



## **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Performance Report**

#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to brief the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board on the partnership arrangements in place following the SEND Inspection in Torbay and the positive actions that the Council and Partners have undertaken to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

#### **Recommendations**

1. To note the content of the report.
2. To be assured that the appropriate monitoring and improvement processes are in place to address the findings and deliver the necessary positive changes for Torbay's children and young people with SEND and their families.

#### **Background**

Between 17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected the arrangements within Torbay to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). This was the second local area inspection for Torbay, but the first under the new 2023 framework.

Inspectors published their report ([50279699](#)) on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025, which judged the local area partnership to have widespread or systemic failings. The report outlined several key areas for improvement, including four areas for priority action, as well as acknowledging the progress made by the partnership to improve local SEND services since the previous inspection. The partnership accepts the outcome of the inspection and apologises to those children, young people and their families in Torbay that have not been receiving the service they need and deserve. The partnership recognises that further urgent improvements need to be made.

As a result of the inspection outcome, the local authority was issued an Improvement Notice and will be subject to monitoring visits, followed by a monitoring inspection approximately 18 months after the report was published. This will be followed by a full inspection in 3 years.

In response to the report, the local area partnership was required to produce a detailed 'Priority Impact Plan' (PIP). [Priority Impact Plan - Family Hub](#)

Torbay's PIP was co-produced with stakeholders, including parents and carers, and is the improvement plan for SEND and replaces the previous Written Statement of Action. The plan sets out what needs to be delivered in the next 18 months with key actions and expected impact. Unfortunately, due to the timing of the published inspection report (25<sup>th</sup> June), the planning and development of the PIP took place throughout the summer holidays. It is recognised that this created challenges in ensuring full partnership representation, e.g. schools, in the development of the plan's content.

Torbay's PIP was reviewed by the DfE and Regional NHSE officials. On the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025 the local area partnership was informed that the plan meets the criteria outlined within paragraph 148 of the Area SEND Inspection Handbook, and is an actionable plan focused on the Areas for Priority Action outlined in the inspection report.

The PIP covers five key priority impact areas:



Area 5: 'Preparation for Adulthood' was identified as an area for improvement in the inspection report. However, following discussion at the SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership Board (SLAIP), it was agreed that this area required greater focus and scrutiny, so it is presented as a fifth priority area for the purpose of monitoring improvements.

## **Governance Arrangements**

Revised governance processes have been put in place to;

- Ensure strong strategic and operational oversight from a multi-agency perspective.
- Ensure that the voice and influence of the child/young person and parents/carers are heard and acted upon at the highest level by their direct involvement.
- Ensure that SEND improvement is firmly cemented within the overall children's strategy and that of the Integrated Care Partnership

A refreshed SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership (SLAIP) Board was established in January 2025 to provide strategic leadership, assurance and oversight for the priority actions; this has been enhanced further following the inspection. The board is using its influence and accountability to set a clear vision, champion change and innovation, and drive improvements across the Local Area, and is chaired independently.

The Board is committed to ensuring the voice and lived experience of children, young people and their families shape its work. Direct input from children, young people and families feeds into Board discussions and champions extending the participation reach and engagement.

The SLAIP Board sits within Torbay and One Devon's broader governance for children, young people and families and is accountable to Anne-Marie Bond, Chief Executive of Torbay Council and Libby Ryan-Davis, Acting CEO of One Devon Integrated Care Board.

The Board reports to the Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB), not only to seek constructive challenge and support, but to ensure the activity and impact is fully integrated into Torbay's wider strategic vision and governance for children, young people and families. The CCIB has senior representatives from across education, health and care as well as political and corporate representation, which ensures there are clear routes for dissemination and alignment with wider priorities.

SEND Family Voice Torbay, the formal Parent Carer Forum for the local area, gathers information from families and wider parent groups and represents their voices at the board. The voice and lived experience of children and young people with SEND is also heard regularly, and the board is strengthening its work with Torbay's SEND Youth Forum. There are also links to the Local Education and Inclusion Board so that school leaders can be fully engaged in this improvement work.

An operational delivery group has been established to ensure that the actions from both the priority impact plan and board meetings are delivered.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

Local areas are required to implement the DfE's and NHS England's monitoring, support, and challenge arrangements to improve their SEND service delivery. This process involves several key steps:

- **Monitoring:** Continuous oversight of the local area's SEND arrangements to ensure they meet the required standards.
- **Support:** Providing guidance and resources to help local areas address any identified weaknesses.
- **Challenge:** Holding local areas accountable for making necessary improvements.

A comprehensive 'stock take' review will be conducted by the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England, during March 2026. The purpose of this visit will be to assess the progress made by the local area in addressing the issues identified in the improvement notice. Following the first stock take, a series of 'deep dive' sessions will then take place. Each deep dive activity will be a thorough and detailed examination of each priority area, to review and actions and assess the difference it is making to children and young people.

Ofsted and CQC will undertake the formal monitoring visit from December 2026.

### **Summary of Progress Since the Inspection**

The partnership's approach to improving support and services to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Torbay continues to be based on the long-term vision, which focuses on the areas parents and carers identified as meaning the most to them:

- SEND is everybody's business – embedding the vision and values into the practice of everyone who works with children and families from 0-25.
- Identify and respond to needs early – in ways that value lived experience and expertise and offer personalised care and support.
- Deliver in the right place at the right time – always asking 'so what difference are we making in the life of children or young people'?

This vision, along with the commitments outlined in the Co-production Charter and Children and Young People's pledge informs and guides the improvement work across the partnership.

**Area 1: Governance: Work faster and better together. Improve Co-production and relationships with parents and carers.**

- A Review of all governance arrangements has been completed.
- An independent chair is in place and holds the local area board to account.
- A plan for improvement is being delivered at pace with full engagement for all local area partners.
- Arrangements for strong and robust governance is swift.
- A communications plan is a key priority for creation and delivery this term to ensure that these changes are being communicated positively with families.

**Area 2: Commissioning: Identify gaps where no support or provision exists and create support and services for these areas**

- A new Torbay Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has been completed.
- A workshop to share and act on the new JSNA took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> January and involved representation from across the partnership.
- Following proposals, the DfE have approved the change in designation of Coombe Pafford School to create of 40 ASC special school places for September 2026. Dual designation will run during transition years, with the school becoming fully ASC specialist by 2030. This addresses a critical gap in local specialist provision for autistic children.

**Area 3: Multi-agency working: Work together to improve support for those children without an EHCP**

- Local Authority Statutory SEND Services have been reviewed, restructured, and reshaped. This will lead to improving timeliness for EHCPs and a better quality of EHCPs; improved quality according to our Envision auditing tool has already reached one of our key performance indicators.
- An Intervention Grant has been successfully acquired, which means Support, Information and Guidance is being delivered to 15 mainstream schools to enhance and strengthen inclusion. An uplift in this grant means that a further 10 schools should be supported during 2026.
- The Local Authority has invested in a new Head of Service for Quality First Teaching role to strategically support inclusion across Torbay.
- The DfE RISE Teams have been working across Torbay on three new workstreams which will positively impact SEND children; attendance and behaviour, Y6-7 Transition and a Cradle to Career project.
- A review of the implementation of the Graduated Response has started with a Torbay map of Neurodiversity Support being launched in January 2026.
- A new role has been implemented to quality assure all Alternate Providers and ensure outcomes for children are at the heart of this support.
- Attendance and suspensions and exclusions area wide is still a challenge, but officers and colleagues from across the partnership are continuing to work on these areas.

## **Area 4: Waiting Times and Support: Reduce waiting times for health assessments and improve the support available whilst waiting**

### **Reduce waiting times**

- Focused waiting list recovery work has resulted in no children and young people waiting more than 18 weeks for an assessment by the Mood, Emotions and Relationships Team (MERS – previously known as CAMHS).
- Community Paediatrics have worked to reduce the waiting time for assessment. There are currently no children or young people waiting over 40 weeks and 40% of those waiting are being seen within 18 weeks.
- An out of hours end of life nursing service began in October 2025, providing a 24 hour on call service for patients who require complex symptom management or who choose to have end of life care at home.

### **Improve the support available whilst waiting**

- The MERS service is piloting an enhanced triage process to extend the support while waiting offer. The aim is that all referrals accepted for getting help will receive a telephone triage assessment from a mental health practitioner within 2 weeks of referral.
- MyWay Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health service, delivered by Young Devon in Partnership, launched in July 2025 and is currently supporting 2000 young people through a variety of wellbeing pathways across Devon and Torbay. Wellbeing sessions have been delivered at South Devon College and two schools, and future delivery plans are being confirmed with partners.
- Luminova - an online therapeutic game designed to support children and young people self-manage worries and build resilience is available to all young people in Torbay. 93% of young people reported a reduction in their anxiety and 97% of young people with SEND showed reliable improvement in their condition following accessing the service.
- The 0-19 public health nursing team has launched regular school drop-ins across all primary and secondary schools in Torbay with good initial uptake by parents. Information and feedback are being collected and will be used to inform future offers of support to families and schools.
- The second year of the Partnership in Neurodiversity in Schools Programme (PINS) began in September 2025, with 4 school benefitting from a support offer tailored to their needs, as well as 5 schools from last year continuing to receive support through a community of practice offer.

## **Area 5: Preparation for Adulthood: Improve processes for transition from Childrens' into Adults' services so that young people are better supported across education, health and care**

- Due to new EHCP processes NEET levels for EHCPs are currently better than Torbay's statistical neighbours.
- Using our NTDi Grant and expertise a family conference for Preparation for Adulthood will take place in March. Five family workshops will also be held at Secondary schools about supported employment and a workshop for colleagues during National Careers week (w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> March).
- Links have been made with the Connect to Work programme which will deliver a supported employment model for young people aged 18+ with disabilities, health conditions or complex challenges.
- Adult Social Care (ASC) colleagues actively engage in transition planning, attending EHCP reviews and weekly transition panels for young people with known or likely Care Act eligible needs.
- A gap has been identified in the referral routes for schools to be able to refer children with EHCP's who are not known to the additional needs team into transitions panel for consideration and tracking.
- The monthly Commissioning Oversight Group meeting brings leads from Children's and adult commissioning together to share emerging trends and themes. These then inform future agendas for our provider forums.
- Commissioning plans including the Adult Social Care Market Blueprint 2020-2030 provide information on our market supply and commissioning intentions.

## **Conclusion**

Following the SEND Inspection, Torbay's Local Area SEND partnership has worked hard to review and redesign the governance structures and establish strengthened partnership arrangements to deliver the required improvements as set out in the Priority Impact Plan.

It is recognised that much of the work, since September, has been focused on delivering actions to improve the system and as such it is too early to fully measure the impact this will have on the outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Torbay.

It is also acknowledged that it will also take time for these changes to be fully felt by families and the ongoing engagement and co-production with children, young people, parents and carers will be critical to ensure the partnership is making a difference.

## **Key Issues for Overview and Scrutiny to Discuss**

1. How can the Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the work of the SEND Partnership Board in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Torbay?