

Children's Trust Joint Committee

Wednesday 4 May 2022

Report Title	Update on the Transfer of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service to Northamptonshire Children's Trust
Report Authors	Sarah Reed, Executive Director of Corporate Services sarah.reed@westnorthants.gov.uk Rory Seymour, Commissioning Manager, rory.seymour@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Members	Cllr Fiona Baker, Children, Families & Education (WNC) Cllr Scott Edwards, Children, Families, Education & Skills (NNC)

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

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To provide an update on the rationale behind the proposal to transfer the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service delivered to Northamptonshire Children's Trust from West Northamptonshire Council to Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- 1.2. This updated report follows initial consideration of the proposals at the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 6 April 2022.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. West and North Northamptonshire Councils deliver support Services to Northamptonshire Children's Trust. These are enabling back-office services that support Northamptonshire Children's Trust to deliver good services to children, young people and their families.
- 2.2. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service is currently delivered by West Northamptonshire Council at a cost of £65,000 per annum (including direct Occupational Health contract costs).
- 2.3. Over the past year there has been productive integrated working between the Children's Trust and West Northants' Corporate Services around health and safety, underpinned by regular liaison meetings. This has led to discussions around the best way of providing services in the future. As a result of this, it has been agreed that it would be beneficial for Northamptonshire Children's Trust to take over responsibility for the delivery of the service directly.
- 2.4. Following deferment of consideration of the proposals by the Joint Committee on 6 April 2022, this updated report incorporates additional information requested by members on the recruitment process undertaken, together with additional information on the budget of £65,000, allocated for the service.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Children's Trust Joint Committee approve:
 - a) The transfer of the delivery of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service provided to Northamptonshire Children's Trust from West Northamptonshire Council to Northamptonshire Children's Trust.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations
 - Moving the service in house to Northamptonshire Children's Trust will better meet its needs in enabling it to deliver good services to children, young people and their families.
- 3.3. Alternative Options Considered
 - a) West Northamptonshire Council continuing to deliver the service - It is recommended that this be rejected because the Council and Northamptonshire Children's Trust agree the service would be more appropriately based in Northamptonshire Children's Trust as an in-house service.
 - b) Commissioning another organisation to deliver the service – It is recommended that this be rejected because it is likely to be more costly than the proposed option.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. To enable Northamptonshire Children's Trust to deliver good services to children, young people and their families they purchase a range of back-office services from North and West Northamptonshire Councils. These are known as the Support Services.
- 4.2. The Support Services Agreement records the overarching terms and conditions upon which the Councils will provide the Support Services to Northamptonshire Children's Trust, and details the service parameters, responsibilities and charges in respect of the provision of Support Services.
- 4.3. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service has been delivered by the Human Resources department in West Northamptonshire Council since Local Government Reorganisation on 1 April 2021. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team provide advice, guidance, assistance and support to Northamptonshire Children's Trust on:
 - a. All organisational activities governed by the Health and Safety at Work Act and relevant regulations made under that Act;
 - b. Procurement and management of organisation wide Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme contracts; and
 - c. Wellbeing matters relevant to all workers working within the organisation.
- 4.4. Northamptonshire Children's Trust is charged £65,000 to receive this service and funding for this is included as part of the overall contract sum it receives. This £65,000 comprises of £45,000 for staff time and £20,000 for Occupational Health and Employee Assistance Programme costs.

5. Issues and Rationale for Change

- 5.1. When Northamptonshire Children's Trust was initially created, it was still developing some of its senior staffing structures especially with regards to back-office and support services. This meant that when the Councils were created, Northamptonshire Children's Trust chose to purchase most of the Support Services from the Councils.
- 5.2. Northamptonshire Children's Trust has now recruited to key positions within the organisation in areas such as Corporate Finance and Human Resources. Now permanent members of staff are in post, they have been able to review the current arrangements for Support Services.
- 5.3. Regarding the provision of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Services, staffing support for year one of Northamptonshire Children's Trust was mostly provided by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner from the West Northants', supported by officers in the Corporate Health and Safety Team. The service, under the leadership of the Assistant Director of Human Resources has worked closely with the newly formed HR service in Northamptonshire Children's Trust. During the last year, a blended support of

officer time has been provided to the trust rather than filling a bespoke post that fulfils the entire role.

- 5.4. There has been close and productive working between Corporate Services, West Northants and Northamptonshire Children's Trust's Corporate Services with regular liaison meetings with the Trust to support their development and reviewing of arrangements that best worked for the trust (in addition to regular service review meetings between the Trust and WNC HR). This has led to a range of collaborative working arrangements such as the Covid Health and Safety meetings and the inclusion of the Children's Trust in the Ways of Working programme.
- 5.5. Discussions with the Trust have highlighted the importance of key governance functions being part of the Trust – this includes business continuity, information governance and risk management. Regarding health and safety, this is another key governance and critical service that benefits to being part of the Trust on a day-to-day basis.
- 5.6. The Trust is a large organisation and an employer in its own right, this means that Northamptonshire Trust and its Senior Management Team has a significant responsibility under health and safety law for managing health and safety risks in their business. Employee wellbeing is of course another key pillar which needs to underpin employment, policies, procedures and working practices to attract and retain a high performing workforce. Collaboration on health and safety matters with West Northants' Corporate Services will continue as normal and reciprocal support is on hand to cover for holidays and joint working as necessary.
- 5.7. From the view of West Northants Council, the proposed changes to operation are also sensible and meet business need. The inherited health and safety service at West Northants is now being reviewed as part of a larger restructure of HR. Changes are also needed as the Business Partner for West Northants has now retired, which was a planned change. This means that there are no TUPE implications from this proposal.
- 5.8. This would mean Health, Safety and Wellbeing would be removed from the scope of the Support Services Agreement. The £65,000 allocated for this service would stay with Northamptonshire Children's Trust and they would use this to deliver the service and Occupational Health contract. In addition, the market for Health and Safety officers at the level needed by the Trust is strong.
- 5.9. With regards to the contracts for Occupational Health and Employee Assistance, Northamptonshire Children's Trust will now liaise directly with the providers of these services rather than linking through West Northamptonshire Council.

6. Next Steps

6.1. If the Joint Committee was to approve this proposal the next steps are:

- a. To make the necessary changes to the Support Services Agreement using the change control procedure set out in that agreement.
- b. Northamptonshire Children's Trust will recruit to the vacant position and establish relationships with the providers of Occupational Health support and the Employee Assistance Programme.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. There are no net financial implications to the proposed change. West Northamptonshire Council will cease to receive £65,000 for the delivery of the service; however, they will also cease to incur the costs of delivery meaning a net nil financial position.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. As is noted in section 4.2 above, the Support Services Agreement governs the relationship between the Councils and Northamptonshire Children's Trust in this area. In order to make this change, it is proposed that the change control procedure in the agreement is used to enable the change to take place in good time.
- 7.2.2. The post in scope for transfer is currently vacant, therefore there is no one who could be subject to the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) regulations.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The proposed change will support North Northamptonshire Council's Corporate Plan Commitment 'Better Brighter Futures' and West Northamptonshire Council's commitment to 'Improved Live Chances. This is because it will enable Northamptonshire Children's Trust to deliver improved services to children and young people.

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. N/A

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1. N/A

7.7. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1. There has not been any consideration by scrutiny.

7.8. Equality Implications

7.8.1. There are no significant equality implications arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. Any future recruitment to the vacant post will adhere to the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010, noting that the Children's Trust is an open and inclusive organisation.

7.9. Climate Impact

7.9.1. There is no significant climate impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.10. Community Impact

7.10.1. There is no significant community impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.11. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1. There is no significant Crime and Disorder impact arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

8. Background Papers

8.1. [Report to Children's Trust Joint Committee of 6 April 2022 – 'Transfer of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Support Service to the Children's Trust'](#)