



## Report of Councillor Fiona Baker Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education

September 2022

### WNC CHILDREN'S SERVICES SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

For the first time, the Council has a fully staffed senior leadership team.

Rebecca Wilshire - Joined on 1<sup>st</sup> September as Deputy DCS, her role will be working in partnership with the Trust to enable line of sight for the Council, Rebecca will review, support and offer challenge in order to ensure DCS and Lead Member have appropriate line of sight. Rebecca has over 25 years experience of working with children, young people and families, her experience has been across both private and public sector and her most recent role was as Director of Social Care and Deputy Chief Executive in a Children's Trust. Rebecca's previous roles as a senior leader have all been linked to service improvement.

Ben Pearson joined the Council in August as the new Assistant Director for Education. Ben joins us from Bedford Borough Council where he was the Chief Education Officer, having held similar senior roles within other Councils and with the Learning & Skills Council. Ben led the local area SEND partnership in Bedford who moved from being recognised as having significant weaknesses to be appointed by the Department for Education as a Sector Led Improvement Partner for SEND within 4 years.

The third member of the Children's Leadership team is Tony Challinor who joined as Assistant Director for Commissioning & Partnerships. Tony held a similar joint role across North and West Northants Councils for the preceding 12 months. Tony has worked in the private sector as well as in public service, including commissioning adult and children's services in NE London, being head of Commissioning at the Ministry of Justice and being Chief Executive of a UK Government international trading arm focusing on criminal justice settings.

### NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST (NCT)

NCT produced its business plan in June 2022 for the period April 2022 to the year 2025/26. ([https://wnugov.sharepoint.com/sites/WNC-ChildrensTrust/Businessplan/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FWNC-ChildrensTrust%2FBusinessplan%2FNorthamptonshireChildrensTrust\\_BusinessPlan2022-23-2025-26%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FWNC-ChildrensTrust%2FBusinessplan](https://wnugov.sharepoint.com/sites/WNC-ChildrensTrust/Businessplan/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FWNC-ChildrensTrust%2FBusinessplan%2FNorthamptonshireChildrensTrust_BusinessPlan2022-23-2025-26%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FWNC-ChildrensTrust%2FBusinessplan))

The Trust reported a small underspend in its 2021/22 budget once reserves and grants were applied. Significant pressures were reported that would impact on 2022/23, particularly around placement workforce costs.

In July NCT reported an improvement in the recruitment of social workers. It also reported that an Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) was likely in September

2022. ILACS applies to both social care and education services, and so would involve both the Council and the Trust.

## **EDUCATION**

### Education Inclusion Partnership team (EIPT)

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022, EIPT became known as the School Attendance Support Service and became part of the School Effectiveness Service (managed by Katie Morlidge)

### School Effectiveness

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September, 4 of our maintained primary schools became academies, as detailed below;

- Deanshanger Primary School – Grand Union Partnership MAT
- Rothersthorpe CE Primary School – Innovate MAT
- Paulersbury CE Primary School – Innovate MAT
- Cogenhoe Primary School – Nene Valley Partnership

## **SEND**

Petition held on 6 September outside OAS. This was arranged by a group of parents complaining about a lack of specialist facilities to meet their children's needs. All parents that attended have been engaged by the service – individual meetings have been held with any parent that requested one. System-wide improvements being introduced to improve communication timeliness and quality.

250 new specialist places being created in local special and mainstream schools this year. This will be followed by the commissioning of a new 250 place special school in Tiffield, subject to DfE approval.

The Council has launched a programme to improve the consistency, efficacy and effectiveness of funding for children with SEND. This work is being co-produced with local school leaders and national SEND experts and is designed to lead to improved outcomes for children within WNC schools.

## **SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

New team transferred to WNC on 1 September 2022 after disaggregation.

The admissions process for September 2023 has now opened for primary and secondary applications. The deadline for applying for a secondary place is 31 October 2022 and 15 January 2023.

Councillor Fiona Baker

**Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education)**