



Northamptonshire Children's Trust – Governance and Reporting Framework

Introduction

Whilst under a statutory direction the DfE retains an interest and role in the governance arrangements for the Trust.

As the commissioner and funder of the services provided by the Trust, and through the statutory remit of the Director of Children's Services, the unitary councils have statutory oversight of the contract.

The Strategic Group and the Operational Group will oversee strategic and operational performance and delivery of the contract. Membership is drawn from the Trust Board, Trust senior executives, the Cabinets of each unitary council (UC) and senior Council executives.

1. Trust Reporting

Principles

- Proportionate reporting to Board, Committees, UCs etc.
- Single reports meeting the needs of many/most audiences (using a common core that is adjusted dependent on audience).
- Contractual obligations fulfilled.
- Recognise strategic/operational nature of different mechanisms and plan/report accordingly.
- Report authors to consider short executive summaries rather than large documents presented at meetings.
- Appended report template to be used. This includes a requirement to refer to dates and decisions if the subject matter has been considered at other Trust/Council meetings. This will help us track progress for audit/accountability purposes. It also flags Equality Act requirements.

Assumptions

- Board meeting dates scheduled for Thursdays of week 3 on the basis finance and performance reports are available by end of week 2.
- Reporting sequence: Trust Executive/SLT for sign off, followed by Committee/Board, then onto the unitary councils' ICF operational and strategic contract meetings, Social Care Improvement Board and, less frequently, DfE and MHCLG.

- For other audiences eg. Council Scrutiny meetings, the Trust Executive will prepare reports based on information already available through the above.
- Quarterly Committee meetings scheduled for months where there is no Board meeting. F&R Committee meeting 8 times a year; PP&Q Committee meeting 4 times a year.

2. Alignment of meetings/groups

- Internal
 - Executive/SLT
 - Transformation and Efficiencies Board
 - Committees
 - Trust Board
- Joint
 - Operational Group
 - Strategic Group
 - Support Services Board
 - Joint Committee
 - Social Care Improvement Board

3. Procedures

Committees

- Each committee will have a forward plan.
- Draft agendas will be prepared drawing on committee/Board forward plans and other relevant sources.
- Draft agendas to be shared with the Executive c3 weeks in advance of meeting, ahead of lead officer/chair 1:1 discussion below.
- Draft agendas to be agreed in a 1:1 discussion between committee lead officer and committee chair c2 weeks in advance of meeting.
- Required papers are confirmed, authors agreed and notified, and papers are collated by business support/PA in time for send out 5 working days in advance of meeting.
- Procedure for prior sign off of papers is a matter for committee lead officer and chair to determine.
- Each meeting is minuted by business support/PA and a simple action log and forward plan is maintained for each committee (those can be integrated within the minutes and/or stored separately).
- Draft minutes are shared with the committee lead officer and chair within 5 working days of the meeting. Once agreed as draft minutes they are then shared as draft minutes and actions with all committee members.
- Invites including those for remote meetings are sent by respective business support/PA, so they “control” any date/time and invitee changes going forward.

- Any matters to be escalated by the Committees are agreed with the respective Chair and reported to the Board.

Board

- Draft agendas are shared with the Executive at least 3 weeks before the meeting.
- Board agendas should be agreed by the Board Chair and Chief Executive at least 3 weeks before the meeting.
- Required papers are confirmed, authors agreed and notified, and papers are collated by business support/PA in time for send out 5 working days in advance
- Final drafts of Board reports to be agreed by Chair and Chief Executive in time for send out of agenda papers at least 5 working days before the meeting.
- Each meeting is minuted by the Company Secretary (in future this could change to business support/PA).
- A simple action log is maintained.
- A forward plan is maintained.
- Invites including those for remote meetings are sent by the Chief Executive’s business support/PA who will “control” any date/time and invitee changes going forward.

4. Dates of Board and Committee meetings

Dates through to March 2024 are set out in the Board Forward Plan.

5. Membership of committees

Practice, Performance and Quality Committee (PPQ)	Finance, Resources & Audit Committee (FRA)
Joshua Imuere (Council-nominated NED) Colin Cross John O’Brien Vacancy (Currently being recruited) Cornelia Andrecut Business Support: Vivienne Simpson	Hilary Daniels (Chair) Colin Cross (Vice-Chair) John O’Brien Darren Hickman (Council-nominated NED) Andrew Tagg (for Part A only) Business Support: Joanne Bayes

6. Extract from Board Forward Plan – for information/context

CONTRACTUAL MATTERS WHICH ALL REQUIRE SOME FORM OF COUNCIL APPROVAL/ AGREEMENT

By when	What	Board/Committee planning January 2022 to January 2024
2022		
15 January	The Trust and the Councils must seek internal approval of the “ Provisional Contract Sum ” agreed by the parties as part of the negotiation process. Recurring	Board 20 January FRA
31 May	Draft annual accounts 2020/22 to the Councils. Recurring	Board 21 April FRA
31 July	Audited annual accounts 2020/22 to the Councils.	Board 21 July FRA
31 July	Prepare the first draft Annual Report for consideration and agreement at the Operational Group. Recurring	Board 21 July PPQ
15 September	Prepare a draft business plan for the 3 years from 1 April 2023 and submit this to the Councils for consultation. Recurring	Board 21 July FRA
15 October	The Strategic Group must convene (unless a different date is agreed) to carry out the Annual Review . Recurring	To be confirmed
30 November	Submit for approval by the Councils a further draft of the business plan , which includes any subsequent amendments agreed between the Trust and the Councils. Recurring	Board 20 October FRA
30 November	The Strategic Group must meet to discuss and agree the Contract Sum for the following year. This commences the negotiation process for the Contract Sum for the following financial year. Recurring	Board 20 October
2023		
15 January	The Trust and the Councils must seek internal approval of the “ Provisional Contract Sum ” agreed by the parties as part of the negotiation process. Recurring	Board 19 January FR&A 17 November or 12 January
31 May	Draft annual accounts 2020/22 to the Councils. Recurring	Board 20 April FR&A 23 February or 18 May
31 July	Audited annual accounts 2020/22 to the Councils.	Board 20 July FR&A 29 June
31 July	Prepare the first draft Annual Report for consideration and agreement at the Operational Group. Recurring	Board 20 July PP&Q 23 March or 22 June
15 September	Prepare a draft business plan for the 3 years from 1 April 2023 and submit this to the Councils for consultation. Recurring	Board 20 July or 7 Sept FR&A 29 June

By when	What	Board/Committee planning January 2022 to January 2024
15 October	The Strategic Group must convene (unless a different date is agreed) to carry out the Annual Review. Recurring	To be confirmed
2024		
15 January	The Trust and the Councils must seek internal approval of the “Provisional Contract Sum” agreed by the parties as part of the negotiation process. Recurring	Board 18 January FR&A 16 November or 11 January
Other cyclical reports with contractual obligations		
Quarterly	Risk register to be submitted to the Councils quarterly.	Board quarterly. FRA quarterly.
Monthly	Within 15 working days of each month the Trust must deliver to the Councils the monthly report, which summarises the performance of the Trust against its obligations under the Agreement in respect of the immediately preceding Service Period. To include contractual KPIs, financial information, quality audits, complaints, serious incidents and case reviews, surveys, inspection-related information, statutory returns, performance by the Councils of their functions and dependencies, and “Management Information” on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis where relevant.	Board quarterly. PPQ quarterly.
Quarterly	Summary of the management accounts presented to the Trust Board to include an Income and Expenditure Statement for the period to date and forecast for the Contract Year end.	To be incorporated in regular and routine reporting to the Board and FRA Committee, using a suitable format.
Half yearly	Balance sheet and cash flow.	To be incorporated in regular and routine reporting to the Board and FRA Committee, using a suitable format.

ANNUAL CYCLE OF BOARD AND COMMITTEE ITEMS

	Standing Items (annual/quarterly)	Which Committee and Why?	Freq.	Trust Board and Reason?	Freq.
1.	Finance outturn and annual accounts.	FRA – Recommendation that Board approves	A	Decision – to approve	A
2.	Annual Audit Plan, including review of previous year.	FRA – Decision – approve plan (plus 6-monthly summary of audits)	A	By exception	A

	Standing Items (annual/quarterly)	Which Committee and Why?	Freq.	Trust Board and Reason?	Freq.
3.	Children's services improvement and performance matters (including practice quality, contractual KPIs, Ofsted visits, self-assessment, annual performance outturn).	PPQ – Assurance	Q	Assurance	Q
4.	Business Plan.	FRA – Recommendation that Board approves draft	A	Decision – to approve	A
5.	Budget: consideration of proposed contract sum - the Strategic Group must meet to discuss and agree the Contract Sum for the following year by 30 November. This commences the negotiation process for the Contract Sum for the following financial year. The Trust and the Councils must seek internal approval of the "Provisional Contract Sum" agreed by the parties as part of the negotiation process by 15 January (from 2022).	FRA – Recommendation that Board approves	A	Decision – to approve	A
6.	Annual review and annual report from Year 2 ie. first report to cover November 2020 – March 2022.	PPQ – Recommendation that Board approves	A	Decision – to approve	A
7.	Finance updates including efficiencies.	FRA – Assurance	Q	By exception	---
8.	Strategy/guidelines (eg procurement and IT).	Relevant Committee – to approve or to recommend that Board approves, depending on strategy/guidelines	Q	Decision - to approve (depending on strategy/ guidelines)	Q
9.	Revision of adopted policies (schedule of policies to be prepared for information/tracking).	Relevant Committee – to approve or to recommend that Board approves, depending on policy	Q	Decision - to approve (depending on policy)	Q
10.	Risk Management updates and Risk Register (Register goes to Councils quarterly).	FRA – Decision – approve status of risks	Q	Assurance	Q
11.	Health & Safety. [Annual Health & Safety report to both FR&A and P&P Committees for assurance and information.]	FRA – Assurance and information PPQ – Assurance and information	Q Q	By exception	--- ---
12.	Quarterly and Annual Children's Services Complaints and Compliments reports.	PPQ – Assurance and information	Q	Assurance	A

	Standing Items (annual/quarterly)	Which Committee and Why?	Freq.	Trust Board and Reason?	Freq.
13.	Annual Independent Reviewing Officers report	PPQ – Assurance and information	A	Assurance	A
14.	To be expanded with other items as and when agreed.				

Notes

- In addition, a Nominations and Remuneration Committee will meet Annually.
- A range of non-standing items will be reported to the Board as necessary.
- Where appropriate, Committees will consider early drafts and other work related to the above items and these will be scheduled as required.
- Written or verbal reports from Committee Chairs will routinely be presented to the Trust Board.

Key

FRA: Finance, Resources and Audit Committee

PPQ: Practice, Performance and Quality Committee

Freq: A - annual; Q – quarterly

7. Committee forward plan considerations

FRA ToR extract

- the Trust's business plan and transformation activity.
- the Trust's finances: strategy, efficiencies, monitoring and forward planning.
- the effectiveness of service level agreements.
- management and resource audits.
- overview of risk management.
- workforce establishment control, budgets and salaries, health and safety.
- employee engagement.
- ensuring that part B of its meetings fulfils the audit remit.

Audit remit

(a) reviewing and monitoring:

- (i) the integrity of the financial and narrative statements and other financial information provided to Members;
- (ii) the Company's system of internal controls and risk management;
- (iii) the internal and external audit process and auditors;
- (iv) the processes for compliance with laws, regulations and ethical codes of practice; and

- (b) making recommendations to the Board in relation to the discharge of governance responsibilities in respect of audit, risk and internal control of the Company.

Long list to inform draft FRA forward plan

Business planning
Finance and efficiencies
Accounts – draft; audited
Annual Audit Plan; findings of audits; actions and progress
External audit; findings of audit; actions and progress
Health & Safety (whole-Trust perspective)
HR and non-HR Policies: sign off; review (*each committee to consider relevant policies*)
Risk management, register, deep dives
Support Services Agreements
Property matters
Business continuity
ICT systems and data
Recruitment and Retention
L&D
Equality and Diversity
Gender Pay Gap Comparators

PPQ ToR extract

- all key issues relating to the practice, performance and quality of all services provided by the Trust to children, young people and their families in Northamptonshire including user feedback, formal complaints and Trust support services.
- the performance and quality of Trust contracts, including purchased support services and service level agreements in place to ensure Trust effectiveness.
- workforce quality and effectiveness including recruitment, retention, learning and development.
- Trust self-assessment and improvement activity.
- actions following Ofsted and other inspections or visits, agreeing and monitoring relevant plans.
- the effectiveness of engagement with children, young people and families receiving the services of the Trust so that their voice, and their experience, can be clear and influential in shaping the Trust's decision-making and direction.
- the development and evaluation of innovative approaches to practice and service improvement.

Long list to inform draft PPQ forward plan

Children's Services improvement and performance matters (including contractual KPIs, quality of practice, performance by the Councils of their functions and dependencies where that has a direct impact on practice, and relevant "Management Information" on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis)

Statutory returns

Effectiveness of early help

Inspection outcomes

Quarterly/annual compliments and complaints report

Serious case/rapid review updates

Annual reports eg. Trust Annual report, IRO Service, Reg 35 Adoption

Health & Safety (practice perspective)

HR and non-HR Policies: sign off; review (*each committee to consider relevant policies*)

L&D from a practice perspective

Appendix: Report template



Meeting	Trust Board
Date	...2022

Agenda Item No.	
Subject of Report	
Author	
Responsible Director	

Date and decision if matter has been considered at other Trust/Council meetings

Purpose of the Report

Action	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information	<input type="checkbox"/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

RECOMMENDATION:

The Trust Board is recommended to:

In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2020. A full equality impact assessment has been considered.

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