investment and DfE bid. Implementation of valuing care project. Weekly meetings chaired by AD for QA and Commissioning involving services and commissioning team. Increase in quality assurance activity with focus on both compliance and outcomes	2	5	10	
SCR 06	01/04/2021	Director of Children's Social Care	Finance / service delivery	Challenges to the delivery of / withdrawal of the Troubled Families Programme	Government withdraw or significantly amends the terms of the Troubled Families Programme	Insufficient funding to sustain services funded by the Troubled Families Programme. Poor outcomes for young people. Increased costs, reputational risk.	2	4	8	1. Regular monitoring of troubled families (supporting families) attachment and PBR income	1. Attachment funding covers staffing and has been rolled forward by government for a further year to 21 / 22 2. Significant increase in successful claims for the final quarter of 20/21 financial year	1	4	4	1. A/D Early Help leading a piece of work to identify where further claims are possible 2. Closer interface with Business intelligence with dedicated resource 3. funding confirmed for future years	2	2	4	
SCR 07	01/04/2021	Director of Children's Social Care	Service delivery	Non recent child sexual exploitation connected cases	Victims coming forward, police investigation and criminal charges, identification of further victims and alleged perpetrators as investigation continues and made public	Serious harm experienced by a child/ young person, reputational, financial (litigation, insurance, additional resource requirements), HR	3	4	12	1. The Trust is managing the safeguarding aspects of the operation/ investigation in collaboration with safeguarding partners who together manage the communication strategy.	Police investigation completed and review of case files has also been undertaken. No indication of links to organised exploitation networks	3	4	12	1. Once report written and publication timeline confirmed then to develop a comms plan. 2. Additional resources agreed by the council to effectively manage existing work and any new referrals linked to the investigation 3. Communication plan managed by the Strategic Management Group, which is chaired by the DCS and includes representatives of the safeguarding partners	2	4	8	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
SCR 08	07/03/2023	Assistant Director CFSS & YOS	Service Delivery	YOS pending HMIP inspection.	Impact for the Children Trust if the YOS provision is considered not to be a strength.	Failure to achieve a successful outcome for inspections and decrease in positive outcomes for young people and families.	3	4	12	Regular inspection readiness Meetings Peer review undertaken Service Performance Data Clinics YJB action Plan performance monitoring QA Audit Controls - recent review of Custody support plans Data intelligence with Police and Partners to Target areas and themes. Scrutiny on Top ten re-offenders YOS Management Board, Assurance reporting, oversight and challenge.	Preparing to convene external scrutiny for inspection readiness preparing to undertake a full audit control of all policy and procedures to ensure updated and accessible to staff. Training Audit tracker Inspection folders in place Review Risk areas known Currently writing the new YJB plan setting out the priorities for the coming year which will further inform inspection readiness.	3	4	12	Continue to hold the inspection readiness meetings. Report all risks to YOS management Board NCT SLT Oversight	2	3	6	
FINANCE AND OPERATIONAL RISKS																			
	01/04/2021	Chief Executive/ Director of Finance and Resources	Service delivery	Manage budget within agreed contract sum	The inability of the Trust to break even leads to a 'breach of contract' as determined within the Financial Mechanism	Step-in notice	1	5	5	1.Regular monitoring of cash flow by Director of Finance 2. Regular monitoring of budget through SLT and Trust Board 3. Developing additional reporting and oversight to gain assurance of current financial position and projected demand. 4. Utilisation of the in year demand mechanisms within the financial mechanism	1. Cash flow position to be addressed through payment of additional funding relating to demand pressures. 2. Transformation and efficiency reporting in place 3. Outturn position agreed as at 31/3/2023 subject to final confirmation of external audit accounts sign off 4. Placement demand and costs increasing consistent with the picture across children's services both regionally and nationally. 5. Implementation of change control processes to respond to demand or legislative changes 6. Increasing challenges in the recruitment of social workers 7. Increasing legal costs	3	5	15	1. Review of Placement spend, though Joint Funding panels and procurement 2. Creation of local provision 3. Continued drive to recruit foster carers 4. Implementation of new ways of working as part of both IT and asset strategy within the trust 5. Implementation of projects in 2023/24.	1	5	5	
FOR 02	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Finance	The risk of cuts in the budget contributions of partner agencies following central budget cuts	Partner agency reduce / withhold supporting budget	Service delivery constrained - reduced service provision; workforce reduction	2	5	10	1. Regular meetings with funding partners to ensure clear sight of any proposed budget cuts 2. Successful bid for additional funding from DFE for improvement activities £469k	1. Submission of contract sum for period 2022 -2025 and provisional contract sum agreed in accordance with SDC 2. Monthly detailed financial monitoring in place, increasing challenges from inflation and demand pressures. 3. Incorporating Structural deficit in 2022/23 and 2023/24	3	5	15	1. Funding agreements in place for 22/23. 2. Process in place for change control in the 22/23 financial year to respond to Medium term pressures. 3. Finalising arrangements for the treatment of earmarked grants and reserves 4. Inflation pressures including pay inflation above the levels forecast in the contract sum, which will require a change control mechanism to be enacted	2	5	10	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Data closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
FOR 03	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Finance / service delivery	Increase in volume and the complexity of care required and increase in numbers of children in need of support adding to budget pressures.	Inaccurate prediction of service demand and Placement Sufficiency	Failure to achieve a successful outcome for inspections and decrease in positive outcomes for children, young people and families	3	5	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular monitoring of cases 2. Review commissioning arrangements and benchmarking for external placements 3. Joint funding arrangements with education and ICB 4. Development of placement sufficiency strategy 5. Implementation of Circle to Success 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased complexity of cases mirroring national picture 2. Review of placement budgets and partner contributions. Workshop held with councils to agree placement forecasting. 3. MARP panel developing, however challenges from partners as implementation of new arrangements for joint funding protocols 4. Increasing demand in placements and inflation costs 5. Increasing number of UASC6. Inflation levels above funding agreement within the 22/23 and 23/24 Contract Sum 7. 	4	5	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual pupil Monitoring systems in place re case numbers. 2. Improved placement sufficiency and planning, through capital investment 3. Trust workshop to develop placement sufficiency and the development of additional local provision 4. Review of Trust property and linking to the councils asset management strategy 5. submission of additional capital bids to develop local provision. 6. Placement modelling to inform contract sum negotiations as part of quarter 1 report , final position to be agreed on actuals. Retrospective change control to be implemented at year end. the funding has been agreed for the 22/23 financial year , a structural deficit exists for the 	2	5	10	
FOR 04	01/09/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Finance / service delivery	Increasing cost of commissioned services and placements as a result of uncontrollable external factors (i.e. Increased national insurance; changes in regulation; impact of Brexit and Covid on ability of providers to secure suitable workforce, failure of external placement market to meet needs)	Failure to secure services and placements to meet level of demand within budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reduced service provision for children and families leading to future increase in demand 2. not able to fulfil contractual requirements 3. Cost pressure 	3	4	12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commissioners working with providers to address workforce related issues 2. Re-opening of frameworks to increase number of providers and reviewing commissioning options 3. Identifying alternative service delivery models to commissioned services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Care and support providers experiencing challenges in securing suitable workforce 2. Reviewing provider contributions to placements and personal care and support; revised panel arrangements still to be finalised 3. DfE Capital bid submitted but not successful ;submitted to WNC and NNC capital programmes approved in November 22, project ongoing but significant delays to delivery 4. Implement actions from external review of placements commissioning and process 5. Further re-opening of frameworks in 2023 and early work on establishing partnership 	4	4	16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Join additional placement frameworks 2. Improve joint commissioning with adults services 3. Bring commissioned services in house if this is viable and will achieve better value for money 	2	4	8	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
FOR 05	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Finance / service delivery	Inability to deliver savings plans within contract sum	There have been additional cost burdens on Children's Services as a result of Covid-19. We have also postponed some transformation projects which were set to deliver savings and efficiencies for the Council	Failure to deliver savings and transformation projects leading to pressures on the contract sum and targeting resources on improving from line service delivery.	3	5	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of individual project delivery 2. Work with partners as a collaborative approach (i.e. CCG, housing). 3. Identify alternative savings and in year mitigations 4. Incorporate project management with SRO for each project. 5. Closer links with finance and corporate project management to establish co-dependencies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued review of budgets and demand as part of the contract sum 2024/25 2. Review benchmarking and demand forecasts , the position within NCT mirrors the demand experienced by other LA's 3. Implementation of forecasting and financial modelling tools and In year mitigations. 4. SRO in place for transformation project with regular reporting. 5. Risks around the delivery of the £3.8m Valuing Care project and the increase in joint funding contributions. Significant progress in this area and the delivery of savings 	5	5	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact factored into the development of the MTFs and contract sum 2. Residual pressures from the 22/23 financial year impacting on 23/24 forecast outturn 3. New monitoring and reporting system in place. 4. Continued review of savings delivery through Valuing Care Programme Board and Transformation and Efficiencies Board 	2	5	10	
FOR 06	01/07/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Information Governance	Data Breach. NCT processes and stores a high volume of sensitive information related to the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children and their families. Data breaches risk the integrity and availability of this information.	"Deliberate or accidental action (or inaction) by NCT as data controller or a data processor of NCT data. Access by an unauthorised third party. Sending personal data to an incorrect recipient. Computing devices containing personal data being lost or stolen. Alteration of personal data without permission. Loss of availability of personal data."	Reputational Harm. Financial penalty through ICO fines under GDPR. ICO audit and regulatory action due to reduced UK GDPR compliance. Harm or risk of harm to service users, their families, employees and 3rd parties due to data breach. Loss of systems functionality. Possible safeguarding impact to children from information loss, incorrect information recorded or inability to access data when decision making. Loss of NCT contract to deliver services.	4	5	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "1. IG Service established and DPO appointed. Data Protection and Cyber Security Essentials training is mandatory to all staff and is renewed annually. Data Protection policies and procedures are in place. Data breach reporting procedure is defined and communicated to workforce. Workforce report data breaches promptly and in line with policy. DPO report breaches meeting threshold to ICO within 72 hours deadline. Data breach protection policies and procedures reviewed as IG BAU. The DPO and SIRO work closely with workforce and SLT to ensure a Trust wide awareness of data protection responsibilities, that training is taken up and breaches are reported to DPO. NCT data protection compliance certification for ICO place. 2. Systems Data Protection Impact. New processes, systems, working methods, project programmes, software implementation, etc., are assessed for their data protection impact. 3. Unlawful Access to NCT Systems: Third party agencies and organisations provided with access to NCT systems within a NCT SLA, Commissioned Contract, other contract type or Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) for defined usage." 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "08/2022. Implementation of IG Framework Action Plan on hold due to additional workstream to address Leaving Care information access request backlog. 07/2022. New controls to authorise access to NCT systems and data for third-parties through an updated access request form has been completed. Trust wide communications through DPO and CEO to workforce advising of current issues, concerns and mandatory training requirements. DPO access for advice and guidance, data breach reporting procedure, training requirement and staff data protection responsibilities. DPO access to SLT and SMT. Data breach reporting and incident management process now responsibility of NCT following cancellation of SLA with WNC. Information Governance Board replaced with bi-weekly DPO meeting between NCT, NNC & WNC to discuss common data protection issues. 07/2022. NHS Data Security and protection Toolkit (DSPT) submitted and NCT assessed as Standards Met. ICO data protection and security assessment recorded good levels of compliance. of 53 compliance requirements 42 are fully met. Audit of NCT email accounts to establish non-NCT employee access to systems. ICO 1st quarter compliance self-assessment completed showing good levels of compliance (06/05/2022). 	4	4	12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> "1. Permanent recruitment of IG team and level of resource to be agreed 2. Training completions to be continually monitored to ensure levels of compliance are maintained. Additional training to be put in place specific to roles and service areas across workforce; direct target of staff not completed mandatory training. 3. Implementation of Information Governance and Data Protection Framework action plan." 	2	4	8	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Data closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
FOR 07	01/07/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Information Governance	Cyber security incident or issue. NCT processes and stores a high volume of sensitive information related to the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children and their families and its workforce through computer systems.	Cyber Attack - Security breaches or hacks of computer systems leading to data breach and loss of functionality from ransomware (malicious software) placed on systems. Successful phishing exercise, data leakage, hacking activities and insider (employee) threat. Cyber defences are not sufficiently robust because the IT environment is not maintained to the required standard of security and integrity.	Harm or risk of harm to service users, their families, employees and 3rd parties due to data breaches. Loss of systems functionality. Possible safeguarding impact to children due to inability to access information. Staff unable to make correct safeguarding decisions due to cyber security attacks.	4	3	12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Protection policies and procedures in place. 2. Data protection policies and procedures to be regularly reviewed . 3. Data Protection and Cyber Security Essentials training is mandatory to all staff and is taken up. 4. Procedure and process to report breaches meeting threshold to ICO. 5. Regular communications to workforce regarding adherence to policies and procedures. 6. Additional training and workshops offered to workforce on procedures and policy requirements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Protection policies and procedures are in place, either NCT owned or incorporated from NCC, WNC or NNC legacy documentation. 2. Review of data protection policies and procedures incorporated into Information Governance and Data Protection Framework Action Plan. Policies and procedures reviewed as IG BAU. Workstream to address Leaving Care access to information requests has impacted the implementation of the Framework Action Plan. 3. Uptake of Cyber Security and Data Protection training is 98.3% of NCT workforce as of 30/06/2022. There has been an increase in the reporting of data breaches since mandatory training course completion has improved. 4. DPO leads on assessing data breaches and reporting incidents that meet threshold to ICO through ICO online portal. 5. Trust wide communications through DPO and CEO to workforce advising of current issues, concerns and mandatory training requirements. DPO and IG Team accessible for advice and guidance on data breach reporting procedure, training requirement and staff data protection responsibilities. 	2	3	6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Protection policies and procedures to be reviewed and formatted to NCT brand. 2. Information Governance and Data Protection Framework Action Plan to be completed 3. Training completions to be reported as part of 2023/24 DSPT submission and monitored to ensure levels of compliance are maintained. 4. Additional training to be provided. 	2	2	4	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
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FOR 08	01/11/20	Director of Finance/ SLT	Staffing	High levels of permanent staff turnover	Less consistency of practice and increased levels of agency staff	Service delivery is hindered by staff recruitment and retention issues. An over reliance on interim social workers, that impacts the overcapacity and capability to deliver. Increased financial cost of interim staff. Inconsistency for families and potential for reduced outcome achievement. High caseloads due to vacancies	5	4	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Push permanent recruitment 2. Effective support for staff to mitigate high levels of attrition 3. Work in partnership with OPUS and community care as part of a strategic campaign 4. Develop reputation and offer for social workers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous review of arrangements to introduce permanent SW staff to the organisation and consideration of an alternative provider to further improve opportunities to recruit to permanent posts. 2. Work on promoting NCT through social media and partners continues. The focus is on Safeguarding (reflecting national pressure) roles. A new Community Care article and resources to be launched October 2023. 2. The pay award for 23/24 has been confirmed and communicated. 3. Participation in regional benchmarking social work deep dive study. Report due in September to consider pay, benefits, the role of agencies. 4. Implementation of regional Memorandum of Understanding for the employment of agency workers. 5. Outcome of government consultation on social care workforce due to report soon, this may have an immediate impact on the market depending on the outcome. 6. Continue to review offer for social workers as part of our recruitment and retention strategy. Series of virtual open evening for prospective locums, permanent staff and NQSW to join NCT. Opportunity to meet CEX and hear about NCT's service models, culture and selling points with contributions from service leads, Recruitment and Opus. 7. There has been significant activity relating to the recruitment of International Social Workers, after a number of cohorts joining we are reviewing the programme. 8. Continued use of managed teams to address increase in demand. 9. Recruitment workshops with NNC and WNC to consider joint action to promote recruitment and retention of social workers. 	5	4	20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing regular focus on permanent recruitment - performing well in a difficult market 2. Development of a strategic recruitment partnership - microsite for recruitment in place 3. Working with community care to promote the trust and utilise networks 4. Development of communication strategies including the use of social media platforms(Linked in and Twitter). Continued focus on alternative ideas for retention. Focus on hotspots across organisation continues. 	2	4	8	
FOR 09	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Contracts and Supplier resilience	Risk of weak supplier resilience	If there is a risk of weak supplier resilience, then there is the possibility of provider bankruptcies putting service continuity at risk.	A reputational risk of failing to meet the needs and expectations of our customers, members and politicians as well as legal implications for statutory services. Potentially increased costs through recommissioning are failure to identify an alternative provider	3	4	12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure service continuity plans are in place and annually reviewed for all strategic and priority contracts. 2. Increase frequency of monitoring of the provider, and use other indicators such as share value performance to help determine risk. 3. Monitoring Creditsafe alerts if the providers financial standing changes and rating drops to below 50%, Contract Managers to increase frequency of monitoring of the provider, and use other indicators such as share value performance to help determine risk 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of all contracts and providers 2. Exposure to financial risk (post covid) organisations have been funded at budget. 3. Impact on changing demands (Transport - continuation of home working/virtual meetings) 4. Premises rationalisation across all sectors 5. Supplier Workshops being undertaken and working with suppliers around Ofsted registration. 	2	4	8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to review supplier resilience as part of contracts review and commissioning strategy 2. Consideration of developing strategic partnership which would provide longer term stability of commissioning arrangements 3. Consideration of inflation related increase to commissioned services in with contract sum negotiations 	2	4	8	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
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FOR 010	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	IT Infrastructure	Implementation of new children's IT system 1/4/22 - RISK updated to Procurement and Implementation of new Children's IT system	Failure to implement the new IT system aligned to support practice improvement, improved reporting and integration with other systems > failure to engage with the service	1. System does not support practice and improved decision making and efficiencies . 2. Failure to integrate with other systems	3	4	12	1. Embed best practice into new system (e.g. Signs of Safety) 2. Ensure new system supports Ofsted Improvement Plans 3.Implementation supports Ofsted Improvement Plans. 4. Appropriate groups embedded in Trust through project but continued post programme 5. Enhance technical support and ongoing development	1. Engagement of Project lead for Children's Services 2. Governance structure now in place. 3. Budget agreed 4. Project risk register drafted 5. Procurement work has started 6. Provision of new system is scheduled to be before end of existing contract (Q4 24/25) which reduces the probability of the risk	4	4	8	1. Ensure programme is progressing to plan.	2	4	8	
FOR 011	01/04/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Service delivery	The Trust is dependent upon the Council(s) delivery of aligned services and of a number of support services	Reduced service delivery level by the Council(s) impacts the trust own performance	1. Performance targets are not met 2. Support services are not supporting the delivery of the trusts objectives	4	4	16	1. Development of KPIs that will support service delivery levels required by the Trust 2. Continued development of support services board , with focus on areas of poor performance 3. Development, implementations and review of SS board risk and issue log.	The Support Services Board has been in operation for 2 years and is receiving high quality monthly performance information and narrative around KPIs. The board reviews risk and issues monthly and records actions / commentary against areas of concern/underperformance. Where KPIs are either red or amber on two consecutive months a recovery plan is developed and presented to the board. SLA charges are currently under review for the next contract negotiation period (24/25) a series of workshops have been held during August and September focusing on SLA specifications, potential changes and any cost variations. Whilst overall the performance levels generally meet the expected levels, the Trust has developed and implemented a specific Support Services Board Risk and Issue log which captures situations (risks or issues) that fall outside of the KPIs. This is working effectively to capture risks and issues and to monitor mitigating actions The recent disaggregation of Transport is proving challenging since this wasn't previously a support service. We have been working with the ICF, Unitaries and Trust Transport hub to develop the SLA and confirm appropriate capacity within the Unitaries to meet needs.	2	4	8	1. Review potential impact on KPIs and service improvement delivery 2. Review alternative delivery models in partnership with the councils 3. A separate risk and issue register has been developed and is in place for Support Services. This enables recording of items relating to performance and affecting service delivery that are not picked up by existing KPIs 4) IT KPIs have been reviewed and agreed. 5) Transport SLA being developed following disaggregation. 6)a series of workshops have been held over August and September focusing any changes to specification within or changes to costs of SLA services. summary changes to be captured as processed as one bulk change request.	1	4	4	

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register			
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE				
FOR 012	01/08/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	IT on-going support	IT support for the Trust including access to systems	Failure to implement new functions in existing IT systems (e.g. CareFirst) results in NCT not being able to fulfil improvement and contractual requirements	1. Not able to support improvement plans 2. Not able to fulfil contractual requirements	3	4	12	1. Escalation with IT and also Eclipse programme board to gain buy in and support for this risk 2. Recruitment of IT relationship manager for the Trust 3. Review critical incident and business continuity	1. Escalated to IT and gained positive results. 2. New business relationship manager employed by IT and has had positive impact 3. Development in CareFirst started, but slow currently 4. Submission of business case for IT investment as part of the contract sum negotiations £1.5m IT investment (linked to risk 16) a d £0.3m for foster care system. 5. Work with DTI on digital strategy is underway 6. IT hardware requirements (laptops and kit) numbers developed for the next 4 year. Assumptions being aligned to West DTI and have feed into Capital requirement for 23/24 - roll out beginning with pilot June 23. 7. Rollout has begun, initially slowly to ensure not bumps. due to pick up pace in send half of the year.	3	4	12	1. CareFirst and other systems roadmap created to align with NCT priorities 2. Invest to save investment in technology to incorporate new ways of working 3. Continued engagement with IT relationship manager 4. Creation of a Trust Digital Strategy 5. Continue to work with WDTI on roll out of IT refresh programme	1	4	4

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
FOR 013	20/12/2021	Director of Finance and Resources	Property Infrastructure	The current level of repair across the properties occupied by the Trust is poor. Clarity of the working principles between the North and West with respect to rectification is causing delay and there are concerns around the availability of funding to rectify issues raised.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and Safety concerns/ event 2. Poor working conditions for staff 3. Staff safety concerns 4. Ability to provide services (children's centres and children's homes) " 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to provide a safe working environment for staff and customers 2. Ability to provide frontline services 	4	4	16	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Escalation to the Assistant Directors of Property (North and West) on 3rd December 2. Escalation to the Support Services Board 20th December 3. North/West to provide clarity on working arrangements as the service disaggregates, including confirmation around tracking and prioritising expenditure 4. Children's home report by Trust capturing high risk areas 5. Monthly SLA meetings to be put in place with N/W Unitaries 6. Progress to be reported to the Support Services Board 7. Trust undertook soft FM audit across sites to feed into tender of N and W contracts 8. Planned programme of works to be developed to address NCC underinvestment in properties 9. ICF tested with defining clear routes for accessing capital for both N and W - documented process with associated templates. 	<p>Following escalation to property ADs in North and West, engagement has continued to improve. Monthly operational and quarterly strategic SLA meetings are in place for the North and the West.</p> <p>The North and West fully disaggregated responsibilities on 31st January. The North have been responsive to queries raised and are bedding in their own processes post-split. SLA KPI performance in Q1 2023/24 show positive progress by the both North and West. Most significantly the planned programme for the North is now in place along with capital funding and works is about to begin.</p> <p>The West planned maintenance programme is in its second year and the Trust has provided some input on priorities noting the wider piece of work to review all Trust properties in line with the developing County asset utilisation strategy emerging from the West and North.</p> <p>Access to Capital Funding routes for in year projects has been very slow to progress with lack of clarity over the process resulting in stalled progress on key projects such as the Thornton House extension and more recently the play area renovations within Children's Centres. further delays in the delivery of planned maintenance works have also been slowed by processed in the North. Slowly these are becoming unblocked and the outlook is looking more positive in terms of speed of progress.</p>	2	4	8	<p>Establish a clear working process with the North and West Unitaries for the management and prioritisation of repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>Ensure the North and West are reporting on all agreed KPIs and that MI information requested by the Trust is provided monthly (spend and reactive jobs)</p> <p>Feed specific capital projects requests into contract setting process to ensure key projects are included within Unitary capital plans</p> <p>Joint N/W/Trust Asset utilisation working group chaired by ICF established since Feb 23, progressing well on identification of future accommodation requirements.</p> <p>Currently biggest gap is availability of space in Wellingborough for locality teams.</p>	1	4	4	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk No	Date Raised	Risk Owner	Risk Type	Risk Description	Event	Impact	Initial Risk Score			Mitigating Action	Current Position	Current Risk			Further Management Actions	Target Residual Risk			Date closed / transferred to Operational Risk Register
							Probability	Impact	SCORE			Probability	Impact	SCORE		Probability	Impact	SCORE	
FOR 014	25/04/2022	Director of Finance and Resource / AD CFSS and YOS	Financial Risk	YOS restructure plans rely on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner funding support. Recently this has been withdrawn for the year 21/22 which has placed a financial shortfall on the team budget. It is imperative that OPFCC provide ongoing funding via the Unitary Authorities to support the Prevent and Diversion from offending priority.	Clear funding arrangements with the unitary authorities needs to be clarified with longer term agreements. OPFCC need a direct reporting line to one unitary authority on behalf of both councils to be able to ensure good communication and payment responsibilities agreed.	Less staffing to deliver the preventative and Diversion element of YOS priorities to reduce the number of first time offenders. YOS are already a Priority one in this area for YJB therefore this would raise ongoing concerns.	4	3	12	1. Senior Managers aware, 2. Identified Unitary Council Lead, 3. Set up regular meetings to discuss financial agreements for the future.	New Finances have been provided by MoJ to aid the early help and prevention work supported by the YOS. This will be a positive position for the YOS staffing issues and managing demand work with partnership working. In addition YOS will be taking forward a service review on priority work from the Service Plan and utilise the current underspend that YOS have to support additional service developments. POCC have also finalised their yearly contribution and work is being done with commissioners to clarify ongoing yearly contribution, therefore the level of risk at this time is much lower. PERMISSION SOUGHT TO CLOSE RISK AT NCT BOARD 19-01-22	1	1	2	Review current Service Plan. New recruitment drive of fixed term staff. YOS management Board oversight of priorities strengthened.	1	1	2	
FOR 015	25/04/2022	Director of Finance and Resource / AD CFSS and YOS	Financial Risk	Supporting Families Changes to Outcome Framework to be implemented in October 2022, the Prescribed framework and guidance has made the reporting of successful PBR claims more challenging than previously. We will need much more partnership engagement to identify more families than last year. The changes to the framework also identifies health as a data provider which has not always been easy to achieve previously.	Data meetings with health are ongoing to ensure we can download what we need BIPI leading on Data warehouse work. Partnership engagement sessions to deliver the new framework so that everyone understands what is required going forward. Information sharing protocol understood and shared to all partners. Governance arrangements to be set out clearly to ensure priority plan delivery. Need to achieve 100% again this year for PBR	Reduced financial contribution from the DLUHC resulting in less staff employed to deliver the work. More scrutiny by DLUHC department and regional leads. More scrutiny in data performance and auditing of casework.	4	3	12	1. Senior managers aware of new Framework, 2. Steering Group aware, 3.New Governance arrangements developed. 4. Revise action plan and risk register.	1. Dates set for meetings with Health Data Leads and IS Governance 2. Police ISA for data sharing sign up. 3. New Early Help Strategic Partnership Board to oversee the SF Action Plan and EH System Guide Self-assessment	4	3	12	Health Lead and AD for CFSS to ensure Early Help Partnership Board hold this as a key priority. Also link with Family Hub delivery plans and ICB and place based delivery development groups for both west and North. DLUHC attending Early Help Partnership Board to discuss Early Help System Guide outcome and support our joint ownership to ensure successful delivery under the new outcome framework arrangements. System Changes have been identified to enable a more simplified process to evidence outcomes in	2	2	4	
FOR 016	07/01/2022	Director of Finance and Resources	Operational risk	There is a risk that the split of DTI services between NNC and WNC Councils will impact the SLA provided from WNC DTI to NCT. This is because the capability and capacity of service from WNC DTI could be impacted by this split.	Continued dialogue with WNC Chief Information Officer to provide assurance of no impact	Currently unknown	4	3	12	1. This is being raised with the CIO for WNC 2. A formal request for reassurance that SLA and other elements of IT services provided will not be impacted by this change	1. Raised with WNC CIO (July 2022). Reassurance received 2. Council assessment March 2023. Continue to monitor with regular meetings with IT Business Partner	2	3	6	Contractual escalation of risk if the impact threatens front line services. WDTI has confirmed that IT infrastructure is not going to disaggregate within the County	2	3	6	
FOR 017	10/01/2023	AD Quality Assurance & Commissioning	Operational and Financial risk	Redesign of short breaks - current services are unsustainable and not always meeting families' needs. Risk is that a suitable provider cannot be sourced, service redesign cannot be completed and costs remain high	Councils do not agree to NCT / NCT partner organisation delivery; no other viable providers/ non NHS providers not willing to take on NHS staff due to potential financial liabilities; have to continue with current provider at cost higher than budget	Risk to family breakdown and increase in children in care if service significantly changes/ withdrawn in unplanned manner; failure to meet statutory duties ;increase costs if have to continue with current provider; negative SEND inspection outcome	3	4	12	Specialist pension advice being sought; twin track planning NCT or NCT partner to deliver; project steering group in place; financial modelling	Service redesign and financial modelling agreed by WNC, NNC, NHFT, ICB Chief ExecsPublic engagement completed, chief Execs agreed 12 week public consultation not required ICB board requested further stage of consultation to be completed in conjunction with NPEFG over summer. NPEFG not available over summer so consultation delayed until October. Unlikely to make 1 Apr timescale for new service. Raised with agency chief Execs to agree contingency. Risk now to timescale	4	4	16	Reviewing models in other areas; consideration of what additional financial support could enable transfer to alternative provider. Working with NPEFG to deliver consultation to reduce likelihood of later challenge	3	3	9	

Appendix 8 – Strategic Risk Register (cont)

Risk likelihood

Probability	Definition	Score	Likelihood percentage
Almost Certain	Is almost certain to occur	5	95%
High	Is likely to occur	4	75%
Medium	Is as likely as not to occur	3	50%
Low	May occur	2	25%
Very Low	Unlikely to occur	1	5%

Definitions of risk impact classifications

Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
1	2	3	4	5
Annoyance but does not disrupt service Financial loss under £5000	Minor impact on service Financial loss between £5000 and £50,000	Disruption to service – causing some concern Financial loss between £51,000 and £250,000	Significant service disruption Financial loss between £250,000 and £1,000,000	Total failure of service for a significant period Financial loss in excess of £1,000,000
Isolated service user complaints Failure to achieve unit level objective	Service user complaints contained with directorate Failure to achieve several Team Plan objectives	Adverse local media coverage/significant number of service user complaints Failure to achieve a Service Plan objective	Adverse national media coverage Failure to achieve one or more Strategic Plan objectives	National adverse media coverage for more than 3 days. Possible resignation of chief/senior officer's Failure to achieve a strategic theme or major corporate objective in the Council's Strategic Plan
Slight injury to an employee/service user	Minor injury to service user/staff	Injury to staff/service user resulting in loss of working time guidance for managers	Serious injury/permanent disablement of one or more employees/service users	Fatality of employee, Service user or other stakeholder

Definitions of risk impact classifications

		Probability				
		Almost Certain	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Impact	Catastrophic	25	20	15	10	5
	Major	20	16	12	8	4
	Moderate	15	12	9	6	3
	Minor	10	8	6	4	2
	Insignificant	5	4	3	2	1



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Children’s Trust Joint Committee Tuesday 16th January 2024

Report Title	Northamptonshire Children’s Trust Contract Sum 2024/25 and MTFP
Report Author	<p>David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS) & Director of Children’s Services (DCS) (interim), NNC, David.watts@northnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children’s Services (acting), NNC, Rebecca.wilshire@westnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Richard Woodward, Head of Business & Performance (NNC)/Intelligent Client Function Programme Lead, richard.woodward@northnorthants.gov.uk</p>
Executive Member	<p>Cllr Fiona Baker – Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education, WNC</p> <p>Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills, NNC</p>

Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A - NCT Contract Sum Summary 2024_25
Appendix B – NCT MTFP 2024_25 – 2027_28

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. For the Children’s Trust Joint Committee to note the provisional 2024/25 contract sum and MTFP for Northamptonshire Children’s Trust (NCT).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The contractual agreements between NCT and the West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) give a deadline of 30th November in each year to agree a provisional contract sum for the following financial year. This is also the deadline for the NCT to submit their Business Plan to WNC and NNC for approval.
- 2.2 NCT submitted their Initial Contract sum for 2024/25 on 15th September 2023 as set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
- 2.3 A series of meetings between WNC, NNC and NCT were held.
- 2.4 Two further versions of the initial contract sum were provided by NCT on 1st November 2023 and 7th November 2023.
- 2.5 Meetings concluded on 21st November 2023 with the agreement of a proposed provisional contract sum to be submitted to Strategic Group for consideration.
- 2.6 The Provisional Contract Sum of £180.009m was agreed between the WNC, NNC and NCT at a meeting of the Strategic Group on the 28th November 2023.
- 2.7 The Provisional Contract Sum of £180.009m is made up of block 1 core funding (£177.429m) and block 2 transformation individual items (2.580m).
- 2.8 WNC and NNC have made provision for a block 3 transformation costs totalling £3.291m. Use of this funding will be subject to business cases being presented to and approved by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.
- 2.9 NCT's draft Business Plan was received in October 2023 and agreed by the Children's Trust Operational Group (OG) on 7th November 2023 and Children's Trust Strategic Group (Strategic Group) on 28th November 2023.
- 2.10 The Trusts MTFP was received on the 11th December 2023.
- 2.11 Cabinet in WNC and Executive at NNC received draft budget reports at their respective meetings in December 2023 which included details of NCT's 2024/25 Provisional Contract Sum.

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note the provisional contract sum for NCT for the 2024/25 financial year.
- b) Note NCT's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 – 2027/28.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations

- To set the budget for NCT for 2024/25

- To facilitate WNC and NNC's to set budgets for the 2024/25 financial year and to meet their duties to set balanced budgets.
- To allow WNC and NNC to build NCT's MTFP into their respective MTFP.
- To meet the requirements set out in the contractual agreements between NNC, WNC and NCT.

3.3 **Alternative Options Considered**

To take no action – This is not recommended as this will not allow the respective Councils to fulfil their responsibilities to set balanced budgets. The proposed recommendations are made to ensure NCT's future pressures and savings are built into the respective Councils MTFP and support NCT to deliver its approved Business Plan.

4. **Report Background**

- 4.1 North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) are committed to supporting Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) to deliver Children's Social Care and Targeted Early Help services across Northamptonshire. Both take their corporate parenting role very seriously and want to support children, young people and families to thrive in their community.
- 4.2 Children's Services in Northamptonshire were judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2019.
- 4.3 NCT was partially formed on 1st November 2020 and fully launched on 1st April 2021.
- 4.4 From 1st April 2021, after the abolition of Northamptonshire County Council, NNC and WNC became joint owners of NCT. Whilst NCT is operationally independent of NNC and WNC, the two Councils still retain significant control over NCT and are responsible for making decisions on several matters that are set out in the NCT's Articles of Association and Service Delivery Contract, which includes, agreeing a budget with NCT to allow it to deliver its approved Business Plan.
- 4.5 Ofsted conducted inspections of West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Local Authority Children's Services between 3rd-14th October 2022 and were both judged as "Requires improvement to be good".
- 4.6 The Strategic Group (a group that oversees the contractual agreements that includes Children's Services lead members, senior council officers and senior NCT officers) must meet to discuss and agree the Provisional Contract Sum by 30th November in each year. In agreeing the Provisional Contract Sum the parties should consider a range of factors such as inflation and demography, although these factors are without limitation.
- 4.7 Once the Strategic Group has agreed the Provisional Contract Sum, NNC, WNC and NCT must seek internal approval of the sum by the 15th January.

5. **Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The contractual agreements between NNC, WNC and NCT give a deadline of 30th November in each year to agree a Provisional Contract Sum for the following financial year. This is also the deadline for NCT to submit their Business Plan to the councils for approval.
- 5.2 NCT submitted their Initial Contract Sum on 15th September 2023 as set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
- 5.3 A series of meetings between WNC, NNC and NCT were held.
- 5.4 Two further versions of the Initial Contract Sum were provided by NCT on 1st November 2023 and 7th November 2023.
- 5.5 Meetings concluded on 21st November 2023 with the agreement of a proposed Provisional Contract Sum to be submitted to Strategic Group for consideration.
- 5.6 NCT's draft Business Plan was received in October 2023 and agreed by the Children's Trust Operational Group (OG) on 7th November 2023 and Children's Trust Strategic Group (Strategic Group) on 28th November 2023.
- 5.7 NCT's MTFP was received on the 11th December 2023.
- 5.8 The Provisional Contract Sum of £180.009m was agreed between NNC, WNC and at a meeting of the Strategic Group on the 28th November 2023.
- 5.9 Cabinet at WNC and Executive at NNC received draft budget reports at their respective meetings in December 2023 which included details of NCT's 2024/25 Provisional Contract Sum.

Provisional Contract Sum

- 5.10 As set out in the table below and in Appendix A the Provisional Contract Sum agreed between NNC, WNC and NCT for 2024/25 is £180.009m.

Area	NCT Contract Sum £m	Contract Sum Split	
		55.84%	44.16%
		WNC £m	NNC £m
23/24 Contract Sum	150.938	84.284	66.654
Total Revised Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 1 Core	177.429	99.076	78.353
Total Individual Items Block 2 Transformation Individual Items	2.580	1.441	1.139

Total Revised Contract Sum 24/25 - Blocks 1 Core & 2 Transformation Individual Items	180.009	100.517	79.492
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- 5.11 The Provisional Contract Sum of £180.009m is made up of block 1 core funding (£177.429m) and block 2 transformation individual items (2.580m).
- 5.12 Block 2 transformation individual items funding of £2.580m includes £2.363m which is non-recurring.
- 5.13 This is an increase of £29.071m from the current year, which is indicative of the national picture of rising costs of children’s social care, and a position that has been informed by the forecast outturn for this financial year.
- 5.14 This Provisional Contract Sum has been arrived at following robust challenge from NNC and WNC. It has taken into account a range of factors including the NCT’s Business Plan and key priorities, the resources available to NNC and WNC, demographic pressures, inflationary pressures and the savings to be delivered by the NCT.
- 5.15 NNC will contribute 44.16% of the contract sum and WNC 55.84% as per the disaggregation principles that were agreed as part of the creation of NCT.

Transformation

- 5.16 In addition to the provisional contract sum WNC, NNC and NCT have agreed on a broad transformation agenda.
- 5.17 Investment into transformation areas will be considered via robust business’s cases at the newly formed Transformation & Efficiencies Board.
- 5.18 WNC and NNC have made provision for a block 3 transformation costs totalling £3.291m. Use of this funding will be subject to business cases being presented to and approved by the Transformation and Efficiency Board.
- 5.19 Subject to the final agreed Terms of Reference for the Transformation & Efficiencies Board business cases will follow the following principles:
- Time limited resource, with estimated end dates and success triggers.
 - Quantifiable Benefits (i.e. payback periods, costs reduction assumption, management of a material operational risk (cost avoidance)).
 - Alternative options to be reviewed as part of each case and explained why discounted to get to recommendation.
 - All proposals must be considered against NCT's MTFP.

Savings Delivery

- 5.20 As part of the 2024/25 Provisional Contract Sum NCT have set out £9.045m of savings. Details of the savings are on the table below:

Service Area	Net Budget £k	2024-25 Savings £k	% of Net Budget	Green £k	Amber £k	Red £k
Staffing	49,732	45	0.01	45	0	0
Other <u>Non Staffing</u>	358	25	6.9	25	0	0
Placements	65,376	8,108	12.4	296	5,812	2,000
Contracts	5,001	100	1.9	100	0	0
Children's Homes	3,767	0	0	0	0	0
Legal	4,788	417	8.7	0	417	0
Adoption	7,776	0	0	0	0	0
Transport	2,870	0	0	0	0	0
Other Care	6,799	100	1.4	100	0	0
NCT Central	(762)	100	13.1	0	100	0
Support Services	5,233	150	2.8	0	150	0
Total	150,938	9,045	5.9	566	6,479	2,000

5.21 The proposed savings have been included in the provisional contract sum.

Medium Term Financial Plan

5.22 The Service Delivery Contract requires NCT to submit a 'future contract sum estimate' (MTFP) as part of setting the contract sum each year.

5.23 NCT's MTFP was received on the 11th December 2023 and is contained in Appendix B.

6. Next Steps

6.1 The Children's Trust Joint Committee is asked to note the NCT's Provisional Contract Sum for the 2024/25 financial year and MTFP for 2024/25 - 2027. It should be noted that this will become part of both Councils' budget and will be subject to the approval and scrutiny processes of each Council.

6.2 NCT's Provisional Contract Sum for the 2024/25 financial year will be taken to NNC's full Council on the 22nd February 2024.

6.3 NCT's Provisional Contract Sum for the 2024/25 financial year will be taken to WNC's full Council on 22nd February 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1.1 Resources and Financial

7.1.2 Once the provisional contract sum is approved, this will form a part of NNC and WNC's draft budgets for the next financial year. This means it will be subject to the governance and scrutiny processes each Council has in place for its budget setting process.

- 7.1.3 When NCT was being developed, detailed work was completed to calculate how costs would be split between NNC and WNC. This was based on the relative populations and demand for children's social care services in each council area. It was agreed that WNC would contribute 55.84% and NNC would contribute 44.16% exclusive of any specific grants that are given directly to the Councils to passport to the NCT.
- 7.1.4 NCT have provided a draft MTFP to the NNC and WNC and this will continue to be updated during 2024/25 as further pressures and savings are identified. This will provide the basis for contract sums for future years and significantly enhance this process. It should be noted that at this stage this shows block 3 transformation funding which has been agreed for 2024/25 extending into future years which would require agreement by the Councils. Any additional transformation funding will be considered as part of setting future contract sums with NCT in line with the requirements set out in the Service Delivery Contract and the MTFP will continue be developed to inform both the 2025/26 contract sum and provide the Councils with potential contract sum for future years.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The relationship between NCT and the Councils is governed by a series of contractual and legal agreements. The finance mechanism of the Service Delivery Contract states that the parties must agree the provisional contract sum by 30th November each year. This must then be approved internally by the Councils and the Trust by 15th January each year.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1 NNC has identified 'Brighter, Better Futures' as a key priority in its Corporate Plan recognising that children, young people and their families may need help at different stages in their lives. They will aim to provide help as early as possible and provide the right support, at the right time in the right way to ensure that children are safeguarded and get the best start in life.
- 7.3.2 WNC has identified 'Improved life chances: Best Start in Life' as a key priority of its Corporate Plan, including a focus on early help services to ensure children have the best start in life and parents have the right support at the right time from the right service, to enable families to thrive.
- 7.3.3 Both NNC and WNC's identified priorities will be achieved by supporting the NCT to provide higher standards of support.
- 7.3.4 The Provisional Contract Sum and block 3 transformation funding, drawn down by business cases approved by Transformation & Efficiencies Board will provide the resources NCT requires to effectively support children, young people and families through the delivery of their approved business plan.

7.4 Risk

- 7.4.1 There is a risk that the cost of services delivered by NCT in the 2024/25 financial year exceed the agreed contract sum. The Trust have alerted the Councils to continued risk of overspend on the budget for placements due to the rising numbers of children in care. This is a demand-led budget which causes challenges in forecasting demand and expenditure and a small number of high-cost emergency placements can have a significant impact on the budget.
- 7.4.2 The Trust have also alerted NNC and WNC to continued risk of overspend on the budget for staffing due to high caseloads in children's social care, national issues in recruiting social workers and if not managed the need to continue to use managed teams.
- 7.4.3 If NCT were to overspend on their agreed budget, in the first instance they would look for in-year mitigations to manage the overspend. If these mitigations were not sufficient, then the Trust is able to seek additional funding through the 'in-year change request' mechanism set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
- 7.4.4 There is a risk that the proposed savings are found to be not deliverable. There has been significant scrutiny of the proposed savings through the contract sum process but there remains a risk some might not be delivered. The process has again highlighted that proposed savings against the placements budget are particularly risky. NNC, WNC and NCT have committed to work together in partnership to manage this including working with partners to ensure they are making the appropriate contributions to the placement budget.
- 7.4.5 The newly formed Transformation & Efficiencies Board will oversee and agreed programme of transformation activity including the risks highlighted above.

7.5 Consultation

- 7.5.1 This report has not been subject to any consultation.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel (NNC)

- 7.6.1 This report has not been considered by NNC's Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7 Consideration by Executive Leadership Team (WNC)

- 7.7.1 This report has not been considered by WNC Executive Leadership Team

7.8 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.8.1 This report has not been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees of either NNC or WNC.

7.9 Equality Implications

7.9.1 There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

7.10 Climate Impact

7.10.1 There is no specific climate impact arising from this report, however as NNC and WNC committed to considering impact on the environment which is managed via the individual strategic lead partnership organisation via organisational policy and commitments.

7.10.2 NNC, WNC and NCT are aware there are emissions associated with publishing web content and will seek to minimise the impact where possible.

7.11 Community Impact

7.11.1 There is no specific community impact arising from this report.

7.12 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.12.1 There is no specific crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None

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Contract Sum 2024/25

Area	NCT Contract Sum £m	Comments	Contract Sum Split	
			55.84%	44.16%
			WNC £m	NNC £m
23/24 Contract Sum	150.938		84.284	66.654
Total NCT Initial Contract Sum 24/25	183.774		102.619	81.155
Change in Contract Value	32.836		18.336	14.500
NCT Initial Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 1 Core	177.903		99.341	78.562
Agreed Changes to NCT Initial Contract Sum - Block 1 Core				
Quality Assurance (To support continued improvement & Inspections)	-0.202		-0.113	-0.089
Vacancy Factor	-0.700		-0.391	-0.309
Transport SLA	0.111	Agreed at JOB 23/11/2023	0.062	0.049
Additional Support Services Increases	0.317	Agreed at JOB 23/11/2023	0.177	0.140
Total Changes to NCT Initial Contract Sum - Block 1 Core	-0.474		-0.265	-0.209
Total Revised Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 1 Core	177.429		99.076	78.353
Change in MTFP	26.491		14.793	11.698
NCT Initial Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 2 Transformation	6.996		3.907	3.089
Delays in Recruitment exec managed teams, C2s and Practice Model	-1.125		-0.628	-0.497
Total NCT Draft Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 2 Transformation	5.871		3.278	2.593
Agreed Changes to Draft Contract Sum 24/25 - Block 2 Transformation - Individual Items				
(4) Improving Services - IRO and CP Chairs	0.085	2 Year investment 24/25 - One Off 25/26 to be built into NCT's MTFP To be monitored by T & E	0.047	0.038
(6) Invest to save – Circle to Success - Innovate	0.880	One Off 24/25 To be monitored by T & E	0.491	0.389
(6) Invest to save – Circle to Success - Impower	0.400	Subject to review of IMPOWER Phase 2 Contract (Sept 23-Feb 24) One Off 24/25 - Retained and Commissioned by the Council To be monitored by T & E	0.223	0.177
(9) Managed Teams	1.083	One Off 24/25 To be monitored by T & E	0.605	0.478
(10) Practice Model	0.132	3 Year Investment aligned to DfE funding - 24/25 one-off. 25/26 & 26/27 to be built into NCT MTFP To be monitored by T & E	0.074	0.058
Total Individual Items Block 2 Transformation Individual Items	2.580		1.441	1.139
Total Revised Contract Sum 24/25 - Blocks 1 Core & 2 Transformation Individual Items	180.009		100.517	79.492
Block 3 - Transformation funding available to be allocated by the T & E Board	-	Subject to business cases via T&E Board WNC and NNC will make appropriate provision in budgets to support the investment in business cases approved by the Transformation & Efficiencies Board		

Reason for changes to NCT Initial Contract Sum	
Staff Inspection	-0.202
Vacancy Factor	-0.700
Specific Items to be considered by T & E - (Note 2)	-3.291
Transport SLA	0.111
Additional Support Services Increases	0.317
Total Changes	-3.765

Note 2 - Items included in NCT's Initial Contract Sum Block 2 Transformation	
(4) Improving Services - Voice of the Child	-0.137
(4) Improving Services - Exploitation Hub	-0.435
(4) Improving Services - Independent Visitors	-0.221
(5) Helping families stay together - Early help	-1.805
(4) Improving Services - MASH	-0.141
(4) Improving Services - Disabled Children	-0.185
(4) Improving Services - Children In Care	-0.298
(4) Improving Services - Fostering	-0.660
(6) Invest to save - Social Work Academy	-0.382
(6) Invest to save - homes for Children	-0.152
Delays in recruitment (3 months) exc. managed teams, C2S and Practice Model	1.125
Total	-3.291

Appendix

NCT Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25-2027/28 - Summary

	2024/2025 £000's	2025/26 £000's	2026/27 £000's	2027/28 £000's	Notes
Contract sum	150,938	180,009	182,212	186,205	
Unavoidable pressures	9,721	8,342	7,427	6,521	Inflation pressures in line with council projections
Demographic / Demand	25,815	2,857	1,919	863	
Savings	- 9,045	- 6,684	- 5,326	- 5,188	Savings subject to Joint Transformation Projects
One off Funding (Circle to Success and Innovate and IRO)	2,448	- 2,363			Removal of one off funding for Innovate and Circle to Success in 2025/26 . IRO £85k included in core contract)
Practice Model	132	51	- 28	53	Adjustment for changes in funding for each year of programme
Net Contract Sum	180,009	182,212	186,205	188,454	
Block 3 Transformation Funding allocated so far	138	138	-	-	Transformation funding initially agreed for 2024/25 only with further funding requests to be considered as part of setting future contract sums. Agreed at Transformation Board in Dec 2023 - 'Homes for children' for 2024/25 and 2025/26 (£0.138m).
Contract Sum including Block 3 Transformation Funding agreed by Transformation & Efficiencies Board in Dec 2023	180,147	182,350	186,205	188,454	Transformation funding initially agreed for 2024/25 only with further funding requests to be considered as part of setting future contract sums. Transformation funding subject to approval of business cases at Transformation & Efficiencies Board
Remaining unallocated Block 3 Transformation Funding	3,021	3,021	3,291	3,291	Transformation funding initially agreed for 2024/25 only with further funding requests to be considered as part of setting future contract sums. Transformation funding £3.291m, note that the figure of £3.291m is net off the full year recruitment impact
Total Funding including Block 3 Transformation	183,306	185,371	189,496	191,745	

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Agenda Item 7

Children's Trust Joint Committee Tuesday 16th January 2024

Report Title	Approval of proposed of changes to Support Services SLA's and associated costs.
Report Authors	David Watts, Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing (DASS) & Director of Children's Services (DCS) (interim), NNC, David.watts@northnorthants.gov.uk Rebecca Wilshire, Director of Children's Services (acting), NNC, Rebecca.wilshire@westnorthants.gov.uk Richard Woodward, Head of Business & Performance (NNC)/Intelligent Client Function Programme Lead, richard.woodward@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Members	Cllr Fiona Baker – Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education, WNC Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills, NNC

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Support Services SLA changes and costs

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report seeks approval of the proposal to amend the Support Services Service Level Agreements (SLA's) delivered to Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) by West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Council's (WNC & NNC) via the Change Control Process.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. WNC and NNC provide a range of support services to NCT as part of the Support Services Agreement (SSA) which commenced in November 2021.
- 2.2. Each support service has a detailed Service Level Agreement (SLA) and cost schedule that was developed in the run up to the signing of the SSA.
- 2.3. The Support Service SLA's have not been formally reviewed since their inception except where changes to individual agreements have been proposed and agreed through the formal Change Control Process outlined in the SSA.
- 2.4. On the recommendation of the Support Services Board NNC, WNC and NCT conducted a review of all Support Services SLA's in summer 2023 to ensure the services remain cost effective and fit for purpose.
- 2.5. A summary of the proposed changes and revised costs to the SLA's is contained in Appendix A.
- 2.6. The financial impact of the proposed changes is an increased annual cost of £0.639m to deliver support services SLA's from 2024/25 onwards.
- 2.7. The additional funding of £0.639m has been included in the provisional contract sum for 2024/25 which was approved by Strategic Group on the 28th November 2023 and included in draft budget reports received by Cabinet in West Northamptonshire Council and Executive at North Northamptonshire Council their respective meetings in December 2023.
- 2.8. A formal change control is required in order to vary the SLA's in accordance with the terms and conditions of the SSA.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Approve the proposal to amend the Support Services SLA's delivered to NCT by WNC and NNC as detailed in Appendix A.
- b) Note the increased cost of £0.639m to deliver the Support Services SLA's for 2024/25 detailed in Appendix A and that this has been included in the contract sum of 2024/25.

3.2. Reason for the Recommendations:

- The proposed changes to the Support Services SLAs will ensure:
 - The support services accurately reflect the current service levels, funding is sufficient to enable the services to continue to meet the current and future service demand.
 - Provide ongoing assurance to the respective parties that support services remain cost effective and fit for purpose.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council are committed to supporting Northamptonshire Children's Trust to deliver Children's Social Care and Early Help services across Northamptonshire. Both take their corporate parenting role very seriously and want to support children, young people and families to thrive in their community.
- 4.2. Children's Services in Northamptonshire were judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted in 2019.
- 4.3. Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) was partially formed on 1st November 2020 and fully launched on 1st April 2021.
- 4.4. From 1 April 2021, after the abolition of Northamptonshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council became joint owners of Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT).
- 4.5. As part of the Service Delivery Contract with NCT NNC and WNC are required to deliver a number of dependencies to NCT including properties, insurance and other support services.
- 4.6. WNC and NNC provide a range of support services to NCT as part of the Support Services Agreement (SSA) which commenced in November 2021.
- 4.7. These services are essential back-office services that support NCT to deliver good and safe services to children and young people and families.
- 4.8. Each support service has a detailed SLA and cost schedule that was developed in the run up to the signing of the SSA.
- 4.9. Support services have been uplifted in each year of the SSA to take account of inflationary pressures.
- 4.10. The Support Service SLA's have not been formally reviewed since their inception except where changes to individual agreements have been proposed and agreed through the formal Change Control Process outlined in the SSA.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. On the recommendation of the Support Services Board NNC, WNC and NCT conducted a review of all Support Services SLA's in summer 2023 to ensure the services remain cost effective and fit for purpose.
- 5.2. An 'SLA Star Chamber' was established as the delivery vehicle for the review which included a series of meetings from August 2023 – September 2023 to enable the

operational leads from NNC and WNC's respective support services and NCT counterparts, to present any proposed changes to the SLA's.

5.3. The Support Services Board recommended to the Childrens Trust Operational Group the in principle agreement to the revised Support Services SLA's which was given at the December 2023 meeting.

5.4. A summary of the proposed changes to the SLA's is contained in Appendix A and include increases/decreases to service delivery levels, changes to wording to reflect updated legislation, updated KPI's targets and tolerances, updated levels of variable items (licences etc.) and updates to initial assumptions when the SLA's were first established.

5.5. The revised costs are detailed in Appendix A reflect the proposed changes to service delivery levels, purchasing of variable products (licences etc), pay inflation, other overheads and pay & grading changes for WNC provided services.

5.6. The financial impact of the proposed changes is an increased annual cost of £0.639m to deliver support services SLA's from 2024/25 onwards. Split by the contract sum percentages WNC contributes £0.357m and NNC £0.282m.

5.7. The additional funding of £0.639m has been included in the Provisional Contract Sum for 2024/25 which was approved by Strategic Group on the 28th November 2023 and included in draft budget reports received by Cabinet in WNC and Executive in NNC their respective meetings in December 2023.

5.8. A formal Change Control is required in order to vary the SLA's in accordance with the terms and conditions of the SSA.

6. Next Steps

6.1. If agreed, NNC, WNC and NCT would prepare and sign a Change Control to formally include the updated SLA's and revised costs into the SSA.

6.2. The delivery of the new Support Services SLA's would commence from 1st April 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

7.1.1. When NCT was being developed, detailed work was completed to calculate how costs would be split between NNC and WNC. This was based on the relative populations and demand for children's social care services in NNC and WNC. It was agreed that WNC would contribute 55.84% and NNC would contribute 44.16% exclusive of any specific grants that are given directly to the Councils to passport to the NCT.

7.1.2. The budget to deliver the Support Services SLA's (excluding property maintenance and insurance premiums) in 2023/24 was £2.842m and this cost

is included in NCT's Contract Sum. This is split based on that described in 7.1.1 with WNC contributing £1.587m and NNC £1.255m.

7.1.3. NCT buy support services back from NNC and WNC with the majority provided by WNC. The cost to NCT in 2023/24 (excluding property maintenance and insurance premiums) was £2.624m for services provided WNC and £0.218m for NNC.

7.1.4. Each year WNC, NNC and NCT complete a trueing up exercise to adjust the payments for delivery of support services SLA's to reflect the actual costs vs. the agreed budget to adjust the cost between the parties. These changes include any variable items such as property related maintenance, licences and actual cost of insurance premiums.

7.1.5. As part of the support services SLA review NNC and WNC agreed to apply a consistent approach to applying inflation and overheads costs to the updated SLA costs for 2024/25 and this has been reflected in the revised costs contained in Appendix A.

7.1.6. The increased to deliver supports services in 2024/25 is £0.639m.

7.1.7. The revised budget to deliver the Support Services SLA's (excluding property maintenance and insurance premiums) in 2024/25, contained in Appendix B, is £3.481m. This is split based on that described in 7.1.1 with WNC contributing £1.944m and NNC £1.537m.

7.1.8. NCT will buy support services back from the NNC and WNC in 2024/25 with the majority still being provided by WNC. The cost to NCT in 2024/25 (excluding property maintenance and insurance premiums) will be £3.146m for services provided WNC and £0.335m for services provided by NCT.

7.1.9. The increased cost of £0.639m to deliver the updated Support Services SLA's is contained in the Provisional Contract Sum for 2024/25 and included in draft budget reports received by Cabinet in WNC and Executive in NNC for their respective meetings in December 2023.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The relationship between NCT, NNC and WNC for the delivery of support services is governed by the SSA.

7.2.2. The SSA contains a Change Control Procedure which sets out the procedure for making changes to the agreement. In order to include the updated Support Services SLA's into the Support Services Agreement NNC, WNC and NCT will be required to prepare and sign a Change Control in line with the arrangements set out in the Change Control Procedures.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. NNC has identified 'Brighter, Better Futures' as a key priority in its Corporate Plan recognising that children, young people and their families may need help at different stages in their lives. They will aim to provide help as early as possible and provide the right support, at the right time in the right way to ensure that children are safeguarded and get the best start in life.

7.3.2. WNC has identified 'Improved life chances: Best Start in Life' as a key priority of its Corporate Plan, including a focus on early help services to ensure children have the best start in life and parents have the right support at the right time from the right service, to enable families to thrive.

7.3.3. Both NNC and WNC's identified priorities will be achieved by supporting the Children's Trust to provide higher standards of support.

7.4. Risk

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

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. This report has not been subject to any consultation.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel (NNC)

7.6.1. This report has not been considered by NNC's Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7. Consideration by Executive Leadership Team (WNC)

7.7.1. This report has been considered by SLT

7.8. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.8.1. This report has not been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees of either council.

7.9. Equality Implications

7.9.1. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report.

7.10. Climate Impact

7.10.1. There is no specific climate impact arising from this report, however as a both Councils are to considering our impacts on the environment which are managed via the individual strategic lead partnership organisation via organisational policy and commitments.

7.10.2. NNC, WNC and NCT are aware there are emissions associated with publishing web content and will seek to minimise the impact where possible.

7.11. **Community Impact**

7.11.1. There is no specific community impact arising from this report.

7.12. **Crime and Disorder Impact**

7.12.1. There is no specific crime and disorder impact arising from this report.

8. Background Papers

None

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Appendix A – Support Services SLA Changes and Costs

Support Service SLA (Lead Authority)	Changes Requested	23/24 Cost (Current)	24/25 Cost (Proposed)	Variance
Customer Services (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£112,909	£138,627	£25,719
Web / Digital Team (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£86,208	£100,752	£14,543
Asset & Property Management (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some changes to reflect the service offer / requirements and SLA wording* Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. <p><i>*Agreement for WNC to mirror NNC changes</i></p>	£181,660	£212,305	£30,645
Asset & Property Management (NNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some changes to reflect the service offer / requirements and SLA wording 	£45,415	£51,955	£6,540
Complaints (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some SLA changes to reflect actual staffing resources Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£55,455	£80,988	£25,533
Report Development (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£49,056	£68,332	£19,276
HR - Payroll & Pension Payroll (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£146,730	£171,482	£24,753
HR Policy & Projects (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some SLA changes to reflect the current offer Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£53,322	£53,322	£53,322
Insurance Management (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some SLA changes to reflect the current offer Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£21,329	£24,927	£3,598
Finance Operations (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£53,306	£56,788	£3,481
Business Systems / ERP Gold (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£168,245	£193,398	£25,153
Audit & Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£82,489	£94,821	£12,332
Procurement (NNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of on costs (not originally included in SLA) 0.8FTE staffing increases 	£74,992	£154,024	£79,032
Payments & Direct Payments (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. Inclusion of PBSS in SLA 	£91,713	£163,169	£71,456
Learning & Development (NNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional costs for extra iLearn licenses. 	£98,000	£129,108	£31,108
IT (WNC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary increases from WNC Pay & Grading Review. 	£1,521,286	£1,778,215	£256,929
		Total	£3,481,207	£639,093
		Total NNC	£335,087	£116,680
		Total WNC	£3,146,120	£522,413

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