

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Case Study

Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) partnered with Opus People Solutions to help recruit, develop and retain a professional and highly skilled workforce of the best and brightest social workers.

THE CHALLENGE

NCT knew that to be successful on their journey to becoming an outstanding service, they would need a strong and stable workforce who could work together to drive best practice throughout the organisation.

However, they were faced with the challenge of the reputation of the previous children's services following a "Requires Improvement" Ofsted rating as well as the national shortage of social workers affecting local authorities nationwide.



Northamptonshire Children's Trust engaged with Opus to help face these recruitment challenges and together we set the following objectives:

- Develop a new attraction and recruitment strategy
- Streamline the candidate journey
- Fastrack recruitment for new employees

NCT have made significant improvements to recruitment with 48 new permanent qualified social workers joining in 2021 and positive Ofsted comments.



THE SOLUTION

Opus worked extremely closely with NCT and our dedicated recruitment team essentially became an extension of NCT's HR and recruitment teams, attending key meetings including board meetings, weekly SMT's and Bi-weekly HR meetings.

Together we developed a short, medium, and long-term project plan. The plan was broken down into clear and measurable tasks that aligned with the overarching objectives and enabled outcomes to be continually reviewed.

We developed joint marketing to showcase the improvements NCT were making for both staff and service users.

THE OUTCOME

In just one year of being established, NCT have made significant improvements to recruitment with 48 new permanent qualified social workers joining in 2021 and applications for NCT higher than neighboring authorities.

An Ofsted visit in July 2021 highlighted the "determined focus on addressing challenges around workforce capacity, recruitment and retention is having some traction."

The partnership was recognised as Highly Commended at the 2022 PPMA Excellence in HR awards for the Best Partnership/ Collaboration category.

"The progress we have made in the last year has been phenomenal. I would describe our partnership and collaboration with Opus as a real team approach. It is much more than just a partnership; they are an extension of our recruitment team. We work with them in a very open and transparent way to come up with innovative and creative ideas to drive forward our recruitment in what are incredibly challenging times."

COLIN FOSTER

Chief Executive – Northamptonshire Children's Trust

