

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

25 July 2022

-: Present :-

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Douglas-Dunbar and Loxton

Co-opted Members

Tatiana Wilson, Church of England Diocesan Representative

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Mike Cook, Imagine This Partnership

Frank Tsyplek, Torbay Youth Trust Junior Participation Worker (Care Experienced)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Law)

5. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Laura Colman (Primary Parent Governor Representative) and Jo Morrell (Non-voting Co-opted Member).

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 14 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7. Update on recruitment campaign for child minders

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, outlined the submitted report which provided an update on recruitment to all areas of childcare and early years provision. It was noted that due to pupil numbers currently decreasing there were no specific areas in which to focus recruitment activities. Risks had been identified in the early years sector with many settings finding it difficult to recruit including schools and nurseries. Therefore, a wider recruitment campaign had been carried out with support from South Devon College and the Department for Work and Pensions. They responded to questions in respect of the following:

- The paper referred to 2, 3 and 4 year old entitlements, what was the provision for 0-2 year olds and was there sufficient capacity for this age group and also during school holidays.
- Was information captured around family looking after relative's children.

- What action was being taken for succession planning within childcare and early years' settings.
- The language around requiring providers to get a DBS could be off-putting, could this be softened to show that support would be provided to help people obtain a DBS.
- Devon has a shortage of Learning Support Assistants who support children in the classroom, was this an issue for Torbay schools.
- What support was provided to ensure relevant specialist support to those children who require such support and how was recruitment supported for alternative provision settings.
- There was a course on autism but there were lots of conditions that young people may suffer from, how do we ensure that suitable training was provided to staff and governors in schools and early years settings.
- Was there an upper age limit on any of the vacancies and how do we encourage older people to come forward to consider these roles.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Director of Children's Services be recommended to consider actively recruiting an older workforce who may be looking for different opportunities working with children; and
2. that the Board receive an update on the sufficiency of Learning Support Assistants within schools in Torbay at a future meeting.

8. Exclusions Update

Dan Hamer, Head of Service for Vulnerable Pupils outlined the submitted paper which provided an update on exclusions within Torbay. It was noted that since the report had been written the whole year figures had been received and there had been 11 primary and 32 secondary exclusions over the past year, with no change to the reported data for special schools. Primary exclusions had started to reduce but there had been a significant increase in poor behaviour and assaults between secondary school pupils. Members noted the high numbers of vulnerable children who were being excluded and were at risk of exploitation and the negative impact that this had on their education and future attainment.

The ambition was for Torbay to be a zero-exclusion authority working with schools, children, young people and their families and other agencies to understand the support required to prevent children from being permanently excluded from school. Mr Hamer outlined the multi-agency approach to this journey and some of the barriers to this including some schools with zero tolerance policies. Members asked the following questions:

- Children supported through pupil premium were more likely to be excluded than their peers and 43.5% of exclusions were children at risk of exploitation, what action was being taken to keep these vulnerable children safe.
- Were relationships with schools improving and what further improvements could be done to ensure consistency and support across all schools.

- There was a new Government strategy which involved target setting with schools around attendance how could these be used to reduce the number of exclusions and support families and children.
- Were case studies being examined to identify issues and good practice.
- What work was being done nationally and how were the issues in the Timpson report being addressed.
- Trauma informed practice was being used in some schools to look at those at risk of exclusion and what support could be put in place to prevent them from being excluded, was this approach used in Torbay.
- What was the impact of zero tolerance policies on vulnerable children and what was being done to support and challenge schools with such policies.
- Councillors were Corporate Parents was there opportunities for them to influence schools with zero tolerance policies.
- What support was provided to support staff who were regularly assaulted.
- Schools were not reporting incidents as bullying, what was the reason behind this and were there high levels of bullying via social media.
- What sort of training was provided to school staff and governors to raise awareness of issues such as grooming and exploitation.
- Do schools still have nurture provision.
- How were children who were permanently excluded tracked to ensure that they were not being excluded from multiple schools.
- How was the community involved in supporting children at risk of exclusion from school.
- Were post 16 exclusions monitored and those children and families supported.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to consider how the community and voluntary sector can become more involved in supporting vulnerable children and their families to help reduce the numbers of children permanently excluded from school; and
2. that the TASH (Torbay Association of Secondary Headteachers) and TAPS (Torbay Association of Primary Headteachers) be recommended to ensure that governor and staff training includes awareness of the impact of exclusions on young people and to consider reviewing the curriculum across all schools (working together) to ensure it meets the needs of all children.

9. Children's Continuous Improvement Board Update

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, outlined the submitted report which provided an update on the Children's Continuous Improvement Board which had been expanded to ensure a joined up, partnership approach to supporting children and young people, following the change of rating of Children's Services to 'Good' in May 2022 from Ofsted. It was noted that an Adults Continuous Improvement Board had also been established with the Chairs from each Board sitting on both Boards to ensure a joined-up approach between Children's and Adults Services.

The report also provided an update on the Leadership, Management and Governance Action Tracker and Child Friendly.

Members noted the contents of the submitted report and acknowledged that CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) still remained a challenge in Torbay as well as at a national level and an emotional wellbeing summit would be looking at early prevention mental health to support children, wider than that which was currently just being delivered through schools. The following questions were put forward:

- How was Liquid Logic progressing and managing complex cases.
- How was the 'where I live' action progressing and who was taking a lead on this theme.
- Where do we hear the voice of the children and young people across the Child Friendly Torbay work.
- We captured the views of children and young people in 2018, how had the views been taken into account and was there a need to repeat this work.
- How would we ensure that the views of existing groups such as My Voice and Children in Care Council were taken into account in the Child Friendly Torbay work.

10. Update on Review of Youth Offending Team

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, outlined the submitted report which provided an update on the Youth Offending Team Review. Members noted that the Youth Offending Team was now the Youth Justice Team reflecting the restorative approach to this service rather than the offending element. The Board noted the improvements which had been made but were concerned that they had still not been able to fill the CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health) role. Members asked questions on the following:

- Had there been any improvement in respect of CAMHS.
- The report stated that part of the work was still in progress but clear evidence of change was not possible to evaluate the impact of those changes on children and young people, what was the reason for this and when would this information be available.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Youth Justice Plan update report in January 2023 include details of quantitative and qualitative improvements to the service.

11. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker

The Board noted the submitted action tracker.