



# Annual Performance Assessment 2006

## Self-assessment

Name of Authority: TORBAY COUNCIL

**PART A Background Information**

<b>Name of Children's Services Authority:</b>	<b>Torbay Council</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Children's Services Oldway, Torquay Road, Paignton TQ3 2TE</b>
<b>Name of Children's Services Contact:</b>	<b>Russell Knight - Performance Review Officer</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Children's Services Oldway, Torquay Road, Paignton TQ3 2TE</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>01803 208958</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b><u><a href="mailto:Russell.Knight@Torbay.gov.uk">Russell.Knight@Torbay.gov.uk</a></u></b>
<b>Date self-assessment submitted:</b>	<b>26/5/06</b>
<b>Signed/agreed on behalf of the Children's Services' Authority</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Margaret Dennison</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Strategic Director for Children</b>
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>How partners have been involved in completing this form:</b>	
The following partners contributed to the APA: – Health, Voluntary Sector, Housing, Cultural services, Environment, Development Agency, Adult Education, Safer communities, Connexions and the Youth Offending service.	
<b>Signed/agreed on behalf of the Children's Services' Authority's partners:</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Mrs Fiona S. Tolley</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Director of Public Health for Torbay Care Trust</b>
<b>Signature</b>	

### **Context**

Torbay consists of three towns: Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. It serves a small local authority area, population (2004 mid year estimate) of 132,500, which increases by about 50,000 during the summer holiday season.

Torbay's popular image as a leading tourist resort masks problems which exist for many families in relation to poverty, poor housing and poor employment prospects. Torbay contains pockets of deprivation which are amongst the worst in the West Country. Torbay also has a low wage economy. House prices are 10.44 times average earnings.

Whilst the population is estimated to continue growing (16% increase over the last 20 years) the number of children and young people is projected to decline until 2015.

Key developments across the Council over the last year include:

- The election of an Executive Mayor who is also the "Lead Member" for Children's Services and the Chair of the Partnership Board.
- The integration of the local PCT and Adult Social Care services to become the Torbay Care Trust (coterminous with the authority).

Torbay Council has continued to make significant progress since the 2002 Comprehensive Performance Assessment having improved in every area identified at that time as a weakness. The 2005 CPA rated Torbay Council as a 2 star Authority.

### **The development of Children's Services**

The Children's Service has moved forward significantly since the last APA, LEA and CSCI inspections. A new vision has been established that will bring to the fore partnership working and early intervention (see Page 14 of the CYPP). The vision has been well received across Children's Services and its partners.

Over the last year Children Services has:

- Continued to reduce the numbers of children in care and children on the register and the management down of associated costs through an emerging culture of commissioning.
- Improved the allocation of social care as a result of increased investment in recruitment and retention measures.
- Realised opportunities for integration in areas addressing early intervention i.e. on issues such as absence and bullying.
- Enhanced the management structure so that it aligns to the 5 outcomes and the potential for partnership working. (See page 17 of our CYPP)
- Succeeded in driving up performance of KS 3 pupils.
- Delivered a significantly improved 14-19 strategy.

### **Partnership Arrangements**

In 2005/06 the Partnership arrangements have continued to strengthen with the further development of a Children's Partnership Board and Children's Partnership Executive. The makeup and effectiveness of the Change for Children Task Groups have been reviewed and

a new system put in place to ensure that all groups are working to our Children and Young People's Plan.

The voluntary and community sector are represented at all levels of our Children's Trust arrangements, at Children's Partnership Board, Partnership Executive and Task Group levels, as well as being involved in specific areas of development, i.e. Torbay's Youth Volunteering Strategy.

*Please see our Children and Young People's Plan for more details, Key Developments, page 12, with particular reference to Children's Trust arrangements on page 13 and Partnership diagram on page 15.*

### **Integrated Front Line Working**

In reflecting the aspirations of Torbay's vision, Services are improving the way they work in order to identify and intervene at an earlier stage when a child or young person is seen to be vulnerable, and has additional needs.

Locality based Schools and Community Clusters are starting to emerge as a hub within communities, primarily aimed at identifying and co-ordinating preventative support and intervention to children, young people and their families but also acting as a gateway to targeted and specialist services when required.

These developments will, over the next year, increasingly deliver integrated front-line working between agencies to meet local needs. This approach is being piloted during 2006 in Paignton with a view to rolling it out across the rest of Torbay from 2007 onwards. It is planned that there will be four Schools and Community Clusters across Torbay. Eventually these localities will form the bases for co-located services.

*Please see the Integrated Front Line working section of Our Children and Young People's Plan for more detail, page 26, with particular reference to the locality school and community cluster system diagram on page 28.*

### **Links to other strategies**

Torbay's Strategic Partnership has identified economic prosperity as being central to the new vision for Torbay. The five Every Child Matters outcomes, including 'Achieving Economic Well-Being', is a link between our Children and Young People's Plan and the community's aspirations. Economic renewal is also an over arching theme being addressed through the priorities being identified in the Children and Young Person's block of the Local Area Agreement. It is vital that our children and young people are equipped with the skills for tomorrow's jobs as well as the broader life skills that will enable them to make the most of opportunities that arise to lead full lives.

*Please refer to our key strategic priorities in our Children and Young People's Plan, page 25*

The council's children's services	Grade
The contribution of <i>the council's children's services</i> in maintaining and improving outcomes for children and young people.	3

The council's children's services	Grade
The council's capacity to improve its services for children and young people	3

Additional area for judgement in 2006 only	Grade
Children's social care services	3

**Being healthy**

Torbay has well established and effective multi agency partnerships which have developed a number of action plans to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce risk taking behaviour such as Teenage Pregnancy; Substance Misuse; Alcohol Action Plan; Children Looked After; Youth Offending Service. Collaborative working between school nursing and teaching staff has helped in building the evidence required for achieving Healthy School status. 38 out of 45 Torbay schools achieved the previous level 3 status. 15 are already committed to work towards the new award and further 12 indicating a wish to join.

**Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Reducing Risk Taking Behaviour**

Torbay has been effective in addressing the impact of alcohol consumption on young people and the community. 23.1 % of young people reported that their drinking habits had changed as result of a high profile campaign, 'Know the Code' on the dangers of alcohol consumption. Decreases were also reported by young people in respect of antisocial and risky behaviours linked to alcohol consumption. In addition to awareness raising Torbay has also piloted the Stay Safe Project. As part of this project a single decker bus has been outfitted as a static first aid clinic based on the Torquay Harbour side area which is a known hot spot for alcohol related issues. The bus offers immediate assistance to those ill, injured or suffering from the effects of drink or drugs. Young people using this service value it highly with public support for the project running at 84%.

**Substance Misuse**

Specialist services continue to see on average 150 people a year; YOT workers helped in achievement of high level of under 18s in treatment with services (98.5% compared to the regional average of 78%). All young people assessed as needing a substance use assessment have received this within 5 days and any intervention identified has started within 10 days.

An agreed protocol regarding alcohol is now in place between A&E and school nurses who follow up by offering advice, education and a health interview with the young person; designated youth worker providing tier 2 targeted work to young people in particular those attending the Pupil Referral Unit; Safer injecting project set up by the Under 18yrs drug worker at the Check Point young people's advice centre in Torquay; "Guide to Alcohol and Drug Advice in Torbay" produced and distributed through schools and youth settings.

Areas for continued development include:

- Providing a screening tool and the further expansion of substance awareness training for all professionals
- Auditing the universal substance misuse education in schools and support schools to reach quality standards as set out in Drugs Guidance for Schools (DfES 2005);
- Monitoring use and effectiveness of Drug testing machine available to schools.

## **Obesity**

Torbay has made significant progress in identifying key issues and the actions needed to tackle obesity with the development of a new obesity strategy led by Health. Data collected on school entry at age 5 years shows a trend upwards in the levels of children overweight or obese. However, the numbers are too small to be truly significant. Working with council partners some of our achievements include:

- The introduction of new school meals contracts which have reduced the amount of convenience products in meals.
- The reintroduction of kitchen equipment in schools to make non-prepared foods.
- A year long campaign "Can Do" with the local press highlighted local stories on what communities, parents and children had been doing to improve their health. Examples include "Brain gym"; "huff and puff" games, after school gardening club.
- The banning, from September 2006, of all fizzy drinks and crisps from vending machines in schools.

Areas for continued development include:

- The expansion of the measurement programme to include both reception and year 6 pupils.
- The targeting of caterers to encourage them to introduce healthier options on kids party menus.
- Improving the co-ordination of joint initiatives relating to breast feeding between midwifery, health visiting and early years to achieve the 2006/07 target of 78.8%.

## **Sex & Relationships**

Conception rates for those under 18 have increased compared to local and national benchmarks. This has focused the partnership to review the effectiveness of current services. Teenage pregnancy will also be key theme in the LAA. Existing universal services will continue to ensure that key messages and knowledge is made available to all young people. For example:

- All schools including special schools receive Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) via curriculum based initiatives through the APAUSE programme.
- Emergency hormonal contraception is free to Under 18years through a number of pharmacists including some with extended opening hours and school nurses.
- Access to free condoms through health and youth settings.
- 6 Torbay teachers already accredited with Personal, Social Health Education (PSHE) certification and a further 6 teachers and 3 nurses currently submitting evidence for accreditation.

In addition, improvements have been made to how SRE is addressed with what are considered to be higher risk groups. As a result of feedback from children looked after and care leavers a new SRE policy and training programme was developed which is now being delivered to foster carers.

Areas for continued development include:

- Conducting a questionnaire with all young women who become pregnant to explore the motivations and factors which led to them conceiving which will be used to develop more effective health services offered to young people.

- Mapping and auditing the delivery of SRE in all settings.
- Targeting of resources to encourage parents and carers to talk about SRE.
- Increasing the provision of sexual health training programmes for staff.

### **Mental Health and Emotional Well Being**

Progress towards a comprehensive service is being made and a rigorous review of Tier 3 services provided across the South West Peninsula is due to report mid May 2006. This will include provision for 24 hour consultant cover to complement the existing protocols in place between CAMHs and A& E which ensure that assessments are undertaken by next working day. Parallel to this review the Children's Trust Board approved a strategic proposal for local CAMHs service reconfiguration which will see the development of a locally managed multi disciplinary service that ensures Tiers 2 and 3 works closely together and fully integrated with extended schools, Children Centres and early intervention services.

September 2005 saw the launch of the South Devon CAMHs Training Website which provides information about training opportunities locally and nationally as well as providing information about child and adolescent mental health generally. ([www.camhs.nhs.uk](http://www.camhs.nhs.uk))

Other developments that have taken place over the last year include:

- Promoting the use of screening tool to address attachment issues
- School Nurse/Mental Health Promoter appointed to provide Tier 2 support.
- The introduction of the Social and Emotional Literacy tool (SEAL) for use in schools.
- CPN hours have been increased to increase the opportunities for intervention work with young offenders.

Over the next year the partnership will:

- Develop joint commissioning arrangements with Devon Children's Trust around eating disorders, legal psychiatric assessments and children with learning disabilities.
- Develop better understanding of BME needs in order to shape specialist service provision across South Devon.

### **Early Intervention Pre & Post Birth**

Torbay has made significant developments in working across agencies to provide targeted support to parents and carers who are more vulnerable including travelling families, teenage parents, victims of domestic abuse and children with ADHD. Paediatric physiotherapy offers clinic sessions at Children's Centres; trained Sure Start staff and educated teacher assistants in order to identify developmental issues and deliver some physiotherapy.

### **Health of children who are looked after**

Last year saw a decline in the number of health assessments completed on time, with figures down to 69% from 81%. This fall was mainly due to the absence, for a period, of the CLA nurse. Performance is set improve as a result of a new protocol between social

work and health practitioners and an improved tracking system. School nurses and health visitors have been trained to undertake reviews and develop health care plans. Specific dental provision for vulnerable groups which will include children looked after is being negotiated. This will help to raise performance in a known area of weakness. Issues relating to mental health are also being addressed and this includes:

- A CAMHS strengths and difficulties questionnaire recently implemented.
- A dedicated primary care mental health worker appointed who provides direct short term intervention and support to foster carers and social workers.

### **Health Needs of Children & Young People with LDD are addressed**

The South Devon children learning disability team which includes a clinical psychologist works closely with portage and team around the child (TAC) key working approach for families. A joint proposal for funding with neighbouring PCTs is being considered to secure a learning disability consultant.

## **Staying safe**

### **Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)**

The LSCB is fully functional within Torbay. The first Board meeting was held in May 2005 following developments by the ACPC to ensure that the new Board is fully compliant with the Working Together Guidance and Regulations. Other developments include:

- Pooled budget arrangement with all partner agencies
- Development and expansion of the child protection team into a Safeguarding Unit to respond effectively to new requirements of the licensing and gambling acts.
- Education Safeguarding Officer - to promote safeguarding with schools and offer assistance, guidance and support to head teachers and designated staff.
- Business Plan to co-ordinate safeguarding activity across all agencies within Torbay.
- Multi-agency child protection training plan.
- 84% of schools have attended safeguarding workshops for headteachers and designated staff.
- All schools have policies in place for safeguarding.

### **Early Intervention**

Early intervention has improved with the co-location of Education Welfare Staff (EWS) within Halswell Family Centre. These changes have led to better working relationships between the EWS and Family Support. Improvements have been made to the identification and tracking of children missing from education. Guidance has also been established along with consistent reporting tools that ensure a clear follow up on all notifications. Improved case management processes have also increased the capability for early intervention work and the ability to focus on specific vulnerable groups of pupils, e.g. CLA, pivotal pupils where attendance could be improved and victims of bullying, as well as its direct focus on improving attendance generally. Other improvements include:

- Innovative solutions to improving attendance - reward scheme "Cool to be in school in the Bay", focussed on transient pupils at Cockington Primary School. Attendance at this school improved to its highest levels for over 2 years as a result.
- The "Trophy Scheme" at Cuthbert Mayne to engage disaffected pupils in the development of materials that will be used to work with other young people.

- Solution Focused Brief Therapy is a further service development within the Early Intervention resource which has targeted children and young people who are experiencing high levels of unauthorised absence from school. Student and school feedback has been very positive. (Please see enjoy and achieve for more information on attendance)
- 2 Children Centres are on track to open in September 2006 with a further 3 planned

There have also been a range of developments within the Family Centre itself including the establishment of a Crisis Response Unit to avoid children and young people being accommodated. The unit has also set up a successful ADHD Parental Support Group, created in consultation with parents welcomed as a highly supportive resource to those parents dealing with difficult behavioural problems and a Domestic Violence Initiative bringing together professionals from Women's Aid, Sure Start and Child and Family Guidance for children who have witnessed domestic violence.

### **Child Protection Services**

- The overall number of children on the CPR has fallen from 88 to 51.
- Child protection outturns are good, PAF C20 2005/06 performance is 97%.
- No unallocated child protection cases.
- However the number of re-registrations onto the child protection register has increased.
- During 2005/06 over 240 practitioners from a variety of professions and agencies attended a range of child protection courses, including CP Foundation Course and Domestic Violence Workshops.

Child protection arrangements within Torbay have been strengthened in line with the recommendations of the last Children's Services inspection. Child Protection Practice, caseworkers supervision have been strengthened through a specific single agency routine team training programme. The Intake Service has been reconfigured and has increased from two to three intake teams to provide a more robust and consistent assessment service. This, together with the improvements in child protection practice, has contributed to the overall reduction in the number of children placed on the child protection register. This reduction in workload has meant that the Safeguarding Unit and IRO service have been able to extend their role in case file auditing and other training and proactive improvement activities. This has led to a step change in quality of working in areas such as quality of analysis on core assessments. There were no serious case reviews last year but a range of independent audits have been undertaken on cases that are raised with the Children's Services Senior Management Team to ensure lessons are learned and practice regularly updated.

In November 2005 Children's Services introduced PARIS, a new electronic social care system, as part of a rolling programme across all social care services within Torbay. As with any large ICT project there have been some technical difficulties in implementing the new system. An ICS Project Manager has been recruited to tackle these issues and the implementation of an ICS module by October 2006. PARIS will allow managers to have a more transparent audit and quality assurance facility for all social case work within Children's Services.

### **Children Looked After**

The numbers of children looked after have been significantly reduced by 21% during 2005 as a consequence of the restructuring of the Initial Assessment Teams, Children Looked After Service and provider services to looked after children. Outturns for stability of placement and adoption are excellent and 99% of CLA participated in their reviews and 95% held on time (See Positive contribution section for more information). Torbay has developed a Children Looked After Improvement Forum, chaired by an elected member, to take forward a range of actions to improve outcomes for children looked after. CSCI service inspections for Adoption, Fostering and Residential care demonstrate that Torbay's services for children looked after have significantly improved. Within the recent CSCI Inspection of Torbay's Fostering Service the Kinship Care Scheme was highlighted as an excellent service offering alternatives to care.

### **Public Protection**

Torbay continues to play a full role as a partner in the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) working closely with Devon and Cornwall Police and probation services to review and audit management arrangements of all previous Schedule 1 Offenders who are deemed to be a risk to children. Torbay contributes to the witness support project to assist children and young people giving evidence in criminal proceedings. The Torbay Domestic Abuse Forum has successfully engaged relevant partner agencies to improve services to children and young people who have suffered or witnessed domestic violence. The Forum has focused on awareness of domestic violence issues with SENCOs, greater participation of youth service and developing an early intervention service within Torbay to children and young people experiencing domestic abuse/violence.

### **Assessment**

Reported rates of initial and core assessments completed within timescale are rising consistently but they are still below national targets. The introduction of the PARIS has had an impact as the system involves direct inputting by social work practitioners. Improved quality in the assessment processes this year as a result of the downturn of the numbers of looked after children and children on the child protection register. Actions in place with increase assessment rates at both stages. There is also evidence that practice within the social care service is moving from a risk adverse to evidenced based assessments with the numbers on the CPR reducing in line with national comparator levels. Additionally other preventative services, such as Family Group Conferencing have been co-located to provide an earlier intervention and more effective service.

### **Social Work Practice Improvement**

Internal reviews, auditing and Independent Reports on a range of case work and service provision have been undertaken. The LSCB Good Practice Sub Group has been set up to specifically target problems and difficulties related to multi-agency deficiencies in service provision and to recommend clear multi-agency training plans for all agencies regarding safeguarding. From the analysis of trends of recent referrals into the Intake

Service it is clear that a range of child protection cases have been related to parents with drug and alcohol or mental health issues. There is clearly a need to build more constructive and effective protocols with the Adult Mental Health Service to ensure that issues are identified and addressed at an early stage.

Analysis of PAF Indicators related to the re-registration rate of children on the Child Protection Register has shown a marked increase in the last year. A detailed audit of all eight families is currently underway and will be reported back to the LSCB Good Practice Sub Group. Initial findings show that of the eight families involved, only one had been re-registered within twelve months of the de-registration and one within 2 years. The remainder related to cases that had been de-registered for over 5 years.

### **English Language Schools**

Following the recommendations of the latest Children's Services Inspection, issues relating to Private Fostering Regulations have been addressed. The safeguarding and vetting procedures made by English Language Schools are inadequate. Further consultation with the English Language Schools accreditation body and the British Council has started.

### **Road safety**

The number of serious road traffic accidents involving children is low compared to national and local benchmarks. Safety on the roads is addressed well in schools by the Road Safety unit in partnership with the Police.

For information on **Young Offenders** please refer to the 'Positive contribution'.

For information on **Children with Disabilities** please refer to the 'Achieving economic well being'.

### **Enjoying and achieving**

The Local Authority has very good data sets and analysis shared with schools to focus resource allocations on the schools, phases, subjects, individual and groups of pupils in order to support and challenge schools to raise attainment. Intervention and support activity on priorities are agreed with schools. The Local Authority knows its schools and settings well, has categorised them and engages actively and rigorously with all schools to secure improvement.

### **2005 attainment**

**Foundation Stage** Profile scores are below national average. However, the Early Years Advisory Team has a very rigorous monitoring and moderation process in place, covering every setting and thus the outcomes are secure. This team has identified improvement priorities to reflect the particular elements of the FS profile where there is low performance. Training and support has been focused on these areas.

**At KS1** Level 2+ attainment is 2% above national average in reading, writing and maths – a significant improvement on 2004. Grade B compared to statistical neighbours. Girls

significantly outperform boys in all core subjects at L2+. However, boys' performance in reading and writing has improved by 5% in 2005. At L2b+, attainment in reading is 2% above national average and an improving trend on 2004 but attainment at L2b+ in mathematics and writing is below national average and is a priority focus. High levels of support are provided for the new arrangements in KS1, building on the FSP, developing greater understanding of the core curriculum and ensuring a consistent emphasis within and cross school expectation of pupils below level 2 at KS1 as a priority. Transition into Y1 has been supported by Early Years and Primary teams jointly. Support for the effective use of the Interactive-Whiteboards to enable children to communicate their learning continues to be core work.

**At KS2** Level 4+ attainment has fallen to 2% below the national average in English, Maths and Science and shows a declining trend on 2004. Reading attainment at 84% is strength but writing is a priority focus. Prior attainment at KS2 for the 2005 cohort was lower than for the 2004 cohort and schools met their aggregated targets in English, but not in Maths. Grade D compared to statistical neighbours. Attainment at Level 5 remains positive for boys in particular with performance at national averages in English and 1% below in mathematics. Girls' trend in attainment at level 5 is emerging as a priority.

Underpinning the Local Authority's improvement strategy and target-setting challenge is the expectation that all pupils make at least 2NC progress across KS2 unless they have a specific learning difficulty that would prevent them making national expected progress but they are still expected to make good progress relative to prior attainment. Pupils achieving below L3 at end of KS2 are English 7% (national 6.3%) and Mathematics 7% (national 5.8%). This is an improving trend on 2004. All schools below the 65% floor target for Level 4+ are targeted for support.

The effectiveness of the targeted differentiated consultant, INSET and resource allocation support to specific under-performing pupils, schools and subjects is reviewed annually. Intervention has been put in place again during 2005-2006 but amended through consultation with schools. Where interventions have been unsuccessful this has been linked to a lack of capacity within the school so sustain and embed improvement programmes. Desired outcomes of support are agreed with schools before intervention is put in place, then monitored and evaluated at all school contacts. Aggregated school targets for 2006 are challenging, due to more rigorous target setting challenge from the Local Authority advisers to both Headteachers and Governors. However, if their Spring 2006 predictions are realised in the 2006 SATs this would mean a 2.5% increase for English and 4.5% rise in Mathematics compared to 2005. This represents good progress in attainment at KS2. There is an Intensive Support focus on three schools deemed priority schools. In the four most deprived Excellence in non-cities schools, there is a focus on improving communication. SAM learning is being trialled in 12 schools for pivotal Years 5 and 6 learners. Science is to be addressed in 2006/07.

**In secondary schools** any shift in attainment levels in respect of the Best Value Performance Indicators is only effected by the five non-selective schools.

**At KS3** Level 5+ attainment in all core subjects is above national average – a significant improvement on 2004 in all subjects, but especially in English (5%) and Science (5%), where three science departments were a particular focus for intervention, and even greater improvements in ICT at L5+ [14%]. There have also been comparable improvements at Level 6 in English, Mathematics and Science with the exception of performance of girls in science at Level 6. There have also been improvements at Level 7/8 at the grammar schools. Grade B compared to statistical neighbours. These significant improvements have been due to a rigorous, differentiated approach by the Secondary Strategy team to improving teaching and learning in schools and a specific focus on pivotal pupils through detailed data analysis and direct input in classrooms.

**At KS4** attainment has not improved at the same rate as national. Although the trend has been steadily upwards overall since 1999. The Local Authority slipped behind the national average and statistical neighbours for the first time in 2005 for 5 A\*-C at 54.75% (55.52%). Performance is relatively stronger, however when English and Mathematics are included in the figures are 45.6% (42.6%). There has been increased focus on KS4 in 2005/06 from the secondary strategy team and ASTs. The two schools where performance at GCSE was particularly weak are LA designated Priority schools and have been subject to specific interventions and support. Schools predictions for Summer 2006 in those schools indicate improvements from 22% (05) to 27% (06) and 34% (05) to 47% (06) respectively. Schools predictions indicate an overall improvement at KS4 in 2006.

**At KS5** Performance at A/AS level is very good. Graded A in all categories compared to national and statistical neighbours, in fact, with a rank of 1 in improvement 2003-5 in APS. In the LSC value added/value for money study of South West Local Authorities, Torbay has outperformed all other Local Authorities on all counts.

The attainment and progress of the very small numbers of BME pupils are in line with Torbay averages at KS 4 and above at other key stages.

The attainment and progress of **Children Looked After** is not predicted to reach the LPSA stretch targets this year. However, improvements have been made to the Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and the tracking off progress by schools, foster parents and the in-house residential home. All CLA are also given the opportunity to receive additional tuition at KS4.

### **Early years**

The Early Years and Childcare Service is ensuring that the Sure Start and Children's Centre provision is well integrated. An innovative approach is being adopted for delivery of Early Year's services across the Local Authority. 95.5% of settings inspected before March 2006 have received overall judgements of satisfactory or above.

### **Schools causing concern**

No school in Torbay has been in an OFSTED category of concern since 2001. Between September 2003 and April 2006 22 Schools have been inspected, 19 have been graded good or better for pupils' achievement and also for overall effectiveness. Most schools also improved since their last inspection. Effective Local Authority support and engagement has contributed to this very good position.

An effective termly link adviser visit programme for primary, secondary, special schools and the PRU ensures rigorous target setting procedures, support and challenge for self evaluation, improvements in teaching and learning and a focus on vulnerable pupils and groups of pupils in accordance with the ECM agenda. Governors have been actively engaged. CPD is provided to improve leadership and management.

### **ICT**

The leadership and delivery of ICT in schools is good. Nationally, Torbay has the highest proportion of schools with an ICT NAACE mark.

Torbay's Broadband solution for schools includes the libraries to ensure community-wide access. The latest upgrades exceed Government targets. 40% of schools are used as host schools for the National College of School Leadership SLICT programme (Strategic Leadership in ICT). The impact of Interactive Technologies has been significant in schools, enabling a wider repertoire of teaching and learning styles to impact on pupil outcomes in a range of subjects. 77% of schools are at Integration Stage or beyond.

### **Gifted and Talented (G&T)**

There is now a good strategy for G&T pupils across the Local Authority and a particularly improved engagement of secondary schools. 7 out of 8 secondary schools have taken part in an audit of provision, made suggestions for support they need, identified good practice they would be willing to share and have pupils engaged in enrichment workshops.

### **Admissions**

Consultation by the Local Authority has enabled it to broker a coordinated admission scheme involving all admitting authorities in Torbay and there is effective co-ordination with the neighbouring Local Authority (Devon). The Local Authority has successfully implemented a system for parents to apply for school places over the internet ahead of the legal requirement. A Hard to Place Protocol has been subject to consultation with all schools and will be published for pilot implementation in September 2006. Permanent and fixed term **exclusions** did fall 2004/5. However, exclusions rates for 2005/6 are up for both permanent and fixed exclusions. The reasons for these increases are being looked into.

### **Interim Tuition**

The Interim Tuition Service has restructured. Links with the PRU are strong and effective. User feedback has been incorporated on monthly reports. Group tuition has

provided with other agencies contributing programmes and expertise, leading to better cost effectiveness. EHE pupils are monitored immediately on referral. There are currently 60 active cases. In 2005/06 all pupils permanently excluded were offered 20 plus hours of education by the 15<sup>th</sup> day following their exclusion. The numbers of pupils not reaching Level 3 at KS2 has fallen in 2004/5 from 2003/04. The numbers of pupils gaining 1A\*-G at GCSE has risen for the third year running and is well above the national averages and the statistical neighbours.

### **Attendance**

The level of unauthorised and authorised absence is higher than statistical and national benchmarks. This year, the level of authorised absences has increased, in large part this was the result of illness caused by the wide spread outbreak of the 'norovirus' which led to several school closures.

Despite mixed results on unauthorised absence, the issue is being met with new and more innovative approaches that are starting to impact on schools with attendance issues. (See Staying safe section for more information on the integration of EWS and Family support). Developments in respect of attendance issues include:

- The use of adult volunteers to mentor and offer personal support to improve pupil self esteem and social skills.
- The systemic training of secondary schools in Solution Focused Brief Therapy, a project which has received national recognition.
- The introduction of an early alert letter for schools to send parents where days have been missed for whatever reason.
- The doubling of resources and increase in the breadth of support available to the secondary school in highest need.

All new initiatives will be kept under review but the early indicators are good.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Torbay maintains a disproportionately high level of statements. During 2005/6 the rate of new statements did decline, as did the overall number of statements. However, the rate of decline is not considered sufficient and further non-financial and financial improvement actions have been implemented or are planned for 2006/7.

The proportion of children attending maintained special schools in Torbay is high but the use of non-maintained/independent schools is low by comparison with statistical neighbours. It is predicted that there will be a reduction (approximately 10%) in the number of children attending Combe Pafford special school over the next two years.

There is agreement with mainstream schools that reduced reliance on Statements of SEN will be matched in growth in unassigned funds delegated via the sub-formula for early intervention. This will also assist in reducing special school placements.

Exclusion rates for children with Statements were in line with national averages. Priority has been given by Educational Psychology Service and SEN Section to maintaining 'high risk' placements through proactive actions.

The Authority improved significantly its efficiency in making statutory assessments and statements (see BVPI 43a & b) by reengineering processes and ensuring compliance with SEN Code of Practice. There were only two appeals to the SENDIST both of which

were upheld, though neither related to the decisions of Torbay Council.

### **Making a positive contribution**

Children's Services and its partners endeavour to ensure that all children and young people are given the opportunities they need to become responsible members of the local community. This includes offering a range of targeted support for those who face disadvantage. For example:

- The sustained development of the Young Carers Service in identifying and actively supporting even more young people
- The continued success of the Youth Offending Team and the innovative plans to expand the diversionary activities for high risk offenders
- The further development of services to support young people leaving care (see Economic Well-Being)

### **Young People Influencing Service Development**

Opportunities for young people to have a say in the decisions that affect them are improving and additional opportunities are planned through the Change for Children agenda. This includes the potential development of a youth cabinet via the Youth Matters work strand, the formal engagement of a young person board as part of a bid to the Russell Commission and the inclusion of user measures in the performance monitoring process on the CYPP.

Young people in Torbay were consulted on Youth Matters through a number of open consultation events and a young people's questionnaire. 83% of participants said they are involved in helping other people at school or in their community, including young people who help in more than one way. Young people fed back that they would like more recognition for the voluntary work they are involved in, they felt this would encourage them and their peers to get more involved in their communities. Consequently, resources have been identified to develop a Youth Volunteering Strategy for Torbay. This will focus on exploring needs and developing opportunities for young people to get involved in volunteering and making volunteering a valued part of their lives, with a focus on young people from hard to reach groups.

Positive and productive life choices are also being assiduously addressed by the increasingly effective Youth Matters partnership. Opportunities are being taken to link the work of extended services in schools, Youth Service activity, Connexions and the Police Service. For example extended services in schools are funding activities that assist children with school engagement issues so they continue on in school. Newly funded activities include: art therapy for low achievers, conflict resolution training for play ground assistants and additional places for adventure play activities for the disadvantaged.

Young View Forums are now a well established means of consultation involving pupils from a significant proportion of schools in Torbay. These Forums have allowed young people the opportunity to influence the delivery of PSHE education and the planning of educational transitions. Young people have been consulted through these Forums on their priorities in the delivery of the Every Child Matters agenda.

### **LAC participation**

On a service by service basis user engagement is being improved by sharing and learning what is already collected from sources such as the Independent Reviewing Team. The participation of children and young people in their LAC Reviews remains extremely high at 99% and new procedures have been implemented by the Independent Reviewing Service to ensure that all care plans clearly record a child's or young person's comments and participation. The level of engagement by parents in reviews is also high and is starting to help in the drive to get young people out of care early. A range of consultation forms have also been recently developed by young people to further increase the levels of participation by children looked after into their care planning. Good engagement in decision making has also been noted in the inspections of Torbay's children home.

Further improvements to the level of assistance and support to missing children has included the launch of the first flexible Refuge within the UK run in partnership with the Children's Society. The project is equipped to offer a safe bed for up to four nights for a young person missing from home or care. Torbay, in partnership with the voluntary sector has continued to provide a Missing Person's Protocol for all children looked after to ensure they are offered an independent interview before they return to placement to ensure their wishes and feelings are considered.

### **Young Carers**

Young carers influence the development of the Young Carers Service through the Young Carer Forum. Young carers are encouraged to complete a termly questionnaire which helps the service to monitor their health and well being. The service has developed ways to raise its profile through the secondary PSHE curriculum. The service now actively supports 280 carers. Feedback from young carers has helped identify the demand for activities and inform the activity programme for the school holidays. This included ensuring that young carers were provided with a discount leisure card. Providing opportunities to encounter young people with similar experiences has helped to reduce the reported levels of isolation and lack of confidence. Some improvements have also been seen in attendance and achievements amongst this group.

Other examples of where consultation with young people has led service developments include planning and provision of support for care leavers and the development of services for children with LDD (see Economic Well Being). Mechanisms have been developed to involve young people in the design of new school buildings.

Young people have also been influential in the development of the **Play Strategy**. For example, on canvassing why young people were not using certain green spaces they identified a need for adult supervision to initiate activities. This led creation of play participation workers linked to green spaces. Now no new planned facility is put in without consultation.

The Council is continuing to make improvements to the Youth Service (see service management section).

### **Promoting acceptable behaviour**

Addressing recidivism rates remains a key priority for Children's Services. New creative ideas (such as the Youth Inclusion Programme) are being developed with this in mind. There is now a particular focus on higher risk community sentence cases and also those receiving reprimands, which historically have had no input regarding their offending. Although practice has been generally good towards the end of Orders in terms of predicting risk of re-offending it is recognised there is room for improvement to minimise the risk of further offending, through improving the quality of exit strategies at the end of the contact with the YOT.

In Youth Crime there has been substantial reduction to the numbers of first time entrants to the youth justice system during 2005/06. The overall number of young people entering the youth justice system reduced by over 27% to 317. Youth crime is down overall during 2005 in terms of detected crime (19.6%) and also outcome crime (5%). The number of overall offences is down and there are fewer young people coming into the system both in terms of first time entrants and overall numbers of offenders. Violent crime is down, as is vehicle crime, public order and offences of criminal damage. According to the community safety unit, levels of anti-social behaviour have remained about the same over the last year, compared with a 19% increase in other areas of Devon and Cornwall. Various preventative initiatives, such as the LINK Projects, the YISP, school support project, anti-social behaviour strategy and the YOT education input to schools around alcohol use and criminal damage are now starting to have a positive impact.

Provisional figures indicate a very slight increase in pre-court recidivism rates, up from 28% to 30%, whilst there have been reductions in re-offending rates in both first tier penalties and community sentences. First tier penalty rates have encouragingly dropped from 73% to 55%, with community sentences down from 87% to 85%. Local targets to reduce offending by 5% on 2003 and 2004 cohorts have been met.

Overall performance is very good with further progress being made against the four areas now monitored by the Youth Justice Board. The average percentage scores against the thirteen key Performance Indicators came out at 92.5% across the year (2005), which was slightly up from the last year reported. The effective practice Quality Assurance Evaluations of two areas of service delivery, focusing on remand and resettlement processes, concluded in October 2005 that the Torbay YOT had generally very good systems in place, with some areas for further development. The 2005 audit against National Standards showed a score of just over 80% of standards being met, a considerable improvement from the 2004 audit (62.7%).

As part of the development of the Early Intervention Service Torbay will be focusing on implementation of the new prevention strategy including the establishment of the targeted Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP) for Torquay. This will provide a continued contribution to tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour through effective partnership working and closer working relationships between the Youth Offending Team and Youth Service. The YIP for Torquay will target three Wards with the highest levels of youth crime, anti-social behaviour and exclusion from schools. The YIP Project will provide early identification and interventions with the thirty most at risk young people (13 – 17 years) in those

neighbourhoods. It will also act as the catalyst for integrating many of the existing preventative funding streams and resources locally.

In addition, it is also intended to pilot an Integrated Youth Support Service in line with the recommendations of the Youth Matters Green Paper.

For information on **children with disabilities** please refer to 'Achieving economic well being'.

## **Achieving economic well-being**

### **14 – 19 strategy**

The implementation of the 14-19 Strategy, agreed with all schools, colleges, the CFE, LSC, Connexions and external providers is now good, moving swiftly from planning to action. Good progress has been made since the 2005 APA and in particular since the 2004 LEA inspection on the core themes of the Strategy. Priority has been given to greater engagement and collaboration between the schools and colleges, the quality and range of the revised 14-16 curriculum offer and to ensure good information is available to students and their parents/carers.

The new 14+ curriculum will have significant impact on year 10 students in September 2006. Most additional programmes have a work-related/vocational bias leading to the implementation of the new 'Diplomas' from 2008. The programme in September builds on the 60 IF places per year to provide a further 200 vocational places, 100 Skill Force places and 80 YMCA places alongside between 40 and 100 NVQ work-related places (the cohort of year 10 students in September is approximately 1,600). All of these are 1 day-per-week, 2 year courses leading to a range of accreditation.

The expanded curriculum and developing collaboration between partners will lead to significantly improved outcomes for students, initially in significantly improved 5+A\*-G percentages and average points scores from 2008 and on behaviour and attendance in year 10 from September 2006.

A key element of the year 10 & 11 plans is the development of individual learning plans for students and the greater coherence of curriculum offer for students at mainstream schools, the PRU, Special schools and on the EOTAS register to re-engage students at risk of falling out of the system. There will subsequently also be significant improvement to the percentage achieving 5+ A\*-C grades as the 14 level 2 'diploma' areas are made available to all young people in Torbay.

The focus on years 10 & 11 results will be the precursor of development of the post-16 curriculum, which will become available from September 2008. The greater achievement and involvement of all students 14 – 16 will lead to significant increase in the percentage of students accessing (and achieving) on appropriate post 16 courses with reduced numbers of NEETs (see section on connexions below). This will build on the very strong AS/A2 performance of Torbay – where LSC/Tribal added-value analyses shows that Torbay is the best performing of the SW LAs.

Access to good information and guidance will be greatly enhanced by the development of the area prospectus, available on-line to all students from September 2006, commissioned jointly with Devon LA to ensure coverage of the travel to learn area. School/LA operational groups are making plans happen for young people and promoting

collaboration. The BSF rebuild of Torquay Community College will include a Centre for Vocational Excellence as the diplomas come on stream.

### **Housing**

Partnership working with Housing services is strengthening with better links being established between housing needs and the intake teams. This includes an emergency housing initiative with Children's Services for accommodating young homeless people overnight. Dedicated housing officer time is now available to the youth offending team to address issues early. The care to community team also operate a liaison service for young people to ensure housing needs and benefits are processed quickly.

Housing services are also fully engaged in the development of the Common Assessment Framework and they are looking to use this approach in the creation of Housing referral hub.

### **Children with Disabilities**

Support for children with disabilities (CWD) is good with 40-50 supported by family key workers. All CLA and child protection cases are allocated. A day care service for 25 CWD which runs holiday schemes and Saturday support was rated as very good and excellent. Joint funding with health provides 2 family workers who model good behaviour management practice for CWD autism, ADHD and associated disorders. Parent support groups have given positive feedback and have been used as a sounding board for the service development. Mayfield Special School enables workers better to access young peoples' views.

The Local Authority has developed and begun to implement its **Learning Inclusion Strategy** 2005-8. It contains nineteen goals and over sixty specific improvement actions. During 2005/6 various stakeholder standing groups have been established to support the implementation of the strategy, notably *the Learning Inclusion Forum for Torbay (LIFT)*. Single stakeholder forums have also been formed for *SENCOs* and *Parents*.

Transitional support is also available to young people from the age of 14 who will need ongoing care. A dedicated transition worker ensures that the move to adult care trust is well managed.

The coordination of services to help children with disabilities cope with key transitions has undergone some significant changes and enhancements over the last 2 years. Up to the point of entry into schools children and their families have benefited from the 'Team around the Child' (TAC) initiative.

The Authority received an excellent independent evaluation for the TAC initiative. The introduction of key workers has helped to bring services and support together in ways that parents feel better meets their needs. Benefit take up for those families with disabilities has increased as a result. The number of direct payments increased to twenty families and is predicted to grow significantly in the near future.

In support of these improvements a review has been undertaken on the information available to parents. A dedicated parents' forum has been set up to help shape this and all other developments within the inclusion services. Work is on going to review the access criteria and decision making processes for respite/ short term break services

### **Adult and Community Learning**

Adult and Community Learning is managed by South Devon College, and uses both free-standing and joint-use venues at the heart of communities, enabling better access for reluctant first rung learners. In 2005/06 25% of the 4000 enrolments will be targeted at this group. Family learning is targeted at school communities where there is a high incidence of FSMs, to enable parents and carers to understand the school curriculum and how to support their children's learning as well as advance their own. 400 parents / carers enrolled 04/05. It also has a presence in the women's refuge, in Sure Start premises and temporary housing locations to access better vulnerable people and reluctant learners. The ESF and co-financed projects target specifically those adults who are disadvantaged, who have not traditionally benefited for educational opportunities, those who have not achieved a full Level 2 qualification as well as parents and carers with child care commitments. These are delivered in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector [VCS], with a focus on groups with for example mental health problems, drug addiction and physical difficulties. The projects include 'Bridge in to Learning', offering one to one support to potential learners to their first level 1 course; E-Torbay, which raises capacity to deliver IT courses within the VCS, narrowing the digital divide; and Skills for All, which supports literacy and numeracy for learners within voluntary and community-based settings.

### **Care leavers**

Support to young people leaving care has improved and continues to achieve higher than average levels of engagement in training and education amongst its care leavers. Over the last year work has progressed on developing improved supported lodging for young people leaving care. This reflects the need expressed by young people for accommodation that offers a greater level of independence with some vestiges of home life. In addition, taster sessions are being arranged for young people who are keen try living independently before they leave care. Through this scheme a young person's foster placement is kept open for a period whilst they try out living alone, thereby giving them a safety net if they find the initial experience too difficult.

Pathway planning has improved with the development of a new guide to transition called 'stepping out' written by a local carer. The new guide is due to be published with Children's Service support in 2006. The levels of engagement in pathway planning have been reported as good via quality assurance checks completed by the independent reviewing team.

The offer of financial support for work based expenses and training in practical life skills is now being enhanced with the help of young people via a new participation group. Advice on employment and training has further been improved with the inclusion of a dedicated connexions worker as part of the leaving care team.

Support for the most vulnerable care leavers has also improved with 72% of young people with mental health needs getting assistance from CAMHS. More work is needed but this is a significant improvement on previous year's results.

**Economic renewal** is an emerging theme for the Council as a whole. A new strategic

plan, currently under development, is looking to address economic outcomes including the priorities for young people.

The role and importance of young people as entrepreneurs is recognised and a new regeneration strategy is being put in place. For example several small business incubation units are being planned at the local Further Education college.

### **Connexions**

Connexions Cornwall and Devon is deemed to be a high performing service with a very good OFSTED, a Charter Mark award and the Investor in People award. There has been an increase in the percentage of 16-18 year olds in learning – this has risen from 71.8% in November 04 to 78.8% in November 05. In November 2005 less than 1% of clients aged 16-18 were “Not Known” and only 3.7% of young people were NEET (Devon and Cornwall 5.3%), a 1% year on year improvement of the last 3 years. Connexions has signed partnership agreements with all secondary schools and a number of local agencies: the service is delivered on a lead professional model with personal advisers (PAs) brokering help and support from appropriate agencies to ensure young people achieve positive progressions from statutory education to post 16 learning and then into employment. Connexions is targeting high risk groups for non engagement these currently include teenage mothers and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Connexions are a key partner in the 14-19 Strategy and the development of services to young people in response to Youth Matters.

## **PART D The management of services for children and young people**

### **Partnership**

The Children and Young People (CYP) Partnership and its Executive Group have set a clear vision in the Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP). The newly elected Mayor is the Lead member for Children’s Services and there is clear political vision for, and commitment to, Children’s Services. The Mayor is committed to ensuring that the children’s agenda is considered across the board within the Council.

A recent external evaluation by the IDeA confirmed that Children's Services was making good progress in the implementation of the change for children agenda. The IDeA identified that there was a positive ethos towards the changes amongst Children's Services and its partners. In this process middle managers were identified as pivotal in making the changes happen. The IDeA is continuing to work with Children's Services to equip middle managers with the skills they need as key change agents. Other areas of strength were partnership working, workforce development and communication.

### **Engagement**

Children and young people increasingly involved in the development of services and priorities, for example, the Take Part Participation Project including activities such as Teen Network Torbay (which recently received the Philip Lawrence award for its work)

and Big Cheeses Listen Up.

The CYPP includes a clear focus (local Torbay additional Outcome area) on the need to further develop the participation of cyp at both a “strategic” level, and at an individual level. There are a number of key priorities and activities for improving participation, that engage partners and cyp, and which are set out in the CYPP Part 2 Annex and which will be led by the Participation Task Group. Services are increasingly taking more steps to involve users in service developments. Consultation with users has led to:

- Switching the focus from family centre based activity to outreach parenting work within families’ own homes as opposed to a one-size-fits-all style of Parenting Group.
- The formation of an ADHD Parent Support Group
- The facilities available to care leavers

These developments build on existing good practice in terms of engagement in services such as in house residential care and care reviews. Plans are also being developed to introduce improved customer focus and input by way of a Service User Telephone Questionnaires. This will directly pick up on the effectiveness and impact of children in need services. A Youth Enquiry Panel has also been established that will allow council services to consult via the web with a group of young people.

### **Joint Commissioning**

Whilst commissioning of services is beginning, Children’s Services recognises that commissioning is an area that needs to be developed further. Capacity will be enhanced with the implementation of the new 2<sup>nd</sup> tier structure and the appointment of an Assistant Director: Commissioning. The CYPP contains a clear statement of intent on commissioning, outlining clear aims and strategies which will run through many of the specific activities outlined in the plan. An example of emergent and improving commissioning is the area of Children Looked After (CLA) placements. The establishment of Torbay’s Children’s Multi agency panel in January 2006 has led to an improvement in joint agency working and provides a positive forum to develop Torbay’s joint commissioning strategy. Torbay PCT is committed to working on joint commissioning with Children’s Services. Costs of CLA have risen slightly but at a lower rate than our statistical neighbours and nationally. This is a result of improved procedures for CLA by commissioning, salaried foster carers and better prevention to reduce numbers of CLA. Children’s Services is looking to work with other authorities, on a sub regional level in the south west to commission more local specialist resources. Future priorities for joint commissioning to be overseen by the partnership include, CAMHS, complex cases and potentially teenage pregnancy and obesity.

### **Staffing**

Performance indicators for spending on training show that Children’s Services is lower than similar authorities. However, staff absence rates and staff leaving rates are both lower than comparator authorities. Vacancies have come down as a result of an improved recruitment strategy which offers excellent remuneration, good training prospects and case load weighting to ensure that we can continue attract the most suitably qualified and experienced staff who work in safeguarding and looked after

children's services. However recruiting and retaining experienced qualified social workers remains a challenge for Torbay. Children's Services will continue to invest in recruitment process and further develop a Star Student Bursary Scheme to attract local final year students from Plymouth University.

Teacher vacancies for the area rose to 0.7% in January 2005. The work force is also aging. This is not regarded as a problem for Torbay.

### **CAF and ICS**

Children's Services has a multi-agency Common Assessment Framework Implementation Board leading a CAF Pilot in Paignton, prior to rolling this out across Torbay through the emerging School & Community Cluster developments. Torbay will be adopting a "Team Around the Child" model of working, learning from our Early Support pilot as well as from Beacon Authorities such as Telford & Wrekin, and West Sussex, both of which participated in a local "Integrated Front-Line Working" conference in March 2006.

An Information Sharing Protocol has been developed and is in place. Over the last year the sharing of management information has improved between public agencies. This has included the sharing of data between Children's Services and its partners to support the launch of initiatives covering, childhood obesity, youth crime and teenage pregnancy.

Torbay has been one of five new authorities to be invited by DfES to join the LA (Child) Index Steering Group, alongside the existing ISA Trailblazers.

The Integrated Children's System (ICS) will be implemented before end of 2006, and Torbay is exploring eCAF and single case record management (CRM) arrangements to further support integrated working and the connectivity between the Child Index, CAF and ICS. We are also exploring mobile working solutions, particularly Digital Pen & Paper (DPP), to support eCAF. With the introduction of PARIS, Children's Services will be ICS compliant by the end of 2006

### **VFM and Investments**

For 2006/07 Children's Services has made substantial savings to reduce its operating overspend. At the same time, consistent with the policy of early intervention, funding has been redirected towards universal/ preventative services.

Spending on the Youth Service is lower than statistical neighbours; however, significant additional funding was added to the Youth Service budget in 05/06 to reflect a local political and inspection priority of increasing Youth Service funding. Activity is focussed around a robust improvement plan and there are encouraging signs of recovery. The service is targeting its increased capacity to reach more young people and improve its quality assurance. The numbers of young people reached by the service is also predicted to increase.

Torbay has made a significant investment of £500k over the last two years as part of the CSCI Improvement Action Plan. It included a number of major investments within the Children's Social Care Service, including;

- Development of a dedicated private fostering service to audit the level of need and improve the public's awareness of private fostering within Torbay.
- Implementation of the Children's Placement Strategy to expand the quality and

choice of in-house placements for Children Looked After.

- Implementation of the recruitment strategy to address the hard to fill posts within the Children Looked After and Assessment teams.
- To further expand the Family Group Conferencing service to further strengthen preventative services for CLA and CP.
- To expand the Independent Reviewing Service to offer a wider quality assurance and monitoring role for CLA.

The results of this investment has been to improve assessment, care planning, reduction in unallocated work and a reduction in the number of high-cost, independent sector placements.

2006/07 has seen the introduction of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for school and school block activities funding. Within DSG, an additional £550k of Personalised Learning Funding has been largely allocated to schools using the Inclusion Sub-formula which is based upon numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, transient pupils and low attaining pupils. £103k has been allocated to enable alternative curriculum provision for disaffected KS4 pupils. This is expected to have a significant impact on this group of pupils.

Integration of some children service functions has started to deliver improved efficiencies and effectiveness for its service users. For example the closer working, and more recently the amalgamation, of Education Welfare and Family Support services has lead to a 7 fold increase in the numbers of cases addressed by the service. Work with regional partners has also established a portfolio of quality assured and graded services for schools.

Significant cost efficiencies have also been achieved by alternative procurement of elements of home to school transport. Savings in 2005/06 have been approximately £120k. and projected savings in 2006/07 are £200k. Good VFM is also predicted in the development of curriculum choices under the 14-19 strategy.

### **Performance monitoring**

Performance is reviewed regularly within Children's Services and by its members. Within the next few months a new and more robust reporting system, designed with the CYPP in mind, is due to be piloted with the Children's Services management team and the partnership. This reporting system will supplement national data sets with additional local information drawn from finance, human resources, file audits and client feedback. Monitoring will take place quarterly and be driven by those identified as the leads for the different work strands in the CYPP. Members will also have access to this along with performance reports based on key indicators.

A culture of learning and performance review is also evidenced by the development of electronic management reporting tools in social care and the use of action learning sets. In the next year £160K of extended school initiatives will be justified and assessed using community profile information. The evaluation of the impact and outcomes of all the extended school schemes are due to feature the views of children and young people.