



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL AND NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CHILDREN’S TRUST JOINT COMMITTEE

7 September 2022

**Cllr Fiona Baker – Children, Families & Education (WNC)
Cllr Scott Edwards – Children, Families, Education &
Skills (NNC)**

Report Title	Changes to the Learning and Development Support Service delivered to Northamptonshire Children’s Trust
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek the Children's Trust Joint Committee's approval of the changes to the Learning and Development Support Service provided to Northamptonshire Children's Trust by North Northamptonshire Council.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 NCT currently purchase Learning & Development Services from North Northamptonshire Council. The services to be provided are defined in a Service Level Agreement which forms part of the Support Services Agreement between NCT and the Councils.
- 2.2 The Learning & Development Service is currently a hosted service delivered by North Northamptonshire Council. As part of the wider disaggregation of council shared services, the councils have agreed that this service will disaggregate, and some elements of the service will transfer to West Northamptonshire Council. The disaggregation process has given NCT and the Councils the opportunity to consider how Learning & Development Services are delivered to NCT.
- 2.3 Officers from the Councils and NCT have worked together to review how the service should be arranged going forwards.
- 2.4 They have recommended the partial transfer of the Learning and Development Support Service delivered to Northamptonshire Children's Trust from North Northamptonshire into Northamptonshire Children's Trust (the L&D children's team, course booking administration, psychometrics, team days leadership, management information reporting) from 1st November 2022.
- 2.5 They have also recommended the continued delivery of some elements of Learning and Development by North Northamptonshire Council via service level agreement (open programme non NCT specific courses, on-line learning resources, business systems consultancy and e-learning development, apprenticeships).
- 2.6 If the Joint Committee were to approve this proposal, the affected staff will be consulted, and the proposed change would come into effect from 1st November 2022.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Approve the partial transfer of the Learning and Development Support Service delivered to Northamptonshire Children's Trust from North Northamptonshire into Northamptonshire Children's Trust from 1st November 2022

- b) Note the continue delivery of some elements of Learning and Development by North Northamptonshire Council via service level agreement

4. Reason for Recommendations

- Moving aspects of service delivery into NCT will provide a more joined-up Learning & Development offer for NCT staff. This in turn will support the delivery of improved services to children, young people and their families
- Keeping certain aspects of service delivery as part of the SLA is more cost-effective than being delivered directly by NCT

5. Report Background

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Learning and Development Support Service has been delivered by the North Northamptonshire Council since Local Government Reorganisation on 1 April 2021. The team is a hosted service which delivers services to North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council as well as Northamptonshire Children's Trust. The county wide L&D service consists of:
- L&D Children's team
 - L&D Adults' team
 - L&D Business Support team
 - L&D Leadership and Digital team
 - L&D Apprenticeships and Qualifications team
- 5.4 The current cost to NCT for the current service level agreement is £393,953.
- 5.5 The Learning and Development Service level agreement includes children's specific services to NCT, they are through the following deliverables:
- Design, delivery, commissioning, and evaluation of 63 different social work/care training courses
 - Design and delivery of Social Work Academy and Senior Social Worker Recruitment Assessment Centres – face to face or remote dependant on Covid-19 policies
 - Design and co-delivery of 'Leading for Improved Outcomes' – bespoke Children's leadership and management programme
 - Supporting Local Children Safeguarding Practice Reviews training requirements

- Diagnosing and supporting delivery specific team learning needs of different service areas with support from manager – face to face or remote dependant on Covid-19 policies
- Design and maintenance of emergency and/or (Covid-19) remote learning toolkits
- L&D representation on the following Boards; Signs of Safety Steering, Workforce Strategy and Development, Safeguarding Partnership, PREVENT Steering and Regional Workforce
- Management of Research in Practice (RIP) subscription and RIP training co-ordination
- Co-ordination and delivery of World Social Work Day - face to face or remote dependant on Covid-19 policies
- Involvement in Provider Forum Events and Training – face to face or remote dependant on Covid-19 policies
- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) support/training including management and moderation - face to face or remote dependant on Covid-19 policies
- Social Work student placements managed via co-ordination with national universities
- Commissioning of Practice Educators trained through University of Northampton with follow up L&D Managing and Supervising Learners course
- CRM (Customer Relationship Management)
- Project Support
- Senior Management Learning & Organisational Development Consultancy

5.6 Before the vesting day of the new unitary councils, it was agreed that Learning & Development would be a hosted service for the 2021/22 financial year with disaggregation taking place during the 2022/23 financial year. On 27th April 2022, the Shared Services Joint Committee agreed that services would be disaggregated in a phased approach by the end of the 2022/23 financial year. A decision therefore has to be taken as to how L&D services will be delivered to NCT. This process has been used a chance to consider how these services are best delivered to Northamptonshire Children’s Trust and to consider any possible changes.

5.7 Continuous professional development functions in NCT are currently disparate, with the NNC-hosted L&D service providing a combination of mandatory and corporate training, early help/ social care practice related training (including signs of safety), non-practice specific training, support for apprentices, NQSWs and students. NCT’s Social Work Academy also provides different elements of practice related training and support and the NCT induction. The disaggregation therefore gives a real opportunity to bring these elements together to form an NCT academy to support the continuous professional development of the whole NCT workforce and embedding of Signs of Safety practice model. It also provides opportunity for greater flexibility to meet changing needs and respond to emerging issues.

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 As part of the disaggregation of the service, Council officers have engaged with the relevant officers at NCT consider how the service can be best configured in the future to meet the needs of Northamptonshire Children’s Trust.

6.2 The options that have been considered are:

- a. **Do nothing** (not recommended) – this is not an option due to the councils’ decision to disaggregate L&D services
- b. **WNC or NNC to host NCT’s L&D service as part of their own disaggregated service** (not recommended) – this would result in the current disparity of NCT’s continuous professional development functioning continuing as is. The opportunity to develop an NCT academy which meets the needs of the whole NCT workforce, fully embed Signs of Safety, support recruitment and retention and support a continued uplift in practice in a more flexible, responsive and efficient manner.
- c. **Transfer all aspects of the current NCT L&D SLA to NCT** (not recommended) – whilst this option would provide greater flexibility and interface of all aspects of the current SLA with NCT, it would lose the economy of scale achieved by delivering and commissioning e-learning, non children’s training and apprenticeships in partnership with the council/s, and would not be cost effective.
- d. **Transfer only the L&D children’s team to NCT, with the remainder of the SLA continuing to be delivered by NNC** (not recommended) – whilst transferring the L&D children’s team to NCT would provide the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive continuous professional development offer for the whole NCT workforce, embed Signs of Safety and improve efficiencies, NCT would not have the flexibility to use the psychometrics and team days leadership and management information reporting to meet NCT current and emerging needs.
- e. **Partial transfer of the current SLA to NCT with remainder delivered by NNC as SLA** as set out in sections 6.3 and 6.5 below (recommended) – the reasons for this recommendation are set out in sections 6.4, 6.6 and 6.7 below.

6.3 The table below summarises the areas of the L&D service that are proposed to transfer to NCT:

Aspects of SLA to transfer to NCT	Current SLA Value	Rationale
The L&D children’s team (currently 4.41FTE)	£215,070	The team currently develops, delivers or commissions training to meet needs of NCT practitioners; moving to NCT provides greater interface with and understanding of current practice and support issues, and greater flexibility to support emerging and changing needs
Management and other ancillary costs	£36,762	To pay for management time for the team and other costs such as printing, subscriptions and externally commissioned courses
Course booking administration (currently 1.0FTE)	£38,000	To effectively support the L&D team who are designing and delivering training they need to be integrated within the NCT team
Psychometrics	£9,000	This has not been accessed through the SLA to date and transfer of funding will provide opportunity to

		utilise as part of NCT's inhouse leadership development programme
Team days leadership	£4,000	This has not been accessed through the SLA to date and transfer of funding will provide opportunity to utilise as part of NCT's inhouse leadership development programme
Management information reporting;	£1,000	By bringing this into NCT's data analysis function NCT will be able to combine with other data reporting and analysis providing more comprehensive and useful information, including impact of training
Assisted and Support Year in Employment	£0 (no budget needs to transfer as it is externally funded)	Employers can apply for £2,000 from the Department for Education for each newly qualified social worker (NQSW) that they support in their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). The L&D service currently do this on behalf of NCT and use the funding to support learning and development of NQSWs. It is proposed that this function moves to NCT who will apply for and use the funding within the NCT learning academy to support NQSWs. Funding will not need to transfer from the Councils as this is externally funded from the Department for Education.
Sub Total	£303,832	

6.4 More can be gained from the roles moving under the responsibility of NCT as the organisation moves into its third year. The national shortage of qualified social workers and continued competition to recruit means that NCT needs the best possible access to L&D opportunities to ensure high standards of practice and the opportunity to grow their own social work staff. Moving the L&D Children's Team into NCT will make development of courses more fluid and support the reduction of barriers to learning that, even with the very best professional relationships, a service level agreement introduces. It will also improve efficiency of working as current arrangements depend on colleagues in NCT providing information or steer to L&D colleagues, having all functions in one service area within NCT will provide consistency of leadership and will enable delegated decision making.

6.5 The remaining elements (at a cost of £98k) will continue to be delivered by NNC, through a revised SLA:

Deliverable	Cost	Detail
Open Programme (non Children's courses)	£38,000	for up to 500 course bookings
On-line learning resources	£26,000	Based on a year total of 1,200 licences
Business Systems Consultancy & e-Learning Development	£3,000	Up to 10 days consultancy & 5 days e-learning development work, per 12 months
Apprenticeships	£31,000	Covers both Levy Management and Training Provider

Sub Total:	£98,000	
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- 6.6 The rationale for these elements continuing under an SLA is that these are on the whole not specific to children’s early help, social care and youth offending and NCT would not be able to achieve the current efficiencies of scale by delivering inhouse.
- 6.7 Previous experience has shown that joint commissioning of social work apprenticeship training with adults has offered a more attractive prospect than if it was commissioned individually. It is therefore recommended to remain within the SLA.
- 6.8 NCT, together with officers from the Councils, have taken the following into consideration when making the recommendation to change the SLA:
- Cultural fit to NCT as an organisation – the leadership and management of the social work development side of learning and development is key to how it is delivered. Having an in-house team provides increased opportunity to shape and influence the day to day as well as long term approach to service delivery and monitoring.
 - Flexibility & collaboration – revisions to service delivery and team responsibilities would be more swiftly realised as deliverables would not be dependant on an agreed SLA.
 - Optimal team structure – longer term, the structure of the team providing specialist early help, youth offending, social work and NCT support service-learning opportunities will benefit from revision to ensure delivery creates maximum benefits for the organisation. This may be affected by new initiatives NCT decides it wishes to follow in terms of growing their own social work staff.
 - Increased development opportunities for staff – those staff working within the new L&D social work team will have increased development opportunities themselves as they become more aligned to continued development of NCT as a social care organisation with its own vision and values.
- 6.9 If the Committee agrees to the proposal the next steps will be to
- Advise Trade Unions of the NCC intention to TUPE staff to NCT.
 - Share data between NNC and NCT to ensure the rights, risks and liabilities of the transfer are identified and acted upon.
 - Consult with staff on the transfer and advise them of any impacts
 - Transfer staff and funding for aspects of the SLA that will be delivered by NCT by 1 November 2022.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 The current SLA is worth £401,832 per year for the full range of services. These are funded through the overall NCT contract sum.
- 7.1.2 The elements transferring to NCT are worth £303,832 per year. This budget currently sits with NCT and from November 1st they will not be charged for this amount. They will be charged for the April to October 2022 period on a pro rata basis.

7.1.3 The elements staying with NNC are worth £98,000 per year. NCT will continue to pay NNC for these elements of the service.

7.2 Legal

7.2.1 NNC has identified a list of staff who are affected by the proposed service change. The affected staff would be subject to Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations, usually known as TUPE. NCT has agreed with NNC that they would work collaboratively to ensure the rights of these staff, warranties and liabilities are set out and staff and unions are effectively consulted with.

7.2.2 The Transfer would take place on 1 November 2022. Prior to this, NCT and NNC representatives will share the required contractual, policy, financial obligations and liabilities details at least 28 days before. This will allow them to proceed with the transfer in an informed way that also ensures they meet their legal obligations to unions and staff to reduce the risk of litigation.

7.2.3 As is noted in section 5.2 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.

7.3 Risk

7.3.1 It is imperative that there is continuity of delivery of the L&D functions for NCT workforce, including the NQSWs in their ASYE and current social work apprentices. There could be a risk to this if existing L&D staff chose to leave as a result of the proposed changes, and/ or the remainder of the service level agreement was not delivered by NNC.

7.3.2 To mitigate the risk, there will be clear and appropriate communication with those affected, with the rationale for the proposals explained and a formal TUPE consultation period. NCT will work closely with NCT through existing support service governance arrangements to ensure that any risks and issues with continuity of service are identified and mitigated at the earliest possible point.

7.4 Consultation

7.4.1 If the Joint Committee were to approve the proposal, a consultation with affected staff would take place before the transfer on 1st November 2022.

7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

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

7.6 Climate Impact

7.6.1 There is no specific climate impact from this report.

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 There is no specific community impact from this report.

7.8 **Communications**

7.8.1 Proposed changes to service delivery will be communicated internally to colleagues and members across the two councils and NCT to ensure everyone is aware of the new arrangements. Communications will also play a key role in supporting consultation activities with members of staff directly affected by the new arrangements.

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 Shared Services Joint Committee, 27 April 2022. Item 6 – [Learning and Development Change Request](#)