

Meeting: Policy Development and Decision Group

Date: tbc

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Children Looked After Placements: Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? Immediately

Executive Lead Contact Details: Councillor Julien Parrott, Executive Lead for Children's and Adults Services, julien.parrott@torbay.gov.uk

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Andy Dempsey, Director of Children's Services, 01803 208949, andy.dempsey@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably possible, sufficient accommodation for Children Looked After in its area. This is known as the Sufficiency Duty.
- 1.2 This Statement sets out the current position in relation to the range of services provided for children looked after and the actions which are proposed to be taken to secure sufficient accommodation moving forward.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 Historically, Torbay Council has had a higher population of children looked after than national and statistical comparators. This reflects a low-risk/high-cost strategy put in place in response to the inadequate inspection outcome in 2011 and weaknesses in our permanence planning.
- 2.2 During 2017, the Council revised its permanence strategy and this is beginning to evidence positive outcomes for children and young people in terms of adoption, special guardianship and foster to adopt.
- 2.3 Alongside this a revised Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan sets out a range of actions to ensure there is sufficient high quality accessible provision for Torbay children and young people to ensure that when a child requires to be accommodated we can identify a placement that is suitable to their needs. It should be noted that this is against a very challenging operational environment with a lack of placement capacity as a national issue rather than one unique to Torbay or the South West region.

2.4 The revised Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan have been developed in order that the Council meets its Sufficiency Duty and will be subject to regular review to ensure it is delivering its aims and objectives.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 That the Children Looked After Placements: Sufficiency Statement and Action 2018-2020 be approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Children Looked After Placements: Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan

Background Documents

None

Report Clearance

Report clearance:	This report has been reviewed and approved by:	Date:
Chief Executive	Steve Parrock	
Monitoring Officer	Anne-Marie Bond	
Chief Finance Officer	Martin Phillips	
Relevant Director/Assistant Director	Andy Dempsey	

Section 1: Background Information

1.	What is the proposal / issue? A revised Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan has been prepared in relation to Children Looked After placements.
2.	What is the current situation? Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to take steps to secure, so far as is reasonably possible, sufficient accommodation for Children Looked After in its area. This is known as the Sufficiency Duty. This Statement sets out the current position in relation to the range of services provided for children looked after and the actions which are proposed to be taken to secure sufficient accommodation moving forward.
3.	What options have been considered? It is a statutory requirement to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation for children looked after. Setting out the actions that the Council wishes to take to meet this duty ensures that progress can be effectively monitored.
4.	How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan? The Sufficiency Statement is part of a suite of documents which support the delivery of the Council's Children and Young People's Plan and the improvement journey for Children's Services. The emerging Children and Young People's Plan has the objective of ensuring all of our children and young people are safe, happy and healthy in order that they can reach this full potential. The delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and its supporting strategies will ensure that the Council meets its targeted action of protecting all children and giving them the best start in life. In addition, the Action Plan takes account of the principles within the Corporate Plan with a focus on reducing demand through prevention and early intervention as well as using resources to best effect.
5.	How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents? The proposed Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan is an integral element of improving outcomes for our children looked after. It seeks to focus on our permanence planning whilst acting, at all times, in the best interests of the

	child.
6.	<p>How does this proposal tackle deprivation?</p> <p>The Sufficiency Statement and Action Plan does not in itself tackle deprivation. However, the Statement supports the Children and Young People’s Plan which sets out how the Council will tackle child poverty. The Children and Young People’s Plan is consistent with both the Economic Strategy and the emerging Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, both of which identify tackling deprivation as a key aim.</p>
7.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>Children and young people in the Council’s care and children for whom an Education, Health and Care Plan has been issued and those needs cannot be met without an out of area residential placement.</p> <p>Consultation has not been undertaken in preparing this Statement and Action Plan. However, the views of children and young people will continue to be taken into account when placements are made, through our CLA review processes – supported by an independent advocacy service.</p>
8.	<p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment	
9.	<p>What are the financial and legal implications?</p> <p>It is a requirement of the Children Act 1989 to take steps to secure, as far as is reasonably possible, sufficient accommodation for children looked after in the area.</p> <p>The action plan seeks to ensure an appropriate range of accommodation in order to develop a more robust approach towards permanence planning. Over time, this will contribute to bringing the numbers of children looked after in Torbay into line with statistical comparators. This will have a positive financial impact on the authority whilst improving outcomes for children and young people.</p>
10.	<p>What are the risks?</p> <p>The risks of not agreeing the Statement and Action Plan is that work on securing sufficient accommodation is not progressed in a co-ordinated manner and that progress cannot be effectively tracked.</p>

	<p>A lack of capacity can result in poor matching and adverse impacts for children and young people. Our Sufficiency Statement places an emphasis on growing capacity for foster care which also avoids the inappropriate use of high-cost residential placements with all that implies in terms of costs and outcomes for children.</p>
11.	<p>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</p> <p>We would take this into account at the point of any procurement process associated with the Action Plan.</p>
12.	<p>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</p> <p>The Sufficiency Statement contains evidence and data about our current population of children looked after. It seeks to identify trends and hence the accommodation required to meet the needs of children looked after in the coming years.</p>
13.	<p>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
14.	<p>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

Equality Impacts

15	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups		
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	By implementing the Action Plan, the Council will be able to best meet the needs of the children it looks after.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability			No differential impact
Women or men			No differential impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No differential impact
16	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Not applicable.		
17	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Not applicable.		