

Full Council 26th January 2023

Report Title	Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22
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Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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

Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This is the Annual Report of the Northamptonshire Corporate Parenting Board for 2021-22. The report was considered by the Executive at their meeting held on 22nd December 2022 and recommendations approved.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The annual report is structured as follows:

- **Foreword.** From Cllrs Fiona Baker and Scott Edwards.
- **Executive Summary.** Summarising the report as a whole.
- **Governance and Statutory Context.** Sets out the legal underpinning of corporate parenting, and the structure and role of the Board, including in light of the creation of the Trust and creation of two unitary councils.

- **Board activity.** Summarises the activity of the Board during the reporting period, including meeting arrangements, service reports, and young people's participation.
- **NCT Improvement Plan and Priorities.** Sets out the Board's performance against the priorities set out in the Trust Improvement Plan, and the Board's future priorities. This section includes recommendations for council's attention.
- **Appendix.** Reproduces the four priorities as set out in the Trust's corporate parenting strategy 2021-25.

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that Council approves the implementation of four key priorities for the Corporate Parenting Board, specifically:

- a) Note the establishment of Corporate Parenting Operational Groups as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
- b) Notes that the Head of Paid Service will consider the inclusion of corporate parenting responsibilities being set out in every North Northamptonshire job description as set out in Section 3 (page 19) of the annual report.
- c) Notes that North Northamptonshire Council will further consider becoming a Fostering-Friendly employer, as set out in Section 3 (pp19-20) of the annual report and delegates authority to the Executive Member for Children, Families, Education & Skills in consultation with the Chief Executive to approve.
- d) Note that whilst not requiring a specific decision, the board's annual report also asks that due regard is paid to how NCT and both councils continue to contribute to the Local Offer for Care-Experienced Young People. The Offer sets out the services (statutory and additional) provided to young people leaving care as they transition to independence.

3.2 Reason for Recommendations:

- To promote and monitor the Trust's corporate parenting strategy.
- To encourage all members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents.
- To promote in-house fostering sufficiency.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered:

3.3.1 The alternative option to the recommendations set out in the annual report, are: For the Corporate Parenting Board to continue operating in its current

form, Corporate Parenting Responsibilities not being included in NCT and NNC job descriptions, and that NCT and NNC do not become Fostering-Friendly Employers.

- 3.3.2 The above options would not promote the Trust's corporate parenting strategy, nor encourage more employees to become foster carers, nor encourage all members and employees to recognise their role as corporate parents.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The report sets out the role, structure and activity of the Corporate Parenting Board, including proposed priorities.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The Council is asked to consider the recommendations set out in section 3. While there are financial and other implications to the recommendations, if they are not approved an opportunity will be missed to promote NCT's corporate parenting strategy, encourage greater fostering sufficiency, and ensure that all employees of the Trust and NNC are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Strategic group on the 30th of November 2022 noted that both councils, in principle, are open to adopting approaches to become fostering friendly councils. WNC/NNC are to develop proposals and share with Corporate Parenting Board in discussion with NCT.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There may be some financial and resource impact in terms of the recommendations set out in section 3. Becoming a fostering-friendly employer could for example include allowing paid leave to employees in order to help children settle into placement, or for carers to complete training. There could also be some resource impact in terms of amending job descriptions to feature corporate parenting responsibility. If there are financial implications of becoming a foster friendly employer, they will form the basis of a further report to Executive on the matter for consideration.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 The annual report sets out the legal framework for local authorities' corporate parenting responsibilities. The recommendations of the report are intended to help the local authority meet its legal corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 7.2.2 The Board itself is not a statutory body. However, selected service reports are required to be seen by a suitable oversight body, and Board fulfils this function.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 The proposals help the Council and NCT meet the following objectives and priorities:

7.3.2 Section 1.1 of NCT's Improvement Plan, as informed by Ofsted guidance, sets the following objective: "Development of the Corporate Parenting Board responsibilities in order for them to champion improvements."

7.3.3 Four priorities for children in care and care leavers are set out in the NCT Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021/25:

- a) Live Safe, Be Safe
- b) Fulfil Potential
- c) Develop Resilience
- d) Enjoy Good Health and Wellbeing

7.4. Risk

7.4.1 Risks associated with the recommendations of the report include:

- NCT lacks sufficient in-house foster places for children in care.
- NCT and Council employees who are foster carers do not receive adequate support from their employer in their fostering role.
- NCT and Council employees do not recognise their role as corporate parents.

7.4.2 Overall, these risks imply a deleterious impact on the outcomes for children in care.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1 The report was submitted to and agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board on 29th September 2022. The Board includes the Trust CEO, Director of Children's Services for the Trust and two councils, and both Executive members for Children and Families.

7.5.2 The report was submitted to the NNC CLT for the 10th of January 2023.

7.5.3 The Council continues to work with partners including Northamptonshire Children's Trust to promote the objectives and outcomes within the report as needed.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 This report has not been considered by an Executive Advisory Panel.

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 This report has not been considered by the Council's Scrutiny committees.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. The report considers the safety and wellbeing of Northamptonshire children in care and care leavers, including those living out of county.

7.9. Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1 None specifically identified

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. The recommendations aim to improve outcomes for Northamptonshire children and young people in care and care leavers, including in the community.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. None specifically identified.

8. Background Papers

8.1. Report to the Executive 22.12.22.