



**North Yorkshire**  
County Council

## Submission Details

<b>Organisation or individual to which this submission relates (if different from above):</b>	North Yorkshire Human Resources (NYHR)
<b>Approximate size of organisation (number of employees) if applicable:</b>	20,000 staff in organisation
<b>Number of employees covered by the initiative if applicable:</b>	27 staff in the NYHR team

## Our journey to creating effective partnerships with neighbouring local authorities – North Yorkshire Human Resources (NYHR)

Word count – 1,187 (from 'Background' onwards)  
File size – 1.4MB

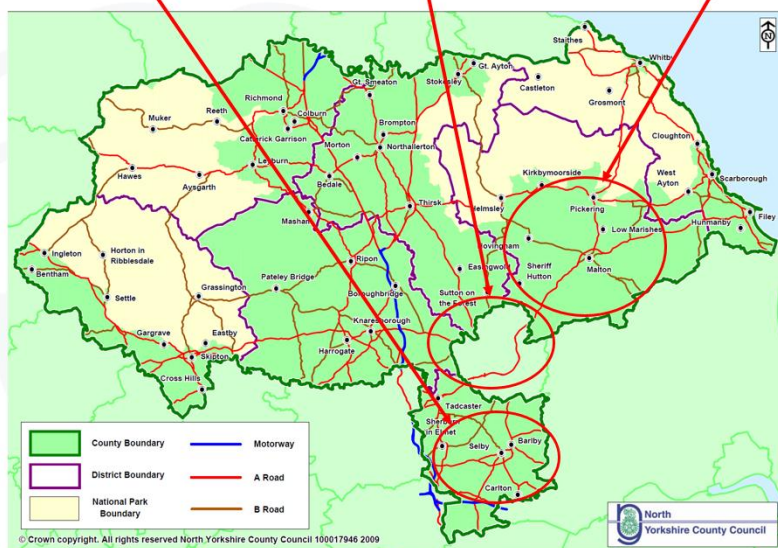
### BACKGROUND

North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) is one of England's largest LAs, serving 600,000 residents. Across the largely rural geography, some 380 schools reside within the county's boundaries. NYHR provides HR services to education based settings.

The educational landscape shifted substantially with the Academies Act, and our NYHR team have adapted their approach to delivering services in a new, competitive marketplace. Schools have a choice of who to trade with, including private sector providers with more resources and aggressive marketing strategies. We re-positioned our services as a business offering, providing 'core' SLA support, with additional commissioned services, exploiting fewer constraints on our ability to trade.

Our retention of maintained schools remains at 99%, but investment in the team has allowed us to grow our portfolio and expand beyond our traditional county boundaries to attract clients in Wakefield, Redcar, Goole and Hull.

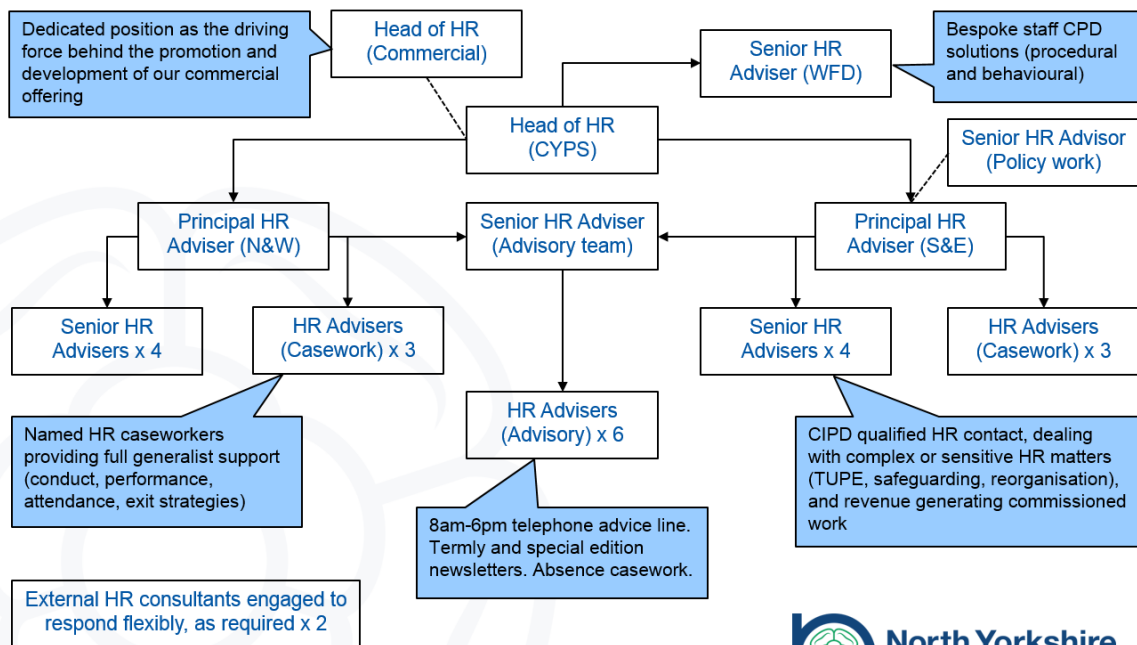
Additionally (and to our knowledge, uniquely), opportunities were explored to enter into partnership arrangements with some of our local councils.



### THE CHALLENGE

NYHR is already well known and used by the majority of NYCC schools and is renowned for being a highly professional, knowledgeable and responsive team. As the education sector continues to evolve, schools have more choice regarding the services they choose to purchase. As LAs adapt to these changes some find they are no longer able to offer an SLA for HR to the schools within their boundaries, meaning that schools have to assess and engage with alternatives.

In NYCC, maintained schools have continued to trade with NYHR, and in the case of City of York, we have been able to expand into areas that would previously have provided their own HR services. This supports our growth agenda allowing NYHR to prosper and be sustainable. This required a tactful and thorough transition to gain the trust and confidence of a new subset of clients who had been known for their resistant to change. We have expanded and developed our team structure to meet these challenges:



## THE SOLUTION

NYCC and City of York Council came together and planned a partnership working agreement that allowed the two neighbouring authorities to work in unison and also allowed York to be able to continue to meet the needs of the city's schools.

A team of HR experts with experience in education, and exceptional customer service skills were deployed into York to work from within the heart of the council's operation. Plans for an integrated strategy were drawn up between the authorities to enable the Advisers to get straight out to schools and deliver outstanding services. The team also worked closely with key stakeholders in York with whom close links are needed in order to continue a fully joined up service to clients. Excellent working relationships with key departments such as payroll, finance and legal within York were quickly established, and involved in the decision making, so that the services to the customer were maintained and enhanced.

The crucial task was to get key headteachers and political members at York involved and onboard right from the outset. NYCC worked hard on this and it has helped a smooth transition which ensured the NYHR service was tailored to the needs of York schools.

The partnership working agreement was so successful that York's schools signed new, extended SLAs with NYHR and this arrangement continues to flourish and evolve as we head into 2019. Since solid relationships have been formed within York, NYHR have been able to bring in improved ways of working and use our award winning service delivery model to replicate this success with other client councils.

## **Challenges along the way, and how we addressed them**

Schools in York are often much larger than NYCC schools and have highly complex HR needs;

- We provide dedicated named contacts
- We studied York's schools policies so these were fully understood and able to be applied
- We set up links with local Unions and arranged termly meetings to build relationships
- We respond quickly, reliably and professionally

The NYHR team have embraced a more 'modern council' way of working;

- Close links with client stakeholders allow our HR Advisers to know who key contacts were and learn essential practice and process in order to satisfy customer needs
- Recent investment in mobile technology allowed NYHR to work flexibly and efficiently
- Used area intelligence to respond to existing client needs and embrace new opportunities

## **Expansion of the "Partnership" Approach**

Following the success of the arrangement above, as partners the two Local Authorities have appointed a joint Head of HR to oversee the Corporate HR function at York. This has meant the NYCC team can be used more widely to provide resilience and capacity to a neighboring LA. Beyond that, continuing with the theme of working collectively, NYCC now work in partnership with Ryedale District Council, which includes the delivery of the Head of HR role, and developing and delivering their workforce Organisational Development strategy through effective partnership approaches. NYCC is also engaging with Selby District Council to deliver focused and effective OD solutions. There is a real understanding of the importance of working together to ensure the achievement of our key strategic goals whilst ensuring efficiency and the appropriate use of public funds in delivering our collective targets.

## **BENEFITS TO THE ORGANISATION**

### **Tangible evidence**

- Forming a partnership with York to deliver HR to over 40 new schools, generating a further £150,000 this financial year
- The team has grown with the expanding customer base, providing career opportunity/development
- Continuously sharing our best practice approach to commercialism to partner services and partner authorities
- Establishing NYHR credibility as a provider of choice
- The HR team achieved over £1million turn over last year, allowing us to deliver over £80k in profit back into the LA
- Selby and Ryedale District Council arrangements are worth over £300k in additional revenue

### **Compliments and commendations**

"I cannot praise the service from NYHR highly enough. It is an extremely efficient service with an outstandingly good response time, particularly like the fact I have been allocated my own 'key workers' who have got to know me and my school and this makes my work so much more efficient and easier to manage. Knowing that I have such a fantastic HR team behind me has allowed me to get on with running a professional and happy school." ***St George's RC Primary School – York***

"Excellent and professional service and support always received. Very helpful and friendly staff who will guide you through every situation to gain the best result." ***Fishergate Primary School – York***

"The HR team at NYCC provide an outstanding service supporting the District Council. After undertaking initial health check assessments, the HR team have driven forward a transformation agenda in partnership with the organisation. The HR team at NYCC understand the challenges and are always up for providing pragmatic solutions." ***CEO – Ryedale District Council***

**To conclude.....**

We are very proud of our team's achievements, and the success of the team's partnership working agreements speaks volumes for the great work we do and adds to our fantastic and ever growing reputation. Having PPMA's endorsement of this progress would be fantastic. Thank you for taking the time to consider our award entry.