



September 2010

# Equality and Diversity

## Report on Achievements

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# Report on achievements for equality and diversity to summer 2010



As a council we are committed to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

Over the past year we have continued to engage and work with our communities to ensure we provide services that meet their diverse needs. Torbay Council continues to work hard in meeting these needs and this report summarises some of those achievements.

The challenge now is for the council to drive forward and work in partnership with others to meet Torbay wide commitments as laid out in the new Torbay Joint Equality Strategy that was agreed by the Torbay Strategic Partnership in January 2010 in order to deliver real equality outcomes and promote equality for all regardless of gender, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age. Together we will help to develop better outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

## **Cllr Louisa Aiton**

Equality and Diversity Champion



This year has been a year of consolidation with regards to our progress in relation to equality and diversity. Since the Council migrated to the New Equality Framework for Local Government and was awarded 'Achieving' status in March 2009 we have continued to work hard to engage with our communities and work in partnership with others to outline area wide commitments for the next 5 years.

In 2009/10 we have achieved many equality and diversity outcomes that we can be proud of – The Council continued to actively engage with our community through our community equality groups, we supported the first Torbay Pride event and the Council completed its Job Evaluation/Single status project. We have continued to embed equalities within the commissioning of your services e.g. the new Joint Venture Company for Waste and will be looking to further mainstream our approach to equalities throughout all business units.

With the new Equality Act we recognise and are committed to continuing with our statutory requirements with regards to race, gender and disability. We have always extended this commitment to age, sexual orientation and religion and belief in the work that we do but will now bring all of our equality and diversity targets together under a Single Equality Scheme for the Council.

Moving forward we are continuously improving and will now drive the organisation towards gaining Excellent in the new Equality Framework for Local Government to show how committed we are in providing services throughout the Bay that meet the differing needs of our diverse community.

## **Caroline Taylor**

Deputy Chief Executive / Commissioner Corporate Support

## Context – *Knowing our Communities*

Torbay Council faces a number of challenges in its ambitions to 'Turn the Tide' in the Bay and create a vibrant place with full community prosperity. Knowing our communities is essential in learning and understanding the differences in need across the population of Torbay that will help us to improve the lives of local people and reduce current inequalities.

- Torbay's resident population is projected to grow by 17.2% from 134,000 in 2009 to 157,000 in 2033. It is also expected that nationally the population will increase by 17.2% compared to a projected increase of 20.3% for the South West region.
- The proportion of Torbay's population aged 50 and over has increased since the 2001 Census from 42.6% to 44.1% in 2009. This increase is projected to continue to 49.7% in 2033. The proportion of people aged 80 is projected to increase from 7.5% in 2009 to 13% in 2033. Our People First Strategy aims to enable people over 50 to unlock their potential for them to play an even greater role, recognising and valuing the contribution older people can make to society.
- The overall number of young people in Torbay is projected to increase. However, while the actual number of young people (people aged 19 and under) is projected to increase from 28,900 in 2009 to 31,100 in 2033, the proportion of the population they represent is projected to drop from 21.5% in 2009 to 19.8% in 2033. This is in line with the national and regional trend. The Council needs to recognise this and work closely with young people to expand their opportunities to encourage them to stay in the Bay.
- Torbay's non-white population has virtually doubled in recent years from 0.7% in 1991 to 1.2% in 2001. According to experimental population estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), it is estimated that the proportion of the population who are non-white has increased further to 3%. The overall Black or Minority Ethnic population is estimated to be at 6% in these experimental figures. This means Torbay is continuing to be more diverse and this brings opportunities as well as challenges to ensure we stay a cohesive community.
- There are 23.5% disabled people receiving benefits in Torbay compared to 18.2% nationally and in the South West. We need to ensure we meet the needs of people with disabilities in the services we provide and continue to engage and involve disabled people in our service planning.
- Despite the 'Palm Tree' image of Torbay, there are areas of severe deprivation, with two of Torbay's electoral wards being ranked in the top 10% most deprived in England. Socio-economic inequalities is something the Council and its partners has begun to focus on through its Closing the Gap project but we recognise that there is still lots to do. :
- There are also disparities in achievement (achieving 5+ GCSE grades A\*-C) between children in low income households (32.2%) compared to pupils not in low income households who are comparatively higher achievers (59.2%). There are also 22% of children in 'out of work' families within the Bay where no adults are in employment. One of the new Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013 strategic priorities is to focus first and most on areas of greatest socio-economic deprivation to narrow the gap between the most and least disadvantaged.
- There is a strong LGBT community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) in South Devon although latest figures show only 0.3% of people stated that they live in same-sex couple households. Our target is to increase our contact with these groups and support LGBT Groups.
- With regards to religion and belief over three quarters of the population (76.2%) are Christian with 14.9% stating they have no religion. We have made stronger links with the Interfaith Forum and will continue to be aware of differing values and beliefs in the way we work.

## **Context – *Knowing the national framework***

- In April 2010 the new Equality Act gained Royal Assent. The Act defines discrimination in terms of nine 'protected characteristics' (rather than equality strands): age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act is to extend the new public sector equality duty to now include all nine protected characteristics and it will make it clear that public bodies will need to take due regard to be positive and proactive in tackling discrimination. The Act also creates a new socio-economic public sector duty on public authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, about how to exercise their functions to "have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage."
- The new Equality Framework for Local Government was developed in 2008. It builds on the old Equality Standard which helped local authorities make real progress in mainstreaming equality. The Framework aspires to be simpler, smarter, proportional and relevant. It is based on three levels of achievement; 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent' rather than the five levels of the old standard. This reduces the actions from 167 to 88, which authorities can implement in ways that are relevant and proportionate to their needs. The Framework also contains new features including: • a wider definition of equality, based on equal life chances • a new section on 'Knowing your communities and equality mapping' • a focus on equality outcomes for all sections of the community, mapping and narrowing gaps • a central role for self-assessment and peer challenge.

# Achievements

For the period 2009 - August 2010 achievements based on the New Equality Framework for Local Government headings include: -

## 1. Knowing our Community

- In November 2008 the Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP) agreed to the development of a **Joint Equality Strategy** for partners across the Bay to provide high level joined up development and action to tackle equality issues and priorities. In 2009/10 a series of consultation events took place with equalities groups, including consultation at the Teranga multicultural event with over 500 people having their say. In addition workshop events have been held with key stakeholders representing the four community plan themes of Pride in the Bay, New Economy, Sustainable Communities and Learning and Skills for the Future. In January 2010 a draft Joint Equality Strategy was agreed by the TSP based on the consultation. The Strategy links directly to the Torbay Community Plan focus on community prosperity for the people of the Bay with three overarching themes being identified: -
  - Socio-economic participation for all;
  - Reducing hate crime and the fear of crime felt by minority communities; and
  - Promoting diversity as an asset.
- A **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** was developed in 2008 that gained national recognition. The report developed by the Torbay Strategic Partnership helps us to get a comprehensive picture of the differences in need across the population of Torbay. It also allows the Council and its partners to understand the complex factors that will help us to improve the lives of local people and reduce current inequalities so that we can set meaningful targets.
- In 2008 all council's had to undertake a national survey called The Place Survey that provides information on **people's perceptions** of their local area and the local services they receive. In 2009 the Council used this information on people's perceptions and provided an equalities breakdown of the information so that we could 'tell a story' about the specific needs and opinions of the traditionally excluded groups within our communities. The results helped us to determine the priorities for the Joint Equality Strategy with our partners.
- **Developing enterprise in Torbay's deprived communities** – The Council has secured £7.5 million from the European Union Competitiveness Programme to help support the development of an enterprise culture in Torbay. This project will help generate economic activity in Torbay's deprived areas and provide opportunity, support and advice for those who are considering self employment. It will help local people develop business ideas and support the establishment and growth of new businesses. The project

will help to focus on creating new commercial/social enterprises within under represented groups.

- **Customer profiling in Connections** – The Connections Team (the first point of call for customer enquiries) understand the types of enquiries customers are making but wanted to know more about who they are and whether any groups are not accessing our services. For example, over 50% of all enquiries are consistently Benefits related and this has informed the way the Benefits Team work to better focus on how we deal with our customers. We intend to analyse and address the gaps in groups who do not access us or have only limited contact. The Customer Profiling exercise has enabled us to look further into whether we are ensuring equal access to services across each of the equalities protected characteristics and to tailor services accordingly.

## 2. Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

- Construction is now well under way on the **new Community Library and Information Centre in Paignton** and the new library opens on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The project prides itself in being a community project that will house a modern new library, a reading garden, a multi-purpose meeting space, a café, a media suite and toilets, including a Changing Places facility which provides extra features for people with a disability. There will also be centralised facilities for a number of agencies, including community police, Connections and adult & community learning. Children and young people are actively involved and have been engaged in the development of the lottery funded community library. Consultation was also carried out with the over 50s about the ICT suite.
- Torbay has developed a clear framework in **People First** and is focussing on gaining greater involvement of older people in effecting the necessary cultural shift and will be providing key focus for 2010. The Older Person's Partnership Board was re formed and is currently chaired by the Director of Age Concern with representatives from each of the quality of life themes. Representation includes the Local Involvement Network (LINK) and the Torbay and Paignton U3A (University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age). The board has been dominated by agency representation and has spent some time examining its role in championing older people and challenging the way services are delivered to improve the quality of life of people 50+ in Torbay. The view of the board is that it needs to completely change the nature of its membership and has commissioned a mystery shopping exercise to involve more older people in the work of the board. The intention is to use a number of reviews and green paper on the funding of adult care as the key mechanism for further involvement and engagement of all ages in planning for an ageing population in Torbay.

- **The Children and Young People's Plan** was developed based on the outcomes we want to achieve following extensive consultation with professionals, partners and the public across 6 staff events and 28 public consultations. A young person's version of the plan has also been designed, developed and produced by 4 different groups of young people who worked hard to make sure young people's views were heard and to make things better for all young people. The groups were CHIPS (Children and fluorescent adolescents Having an Impact on Policy and Services) Torbay's Disability Council, TOFFY (Torbay Opportunity Fund For Youth) and Torbay Youth Cabinet. The groups were supported by Children's Rights and Participation, The Children's Society, and the Torbay Youth Service. They designed the plan so that young people had a document telling them about the priorities agreed by the Children's Trust, how young people can help themselves and to provide some ideas for the Children's Trust to consider to improve outcomes in the priority areas.
- Torbay Council is signed up to the **BSL (British Sign language) Charter**. This Charter contains a series of pledges that are aimed at improving the lives of Deaf people in Devon - providing a framework for organisations on how to ensure Deaf people access services and education fully and have their language needs met on contact. It is expected that the Charter will give Deaf people, who use BSL, a basis on which to assert their rights to receive a minimum standard of service from an organisation. It translates the legal duties of the Disability Discrimination Act into practical, meaningful solutions. There are six advisors in the Connections Team who are able to sign and the Team ensure that these advisors are in Connections on a Wednesday morning with at least one advisor being able to sign during normal opening times.
- In November 2009 Members awareness sessions took place around **'Improving Life Chances for All'**. The aims of the sessions were to deepen members understanding of the importance of equality and cohesion in communities they represent and also to better equip members to represent hard to reach groups and utilise their community leadership skills to predict future service needs. Members discussed how people experience Council services differently depending on their needs and that by identifying diverse needs they can proactively build relations in the community to promote community cohesion.
- The Council continues to meet its **equality and human rights obligations** through its Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Equality and Diversity Policy and Scheme all of which are under review during 2010 in order to develop a Single Equality Scheme (SES). The SES will cover all equality legislation and be developed in line with the new Equality Act and Equality Framework for Local Government.
- The Council was presented the **'Achieving'** Level within the new Equality Framework for Local Government in March 2009 following a Peer Assessment in 2008 under the old Equality Standard Scheme. We are now committed to driving improvement forward to gaining 'Excellent' status.

- The organisation is committed to equality and diversity and its **Corporate Equality Action Group (CEAG)** play a key role in mainstreaming equality through service provision. The CEAG is made up of equality representatives from each business unit who have a role in the continued assessment by services on their equality impacts – through Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). An example of this is the EIA on the Corporate Procurement Strategy where the Procurement Team are now working to simplify the standard template documents and terms and conditions in order to improve accessibility to small and medium business enterprises and other such organisations as those coming from the Third Sector. The Team also used their EIA to highlight the need to include a supplier feedback form within the tender document in order to gain information from them about how they found the process/the department through the process and some improvements have been made to the equalities monitoring form that is included in the tender document. Once work on these templates has been finalised we will then go live with using them with a view to increasing the level of customer satisfaction (from the supplier side).
- Some of our pupils at **Torbay School** recently took part in a Community Cohesion media competition which looked at celebrating diversity within Torbay. Year 9 pupils won 1st prize in the Key Stage 3 section with a photography entry and one of the Key Stage 2 pupils, Jordan O'Rourke, won 1st prize with his poster entry.
- **Barton Primary School** achieved the Inclusion Mark 2009 being one of the first schools in Devon to achieve this award. Barton is also involved in the Comenius project and has been for the past two years being linked to two schools in Italy, Poland and Turkey. The school has just been awarded the next two years of funding being 4 out of 20 schools to achieve this out of Devon from the British Council. The primary school has had notification that they are linked so far with Germany and Spain.

### 3. Community Engagement

- The **Hele Neighbourhood Pathfinder Project** is an initiative to engage more extensively with the residents of one of Torbay's most deprived areas. 'Hele's Angels' was formed as a cross agency team to work with the local community. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and crime, clean streets, activities for teenagers and the under 11s, and job prospects and wage levels formed the four priority areas for targeted delivery. The project provides opportunities that would otherwise not have existed for developing projects and services that will address a range of issues associated with deprivation.
- In addition to the Hele Pilot, engagement in other deprived areas has also resulted in **positive outcomes**. For instance facilities for young people Roundham with Hyde ward – Paignton Play Park.

- Within Safer Communities the **'You Said, We Did' Campaign** is undertaken every year and targets hard to reach community groups. The campaign aims to engage with local communities, identify the issues that matter to them and deliver actions based on the feedback. The latest round of You Said We Did Meetings were held during January and February 2010, the community groups included:-
  - i. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
  - ii. Black Minority Ethnic
  - iii. People with Disabilities
  - iv. Young People
  - v. Older People

Following on from the You Said We Did meetings action plans are being produced to tackle a number of issues raised from these community Groups.

- **Equality community groups** were established in the beginning of 2008 with groups being set up around the equality strands: -
  - **Imagine (Torbay Multicultural Group):** Imagine members are heavily involved with the Teranga event. Other projects include e.g. ESOL language courses (Sure Start pay for meeting rooms and also funded the courses with £1000 for books etc), One Nation multicultural group (based in Torquay), One World after schools club and a women's group. There is also a Turkish and Kurdish group which also meets regularly in Paignton. The group invites speakers along from different organisations e.g. Council's Council Tax and Benefits department, Police, Fire etc to talk to the group about services and support that is available to them. A leaflets and information table is always full with information that people can also take away with them. There are currently 110 people on the mailing list and 10 people who sit on the core group.
  - **50+ Forum:** The group have been involved in a number of consultation events e.g. looking at the outcomes from the Place Survey, New Paignton Hub, and Joint Equality Strategy. They have had speakers from a number of organisations including Age Concern, Stagecoach, Health and Fire to give them information and advise. There are currently 56 people on the mailing list.
  - **Youth Cabinet:** The Youth Cabinet has been established now for nearly 2 years with a structure of sub groups around the Every Child Matters outcomes. Youth Cabinet members campaign to get new members involved during the local democracy week 12<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> October and will take part on presentations to advertise their group and to let other young people know what they have been involved in. There has been a lot of support for these new groups from partners e.g. Safer Communities, Police, Connexions and the Children's Society and is also well supported by South Devon College who believe strongly in what the Youth Cabinet are doing and provide the meeting rooms free of charge.
  - **Disability Group:** The Disability community group has a contact list of around 37. The group have been involved in a number of consultations especially around access which has included the new Paignton Library, Taxi survey and Housing Strategy. The group also had speakers along

from the Disability Information Service, Stagecoach and Fire to talk about issues that may affect them.

- **LGBT Community Group:** Now that more trust has been established the numbers have increased for this group. There are currently 23 people on the mailing list and most meetings there are around 13 people who attend on a regular basis. The group meets regularly and it is from these meetings that the **Torbay Rainbow Café** has been established - a social coffee morning where people can meet up away from 'the scene'. The same people who attend the meetings also attend the Rainbow café and they are very keen that both groups remain. The meetings have involved speakers such as Healthy Lifestyles, Fire, Recycling, and Police. The group is also very keen to produce some literature around Gay History in Torbay and are looking at gathering quotes, stories, pictures etc to produce a leaflet that could be produced for the Gay Pride event.
- **Faith and Belief:** Links are being formed with the Interfaith Forum to see whether the Council can support them with future projects.
- During 2009-10 specific outcomes that were achieved by the Equality Groups include:-
  - i. The **Terranga Cultural and Diversity Festival** was held in August 2009 aimed at bringing people from different cultures and communities in Torbay together for a day of international dance, music and food. The event that has taken place now for the last 2 years was formed from the Imagine Equality Group targeted at the Torbay BME community.
  - ii. Grass Roots funding has allowed the Rainbow Café (LGBT Group) to develop a permanent '**Walk with Pride**' walk around Torbay to celebrate Gay Heritage. The walk and promotional leaflets are in were launched during Pride Torbay 2010.
  - iii. **A community information day** was held in February 2010 targeted at the BME community and BME businesses. This involved the Safer Communities 'You Said We Did' initiative to feed into action plans
  - iv. The **Youth Cabinet** were actively involved in the development of the Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013.
  - v. **Disability Awareness Day Event April 09:** Torbay Council organised, in partnership with community members and agencies, Torbay's first Disability Awareness Day event. The aim of the day was for it to be fun but to also raise awareness of the types of disabilities people have to live with and for people to find out about clubs and sports they could get involved in and also support groups and agencies that are in the bay.
  - vi. Targeted support funding was used to hold an Election event targeted at **people with learning disabilities**. The 'Make your Mark' event was held to aid understanding of elections and the election process, how to vote and to ensure adults with learning disabilities felt confident going into a Polling Station. The 3 events were arranged in partnership with the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Torbay Care Trust, Democratic Services and the Communities Team at Torbay Council.

- vii. **Gay Pride** events now take place yearly in the bay as a result of a very proactive group some of which attend the LGBT equality group. The Council actively supports the gay pride celebrations which include numerous events enjoyed by gay and non gay communities alike. The event also seeks to attract additional tourist trade encouraging the 'pink pound' into the Bay. This year saw a 25% increase in numbers to the Pride events with a 70% : 30% mix of locals to visitors. There was also a mix of LGBT, non-LGBT and family visitors to the events. Online feedback has been positive with requests for further events such as a parade. Torbay Pride is now the biggest Pride event in the South West.
  - viii. The Community Equality Groups are actively involved in the shaping of services via consultations/questionnaires. For instance, groups such as the **50+ forum and Disability Group** have been involved in the following:
    - o Clennon Valley plans
    - o Paignton Library
    - o Future of day care services
    - o Rock Walk
    - o Heritage Strategy
    - o Car Park Survey
    - o Mystery Shopping exercise
    - o You be the Judge
    - o Torbay Harbour Area action plan
    - o Joint Equality Strategy
    - o Take a Stand
    - o Dog Fouling
- A **Multicultural Arts Week** was held at Oldway Primary School in May 2010 that included community workshops and training for staff and pupils from other local schools. The week culminated in a celebration showing various art forms, providing additional opportunities for community involvement. The activity promotes awareness of cultural diversity and develops community cohesion through the arts.
  - Pupils at Oldway School also took part in a **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Project** and were asked to illustrate the front cover of a publication 'People are Different'. Pupils from Oldway did well in the competition and learnt more about equality and diversity and what that meant to them and the Fire Service.
  - **Torbay Voice**, a service-user group, was established as part of our Supporting People serviced to ensure the Supporting People Strategy meets the needs of vulnerable people. Torbay Voice is a group of people who use or have used Supporting People services - they are involved in the planning, development and delivery of services. Their aim is to give a voice to people who use services. This ensures services meet the needs of the people using them. This year members of the group went to London with SPOT (Speaking Out in Torbay- a group of people with learning disabilities) to talk at a conference and run workshops for Supporting People teams and other agencies to highlight the

support people need to be involved in decision making. The workshops were well received and have used around the Bay to promote the views of clients.

- A member of the Torbay Voice group has been employed as a **Torbay Voice Link Worker**. He works alongside our Community Engagement Officer to support the involvement of people who use services. We are able to use his first hand knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm and support him as a positive peer role model for people in services. The post:
  - i. Facilitates involvement of vulnerable people who use services in Torbay in decision making: i.e. commissioning, procurement, business and community planning.
  - ii. Supports and assists the Community Engagement Officer in the development of a 'Torbay Together' joined up approach to involvement across the Council, Torbay Care Trust and Probation Service.
  - iii. Ensures that all people who use services are able to voice their needs, raise issues, pursue complaints and resolve problems by empowering them through providing support or advocating on their behalf.
  - iv. Acts as a link with Torbay Voice to encourage people to get involved with Torbay Voice.
- Supporting People and Torbay Care Trust undertook a public consultation, about the future shape of **support and care services for older people**. The Older Person's Partnership Board was re-launched to get more people involved in forming plans for the Bay, and participating at their chosen level. A SP service development officer has been seconded into the Care Trust older persons team to ensure an integrated approach.
- The Eddystone Trust, in partnership with Torbay Council and UNISON held a **Women's Health Fair** in October 2009 including information and advice on all aspects of women's health, wealth and happiness.
- In January 2010 the **Aiming High for Disabled Children Fayre** took place. This was a free and exciting event for all children and young people with disabilities and their families and friends. People who went along could find out more about new and exciting opportunities available in Torbay, meet providers, have a go at new activities and get up to date information on the services in Torbay.
- In planning our services, the Council continues to organise monthly roadshows called **Torbay Connect**. The Torbay Connect Caravan travels throughout the Bay giving local residents, visitors and businesses the opportunity to meet the Mayor, participate in consultation exercises and log enquiries about council services. The 'connections on the move' service allows us to reach those people who may not be able to travel to council reception buildings to have the confidence to enter a civic building.
- **'It's Your Choice'** is a short film produced by Safer Communities Torbay aimed at raising awareness amongst young people about the reality of crime, the importance of reporting it and the very real consequences that they may face should they commit crime.

- Each year Torbay welcomes between fifteen and twenty thousand **Visiting International Students** over the summer period. To ensure they remember Torbay for the right reasons Torbay's Language Schools will be working closely with the Police, Safer Communities Torbay and partners in what is called 'Operation TVIS'. This Police-led operation which stands for 'Operation Torbay Visiting International Students', started in April 2006 in order to provide a safe and secure environment for all visiting students. A partnership team which includes Language Schools, Local Schools, Street Wardens, Torbay Youth Offending Team, the Tourist Information Board, Street Pastors, Safer Communities Torbay and the Police are keen to work together to ensure that students from all cultures come together, enjoying all that Torbay has to offer. A Police Officer and members of staff from Safer Communities Torbay run a series of talks and presentations to visiting international students welcoming them to Torbay and outlining local laws and expectations.
- **Community Cohesion Competitions** were held by Safer Communities Torbay to provide opportunities and tools for teachers/students and group leaders to explore issues around prejudice, extremism and active citizenship and to help them to develop their Community Cohesion strategies. The intention of the projects was to draw on the expertise, experience and energy of Torbay schools and colleges; to put the young people of Torbay at the forefront of their drive for an inclusive Torbay.
- As part of its review of the **Young People and Alcohol Misuse**, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board met with young people being supported by the Youth Offending Team, using police diversionary schemes and the Youth Enquiry Service and those in touch with detached youth workers. The views of the young people informed the Panel's recommendations which went on to be included as one of the seven priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan.
- In June 2009 Torbay libraries working in partnership with the Devon Consortium Traveller Education Service held special story times opening up the world of **Gypsy Roma Travellers** to under fives, their parents and carers. Puppets were used to tell stories that explored Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle and culture.
- Children and young people in years 6, 8 and 10 of School were asked to give their views on a number of issues which affect them as part of the **Tell us 4 Survey** that was conducted in the autumn term 2009. Across Torbay, all but two schools took part in the survey which means that schools and the local authority have a really good insight from children and young people about a number of different issues from bullying to drinking and drug use. The findings from the survey have been used to inform national performance indicators and the priorities and targets set for the Children's Trust within the Children's and Young Person's Plan.

#### 4. Responsive services and customer care

- Providing improved access to services and improving outcomes for vulnerable people can be found in the **Benefits Service** where the needs of older people, who make up a larger proportion of the Bay's population than the national average, are met through partnership working with Age Concern. Age Concern are accredited to complete and verify Housing and Council Tax benefit claims for people over 55 who only need one stop to meet all their benefits needs.
- A **Blind club** meets monthly at Torquay Library. This is an informal meeting of very elderly, and avid readers, who are visually impaired and require materials on spoken word to supplement their normal RNIB materials. It also gives them a chance to get out and meet others in a quiet environment. Books are discussed and readers are able to choose the materials for themselves and enjoy a cup of tea. Taxis are arranged to transport readers, which are paid for by the Devon Association for the Blind.
- The Council is working with its partners on the **Closing the Gap project** which is targeted at helping the worst off within Torbay. It has a clear vision to : -
  - a. Improve the quality of life of people living in Torbay by closing the gap that exists between our most and least deprived communities, creating an environment that fosters healthy living (upstream) supported by socially targeted interventions (downstream). This will lead to: -
  - b. Improvements to the physical, social, economic status and environment of deprived areas;
  - c. Earlier intervention in disease and prevention of ill health.
- A priority within the Support People (SP) programme is the **personalisation of services**. Part of the Supporting People programme plan is that 'all services deliver positive outcomes for people increasing choice and control'. SP is looking at how we can introduce Personal Budgets (including Direct Payments and Individual Budgets) for people who use our services. Personal Budgets aim to put the person who is supported, or given services, in control of their funding and in control of deciding what support or services they get.
- Work is progressing with the **Coalition of Disabled People** in South Devon to provide employment support for people who want to recruit their own Personal Assistant (PA- also known as paid carers and/ or enablers) through their support service. The Coalition supports all aspects of employing a PA and is developing a portfolio listing PAs available for work. We also work with **Disability Focus**, an organisation which helps people manage their Direct Payment and Individual Budget money. Disability Focus offers a Money Matters service and assists people with budgeting, providing a payroll service if they employ a PA and/or managing all the money through an individual account.
- A number of **link worker** posts have been jointly funded by SP and Devon Partnership Trust, Torbay Care Trust and Devon and Cornwall probation to increase social inclusion of offenders, people with poor mental health drug and alcohol problems and those with physical and learning disabilities.

- A priority in **Supporting People** in Torbay is 'Improve quality and value for money by taking forward plans to design and buy services for people with different needs' thereby providing new services addressing identified needs. A new engagement, assessment and resettlement centre for homeless people has been completed. Bringing all aspects of tackling street homelessness together, the service engages with people who are living on the streets, assesses their needs, and works with them towards resettlement into permanent accommodation, as well as accessing training & employment via Shekinah Mission's Reconstruct scheme. The service also includes an outreach service working closely with partner agencies including: the police, street wardens, safer communities, mental health, drug and alcohol services. The service is developing services to meet the needs of today's clients and the diverse wider community into which they will ultimately be integrated.
- A **Family Mediation Service** has been set up and is delivered by Checkpoint in partnership with Supporting People. The service is dedicated to young people aged 16 and 17 years old, who are at risk of becoming, or are, homeless. The service aims to improve family relationships, find sources of support, and aims to enable the young person to return home or remain within the family's own social/ family network wherever possible.
- Westcountry Housing provides two **specialist Domestic Abuse services**. Both services work within a multi-agency setting to ensure that there is a comprehensive support package around the family. The support offered is tailored to the individual and includes supporting the client to build on their existing skills to keep them and their children safe.

  - i. Torbay Refuge Service - temporary, safe accommodation for up to 14 women and children across a safe house and 4 further separate units - this has over doubled the previous provision
  - ii. Domestic Abuse Support Service (DASS)- support for up to 50 clients, male and female - this is a new service which recognises the need for a service for men as well as women
- **Peer review within the Supporting People** Service also enables vulnerable people to be involved in SP services. People who use or have used SP services have been applying for paid jobs to check and review SP services. These Project Workers will help make sure that the views of clients are properly listened to in the reviewing of services. Project Workers will get 7 days training which will include training in communication skills, confidentiality, boundaries, and SP reviews. In pairs, they will go into SP services to talk to clients about their experiences of their service. The Project Workers will then talk to SP staff about what they found out from clients about the service. This will form part of the SP review of each service. The posts will be recruited, managed and supported by SPOT (Speaking Out in Torbay). SPOT is a user led community organisation and makes sure the voice of people who use services is heard and acted on in the development and provision of services.
- The Bay's **Zig Zags Children Centre** is situated in the centre of Torquay and draws families from primarily the electoral wards of Tormohun, Ellacombe and St Marychurch all of which rank in the top 10% of deprived areas nationally.

The proportion of children living in poverty is proportionately high. Successful outcomes tackling inequality and disadvantage include:

- i. Of the 255 children who fell in the lowest achieving 20% in 2009, 60 live within the specified reach area of Zig Zags. For these 60 the percentage gap in achievement between them and the rest is 23.1% which is much smaller than the Bay wide average of 30.2%.
  - ii. Links with Job Centre Plus have enabled attendance by advisors at weekly Stay and Play sessions to provide information for parents with regards to further learning.
  - iii. There is a thriving multicultural group from the Zig Zags centre which is promoting tolerance, understanding and community cohesion within the reach area. The One Nation Multicultural Group meets monthly to celebrate and share diversity of cultures.
  - iv. Teenage parents from the reach area of Zig Zags are accessing the young parents training programme which is offered Torbay wide at Paignton Sure Start. This contributes to the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) figures for Torbay being lower than the national average.
- Within our **Connections Service** we have a group of six advisors who have learnt basic Polish in order to communicate more effectively with the increasing numbers of Polish and Eastern European customers. Two of the advisors also regularly attend Polish events to enable them to practice what they learned. One of the Team's senior advisors is also their equalities representative and has given a presentation to the whole of the service with regards to understanding and awareness of the main faiths of Torbay residents. This also included the development of a multi-faith calendar outlining all of the main religions and festivals to make officers aware when planning services, events and meetings. The team also hold regular customer forums and ensure that we include any hard to reach groups in consultation with customer first.
  - Torbay's **Children's Disability Service** is targeted at young people under 18 years of age with disabilities and their families. It ensures that children with disabilities within Torbay are offered assessment and appropriate services reflecting their level of need. The Children's Disability Strategy sets out the vision for the service as well as the outcomes it strives to achieve and the measures that demonstrate success. Aiming High is a government transformation programme for disabled children's services. In Torbay Aiming High for Disabled Children achievements during 2009-10 included: -
    - Increase in the number of families receiving Short Breaks from 135 in 2008/09 to 236 in 2009/10.
    - Aiming High for Disabled Children Fair to promote the wealth of services and activities available for families with children with disabilities.
    - Financial contributions towards the building of the new Mayfield School (Special School) playground, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust Occombe Farm and Warren Barn improvements and specialist equipment to support carers breaks.

- The Council provides residents **with a multilingual website**. From Arabic to Bulgarian and from Ukrainian to Vietnamese, Bay residents can now view information and advice on Torbay Council's website in over 30 different languages - including German, Spanish, French, Italian and Polish - a vast expansion on the seven that the site used to provide. The translation service is provided free through internet search engine Google. The new translation service contributes to the council's role and commitment in promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity in the Bay. We work hard to ensure that women, disabled people, black and minority ethnic communities, lesbians, gay men, young people and older people all have equal access to our services.
- Supporting People is funding a worker to support people who communicate using **British Sign Language**. The worker helps people with issues such as budgeting, claiming benefits, learning skills needed to live independently such as cooking, cleaning and dealing with correspondence, accessing other services, accessing employment or training, and making social contacts. The worker also works with the Deaf community to raise awareness about housing to make sure they feel able to access mainstream housing and support services.
- Torbay Care Trust and Supporting People fund four **Housing Link Co-ordinators** who work across the learning disability, physical disability, Probation and mental health sectors. The purpose of the housing link team is to help vulnerable people secure and maintain appropriate housing and housing related support. The team keeps Social Care Teams and other professionals informed about housing and independent living options and how to access them. This makes independent living more possible for vulnerable clients. The aim is to enable better joint working between all the relevant agencies and services for the benefit of vulnerable people.
- In January 2010 work started to **help more people access Oddicombe beach**. The only way visitors could get to the beach was by the stepped revetments. This can be difficult for many visitors and almost impossible for those with impaired mobility. For that reason, it was possible to utilise Disability Discrimination Act funds to finance the work. The improvements included creating steps at the foot of the cliff railway to allow access around the base of the lower station to the causeway and the beach. The set of steps next to the old slipway have also been refurbished and extended down to beach level. Both sets of steps now have suitable handrails.
- **Help for wheelchair users** also took place at Paignton Sands where a ramp was constructed down to the beach from the promenade. This will now help wheel chair users, people with push chairs and the less able to access the beach more easily, avoiding the steps. Special beach wheel chairs will be available during the summer season, which will allow access across the beach, even on soft sand. Torbay Council also hopes to obtain grant aid to purchase roll out matting to allow conventional wheel chairs access across the beach.
- A **new Torbay Youth Service Youth Centre** in Victoria Park in Paignton is now complete and was officially opened on Wednesday 7 April 2010. The Youth Centre was commissioned by the Council in response to feedback from young people that they needed more facilities available to them for positive

activities outside of school hours. When the changing room block became available it was thought to be the perfect site for structured activities for 11 – 25 year olds. This project was already commissioned before the Council received the news that they were successful with the My Place bid, which will be based at Parkfield on the Esplanade in Paignton. When My Place opens the use of the new centre will be evaluated to see if there is still a need for the building in Victoria Park or whether it will be moved to another area of Torbay. During school hours the building will be available to local schools to use for their alternative groups. It is hoped there will be some remaining capacity for use by local voluntary and community groups. During the summer months the youth service will be looking at utilising the park's outdoor space to provide structured sessions.

- Torbay Youth Service launched its brand new positive activities and information website for young people - [www.my-bay.org.uk](http://www.my-bay.org.uk) - with the newly branded mobile provision for young people, "The Box", appearing all over the Bay in the school holiday half term week. My Bay is a new interactive website with young characters representing areas of interest to young people. By clicking on the characters there are various levels of information about health matters, staying safe, work and education, "all different all equal" and a searchable database of positive activities across Torbay. The Box, a popular youth-bus which travels around the Bay and is visited by hundreds of young people every year, has been liveried in the new My Bay branding.
- The **Supporting People Physical Disability Strategy Sub Group** won the gold award for partnership working at Torbay Care Trust's Blue Shield Awards ceremony. The group won the award because it is a true partnership of people who use services, service providers, Torbay Care Trust, Torbay Council and other agencies. The group works together to develop and monitor housing support services for people with a physical disability, sensory disability, acquired brain injury and/or long term conditions. It was the first group of its kind in Torbay for these areas of need. The group set up Westcountry Housing Association's SPLASH service which is a support service for people with these needs- another first in Torbay. It includes a specialist service for sign language users. The group had very positive feed back from people who use services and is very successful.
- Torbay Council helped to promote the Stagecoach **unlimited travel offer for young people** aged 16 to 19 years unlimited travel on their buses within the Torbay Megarider zone for only £1 between 6pm and 10.30pm 7 days a week. The trial saw over 400 young people using the Niterider ticket in the first week, numbers then peaked to 600 by mid December 2009. The trial was then extended until May 2010. The service was promoted via the MyBay website.
- We continue to subscribe to **DisabledGo** a national body who assess the accessibility of commercial buildings. The website [www.disabledgo.info/](http://www.disabledgo.info/) details useful information with regards to accessing buildings, services and getting around Torbay for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Likewise our Transport Team continue to construct dropped kerbs at the request of wheelchair users and have consulted older people and disabled people's groups on the Third Local Transport Plan.

- Through the Torbay Parenting Strategy Group a **Fathers' Audit** was completed in April 2010. The Audit comprised a self-completion questionnaire for fathers; an environment Audit of Children's Centres services delivery sites and a family support files audit. The self-completion questionnaire completed by 245 fathers, living in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, with at least one child under 5 years. An action plan has been developed to make improvements to services based on the audit findings.
- The Early Years and Childcare Inclusion and Diversity Task Group has developed the **Torbay Inclusion Checklist**. The Checklist is a tool which will be rolled out from September 2010 and will be used as a:
  - i. checklist for providers to consider their own practice and explore what to do next.
  - ii. development tool for advisers and those supporting settings.
  - iii. tool that providers can use with service users to find out their views of the setting.
- **Torbay Launch of Echo (Empowering Children of Offenders)** - Torbay Council Steering Group for Supporting Children of Offenders and the Barnardo's Echo Project facilitated the Torbay Launch of Echo in Torbay. The event was held at Torquay Museum on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The Barnardo's Echo is a community based project to help children with a parent or carer in the criminal justice system. The aim of the project is to engage children of offenders to reduce the isolation, financial hardship and stigma attached to having a parent in the criminal justice system and to increase their social, emotional and mental wellbeing.
- Torbay now has a **Children and Families of Offenders Steering Group**. The aim of the group is to take the lead, in Torbay, for bringing together the work of all organisations working with children of offenders and their families, thus leading to improved outcomes for them.
- Torbay Children's Centres and the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Achievement Team organised the **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month 2010** incorporating the launch of the Strategic Working Group in Torbay on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010. A key outcome of the event has been the establishment of the Torbay Gypsy, Roma and Travellers Working Group. The aim of the group is to provide a more joined up, multi-agency approach to work with Gypsies, Roma or Travellers in Torbay settled or mobile.
- Torbay beaches will run the first pilot scheme for an **access statements** template as part of its work with the National Beach Award advisory group. All beaches, as part of the Quality Coast Award criteria, must have an access statement for every award beach published on their websites. Having one is the essential aspect but the level of access is not a standard due to the varied topography of the coast.

- The **Young Victims of Crime Project**, delivered by Safer Communities Torbay, aims to help young people who are victims of crime by:
  - i. Improving the identification of young people who are victims of crime and ensuring the provision of support services for these young people.
  - ii. Completing an audit of existing services and developing a contract of commitment between agencies to ensure effective partnership working and clear referral pathway protocols to deliver existing services.
  - iii. Developing the use of social media tools to appropriately target young people who may have been victims of crime and how to get help.
  - iv. Engaging with panels of young people to gather their views and opinions on current service provision, what we could do better and what needs changing etc.
  
- Corporate Procurement are currently working on an **Adult Social Care Services Transport Framework** which will be in place to ensure that adults in the social care system have adequate transport to ensure that they can go to daycare centres. Part of this project has included working with IT on buying in a queue management system that allows for better accessibility for people with sight and hearing impairments which will go in to connections offices.
  
- Torbay Libraries actively support **children with special needs**. Torbay libraries have collections of Bag Books (multi-sensory story packs) designed for sharing with children with severe to profound and multiple learning difficulties. These are available for loan and training in how to use them has been provided for portage/education workers. Libraries loan Clearvision picture books which are mainstream children's books with added braille. The books can be used by families where the child is learning braille or for an adult braille user to read to sighted children.

## 5. Modern and diverse workforce

- **Staff Equality Groups** have been developed over the last 18 months to support staff and provide a social opportunity. Some of the key outcomes from these groups include: -
  - i. **50+ Forum:** A very proactive group who have invited speakers from HR, I.T, Healthy Lifestyles and pensions. One of the main outcomes from this staff group meeting is that I.T are now running European Computer Driving Licence courses at a more relaxed pace to help those people who may not be as confident in I.T as others may be. Two such courses have now been set up and are proving to be popular with staff of all ages. The group have also suggested re-starting Thai Chi classes which used to run over a lunch period. This is in the process of being set up.

- ii. **Disability Group:** One of the main outcomes for this group included better access for staff with disabilities to the Roebuck House offices. Staff were only able to access the building from the side entrance (with stairs) unless they waited until 9.00am when the main doors were opened. As from October 2009 the main entrance can now be used via staff's swipe cards from 7.00am. Another issue raised by the group related to the disabled toilet and shower facility – also in Roebuck House. When the shower was in use staff were unable to use the disabled toilet, a separate shower facility has now been built in the basement of Roebuck to counteract this problem.
  - iii. A **Cancer Support Group** has recently been set up following requests from staff to support staff members who are currently going through cancer treatment or for work colleagues or family members who may need support and advice.
- The Council works in partnership with Pluss (a social enterprise organisation that supports over 2,500 people with disabilities each year to achieve employment and a career) to **support people with a learning disability** to be employed by the council. A female worker, who has a learning disability and emotional and anxiety issues, works in the Council's Consultation and Research Team. She is employed as a modern apprentice and is fully integrated into work life.
  - **Deaf Awareness Training** was promoted to all staff during Deaf Awareness Week. In association with The Deaf Project, who work with the local deaf community whose first language is British Sign Language, the Council promoted six courses that were held over a range of days and locations for staff to attend.
  - During 2009 we updated our approach to **equality and diversity training** within the authority. The new on-line equality training is accessible to all and is one of the key modules to be covered through the induction programme. It can also be taken as a stand-alone course that can be accessed directly by members of staff. The module can be adapted with the use of the 'AAA' software which is an option available at the signing-in stage so it can be changed to suit specific requirements. To supplement the online module a Theatre Learning course is available through a training partnership with Teignbridge District Council. This provides an interactive session which takes a fresh look at diversity to gain a greater understanding of what this means in practice. The course also explores diversity and recognises the difference between diversity and equal opportunities, outlines what is new in legislation and develops confidence to tackle issues.
  - Libraries staff undertake **Disability Discrimination Awareness (DDA) Training**. All new staff are invited to attend a one day awareness training session on the needs of customers and staff who have a disability. The session is written for libraries and covers buildings, service requirements and people. There are practical exercises on the needs of people with visual impairment, hearing impairment and mobility loss, both wheelchair and ambulant disabled.

Staff can also attend a Dyslexia awareness course which highlights the many different ways dyslexia can affect people, causing problems with literacy, numeracy and organisation in their everyday lives.

- The Council has **completed its Job Evaluation** in partnership with the trade unions. It has worked hard to ensure an open, fair and balanced process has been carried out in order to ensure that everyone will receive equal pay for work of equal value.

If you would like any further information on any of the equalities achievements outlined in the Equality Achievements Brochure then please contact us on: -

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