

Shared Services Joint Committee 19th January 2022

Report Title	Education Safeguarding – Change to timeline
Report Author	Ann Marie Dodds, Assistant Director Education (North) Chris Kiernan - Assistant Director Education (West)
Executive Member	Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills NNC Cllr Fiona Baker, Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education WNC

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	None

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To approve the recommendations to re-profile the timeline of the Safeguarding in Education disaggregation from 31st March 2022 to September 2022 (in line with the academic year).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Safeguarding in Education Service (SIES) offers specialist advice, guidance, training and support for schools and educational settings including early years (Children’s Centres, and private, voluntary, and independent settings); primary and secondary schools; off-site providers; and further education. This is to enable those working with children and young people in these settings to identify and manage safeguarding issues and ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding children, both in terms of local and national procedures as well

as the important preventative role that they undertake. The service is currently a hosted service in the North.

- 2.2 Several options are being considered for the service, giving due consideration to the issues surrounding disaggregation as set out below in section 4. *Report Background*. These include options both for the service to remain hosted by NNC, for disaggregation to take place, with and without additional funding to support continuation of the fuller service provision. Further clarity on funding is required before a recommendation can be made.
- 2.3 Disaggregating at the present time with the current establishment budget presents a high risk that statutory services could not be delivered in either authority. A reprofiling of disaggregation would both ensure current stability of the service is maintained and would additionally provide an opportunity to review non statutory service delivery, staff establishment and budget required for minimal viable service. The service are confident the original service provision can be funded for the period between April and August 2022 and discussions are taking place to confirm provision for the enhanced service during this period alongside a priority review of the options in early 2022.
- 2.4 Approval is thus sought to support the recommendations to re-profile the timeframes (set out in the Transformation Task and Finish Group proposed timeline) for the Education Safeguarding Service disaggregation to 22/23 for proposed implementation in September 2022 in line with the academic year.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Joint Committee (Shared Services)
 - a) Approve reprofiling the disaggregation of the Safeguarding in Education service from March 2022 to September 2022 in line with the academic year., allowing further review of the impact assessment into disaggregating the service.
- 3.2 Reason for recommendation:
 - The recommendation is being made to remove the risk associated with attempting to disaggregate at the present time with the current establishment budget and to allow for the work required to be undertaken to further assess options to review statutory service delivery and staff establishment requirements.
 - Disaggregation will be aligned to the academic rather than the financial year, taking place by September 2022.
- 3.3 Alternative options considered:
 - Delivery by March 2022 would now incur significant risk to the delivery of this statutory service – to continue with the current timeline is not a viable option.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The Safeguarding in Education Service (SIES) Statutory Service provision is made for Section 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002. Schools/colleges must 'make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children': Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.
- 4.2 The service works closely with Ofsted, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (regulatory body for academy schools), and the Department for Education in investigating and responding to Ofsted notifications about safeguarding concerns in schools. The Safeguarding in Education Service have a responsibility to investigate any safeguarding concerns referred to Ofsted or other agency about a school or other education setting.
- 4.3 In addition to fulfilling statutory safeguarding duties the service offers:
- Advice, guidance, consultancy, and specialist safeguarding support
 - Acts as an interface between other agencies
 - Provides model policies, procedures, and protocols
 - Instigates and leads safeguarding forums (including representation on multi-agency panels and groups)
 - Online safety training
 - Quality assurance services
- 4.4 It was agreed in the North Northants Blueprint that the service would not disaggregate prior to the formation of the unitary authorities. The Blueprint agreed for the North to host the service for 12 months. The Safeguarding in Education Service is thus hosted by NNC, all staff are employed by NNC, and it provides the service to WNC via an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). The expectation from the blueprint is that Safeguarding in Education Service (SIES) should disaggregate within 12 months of vesting day (1st April 2021).
- 4.5 In July 2020 a Business Case was produced in which it was recognised that the Safeguarding in Education Service was significantly under resourced relative to the breadth and scale of the safeguarding work required across all Northamptonshire education settings. Additional funding was awarded but subsequently retracted. As the full additional staff from that business case have not been implemented, and those that have are agency or contractors, the team are still under resource pressure.
- 4.6 The service consists of a permanent team of one Service Manager and one Online Safety and Wellbeing Officer. The business case in 2020 for additional team members was to add three roles to the team funded temporarily by the DSG Underspend. The addition of these new roles coincided with additional and enhanced services to be delivered by the Service.
- 4.7 With the increased team size in 2020 the team now delivers the following:
- Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Office
 - Advice, guidance, consultancy, and specialist safeguarding support
 - Increase in responsibilities through the restructuring of other departments of the Learning, Skills and Education (LSE) Service
 - Publishing a Safeguarding in Education Newsletter

- Creating additional written guidance and policies
- Monitoring schools' performance
- Risk assessment management
- Liaison with Police and schools/colleges
- Leadership support
- Traded offer
- Safeguarding review audit
- Additional partnership activity/meeting representation generated by new safeguarding concerns

4.8 Three temporary staff are currently in place. These posts were meant to be funded by the DSG underspend from 20-21 however the funding was not carried forward therefore current expenditure exceeds current budget and there are ongoing discussions within Children's SLT and finance to identify budget to fund these temporary posts in 2021/2022. There is currently no provision in the 2022/2023 budget for these posts.

4.9

Several options are being considered for the service, giving due consideration to the above issues. These remain under discussion and further clarity is required regarding the ongoing funding of the service before further consideration of longer-term options can be made in January 2022.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 To attempt to disaggregate in line with the current Task and Finish group timeline would incur significant risk for the Service, with the associated negative impact on the reputation of the Council. It is thus not a recommended option.

6. Next Steps

6.1 Clarification of funding options is required before the options on the future of the service can be further assessed and recommendations made. The work to review the operational options for disaggregation can begin in January 2022.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- No expected change from this Change Request, however the establishment budget for the Safeguarding in Education Service needs to be resolved prior to disaggregation.
- The service is confident that the original service provision will be funding in the interim period April to August 2022. Discussions to confirm provision of funding for the enhanced service for this same period are underway.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- There are no legal implications arising from the proposals in this report. Any legal implications arising from recommended options will be considered and articulated in the options and Impact Assessment.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- There are no relevant policies and plans associated with the change in timeline proposed in this report. Any relevant policies and plans for recommended options will be considered and articulated in the options and Impact Assessment.

7.4 Risk

- The recommendations reduce the very significant risk that would be incurred through attempting disaggregation by 31st March 2022. No other risks are incurred through the change.

7.5 Consultation

- No external consultation for the recommendation was required. Any consultation required in forming the recommended delivery options will be considered and articulated in the options and impact assessment.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

- Not required.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

- Not applicable.

7.8 Equality Implications

- No equality impacts from the recommendation to move the timeline. Any impact from options will be considered and articulated in the future impact assessment.

7.9 Climate Impact

- There are no climate impacts arising from the recommendations in this report. Any impact from options will be considered and articulated in the future impact assessment.

7.10 Community Impact

- There are no community impacts arising from the recommendations in this report. Any impact from options will be considered and articulated in the future impact assessment.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

- There are no impacts as a result of the recommendations. Any impact from options will be considered and articulated in the options and future impact assessment.

8. Background Papers

8.1 None.