

## **Non-Executive Director – Role and Person Specification**

### **Background**

Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) was set up as a company limited by guarantee on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020, wholly owned by Northamptonshire County council. The ownership transferred to the successor councils North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2021. NCT was established in response to a statutory direction from the Secretary of State for Education issued in June 2019. Statutory directions are issued to councils that are poorly performing and, in most cases, that provide children's services judged inadequate by Ofsted. In June 2019, Northamptonshire Children's Services were inspected by Ofsted were judged 'inadequate' as they were in 2013 and found to be failing to keep children safe. The most recent full Ofsted inspection in October 2022 showed a marked improvement in services with an overall 'required improvement to be good' judgement but there is still a lot of work to do in driving further improvement to achieve a 'good' judgement at the next inspection which is expected late 2025 or during 2026.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of Northamptonshire Children's Trust are to provide social care, youth offending and other related services and support to children, young people, and their families for the advancement of the community, and in particular:

- (a) to provide high quality and coordinated services in connection with children, young people, and their families, including in relation to children's safeguarding, children in care and at the edge of care, children leaving care and adoption and fostering services.
- (b) to innovate and to secure improvements in the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to children, young people, and their families in respect of social care, family support and youth offending service and (subject to the Company's overriding duty to keep children and young people safe from harm) to demonstrate value for money considerations.
- (c) to advance and promote social care, family support and youth offending services available to children, young people, and their families.
- (d) to work collaboratively with other agencies to identify the individual social care needs of children and young people and to establish suitable arrangements to prepare for and meet such needs.
- (e) to make a positive and effective contribution to multi-agency early intervention support for children, young people, and their families to avoid the need for more intensive social care support.

## **The Company's Board**

The Company's Board will provide strong leadership and financial oversight of Children's Services and have a single focus on improving outcomes for children, young people, and families, making sure that their views are recognised in helping to shape, develop and improve services. The board will have the opportunity to shape the new Trust for a new future, working with the new emerging unitary authorities.

The Board operates at a strategic level and is the responsible body for the operational performance, achievement, and overall direction of Children services. The Board will provide clarity of direction that demands the highest quality practice; recognises the importance and value of working in partnership and centres all its work on meeting the needs of children and young people. It will seek out innovative, collaborative, and creative solutions to deliver the highest quality service in the most efficient and effective way. It will work openly and transparently with the two unitary authorities and its partners about performance and outcomes and ensure that elected Members are able to exercise their democratic and statutory accountabilities to their communities.

The Company's Board will consist of several Executive Directors and Non-Executive Directors comprising the following:

- A chair, appointed by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Council, as a non-executive director during the period of statutory direction.
- Executive directors including the Trust Chief Executive.

Up to four non-executive directors to be appointed, with collective knowledge expertise and experience across children's social care, governance, finance, HR, and other relevant areas. Appointments will be made by the Chair in consultation with the Commissioners and the Council; and

- Additional Non-Executive Directors nominated by the Council.

## **The role of a Non-Executive Director**

Non-Executive Directors contribute to the work of the Board based upon their independence, their experience and knowledge, and their ability to stand back from the day-to-day operational management. They play a full and active role in the governance of the Trust bringing an independent judgement on issues of performance, forward planning, and accountability.

Non-Executive Directors are required to contribute and accept corporate decisions to ensure a joined up, robust and transparent decision-making process by the Board.

Board members, including the Non-Executive Directors, are required to represent the company locally, regionally, and nationally, developing and maintaining excellent relationships with a range of key partners and stakeholders including the Council (as a customer under its services contract),

other councils, Government, health organisations, and partners in the delivery of high quality and value for money services to children and their families.

Non-Executive Directors attend board meetings, which take place quarterly. In addition, there will also be attendance at committees, and they will undertake other tasks as appropriate and required. The meeting structure is to be determined by the new Chair and their board. All board and committee meetings take place during the day.

Board and Committee meetings will be held in Northamptonshire; however, some work can be done remotely and by telephone.

### **Person specification for a Non-Executive Director**

Children's Trusts are more common recently, but experience of operating in or as part of one is not essential. We are looking for a blend of skills and experience to lead the delivery of statutory and preventative children's services in changing environment with several significant challenges. Being able to improve services from their current levels whilst creating and using the Trust's status to its best advantage.

Applicants for the Non-Executive Director positions will be asked to provide evidence of examples of their experience and/or achievements in each of the selection criteria listed in the Person Specification.

Successful candidates will be expected to be able to demonstrate a strong record across the range of criteria listed. These responses will be further developed and discussed with those candidates invited for interview. We are looking for a range of diverse experiences, which collectively will construct the most effective board composition. As such, candidates do not need to possess all the outlined skills and experiences below. Significant strength in certain areas could offset a lack of experience in other areas as we seek to enhance the combined strength and diversity of the board.

### **Personal qualities and skills**

- A genuine commitment to improving the life chances of children and young people and an understanding of diverse and complex communities and the disadvantages faced by vulnerable children and young people.
- Strong interpersonal, listening and communication skills which engender confidence and support and the ability to engage with other Board members and Trust employees.
- Ability to think and act strategically in assisting the Trust to set and deliver on its objectives.
- Ability to work effectively with senior officers, wider Board members and the Chair.
- Capacity to commit the necessary time to fulfil the role.
- The ability to promote a culture that emphasises high performance and continuous improvement.
- Be able to demonstrate integrity, high ethical standards, sound judgment, and a willingness to challenge.

- Political sensitivity and an ability to establish positive relationships, which engender confidence and respect.
- Effective analytical skills; and
- Commercial Acumen.

### **Experience**

- A demonstrable track record of senior leadership and management, and of delivering a successful improvement in services.
- Evidence of effective strategic and operational resource management within a complex organisation.
- Experience and strong professional knowledge of children's services.
- Experience of children's social care, governance, finance, or HR.
- Evidence of working within a political and publicly accountable environment.
- Experience of working at Board level and effective corporate governance; and
- A level of local knowledge of Northamptonshire.

### **Terms of Appointment**

Each Non-Executive Director will be appointed for a fixed term of two years, with the potential for re-appointment at the end of that term.

Non-Executive Directors are anticipated to commit to approximately up to 20 days per year, including attendance at Board meetings together with any further Board or committee meetings that may be arranged, and to undertake work on behalf of the Board from time to time as required.

A Non-Executive Director must provide a minimum of three months' notice in writing to the company of any notice of resignation.

### **Qualification criteria**

- All Non-Executive Directors must:
- Be aged 18 or over.
- Not be the subject of a bankruptcy order or an interim order or entered a composition with their creditors generally in satisfaction of their debts.
- Be eligible to be a company director under the provisions of the Companies Acts and not be disqualified from being a company director.
- Not have been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence; and
- Provide a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.