

Friday, 17 March 2023

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
SUB-BOARD**

A meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**
will be held on

Monday, 27 March 2023

commencing at **9.30 am**

The meeting will be held in the Meadfoot Room - Town Hall

Members of the Board

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar

Councillor Dudley

Councillor Foster

Councillor Mills (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members of the Board

Claire Platt, Church of England Diocesan Representative

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Vacancy - Roman Catholic Diocese Representative

Vacancy - Secondary Parent Governor Representative

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Governance Support, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-BOARD AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.

2. Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board held on 30 January 2023.

(Pages 4 - 8)

3. Declarations of Interest

a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)

4. Urgent Items

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

5. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

(To Follow)

1. To receive an update on CAMHS and the action being taken to reduce waiting times and explore options for those young people who do not meet the threshold for formal CAMHS referral or support.

2. To hear from Children and Family Health Devon on what they were doing to resolve the lack of a CAMHS support for the Youth Justice Service to ensure that provision of at least one day a week is commissioned as soon as possible as well as responding to overall issues in connection with the lack of

access for young people to CAMHS services.

(Note: Jo Turl, Director of Commissioning Primary, Community and Mental Health Care, NHS Devon has been invited to attend the meeting for this item.)

- 6. Children's Services Self Assessment** (Pages 9 - 95)
To receive a report on the Children's Services Self-Assessment which will be used to inform the Ofsted Annual Conversation on the performance of Children's Services.
- 7. Torbay Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Joint Inspection Written Statement of Action Update** (Pages 96 - 200)
To receive update on the progress of the implementation of the action plan arising from the Written Statement of Action following the Torbay Local Area Special Educational Needs (SEND) Joint Inspection.

(Note: Hannah Baker, Project Management SEND Written Statement of Action has been invited to the meeting to present this item.)
- 8. Young People - Housing Strand Update** (Pages 201 - 214)
To receive an update on care experienced, including data around Nightstop use and long term housing sufficiency and any recommendations arising from the work with the Department for Education (DFE) care experienced expert.

(Note: Tara Harris, Divisional Director for Community and Customer Services and Shaun Evans, Head of Safeguarding and PSW have been invited to the meeting for this item.)
- 9. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker** (Pages 215 - 217)
To receive an update on the implementation of the actions of the Sub-Board and consider any further actions required (as set out in the submitted action tracker).

Meeting Attendance

Please note that whilst the Council is no longer implementing Covid-19 secure arrangements attendees are encouraged to sit with space in between other people. Windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation and therefore attendees are recommended to wear suitable clothing.

If you have symptoms, including runny nose, sore throat, fever, new continuous cough and loss of taste and smell please do not come to the meeting.

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

30 January 2023

-: Present :-

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Dudley and Foster

Co-opted Member

Claire Platt, Church of England Diocesan Representative

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Jo Morrell, Torbay Youth Trust

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

Ian Stevens, Devon and Cornwall Police

(Also in attendance: Councillor Law)

20. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Douglas-Dunbar and Mills and Mike Cook (non-voting Co-opted Member) and Ed Wright (who was represented by Ian Stevens, non-voting Co-opted Member).

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 21 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. Review of the Learning Academy

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, provided an update as set out in the submitted report on the review of the Learning Academy and responded to the following questions:

- Where was the Council with recruitment and retention.
- What progress had been made on recruiting a lead officer for restorative practice.
- Were all leadership roles now in place including the Head of Quality Assurance.

Members acknowledged that whilst some social workers had left the Council due to higher pay being offered elsewhere, some had returned due to the better working conditions at Torbay and vacancy levels remained relatively low at 10% across the whole of Children's Services, despite national difficulties recruiting and retaining social workers.

The Sub-Board noted the partnership approach being taken and the support offered through the Learning Academy, including five members of the Youth Trust Team taking part in restorative practice training and sharing good practice across teams.

The Sub-Board welcomed the progress made and success of the Learning Academy and thanked all those involved for their excellent work.

23. Virtual School Annual Report

Jane Inett, Head of the Virtual School, outlined the submitted Annual Report (2021-22) of the Virtual School Governing Body and responded to questions on the following:

- Was there any evidence that drug gangs were targeting cared for or care experienced young people and their families and what was done to identify potential risks.
- Did the Virtual School engage with the Police Intervention Officers.
- If extra tuition helped some young people to gain entry into the Grammar Schools, why was it not compulsory for extra tuition to be offered to all young people.
- Grades do not define young people they can still succeed and achieve at other goals or ambitions and the importance that this was recognised.
- What additional funding was available to support young people and did this continue into further education.

The Sub-Board noted that a pilot was being carried out with the Virtual School, Youth Trust, Children's Services and South Devon College on detached youth work for cared for and care experienced young people which would feed into next year's report.

Members celebrated the success of a number of young people highlighted in the report who had gone on to achieve great success in areas such as poetry, high grades as well as going on to university. Frank Tsyplek, Torbay Youth Trust Junior Participation Worker who represented care experienced young people on the Sub-Board was also congratulated as he had started as a young worker and now works 16 hours a week as a youth worker and was training to be a climbing instructor.

The Sub-Board thanked Jane Inett for her passion, enthusiasm and the leadership she has provided to help our cared for and care experienced young people to achieve all they want to and welcomed this approach being continued going forward.

24. Revised Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, presented the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy which had been updated having regards to the views of children and young people and their foster families and reflected the kind of Corporate Parents they needed us to be to enable us to respond to the needs of young people. They responded to the following questions:

- How many care experienced young people were worked with on the Strategy.
- The Strategy referred to partnership working, who were the partners involved.
- The forward just includes photos of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, this should be the whole of the Corporate Parenting Board to demonstrate that it was their collective responsibility.
- There were no mention of accommodation needs or housing.
- Do you monitor your young people who were not in accommodation.
- P12 refers to The Cycle and My Voice being participation groups currently facilitated by Torbay Youth Trust this had moved back inhouse to Torbay Council.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended to approve the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy as set out in the submitted report subject to the following:

1. amend paragraph 1.2 to read 'wider partnership';
2. to include photos and membership of the whole of the Corporate Parenting Board and not just the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services in the forward to show that this was their collective responsibility;
3. to include reference to the housing needs for care experienced young people and reference to the Torbay's Housing Crisis Review recommendations set out below:
 - to consider paying private landlords more than the standard one month deposit (normally the equivalent to one month's rent) to encourage them to rent properties to care experienced young people to give them more confidence they will not be left out of pocket once the young person has moved on;
 - to request that provision of new accommodation for care experienced young people should be a priority for TorVista Homes and other registered housing providers;
 - to explore options to enable more care experienced young people to remain longer term with their foster carers;

- to explore options for Banding in Devon Home Choice to see if care experienced young people can be given a higher priority and what processes are in place; and
 - to request that officers look at good practice from other local authorities when refreshing the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to see how we can encourage the development of more larger family homes, single units, units for care experienced young people or units to assist adults with a disability to live independently; and
4. page 12 of the Strategy to be amended to reflect that The Circle and My Voice participation groups are no longer facilitated by Torbay Youth Trust and have been brought back inhouse.

25. Youth Justice Plan Update

Jon Ralph, Service Manager, Youth Justice Service provided an update on the implementation of the Youth Justice Plan as set out in the submitted report and responded to the following questions:

- You have been trying to recruit a CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health worker) for two years, if you were still not able to recruit at what point do you need to change your strategy.
- What options have been explored with health to provide CAMHS support.
- In the short term the Youth Trust has been working with children and young people on what impacts them whilst waiting for CAMHS, the Youth Justice Service could link up with the Trust to access some of this work.
- What action was being taken by the Police to help speed up outcomes for young people.
- The One World Café had been identified as a suitable safe site to meet with young people and a bid had been submitted with other youth sector providers, was there anything the Sub-Board could do to support the bid.
- What other services were intended to be provided at the One World Café if the bid was successful.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Sub-Board requests that Children and Family Health Devon be invited to attend their next meeting to provide an update on what they were doing to resolve the lack of a CAMHS support for the Youth Justice Service to ensure that provision of at least one day a week is commissioned as soon as possible as well as responding to overall issues in connection with the lack of access for young people to CAMHS services; and
2. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board supports the proposal for Youth Provision at the One World Café.

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

The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted action tracker and requested an update on youth work at Parkfield to be presented to the next meeting.

Chairman

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 27 03 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Children's Services Self Assessment

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Cordelia Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
cordelia.law@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services
nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This paper has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the Ofsted Annual Engagement Meeting and the associated Self Evaluation Framework Submission.

2. Reason for Proposal and its Benefits

- 2.1 Torbay Council Children's Services are monitored under the 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) framework.
- 2.2 As part of this framework the following activities are undertaken:
- local authorities sharing an annual self-evaluation (SEF) of the quality and impact of social work practice;
 - an annual engagement meeting between our regional representatives and the local authority to review the self-evaluation and to reflect on what is happening in the local authority and inform how they would engage with each other in future.
- 2.3 This self-evaluation will, in line with the child's journey, outline how Children's Services work effectively in partnership to protect and keep children safe, promote their wellbeing and meet their needs. As part of our commitment to view need in its most holistic sense, and in line

with our vision of becoming a 'One Children's Service', this self-assessment considers both social care and education, and the impact of both services on the outcomes for children.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board note the contents of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Children's Services Self Assessment

Appendix 2: Children's Services Annual Conversation Briefing

Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

1.1 Please see appendix 1.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 N/A

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 N/A

4. Legal Implications

4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 N/A

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people			No differential impact

People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability			No differential impact
Women or men			No differential impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No differential impact
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No differential impact

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 N/A

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 N/A

TORBAY CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELF ASSESSMENT

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Introduction and Vision

This document details the current position within Torbay's Children's Services. It reflects the ongoing progress to build on the improvements reflected within the March 2022 ILAC inspection report and further enhance the services that are provided to children and families in Torbay.

As outlined in the previous Self-Assessment, Torbay has fully acknowledged what has been required to make sustainable improvements to ensure are compliant and safe. The 2021-22 Self-Assessment was produced at a time when the first phase of improvement had been completed and the second phase was being launched with the aim to focus on improving service quality beyond what is required to secure safety and compliance.

Torbay had a full ILACS inspection in March 2022, and were judged as good across all areas, for the first time in many years. Ofsted found:

“Services for children in Torbay have significantly improved. This improvement is demonstrable and making a tangible difference for Torbay’s children. Strong political and corporate commitment to the improvement agenda has enabled the local authority to change the trajectory of social work practice so that services in Torbay are now good. This is an impressive achievement.

Strategic partnerships are now strong and there is good communication across both corporate and operational management. Despite this improvement, local authority senior leaders are not complacent. They have a strong awareness not only of what is being done well, but of areas of practice in which they could do better for children. Such areas include clearer expectations of workers when care leavers live in emergency accommodation and greater consistency of supervision and management oversight.

A highly effective approach to recruitment and retention has enabled the creation of a largely stable permanent workforce. As a result, manageable caseloads now enable stronger and more constructive relationships to be built with most children and families.”

This reflects the significant and consistent progress made in addressing the previous improvement objectives, and provides the platform upon which services can move forward to achieve our corporate ambition of sustaining a 'Child Friendly Torbay.' Whilst maintaining an acute and continuous focus on children who need help and protection, those who are cared for, and care experienced, we also aim to sustain progress in other areas. For example, preventative Early Help services based on the family hub model, and early intervention to provide consistent support to children with SEND at SEN K level, are two areas in which aspirational and innovative work has begun. This will be achieved through the robust implementation of Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan, which is the driver for the process of partnership-wide

transformation in order to achieve the delivery of outstanding services to children and young people.

Our overarching ambition is for these outstanding services to be appropriately informed by enhanced understanding of our local community and the needs of children and families. They will be co-designed and co-produced and based on meaningful and impactful engagement, consultation, and participation. We want children and families not only to have a 'voice', but for this 'voice' to be at the core of service improvement and innovation. As we strive forward to build on the significant success of what has been achieved already, we are committed to ensuring that our workforce, our partners, our Members and our communities are involved and informed, and are able to share in what we do and how we do it.

Within the full inspection in March 2022, areas for development were identified as:

- ☒ The oversight of arrangements when care leavers move in and out of temporary accommodation.
- ☒ The focus on reading (literacy) in personal education plans.
- ☒ The quality of planning for some children in need.
- ☒ The frequency and quality of management oversight.

Work has already begun to respond effectively. For example:

- Our care experienced service has been subject to significant review. A robust process has now been implemented which ensures that any care experience young person who is living in temporary accommodation has the oversight of the Director through the Independent Placement Overview Panel. Following the inspection in March 2022, Torbay invited the National Adviser for Care Leavers, Mark Riddell, to visit and provide some feedback on the strengths and areas to strengthen in regard to the care experience service, and this has fed directly in to Torbay's Operational Corporate Parenting action planning.
- Our Learning Academy continues to offer a three-year program for newly qualified social workers as well as advanced and skills-based courses for our wider workforce, including non-qualified staff. The Learning Academy continues to make a major contribution to our wider and broad-based recruitment and retention strategy as well to the knowledge and skills base of our workforce, resulting in our current vacancy rate for front line social workers reducing to 8.33%.
- Our Cared For Service in conjunction with the Virtual School have progressed work to ensure that literacy remains a key focus for all cared for children. A new Literacy Policy is in place, endorsed by the Virtual School Governing Body; a reading target is a central part of each primary aged cared for child's PEP; from 1st February 2023a specialist teacher is leading on literacy; the enrollment in the Letterbox initiative continues which sees bi-monthly reading materials sent

to certain year groups; book tokens are being used as rewards for progress; and training is being offered to fostering families, so that they may support reading alongside the pilot project in place which aims to use new technology to support reluctant readers.

- Supervision and management oversight remains a core priority, and an area of development highlighted by Ofsted and our own audit activity. Through the Learning Academy, we have established a supervision workstream, to review the supervision policy and its associated delivery models. Once completed, the workforce development plan will be updated and include specific focus on the favoured 'four by four-by-four model'. We have also implemented cross-service bespoke buddying and mentoring opportunities, to ensure that peer support is provided consistently to the workforce. At December 2022, 66% of children under 18 have had either management oversight or supervision recorded in the last eight weeks;
- Quality of planning remains a significant service focus. SMART planning for restorative plans is a significant priority, with service guidance being written and provided to the workforce to support its development, in addition to bespoke training for managers, advanced social workers and the rest of the workforce. This is a regular topic at our established Practice Improvement Forum, where good practice is shared and thematic learning from audit activity is presented.
- Our Exploitation Team continue to work with those young people highly vulnerable to sexual and criminal exploitation. The maturity of this team is evident through the enhanced partnership working and data-sharing, include the January local profile, joint county lines risk assessments, the ongoing implementation of the CEMOG, MACE and triage processes, the workforce development plan and the involvement of the team in the reconfiguration of the LiquidLogic system. This work is central to the strategic exploitation plan which is monitored through the TSCP.
- We are progressing with the implementation of three localized Family Hubs as part of our wider early help model which will support us to create community resilience and support for families at the earliest opportunity. Through the development of the Torbay Family Hubs, Torbay families will benefit from improved outcomes and enhanced lived experiences through the reduction of the impact on families of poverty and deprivation, improved mental health and support, the reduction of reliance on statutory services and an increased sense of community-based services responses, thereby empowering families to overcome their own challenges.

We continue to be encouraged by significant sustained progress against our priorities over the last year. A sample of our achievements s which captures the current position is set out below. Compared to the position at the time of the previous Annual

Conversations with Ofsted, and particularly the position in 2021-22, it highlights the breadth and significance of progress in a wide range of areas. We draw attention to:

- the rate of contacts completed in 24 hours has sustained at 99% (December 2022) from 86.6% (2020) despite there being continued high levels of demand in the MASH in terms of contacts and referrals.
- the sustained timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences held within 15 days of a strategy discussion, 89% (year to date to December 2022) from the low point of from 56.9% in 2021.
- the continued work to ensure that proportionality is central to decision-making in relation to those children becoming subject to child protection planning has seen the rate of children subject to those plans reduce to 63 per 10 000, in line with our statistical neighbors at 61. Torbay have historically been an outlier for many years in relation to both statistical and national comparators. Despite the high levels of need, we continue to use early intervention to safely prevent the need for unnecessary escalation into child protection planning. The continued work to reduce the overall numbers of cared for children, with a reduction from 352 (2020-21) to 329 (end of December 2022). Of those 329 children, 29 were classified as Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, either transferred to Torbay through the National Transfer Scheme (6 of the 29) or as a result of the age assessment process (23 of the 29). The overall numbers of cared for children has been significantly impacted by the numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who have needed to become cared for., The 'stand up' of a local asylum contingency hotel has resulted in 23 age representations alone to date.
- The improvement in the proportion of children living with Torbay foster carers has been sustained (62% at December 2022, an increase from 55.7% in December 2021). The reduction in the use of residential care has continued (with 15 children in residential provision at December 2022 compared to 22 at December 2021).
- significant improvement in the recognition and response to children vulnerable to exploitation with 215 exploitation assessments being completed in year to date (YTD) 22/23 compared to 179 at the same point in the previous year. Between April and December 2022, 42 children have been identified as at high risk, compared to 37 children in the same period the previous year, and our intervention had reduced risk for 39 children compared to 35 in the same period the previous year.
- There has been significant improvement in recruitment and retention data. Our annual turnover rate for permanent staff has significantly reduced from 26% in September 2020 to 15% in September 2021. We have maintained our turnover rate between 15%-17% (FTE) and report on this quarterly via our governance

arrangements which allows us to update our retention strategy accordingly. We hold regular listening circles, bench marking exercises, celebration events and have a weekly colleague recognition scheme as part of our determination to value staff for what they contribute. Our vacancy rate for Qualified Social Workers has continued to decrease from 38.7% in September 2020 to 22% in September 2021 and 13% in September 2022. Currently, in December 2022 the social work vacancy rate our vacancy rate is 10.3% in December 2022. These data confound the critical challenges in recruitment and retention experienced by almost all parts of the country and reflect the strength of our strategy and its implementation.

- Allocation of children to qualified social workers continues to be monitored through the strategic quartet as well as operationally. Presently the average allocation across the service is:
 - ASYE average caseload – 8
 - ASYE year 2 Cohort 16
 - Advanced Social Worker - 19.3
 - Experienced social worker – 20.3.

This is slightly higher than we would aspire to, however the impact of the age assessments is reflected within this position.

Torbay is most proud however of the aspirational learning culture which continues to be fostered within its Children's Services, and which means that, despite this progress, the continued aim is to strive forward to a point whereby we are delivering outstanding services to the children and families of Torbay.

This self-evaluation will, in line with the child's journey, outline how Children's Services work effectively in partnership to protect and keep children safe, promote their wellbeing and meet their needs. As part of our commitment to view need in its most holistic sense, and in line with our vision of becoming a 'One Children's Service', this self-assessment considers both social care and education, and the impact of both services on the outcomes for children.

Practice Model

In March 2022, Ofsted recognised Torbay’s restorative progress, stating:

“Child protection conferences take place within appropriate timescales and respectful work by social workers using restorative approaches supports parents to be engaged well in the process”.

“Stronger assessments, often carried out using Torbay’s restorative model of social work practice, explore effectively the impact on children of parental mental illness, domestic abuse and substance misuse”.

“Experienced and newly qualified social workers and other frontline staff value the considerable investment in their professional development. A restorative practice model focuses on working with families. An ethos of ‘doing with’ rather than ‘doing to’ is progressively becoming embedded across services, leading to more sophisticated and effective direct work with children and their families.”

Torbay Children’s Services and its partner agencies believe that the adoption of a restorative and relational approach to our work enables practitioners and children and families to develop positive relationships to ensure children and young people are safeguarded and the needs of the family are met. It recognises the importance of separating the behaviour from the person, placing a focus on the relationship as being key to achieving positive outcomes.

We continue to embed and enhance the implementation of the Restorative Practice model, with the maturity of this implementation underpinning our decision to successfully apply to become an accredited restorative organisation with the Restorative Justice Council scheme. In addition, the benefits of the restorative approach implemented within Children’s Services has been recognised corporately and has contributed to a proposal to embed a relational council approach, which combines both restorative and trauma informed practice. If Torbay adopts the relational approach, we would have a 'golden thread' connecting all services, staff and politicians

In July 2021, we extended our Restorative Practice training offer through the Torbay Children’s Safeguarding Partnership to a wider range of partners and this offer

continues. To date, 149 individuals from the voluntary sector, housing, other directorates within Torbay Council, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, supported accommodation providers, early years settings and primary, secondary and special schools have been trained.

Since September 2022, we have reviewed and revised the Social Care Practice Standards. This has required intensive consultation with the workforce and children, young people and families, and each standard is now written to the child or young person. A launch event is planned for the 27th of February 2023, to ensure this foundational shift in our practice is celebrated sufficiently.

Following feedback through a corporate-wide HR survey, Children's Services have also designed a staff pledge, which promotes a set of working behaviours which all of the Children's workforce can commit to and evidence in their day-to-day practice.

Torbay are also in the middle of a Restorative Recording pilot which ends on the 3rd March 2023, with the aim of moving towards more consistency in terms of our restorative recording, recognising that each and every time we record on a child's file, a contribution is made to their life story.

Held by the DCS and senior leaders, we continue to hold regular listening circles as part of our commitment to working restoratively and 'hear' the experiences and views of our workforce. These sessions are very positively viewed by participants. The feedback gathered and collected is put together in a 'You said, We did' presentation which is delivered to colleagues. We also make use of the weekly bulletin as a way to provide feedback. Where appropriate, we also feedback on an individual basis.

Experiences and Progress of Children in Need of Help and Protection

Early Help

Current Support to Child and Families

In March 2022, during a full inspection, OFSTED stated:

“A radical transformation and development of early help services mean that children and families in Torbay benefit from responsive, well-coordinated, universal and targeted early help services that help to reduce harm and to promote children’s welfare. Good-quality assessments are overseen by experienced early help managers. A ‘team around the family’ model delivers a holistic, multi-agency perspective on families’ needs. This is making a difference to most children’s lives, as it prevents risks escalating. The weekly multidisciplinary early help panel ensures that most children get the right level of help at the right time.”

As of December 2022, Torbay were supporting 1022 children across the Early Help partnership, compared with 952 at the same time last year (December 2021). 47% of children are supported by a lead professional within the internal Early Help Service with the remainder allocated lead professionals across Education, Health, Action for Children and the wider VCS. This figure is significantly higher than the figure of 23% the previous year. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, there is now a children with disability pathway within Early Help, enabling a more proportionate response to children with disabilities who require low-level support, and secondly the complexity of work being accepted into Early Help requires higher level interventions that are not available across the wider partnership. However, both these factors reduce the demand for statutory interventions for families. The robust management and success of support offered to families at the Early Help level is evidenced by just 2% of referrals to Children’s Social Care (27 referrals) in the period May 2022 to December 2022 came from Early Help.

It is noteworthy that the percentage of contacts progressing to Targeted/Early Help is continuing to increase, from 11% in 2019/20, to 17% in 2020/21, to 24% in 2021-22 and now 25% (2022-23 year to date as of December 2022), reflecting a more proportionate response to our families. In the period from 1st April 2022 to the 30th November 2022, Torbay started or completed Early Help assessments in relation to 745 children [Annex A data].

Background Summary

Early Help within Torbay has been subject to radical transformation and development following long standing challenge to the delivery model which was underdeveloped and fragmented. Service development has continued throughout 2022 with further services moved from the statutory area of service delivery in order to frontload support

to families and support a more robust preventative model. Most notably, the Family Group Conference (FGC) service is now managed under the Early Help umbrella. This allows for families to be offered FGCs at the point of referral into Children's Social Care in order to support family led planning from the outset of contact with social care. Moving FGC to Early Help has also made a significant impact on referrals with the number of children being referred to FGC increasing in the quarter to the end of December 2022 to 271 from 199 in the quarter to the end of September 2022. In total, 46% of all referrals (by family) for the quarter to the end of December 2022 came from Early Help compared to just 10% coming from Early Help the previous quarter.

The new relationship-based Early Help Model is predicated on delivery by one of the three locality based integrated partnerships based in each of the three main towns of Torbay. These virtual teams meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss challenges and ideas along with sharing good practice. The bi-monthly meetings are now maturing with attendance from a variety of members from the wider Early Help Partnership. Going forward, the three-locality based integrated partnerships will be aligned to the three Family Hubs strategically located across the local area (Torquay, Paignton and Brixham). This will allow the wider Early Help parentship to steer and contribute towards programmes of activity that form the Family Hub offer to children, young people and families as defined within the Family Hub development plan and the overall strategic Governance of Children's Social Care in Torbay.

The Early Help model was agreed by key partners in 2021 after a significant degree of co-production and has received a high degree of "sign up". Work has continued throughout 2022 to develop the operational delivery of the model in practice. This includes detailed guidance to ensure professionals across the partnership understand the guiding principles of Early Help as well as how support to families is delivered in a coordinated manner. A training package has also been developed with delivery to partners starting in September 2021. Uptake and feedback from the training continues to be positive. A further 33 practitioners trained in 2022 makes a total of 153 practitioners across the partnership trained over the last two years in the delivery of the new Early Help model and its associated processes. This includes the new Early Help assessment and revised Team Around the Family (TAF) planning processes. The number of new practitioners trained compared to the previous year is relatively low reflecting a pause in delivering the training whilst it was updated to fully reflect the incorporation of restorative practice into the content.

The effectiveness of the new model is seen in the fact that there is no longer a waiting list for families to receive early help as once an assessment is completed, and an initial TAF plan or specialist single agency referral is completed within a creditable 10 working days. Furthermore, it is argued that the reduction of contacts into MASH from 2021 and this being sustained throughout 2022 reflects the Early Help preventative work and approach starting to bed in.

To ensure the ongoing success and sustainability of the model, the formal governance arrangements for Children's Social Care in Torbay have been fully revised and re-

structured to ensure a joined up 'One Children's Service' vision. The Early Help Strategic Board is central to the new governance structure with the progress of Early Help being accountable to the Children's Continuous Improvement Board through the regular One Children's Service Focus meeting, which combines the Sufficiency Board, Children's Services Operational Board, QA Board and Workforce Development Board. Early Help has a significant role to play in each of these Boards.

Internal Re-Organisation – Phase 2

To ensure the Council's internal Early Help Service is robust and furnished with the right skills mix to deliver appropriate direct work and support to the overall Early Help partnership, phase two of the service re-organisation was delivered over 2022 which built on the major re-organisation seen in 2021. As noted above, Family Group Conference has now moved to the Early Help from the statutory part of the service. A new Service Manager took up post in September 2022. The Service Manager maintains full day to day operational delivery responsibilities for the whole Early Help service as well as supporting the process of service development on continuous change. The outgoing Service Manager has taken up the post of Head of Service for Safeguarding, Early Help and Business Intelligence. With the inception of the Business Intelligence Service, the team of Supporting Families Analysts will be moving in January 2023 from Early Help to the Business Intelligence Service to ensure all data processing and analytics is joined up across all services as part of the One Children's Services vision.

The main objective of keeping the Early help, safeguarding (which consists of the IRO and LADO service area) and Business Intelligence within one Head of Service portfolio is to ensure there is synergy between the preventative work and also the responsive interventions delivered by the statutory areas of the service. This will allow for clear pathways for children to step-down and ultimately out of statutory services and be supported at the Early Help level quicker via more robust and cohesive cross service working. To further facilitate this, A Child in Need IRO was appointed and will be in post in January 2023. This role will be directly managed under Early Help to ensure the focus for children subject to Child in Needs Plans remains step-down to Early Help at the early possible point.

To ensure the additional demands placed on Early Help can be met, agreement for an additional two-Family Intervention Team practitioners was gained in 2022 with the view to these being in post in early 2023.

Embedding Prevention into the Culture of the Early Help Partnership

As noted previously, there has been purposeful shift over 2022 with the emphasis in Early Help moving away from purely responsive work to early identification and preventative work. This has resulted in a widening of the early help remit to include such areas as youth homeless prevention and Family Group Conferencing. Coupled with stepping statutory plans down to Early Help plans, it means there is more cross service working with colleagues in the statutory areas of children's services. This has

commenced with co-working with the care experienced personal advisors in relation to homeless prevention for young people aged 18 to 25 who were previously cared for. Going forward with the CIN IRO coming on board, there will be more work undertaken to ensure step-downs from CIN planning to Early Help planning have 'warm handovers' between relevant practitioners. From a preventative perspective, the CIN IRO will have oversight of stepdown plans to reduce the risk of re-referrals into Children's Social Care.

Early Help are also working in collaboration with SEND, with an aim to reduce the number of EHCPs issued without intervention and support to front load and meet the needs of the child as early as possible. This is confidently predicted to reduce the need for escalation to statutory intervention.

There will be clear procedures in place, to ensure effective cross working between SEND and Early Help and partners will be fully aware of the transitions process and pathways, for all children, not just those known to statutory social care. There are plans to draft a joint working protocol between SEND and social care, outlining the need for an Early Help offer in line with SEND Support or RSA requests. This requires input from local primary schools and early years setting. In the true sense of preventative Early Help, this will focus primarily on children in the early years stage. This will then need to feed into the new Early Help Strategy, with SEND clearly defined within this. Alongside this, there will be a plan to implement a schedule of training and raising awareness events for partners in terms of transition pathways. A SEND representative now sits on the Early Help Panel and set of KPIs will be established in relation to this joint working protocol.

To further shore up the Early Help offer regarding SEND and to ensure a graduated response to SEND challenges for children and their parents, the plan going forward is to establish another team within the Early Help Service that focuses on SEND and supporting general educational achievement. It is envisaged that this team will consist of a SEND helpline Officer, an EHCP coordinator and will be led by a Designated Social Care Officer for SEND.

Family-Hubs – Phase 3 Implementation

The Early Help model includes several theoretical approaches such as a social prescribing model, a restorative strengths-based assessment through a resilience model, and the principles of Family Group Conferencing. In essence, this reflects a conscious move towards the community being self-supporting and reducing poverty of opportunity. With this in mind, the focus of the next phase of the Early Help model is to implement and conjoin a network of family hubs across Torbay. In order to make an immediate start to the implementation, the three Children's Centres located in each of the main towns in Torbay have been identified to be co-branded as the Family Hubs. The hubs will form the centre of the Child Friendly Torbay Early Help offering and the central locations for the delivery of services and support as prescribed by the Government's Family Hub programme in which Torbay has been identified to be a trail blazer.

The development of the hub network will be co-produced with the Early Help partners as well as the VCS who will play a pivotal role in support parent engagement via the development of parent/carer panels. Across the Early Help partnership there continues to be strong 'buy in' with a collection of established community assets already identified as potential early adopters.

Other Key Programmes/Activity the Early Help Service is Engaged with

Torbay Promise

This is a collaborative partnership set up to support families expecting a child and identified as vulnerable and living in a particularly deprived area of Torbay. The partnership consists of professionals from Health, Education, Social Care and the VCS and will form a team around the family to ensure the first 1001 days in a child's life are characterised by best start principles via the deployment of comprehensive support. Parents are being identified at the pre-birth stage with holistic 'conception to carer' support being offered so that post 1001 days families are able to sustain change. They will be equipped and given opportunities to provide their children with positive childhood experiences that reduce the risk of statutory intervention.

During 2022 thirty-three families engaged with the Torbay promise benefiting from the multi-agency enhanced ante-natal offer. The findings and outcomes of this work will now be fed into the main Family Hub work as well as informing the 'Born into Care' sufficiency workstream. This Sufficiency Strategy workstream has been devised to develop an investment and delivery plan to reduce the number of repeats 'born into care' situations. Not only will this reduce the number of cared for children, but it will also provide a number of potential mothers and fathers with an opportunity to have a family life safely caring for their own children in the future.

Operation Encompass (0–5-year-olds)

Following successful completion of a 5-month pilot project in 2021, Torbay have joined the 3-year research programme supported by the Home Office. The objective of the programme is to build on the established Operation Encompass programme that has been rolled out across primary and secondary schools by identifying pre-school aged children exposed to domestic violence. A multi-agency group meets daily to review police CARAs and determine actions that need to be completed with allocation of the work to the most appropriate agency across children's social care, the Health Visiting Service and Early Years. The objective of this programme is to ensure domestic abuse work is delivered at the earliest point in a child's life in order to prevent escalation and children experiencing chronic abuse. This work sits with FIT 1 which leads on the Early Help domestic abuse response.

This work has continued throughout 2022 and is now considered as 'business as usual'. Going forward, the preventative side of the work is envisaged to include ensuring a trained domestic abuse champion is available in every early year's settings across Torbay.

The Medical Research Fund Programme

This research led by Exeter University has been commissioned to explore the reasons for Torbay's historically high number of children receiving statutory services. A significant focus for this research is the focus on the preventive role of early help across the partnership. The research is being used to inform new ways of working and in particular how the VCS can be supported to play more of an active role within

the partnership. A secondary consideration within the research is the exploration of the links between poverty and neglect. As neglect is the major category for children requiring statutory services, this is a key piece of work. It has led to widening the thinking around poverty from the purely financial context to that of poverty of opportunity and will link into the work of the Homeless and Poverty Prevention Team within the new internal Early Help Service.

The initial findings of this work have been used to feed into the Neglect Group within the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership. From this the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) tool has been identified as the preferred tool for identifying and addressing neglect. The preparation for the implementation of the GCP2 commenced at the latter part of 2022 with a number of practitioners trained to as part of a multi-agency train the trainer programme. Some of these trainers have now started to deliver courses to frontline practitioners which has resulted in 21 practitioners across a number of agencies now being trained to undertake the GCP2 with parents. The aim over the next 2 years is to have a register of 240 practitioners trained to undertake the GCP2 across the Early Help Partnership at any given time.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH continues to be appropriately resourced with the involvement of key partners including police, health and education. Several partners are also utilised to support the MASH when necessary, including probation, the youth justice service, adult services and housing. There are three referral coordinators, 3.5 social workers, two Assistant Team Managers and one team manager who ensure a timely and robust response to all new contacts.

Torbay recognise the central function of the MASH in terms of the part it plays in ensuring that children are safeguarded. As such, we welcomed two additional quality assurance measures this year: an appreciative enquiry exercise undertaken internally undertaken in February 2022 and a peer review undertaken by Leeds in March 2022. Feedback from both of these important exercises is reflected upon within this section.

Demand in Torbay continues to be high. The number of referrals in the year to date at December 2022 would equate to 6439 if continued at the same rate for the rest of the year and therefore is likely to be in line with the figure of 6998 for 2021/22. The data below shows that response to contacts within 24 hours has been consistently better than good and in December 2022 (year to date) was 99%. We are pleased with the sustained step-down rates which reflects the investment made in developing Early Help.

Area	September 2019 (Annual conversation)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	December 2022 (YTD)
Contacts	3869 (YTD)	8689	7956	6998	4829
Contacts within 24hrs	86.6% (YTD)	91%	97%	97%	99%
Conversion Rate	17.7%	22.1%	28%	30%	31%
Re-Referral Rate	24%	22.2%	25%	27%	22%
Step down to targeted help		10.7%	17%	25%	25%

The last three months of data demonstrates a consistency in the timeliness of contacts being progressed through the MASH, with 99% of contacts being responded to within timescale in October 2022, November 2022 and December 2022; this aligns to an overall consistency of performance data since April 2022 for MASH contacts not dropping below a 97% completion rate.

This performance has been achieved in the context of some staffing challenges over the past year, due to staff sickness and vacancies which presented capacity issues throughout the year and into December 2022, which had to be mitigated against at times through a flexible approach to staffing within the wider 'Front Door' service. This has required social workers and CCWs from the Assessment Team to directly support MASH activity at various times. This has fed into a wider contingency plan which

recognises that, due to the size of Torbay as an authority and particularly the size of the MASH team, there is a need to ensure that mitigation is in place in the event that staffing capacity is impacted for any reason. Intensive recruitment and retention targeted activity has also been in place to address this identified need and, in the last two months positively, there has been an agency to permanent conversion within the MASH staffing group and all vacancies have now been filled, with all but two staff (one ATM covering maternity leave and one social worker) being permanent members of staff.

Alongside the quantitative data, the MASH continues to engage in dip sampling activity twice a week: one session is collaborative with a rolling schedule of key partner agencies, which supports the review of partner referrals and offers opportunity for learning, reflection, and feedback; and one session per week is a 'MASH only' activity to review internal operational consistency and to enable reflection on practice.

Conversion rates for contacts progressing to Early Help for six out of the last nine months have been equal to or above the end of year average for '21-'22 (25%) and dip sample data supports a view that partners appear to have increased confidence in completing comprehensive Early Help Assessments and a better understanding of thresholds and need. In turn, this increased confidence means that children are supported to get the right help at the right time, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

The MASH has also been heavily involved with updates to the LCS system, through working alongside BetterGov and our data performance team to build a much more comprehensive and 'live' reporting system using Power Bi. This work is paying dividends that are making a difference in our understanding of the work coming in at the Front Door and supporting Mash managers to work effectively across the partnership. The MASH has also worked with BetterGov on various other workflow improvements such as the Child Protection module and Private Fostering workflow for example, to ensure that LCS pathways are fit for purpose and initiated correctly by the MASH at the outset.

How do we know this?

Ofsted stated in the March 2022 inspection:

“When children’s needs or risks to their well-being increase, they are referred to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). Clear and well-established systems provide timely and effective management oversight of referrals. The co-location of early help coordinators with professionals from partner agencies who have a responsibility for safeguarding adds value, leading to swift and proportionate threshold decisions. Workers in the MASH are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Most children receive the right level of help and support at the right time. Consent is sought from families when checks with partner agencies are necessary. Mature partnership arrangements in the MASH help to ensure that relevant information is shared swiftly.

Referral pathways are clear, with effective collaboration across teams and services. This is a significant improvement since Ofsted’s last inspection.

Robust checks with other agencies ensure that children at higher risk are prioritised quickly.”

MASH dip sampling and partnership dip sampling routinely evidence sustained strong performance in respect of the timeliness of responses within the MASH examined MASH performance in detail and found that safe decisions were made in a timely fashion, a finding endorsed by monthly performance data which demonstrates that year to date in December 2022, the percentage of contacts completed within twenty-four hours has never fallen below 97%.

Dip sampling activity also evidences that no children have been identified to be at risk through MASH decision making, further reinforcing the view from the Leeds Peer Review and the latest Ofsted inspection in that there is a consistency in the application of thresholds and that decision making is timely, proportionate and right for children and families.

Information from weekly MASH dip sampling activity evidences the following strengths in terms of practice:

- Dip sampling identified that 56% of children were allocated the same day as the referral and 44% the next working day.
- 100% had allocation case notes and management oversight on the direction of work required.

Full audit cycle activity in July 2022 identified:

- Actions undertaken by MASH were timely;
- Appropriate decisions are being made;
- There was a consistently good level of management oversight in relation to decision making.

Areas identified for further opportunity included:

- Considered work needs to be undertaken around chronologies.
- Involvement of birth fathers as a continued area of improvement when gathering information at the front door.

In terms of practice development, following feedback from dip sampling, there is still some work to be done in terms of consistency in the quality of our MASH chronologies and ensuring that we communicate with and capture the voice of ‘absent parents’. In February there is a learning set session organised with the MASH management group to look at how we involve the team in learning from feedback and putting the learning in to practice in an effective and collaborative way. MASH managers have also recently become involved in a Voice of the Child pilot and are currently trialling a more restorative and child focused approach to their Manager’s Analysis which they have embraced with enthusiasm.

The findings of the Leeds Peer Review in March 2022 confirmed the outcome of the appreciative enquiry exercised undertaken in February 2022, in terms of the strengths within practice and areas to strengthen.

Strengths included:

- There was a stable, confidence and competent team of MASH workers and the team were well-resourced.
- There was consistent management oversight, including clear rationales for decision-making; all records considered for audit purposes demonstrated clear evidence of this management oversight.
- Strong achievements in terms of timescales.
- An understanding and commitment to restorative practice and building relationships with parents and carers.
- Effective and efficient strategy discussions.
- Good step down arrangements and relationships with Early Help.
- A strong quality assurance framework.
- Knowledge in regards to exploitation, including partners, and a commitment and enthusiasm to supporting children and young people whereby contextual safeguarding is an identified risk.

Areas for further opportunity included:

- Reconfiguration opportunities to streamline the case management system [this has already been fully actioned as part of the reconfiguration project].
- Continued development of the Early Help pathway and other preventative measures, including the use of Family Group Conference to enhance family-led planning from the very initiation of a child's journey through the MASH.
- Examples of inappropriate contacts from partner agencies.
- A renewed shared vision being progressed through the MASH Strategic Board.

This feedback has been incorporated into a specific action plan, which already evidences significant progress in regards to the areas for further development.

Children whose Responses are within the Single Assessment Teams (SATs)

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

The Single Assessment service has a full, permanent managerial workforce, two of whom have been part of our succession planning scheme administered by the Learning Academy. Consequently, the two managers that have moved up into these roles has enabled others in the single assessment workforce to progress into Advanced Social Workers positions, contributing to the stability of the service. Of the twenty social workers in the service, 13 are permanent (65%) and the family support workers are all permanent, with two considering social work career pathways as part of our ongoing recruitment and retention strategy.

Area	September 2019	2020/21	2021/22	December 2022 YTD
Children Seen Within 5 Days	72.9%	80%	76%	%
Number of Child in Need post-assessment (excluding CfC, CPP and care experienced YP)	438 (19/20 – 595)	557 at November 2020	528	567
Number of Child Protection Plans	218	223	152	159
Percentage/number of children on a Plan for a Second or Subsequent Time	34.9% (83 children)	25% (74 children)	33% (63 children)	31% (55 children)
CP Visiting (within last 10 Days)	68.2%	88% (March 2021)	76% (March 2022)	62% (December)
ICPCs within 15 Days of Strat	56.9%	80%	92%	89%
Number of Children Allocated to Social Workers – FTE Caseloads	Lowest 3 – highest 29 (Average 22)	20.8	16.6 (September 2021)	17.7 (September 2022)

The timeliness of completion of assessment is 85% (as of December 2022), which is in line with the national standard and above our statistical neighbours. This is a slightly

reduced position from December 2021, when this performance indicator was 87%. Torbay acknowledge that this is in part due to the significance of the additional workload which resulted from the stand up of a local asylum contingency hotel, and the representations from 23 of those residents in terms of age assessments. We now have structures in place and a number of staff across all service have been trained to complete these age assessments which will reduce impact on particular service areas.

In line with Torbay’s restorative model, the single assessment service is working closely with the restorative lead to improve the quality of assessments by focusing on the voice of the child. This involves inclusion in the restorative recording pilot, whereby assessments will be written to the child.

Our expectation is that following a decision made within twenty-four hours of a contact, we have a maximum of five days to visit the child and commence our assessment. A system has been implemented which allows for more robust tracking of the expected five-day visit following the decision being made in MASH to progress to an assessment. Team managers all have access to the Power Bi DASH board that gives an updated overview of any children that have not been seen and this dashboard is used to monitor performance in daily briefings, weekly team briefings as well as the monthly performance surgeries. The percentage of these children seen within this timescale as at December 2022 was 69%, below expectations, and therefore has been identified as a service priority for improvement.

YEAR	Average Days to first visit (where visit was made)	% Visits in 5 days
YTD 2022/23		73%
2021/22	4.52	76%
2020/21	5.03	80%
2019/20	6.3	710%
2018/19	5.5	71%
2017/18	5.3	74%

How do we know this?

During the March 2022 Ofsted inspection, they found:

“Assessment and planning are effective and timely for most children. Social workers demonstrate good skills and professional curiosity in trying to understand and evidence what children and their parents or carers are telling them. Social workers do well at engaging and assessing the parenting strengths and weaknesses of fathers and male partners as well as mothers. Stronger assessments, often carried out using Torbay’s restorative model of social work practice, effectively explore the impact on children of parental mental illness, domestic abuse and substance misuse. Social workers sensitively evaluate the impact that these and other vulnerabilities have on parents but keep a clear focus on children’s need to stay safe. Most assessments are comprehensive and of good quality and include a family history. Children are seen regularly, and workers seek to gain their views about their lived experiences. Some direct work is powerful in enabling children to express their lived experiences, for example in pictorial ways, and this is an important tool in understanding the

harm they are suffering and ensuring that effective action is taken to address it.”

Our audit activity identifies the following areas of strength:

- Identification of risk in last Quarter for the single assessment service was in the 80th percentile from full audits. *“Timely identification of risk was evident and legal action was undertaken in a timely way to ensure the child was safeguarded.”*
- Within single assessments, there is consistent evidence of child and family involvement (between the 60-70th percentile).
- Dip sampling identifies that case notes for **100%** of the children and young people had a clear record of their wishes and feelings
- Single assessments are timely. Dip sampling activity evidenced 88% of assessments completed within 45 days.
- 100% had evidence of family history being considered.
- 100% had evidence of developmental needs, parenting capacity, family and environment being assessed.
- Supervision and Management oversight is in the 70th percentile for this service area.

Audit activity highlights areas of practice to strengthen as being:

- Evidencing direct work on the file and completing direct work through play with younger children.
- Father to be included in assessments- 64% in dip sample had both parents
- Stronger links to research to support analysis.
- CIN plans need to be SMART purposeful and reflect progress.

Operational Services Teams

The Operational Service consists of five teams comprising five full time equivalent Team Managers, five Advanced Social Workers and 30 Social Workers as well as 6.6 Community Care Workers.

In the Operational Service, there continues to be stability in the workforce following the successful recruitment of our international social workers and ASYE social workers. Out of the establishment of thirty social workers, twenty-eight social workers are permanent members of staff (93%). We have been successful in creating stability within the management structure with the permanent recruitment of a Service Manager. Three of five Team Managers are permanent, and we have in the last two weeks received some external expressions of interests relating to potential candidates for these permanent vacancies, and therefore we hope to fulfil the vision of an entirely permanent management structure within the operational service.

There continues to be focussed work in respect of the quality of child in need plans, which will be further supported by the newly appointed CIN IRO to provide an additional layer of support and scrutiny. It is anticipated that the identified work to enhance the quality of child in need plans, as well as the continued development of the Early Help pathways will lead to a reduction in the overall numbers of children who require child in need planning in the near future.

Of those children subject to child in need planning, 84% had been subject to review in the year to December 2022 (not all of the cohort had yet been due for review). Performance demonstrates that 71% of visits to children subject to Child in Need planning were completed within timescales in the year to December 2022. This compares to 65% for 2021-22 and 50% in 2019-20.

The operational service continues to work collaboratively with Torbay's revamped Edge of Care service, renamed Building Better Futures team, to offer high intensity support, reparative parenting, and intensive parenting intervention to work alongside families to reduce risk and stabilise safe permanence for children. This working relationship continues to be an area of development for the service and will involve ensuring ensure that earlier involvement of Building Better Futures is considered at the right time to prevent escalation of need.

Due to the positive work in collaboration with the IRO service, there has been a continued emphasis upon Child Protection Planning which has led to an overall reduction in our children subject to child protection planning over the course of the year. The reduction in child protection planning has been supported by increased management oversight and grip in relation to decision making, supported by reflective conversations to consider the proportionality of a Child Protection Plan. There is evidence of increased confidence and consistency by the workforce when considering Child Protection Planning, reflected in the rate of children becoming subject to child protection planning per 10 000 in December 2022 being 29, far below national and statistical comparators;

The operational service continue to work with the Learning Academy to continue to embed restorative practice when working with families, to consider how best to support

families to work with risks and develop strengths within the family network to meet children's needs, as opposed to escalation. The operational service is currently engaged in the restorative recording pilot, to consider how we can reflect the voice of the child in Core Group meeting, Child In Needs reviews and management oversight and supervisions, by writing our recordings to the child.

We are investing in our social workers to provide training to equip them with the skills to complete comprehensive parenting assessments and there is ongoing work being undertaken alongside the Court Quality Assurance Manager based in the Learning Academy, to enhance the quality assurance of the work presented as part of documentation submitted to court as part of care proceedings. Training will support the growth of expertise within our workforce, leading to reduced time within public law proceedings and better outcomes for children.

As part of our workforce and development planning in relation to the operational service, a buddying system has been implemented for social workers. This links the social workers to the IRO service to provide bespoke mentoring and additional support.

The operational managers have increased oversight through weekly performance meetings and data tools using Power Bi which is supporting improvements within performance.

At the end December 2022, there were 9 children subject to pre-proceedings and the average length of pre-proceedings was 26 days; this is a significant reduction from 37 days in 2021-22, 61 days in 2020-21 and 101 days in 2018-19. This evidences that there is no unacceptable and avoidable drift and delay.

As of December 2022, the snapshot figure evidenced 81 children subject to ongoing care proceedings; this is an increase from 57 children in December 2021. For 43 of these children, care proceedings has been ongoing for more than 26 weeks, with a number of issues impacting on delays for children, including Court availability [which continues to be a challenge post-pandemic], delays in expert availability or court requests for repeat assessments. This understanding and oversight feeds directly into the workforce development plan and has informed our decision to work with Mutual Ventures to more comprehensively understand the impact of this delay on children.

Operational services continue to robustly track progress for all children in pre-proceedings or proceedings. The responsible Head of Service as Chair of Legal Gateway Panel and in conjunction with a dedicated Court Quality Assurance Manager monitors and oversees all cases through the Legal Gateway Panel, to ensure that they remain on track wherever possible. Pre-proceedings are monitored mid-way and at the end of the 12-week process, ensuring consistent management oversight, decision making and completion of the process within the agreed timeframe.

Unborn children subject to assessment continue to be tracked through the Unborn Baby Tracker Panel and there are clear expectations in respect of pre-birth assessment and planning identified within Torbay Pre-Birth protocol. This has resulted in more robust oversight of the children concerned. For those children who require

court intervention at birth, there are stronger evidence-based plans in place, and we are encouraged to have seen a substantial reduction in the use of residential placements and better use of parent and child family-based placements.

Year	Residential parent and child	Foster placement for parent and child	Total
2019	8	17	25
2020	2	10	12
2021	1	11	12
2022	2	9	11
2023 year to date	0	1	1

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

“Bespoke direct-work tools are helping children with complex needs, including some of the most vulnerable and exploited adolescents, to manage their behaviours and to express their views. Plans and planning are improving and all children in need have a current plan in place. The majority of plans are reviewed regularly to track progress. Most plans identify children’s most important needs and the key risks to them, although some are not updated following significant events or changes to children’s circumstances. The quality of this child in need work is not consistent for all disabled children. This means that a small number of children are experiencing delay in making progress in line with their assessed needs. However, inspectors did not identify any children left in situations of significant risk.

Rigorous monitoring and tracking of children subject to the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline is preventing drift and ensuring timely decisions about applications to family courts. Plainly written, authoritative and sensitive letters to parents explicitly outline what needs to happen. When necessary, legal proceedings are initiated quickly to ensure that children are not subject to neglect or living with other damaging home conditions for too long.”

The audit universe includes full audits in relation to children supported within the operational service on an ongoing basis; in addition, a number of dip samples have been undertaken (including children becoming subject to a child protection plan undertaken in July 2022 and the quality of Core Group meetings in December 2022).

Areas of strength within the operational service include:

- Involvement of children and families, particularly with regard to parent’s views being included in **87%** of plans. (May 2022)
- Collaboration with key agencies remains a strength in practice with a dip sample identifying **87%** of CP plans were multi-disciplinary and mostly involved school and colleagues from health (May 22).

- Improved outcomes were rated as good for 75% of audits completed in 21-22.

The recent dip sample undertaken in December 2022 in respect of the quality of Core Groups found:

- 100% had core groups recorded.
- 60% of plans were SMART/
- 75% had the child's view recorded on the plan.
- 100% evidenced at least one parents' view.

A dip sample was completed in September 2022 to consider those children who became subject to a child protection plan in July 2022.

Strengths of practice identified included:

- Involvement continues to be a strength within the full audits and the voice of the child and involvement of family within the case records meeting good falling with the 70th percentile of Quarter 1 (2022-2023) and 60th percentile in Q2.
- Improvements in the gradings and overall outcomes increased by 8%

The dip sample identified the following learning:

- Threshold was not consistently applied. Of the children considered, threshold was not felt to be met in respect of 25%.
- For a number of the children, who were child in need there was an disproportionate overreaction to incidents and progression to child protection process without consideration to strengthening the CIN plan and whether this could/ would reduce that risk.
- There needs to be more focus within plans on the role of the multi-agency group in facilitating change.

Areas to be further strengthened to achieve consistency and sustainably high standards are:

The operational service is focussing on supervision and management oversight; there has been a decline in performance in this area, in part due to two new team managers joining the service and adjusting to these new positions. Increased monitoring is showing a week-on-week improvement, alongside one to one mentoring support and investment within the Team Manager training programme which will continue to develop manager's leadership skills and highlight the power and value of reflective supervision, both for children and families and for the workforce.

Children with Disabilities

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

The responsibility for the Children with Disabilities team is organizationally located within Regulated Services and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Head of Service and Service Managers within this area of service.

The Children with Disabilities Team is fully staffed consists of one Team Manager, an Advanced Social Worker, four permanent social workers (one of which is an interim social worker), three newly qualified social workers, a student social worker and two Community Care Workers.

Increasingly, members of the team are locating in special schools, to enhance the relationships and multi-agency working in respect of the children the team support.

Children are referred into the service directly via the MASH, where threshold decisions are made. Historically, the eligibility criteria for this team have relied heavily on diagnosis. This has been reviewed and is now solely focused on the impact of the child's disability on their lived experience, their functioning and needs and this change has been positively received by parents and carers. Decisions to do so depend on the complexity of the disability and therefore children who are assessed as having a mild or moderate need are supported by the operational or cared for teams. The focus of the Children with Disabilities Team is upon children with severe or profound needs including physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairments, and communication disorders.

At Torbay, we recognise that children with additional needs and disabilities and their families may require a variety of additional support, at various times in their lives from both universal and statutory services. We believe that children should be supported in the right way, and at the right level according to their assessed needs.

Whilst every child with a disability is a child in need, and every family caring for a child with a disability has a right to request an assessment of need, it may be the case that this assessment determines a low level of support, through the provision of Short Breaks or another intervention, which addresses the identified need to a point whereby statutory intervention is no longer required, and support can be provided under universal service through Early Help.

Often, the needs of a child with a disability are unlikely to significantly change in a short period of time and the support identified will need to be ongoing as opposed to short term basis; this can mean that children with disabilities are disproportionately supported as Children in Need for significant period of time, which for children and families can feel unnecessary, invasive, and intrusive. We do not believe it is fair or proportionate for children and their families to be supported at level four in terms of threshold, at statutory Child in Need (s17), simply because the provision of a low-level service is required as a result of the child's needs and there are no other support or

safeguarding issues identified. We have therefore introduced a Children with Disabilities Early Help pathway. In terms of the process, at the point of step down, the most recent single assessment will form the foundation of the assessment driving forward the child’s Early Help plan.

Unlike other services, the Children with Disabilities Teamwork with all children who meet their criteria for support regardless of legal status. Therefore, the team supports children who are subject to:

- Early Help planning;
- Children in Need planning;
- Children subject to Child Protection Plans;
- Cared For Children planning;
- Children subject to Public Law Outline; and
- Children with a plan of adoption.

Children with disabilities team	December 2021	December 2022
% of CP visits on time	No data for December 2021 available due to migration issue	73% (8 of 11 visits; YTD is 92%)
% of CiN visits on time	46%	59% (26 of 44 visits; YTD is 61%)
% of CfC visits on time	86% (6 of 7 visits)	75% (3 of 4 visits; YTD is 58%)

All visiting rules have been updated in respect of every individual child, in line with the assessment of their need. A bespoke performance report is being built, separating Children with Disabilities performance from that of other areas of service. Performance is monitored daily, through daily briefings, and through monthly performance surgeries.

We have sought to strengthen the strategic and operational links between the Children with Disabilities team and the SEND agenda. As part of the Written Statement of Action, there is a renewed commitment to improve the quality of Appendix E and social care contributions to Education, Health and Care Plans. In addition, the post-sixteen officer from SEND forms part of the Transitions Panel, which reviews and monitors transition planning for all children supported in the Children with Disabilities Team from the age of fourteen.

A Parent Carer distinct assessment has been created which is now embedded within the assessment proforma on Liquid Logic.

The Team Manager in Children with Disabilities meets regularly with the Carers' Services Delivery Manager, in terms of the services available to parent/carers within the local area.

How do we know this?

Children with disabilities assessment and planning was considered in the November 2022 audit cycle specifically.

Areas of strength included:

- Identification of risk.
- Involvement of children and families.

Areas to strengthen include:

- Ensuring all children are subject to timely, reflective supervision.
- Ensuring that single assessments take into account family history and the impact of the support of wider family member.
- Ensuring plans include measurable outcomes, which can then be reviewed through the CIN or Core Group process.

Experiences and progress of cared for children and achieving permanence.

Cared For Children

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

The Cared For Children's Service comprises two teams, both of which are managed by their own Team Manager and there is one Advanced Social Worker whose role is to work across both teams. The service consists of 10.6 experienced social workers (incorporating two ASYEs), and four permanent Community Care Workers. The cared for service has three vacancies for social workers currently, and five interim workers within the service; this is reflective of some challenges we have experienced over the last year in recruiting to the service.

Torbay are corporate parents to a reducing number of cared for children, from a height of 362 children and young people in the 2018-19 period to 329 children as of December 2022. This included 29 asylum-seeking children either transferred to Torbay as part of the National Transfer Scheme or subject to the age assessment process. As of the 2nd February 2023, the time of writing, this has reduced further to 321 children (including 28 UASC).

The following table provides profile data relating to the Cared for Children Service. As has been highlighted in the introduction, it demonstrates a high number of areas in which improvements have been achieved, some of which is significant. Narrative explaining the specific data reflected within this table can be found below.

Area	September 2019	November 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Cared for Children				
Number	352	326	295	329
Placement stability	Short term – 15.2% Long Term – 65.6%	Short term – 9.8% Long Term – 61.7%	Short term – 14% Long Term – 67%	Short-term – 20% Long-term 66%
Visiting	77.6% (YTD) - 55.1% (19/20 YTD)	68.4%	75%	79% YTD
Initial health assessments	47.4%	80%	25% YTD	34% YTD (possible late recording issues)
Annual health assessments	84.1% (August 2019 data)	88.1%	75%	86%
Dental checks	45.8%	85.8%	34%	57%
SDQ	60.8% (53% 19/20 YTD)	56.9%	[no data]	66%
In Residential Care	42	22	22	15

Cared for children more than 20 miles away	60%	26.5%	27% (November 2021)	32%
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Placement stability

Torbay are proud of the fact that the greater number of cared for children achieving permanence through long term placement stability has been sustained this year, at 66% as of December 2022. This is reflective of a number of initiatives which are being progressed, to consider other forms of permanence for our cared for children, for example the Former Foster Carer Special Guardianship Offer, which is described in more detail below. However, it is recognised that this remains slightly below both the national and statistical comparators and therefore enhancing permanence and placement stability remains a key priority area for the service.

To ensure that intensive support is available at the point that placement instability is identified, the pathways within our edge of care provision, Building Futures Together, have been enhanced to ensure that there is a clear offer of support to all cared for children, their fostering families and their placements.

There has been a decline in terms of short-term stability performance and this is for a number of reasons. This group of children includes those for whom changes of placement are purposeful and necessary, for example children with a plan of adoption. In 2022-23, it also increasingly included those UASC who have made representations in respect of age assessment. This meant that Torbay needed to urgently identify a number of placements for 22 young people who presented at approximately the same time. Interim options had to be explored to ensure the welfare and safety of the resident in the immediacy whilst longer term options were identified. This cohort also includes a number of cared for children with highly complex needs, whereby interim solutions have been necessary due to immediate notice being given by placement providers. This demand generated by providers, often with little or no notice has been an ongoing challenge nationally. We always challenge these decisions and re-enforce to providers the damaging impacts their actions cause.

We advocate 'Staying Put' as a beneficial option for our cared for children as they prepare for transition and pay foster carers competitively to continue to support young people once they turn 18. This reflects in the fact that, of the 16 young people who are now 18 and who left care on or close to their 18th birthdays, 12 (or 75%) remain in Staying Put arrangements.

Visiting

The increased use of PowerBI dashboards to monitoring visiting compliance on a daily basis, and through weekly team and service meetings, has contributed to a sustained improvement in those children being seen on time in line with their visiting schedule. Daily briefings, weekly team and service meetings as well as monthly performance surgeries are able to make use of this child-level data to explore the rationale for any visits completed outside of timescales and, most importantly, the impact of this on children.

Health

Torbay continues to support all children to access therapeutic support when they need it, and when threshold for statutory CAMHS intervention is not met.

As of December 2022, the year-to-date figure for the timely completion of Initial Health Assessments is 34%. This is disappointing, as a number of initiatives have been embedded to ensure that the significance of a child becoming cared for, through a holistic lens, is fully recognised and that all statutory duties are complied with in a timely manner. This includes the introduction of a 'Becoming Cared For' guide for practitioners, which includes prompts for consideration before, during and after the process of a child becoming cared for. In addition, a 'Becoming Cared For' meeting is chaired by the Divisional Director of Safeguarding for every child who becomes cared for, to allow for greater senior leader scrutiny and oversight of the planning for the child at this pivotal point in their life. Through data scrutiny, Torbay are currently investigating potential late recording issues which may be impacting on performance in this area.

We remain in a recovery period in terms of health-related performance. However, there are now encouraging signs of improvement. As of December 2022, 57% of children who have been cared for over a year or longer had had a dental check in the year; 86% of children who have been cared for over a year or longer have had a health assessment in the year. We are aware that our sixteen and seventeen years olds are a significant proportion of the 14% who had not had a health assessment, as they have not provided consent. This remains a focus for the newly established Health Steering group, the IRO service and the Corporate Parenting Board, with the aim of ensuring that cared for young people understand the benefits of this assessment in terms of their short- and longer-term outcomes and aspirations.

The Health Steering Group that has been established, brings together children's social care and various health representatives, to identify solution-focused actions to overcome barriers to the appropriate access to health services and wider health performance. This includes a review of Torbay's SDQ process, to ensure that we are maximising the intelligence this provides in relation to the emotional health of our cared for children. It enables earlier intervention to prevent escalation into mental health crisis and the wider implications this has for the child, including its impact on placement stability.

Historically, there has been a service level agreement in place between CAMHS and Children's Services and this is currently under review with a view to significantly revising the role of this service to meet the changing and current needs of our cared for young people.

Children in Residential Placements

Torbay's ethos remains that every child deserves, where possible, to live in a family setting and it is this conviction which has underpinned the intensive work undertaken by the service to safely reduced the number of Torbay cared for children in residential provision. In in December 2022, 15 children lived in residential settings a significant reduction from 46 children in the 2018-19 period. Exit planning is in place from the

moment a residential provision is identified to establish what is required to enable a safe step-down into a fostering family as soon as possible, subject to it being consistent with the child's needs.

As a result of the National Panel Chair's phase one report, Torbay undertook its own assurance activity in relation to all cared for children with Education, Health and Care Plans in residential provisions between September 2022 and October 2022. Whilst Torbay did not identify any children placed in residential specialist schools that are registered as children's homes and who are cared for, there was an appetite to apply this quality assurance exercise to provide partnership assurance in respect of the quality being provided to our children. This exercise involved joint visits and quality assurance activity with the placement provision and education setting for each child, conducted jointly by our Placements Auditor and the child's social worker and consultations with the wider partnership.

Cared for children placed more than 20 miles away

Torbay continue to promote a child's right to be cared for in the locality of their home, their family and peer network and in line with their wishes and feelings. The increased number of children placed more than 20 miles away includes a significant number of UASC for whom the placement has been deliberately selected in accordance with their wishes to live in a more urban setting.

In line with Torbay sufficiency strategy, we are committed to increasing local provision to help our young people to live in closer proximity to family and friends when it is right for them to do so. We are offering choice and not subjecting them unnecessarily and avoidably to out of borough living arrangements.

Participation

Participation continues to be a significant focus and priority for Children's Services, particularly in respect of the voice of our cared for and care experienced children and young people. Such is its importance that a Strand Lead through the Strategic and Operational Corporate Parenting Boards has been dedicated to it, exploring how we can embed a culture of co-production, consultation and true participation and learn from what children, young people and their families tell us. This has in part been motivated by the wealth of invaluable information and learning which was extracted from Torbay's roll out of the Bright Spots Your Life In and After Care surveys undertaken in 2021.

Torbay continues to have an active Cared for Community represented by the Circle (previously known as the Children in Care Committee) and a participation group for care experienced young people called My Voice. Previously, this service was commissioned to the Torbay Youth Trust. However, in line with our evolving and strengthened participation agenda, this service is now delivered in-house, through the Learning Academy's two dedicated Participation Officers.

The Divisional Directors of Safeguarding and Education and the Director of Children's Services meet on a monthly basis with a child with involvement from social care and two cared for children, to discuss with them their views on their experience of all aspects of social care including perspectives on being a cared for child, and These meetings are then fed into an ongoing participation feedback loop, with the notes and learning shared across Children's Services, with specific actions arising from each meeting. Some of the ideas arising from this participation work, such as the Act of Kindness Certificates and Celebrating Achievement nomination for cared for children, have now been actively embedded into practice and are proving to be a powerful and positive way of celebrating with our cared for and care experienced children and young people.

Torbay is also establishing a Children and Young People's Panel (name to be confirmed by the young people themselves) from January 2023 which provides a regular forum in which young people can scrutinise and provide feedback in relation to policy, practice and quality of service.

Special Guardianship

As of March 2019, all Special Guardianship assessments and Special Guardianship Support has been held within the Fostering Service.

The Fostering Assessment team is responsible for the assessment process itself, including support for the prospective Special Guardian and input into the formulation of the Special Guardianship Support plan. Once a Special Guardianship Order is made, Special Guardians can access support through the Fostering Support team.

All Special Guardianship Order assessments are now undertaken by social workers within the Fostering Assessment Team; all support for children subject to these Orders and their families is coordinated through the Fostering Support team. Referral routes, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and established.

A flowchart outlining social work responsibility in respect of Special Guardianship support plans, how these are recorded and the recording of communication of this to applicants. This has been communicated to all teams across Children's Services.

Information leaflets for assessment and support are in use by both the Fostering Assessment and Support teams. Consultation was offered by legal services in the creation of these leaflets.

A Special Guardianship Order tracker is being maintained, to include all those children subject to the Order, the status of the support being offered to them and the dates for review of the Special Guardianship Support plan. This will include trigger dates for the children at the age of fifteen years and six months, which will then prompt a letter explaining their rights to access from the Care Experience service.

Each Special Guardianship Support plan is then reviewed annually, in line with the month the Order was made, and a letter is sent to every Special Guardian at this point, outlining the support available to them, information in respect of our work with Family Action and our Family First support leaflet. For those Special Guardians receiving

active support from the team, more frequent reviews of the Special Guardianship Support plan are undertaken in line with the child, Special Guardian, and family need.

In conjunction with the Learning Academy, Special Guardians will now also have access to specific training opportunities and also benefit from our growing Corporate Parenting Offer. In addition, Special Guardianship support groups are in place, and we will look to develop this over the next year in line with the Fostering workstream.

The number of SGOs made in 2021/22 was 19 (17% of children ceasing to be cared for); the year-to-date figure at December 2022 was 9 (15%).

Transitions

Transitions remain a key area of focus and improvement for Children's Services.

Children within the Children with Disabilities team and the Cared for Children teams, and all young people with an EHCP, are tracked from their fourteenth birthday; this is through the implementation of a Transition Tracker and through the newly established Transitions Panel, which went live on 21 September 2021. The Transition Panel is held weekly, and oversees transition planning in respect of the following key areas:

- Current placements and support packages.
- Transition planning and joint work with adult services.
- Issues in relation to liberty protection safeguards and restrictive measures if identified.
- Joint work between the allocated social worker and Personal Advisor where appropriate.
- Preparation for independence work.
- Post-eighteen accommodation and support planning
- What actions are required to achieve better outcomes for the young person?

The membership of this Panel includes a representative from adult social care, health and SEN, as well as key individuals from Children's Services. The Panel will also serve as a means of consistent managerial oversight in respect of the allocation of Personal Advisors at fifteen years and nine months. A pre-transfer referral is now made to the Care Experienced team three months before the young person's sixteenth birthday. This is to allow for a Personal Advisor to be co-allocated, and for relationship-building and information gathering to take place at a much earlier point than it has been historically, to aid the transition of the young person from cared for to care experienced.

The Transitions Panel also forms a means of identifying and tracking parent/carers who may need additional support during the period of the child's transition; this is highlighted to the adult transitions team, in order that appropriate support can be accessed by the parent/carers when the child becomes an adult.

The remit of the Panel has now been extended to include those assessed as at high risk of exploitation, those supported through the youth homelessness pathway, young parents, young people supported through a child protection plan and those subject to the NRM process. Any young person can be referred for consideration through the

Panel if this is felt necessary and beneficial. Most important, all young people with an EHCP are also now considered as part of this Panel, in line with our Written Statement of Action improvement work relating to preparing for adulthood and our vision of becoming a One Children's service.

The joint transitions protocol has also been reviewed jointly between Children's, adult social care and all other relevant partners, including Young Carers, Carers services and adult mental health. This review focused on a consultation with young people and parent/carers as well as SEND Family Voice, to ensure lived experience was reflected throughout. This document is now explicit in terms of what transition to adulthood is, and how this can be experienced by young people, as well as outlining the characteristics and expectations in terms of good transition planning.

A Young Person's One Page Guide to Transition has been created, following feedback from young people about this protocol and the need for something more concise and young-person focused. Next steps are to create a Parent/Carer specific guide also.

In addition, we are seeking to utilize the Transitions Panel, to undertake an aspiration audit of young people, and then tailor bespoke opportunities in relation to employment and education aligned to these wishes and feelings.

Children with a plan of reunification

We have continued to focus on those children who can return to parents' care and our Building Futures Together team continues to assist with this area of work, with a reunification pathway included within our edge of care intervention. We are also committed, where it is right for children, to ensure Court orders are discharged at the earliest opportunity.

In 2021/22, 46 children returned home; in December 2022, the figure for the year to date was 10, with a number of children's plans in progress and awaiting final confirmation through the conclusion of care proceedings.

Our children who are placed with parents (this currently relates to eighteen young people as of the 2nd February 2023, an increase from twelve at December 2021) are reviewed by the Permanence Panel in order that there is no drift in considering the discharge of orders. A Schedule 3 Tracker has also been established, to track pending and current plans of reunification, dates of completion and review of Schedule 3 assessments and agreed projections for presentation to Legal Gateway Panel when a plan for revocation has been confirmed through Permanence Panel.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Torbay has been working with the National Transfer Scheme since August 2021, on both a voluntary and the mandatory basis, and have welcomed 18 unaccompanied young people as part of this scheme to date, having offered placements for over 25 referrals.

In September 2022, an asylum contingency hotel was established in Torbay. As a result, 23 representations have been made in respect of age disputes, triggering the age assessment process.

As of the 2nd February 2023, Torbay support 28 UASC cared for young people (above the 0.1% figure for Torbay of 25), 10 care experienced UASC young people and one further representation remains in triage.

The Cared For and Care Experienced teams therefore support a growing number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) from all over the world who are cared for or care experienced. All UASC have access to interpreters when they become cared for, a facility extended to all care experienced young people who need this support. We link UASC into education, health services and language classes to improve their life chances. We work closely with young people, their carers, solicitors and our legal team regarding the young peoples 'remain' status and during the appeal process. Where necessary we attend Court (appeal / 'bail') and solicitor appointments with the young person. We support young people to make contact with lost or otherwise displaced family members through organisations like the Red Cross.

Placements

The Placement Team is overseen by the Service Manager for Specialist Services, and comprises one Placement and Contracts Officer and two full time equivalent referral co-ordinators. The team is responsible for identifying and commissioning all placements for children in our care. The Team also actively tracks placements and completes due diligence checks, on providers in conjunction with the Placement Auditor noting Ofsted inspection judgements and outcomes. The Team liaises with the social workers and team managers around timely completion and quality of placement plans and All About Me (child-centred front pages) for our children requiring a placement.

The commissioning arrangements to procure semi-independent provision and housing for care experienced young people have been reviewed and a block contract and Framework Agreement for semi-independent living arrangements have been developed and are in place.

A Placement Auditor has now been in post for a significant period of time and this role is instrumental in undertaking audits of placement provisions across the range of placement options for young people. The Placement Auditor has already had an impact, in working with providers to undertake child-focused and outcome-focused quality assurance visits to semi-independent and residential provisions. The Placement Auditor is also contributing to a local quality assurance framework and its associated set of standards to ensure there is consistency across the Southwest in respect of expectations for semi-independent provision, thereby improving the quality and oversight of semi-independent provision and the service this provides to our young people. The Placement Auditor will also be joining Torbay's Fostering Panel in the quality assurance role.

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

"Children in care are seen and seen alone regularly by their social workers, who work hard to build meaningful relationships, often using creative ways to engage and

communicate with them. This is ensuring that children's voices are heard and that their views are informing planning. Not all children have effective life-story work carried out to help them understand their history and circumstances.

Children return to their parents' care when it is safe for them to do so. Good consideration is given to children's wishes, to the level of risk and to the support required to give the return home the greatest chance of success. Family time is encouraged and supported to ensure that children maintain links with their family and people important to them. When children cannot remain with their parents, other family members are considered and assessed to enable children to continue to live with their extended family whenever possible.

For most children, permanent homes are being found in a timely manner. Children benefit from timely adoptions or placements with special guardians and connected carers. Early permanence and parallel planning are very well considered, foster to adopt is well established and a number of children have benefited from such arrangements. Staff are tenacious in finding adoptive families for children, including older children with additional needs.

When family arrangements are not possible, most children live in alternative stable placements that meet their needs well and where they are making good progress. Children's needs are well considered when matching and placing them with foster carers. When placements are at risk of breakdown, effective additional support is provided by the edge of care team and stability meetings are held to consider what other support can be provided to help make placements more resilient.

The right support and interventions are in place for most children in care to enable them to flourish. Most children's care plans contain the right actions to promote progress for children. Children's plans are regularly monitored through timely reviews. Most independent reviewing officers contact children just before their review and maintain relationships with them.

Health assessments are completed in a timely manner and good use is made of them in plans for children. The assessments, carried out by healthcare professionals, contain clearly recorded discussions with children about their health needs. Children in care are supported with leisure and enrichment opportunities, which promote their well-being and enhance their peer relationships."

Audit activity identifies the following areas of strength:

- Overall outcomes of meeting a good standard of outcomes for our Cared for children has remained in the 80th percentile across Q1 and Q2 of 2022.
- Risk is being identified well. The majority of audits graded the identification of risk for our cared for children and meets good or exceeds good in q1 and Q2 scoring within the 80th percentile.
- There is clear evidence of working well with agencies with this ranging from the 80th and 70th percentile in Q1 and Q2 respectively.
- Living arrangements for our cared for children are also graded as meets good or exceeds good for 83% of the audits completed across Q1 and Q2

- Whilst supervision remains an area for development in this service area, it is positive to note within the dip sample there was evidence of 89% supervision records identifying the aspirations we wanted to achieve for our children.
- Voice of the child is a strength within practice and recording with audits meeting good or exceeds good being within the 70th percentile. **87%** of the young people's views were clearly recorded within the case file for cared for children and young people.
- Cared for child have plans which consider and offer permanency with audits showing this as meeting good in over 70 percent of those examined.

A February 2022 dip sample undertaken in relation to the circumstances of the last ten children accommodated showed:

- 80% of children had a care plan and 70% were visited in the first week of placement.
- 90% files evidenced placement planning meetings.
- 80 % of children considered in placement move dip sample had clear IRO oversight evident.

Areas of opportunity through audit activity are identified as:

- The quality of assessments for cared for and care experienced children and the timely update of assessments at points of significant change for a child.
- The quality of plans, being timely and SMART and purposeful is an area of ongoing development.
- Frequent and consistently reflective supervision and management oversight.
- Rationale for matching to be more clearly recorded on children's files.
- More consistent recording of stability meetings and outcomes and actions.

We know our children, what they need, what their parents, carers and providers need, and we implement creative plans of wrap-around support in a timely way to safeguard against placement instability, with the full knowledge of what placement breakdown can mean for a child in terms of their outcomes. The areas of opportunity as outlined above will therefore be progressed with that full understanding, and in consultation with our children and families.

Care Experience Services

The care experienced service comprises of a full-time Team Manager and Assistant Team Manager who are both qualified social workers, and there are eight Personal Advisors, one of whom we are currently supporting to undertake their studies in order to become a social worker.

There are currently, as of December 2022, 116 former relevant young people aged 19-21, however the service supports young people who are cared for by Torbay Children's Services are currently provided with a Personal Advisor when they reach 16 and this is co-ordinated through the Transitions Panel.

Area	September 2019 (annual conversation)	November 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Care experienced– in touch	100% (82.5% 19/20 YTD)	70.3%	95%	92%
Visited	83.3% (63.9% 19/20 YTD)	40.6%	51%	63%
In suitable accommodation	90% (88.1% 19/20 YTD)	85.7%	87%	82%
EET	63.2%	68.1%	46%	58%

Young people in contact

In the current 2022/23 year, there are 116 Former Relevant young people who have or will have their 19th, 20th or 21st birthday during the year (the cohort on which we are required to report to the DfE). 107, or 92%, have had a care experienced contact (CEC) recorded in the period from three months before to one month after their birthday. This is in line with national comparators in 2021-22.

We also monitor regular visiting. At December 2022, 63% of care-experienced young people aged 18, 19 and 20 had had a visit recorded in the last eight weeks.

Pathway Plans

At December 2022, 95% of Former Relevant young people aged 19-21 had a Pathway Plan, and 23% had had their plan updated in the last six months. The timely updating of pathway plans has also been highlighted as an area for development through audit activity and is a service wide priority reflected in the care experienced action plan.

Education, Employment and Training

Supporting our cared for and care experienced young people to maintain engagement in education, employment and training remains a key priority for the service. As at December 2022, 58% of the Former Relevant cohort aged 19-21 were in contact and

in EET during the four-month period around their birthdays. Of the young people who were not in EET:

- 5 were unemployed because of illness or disability;
- 3 were unemployed because of pregnancy or parenting;
- 8 were unemployed for other reasons.

The table below evidences the impact pre pandemic and post pandemic in respect of our care experienced young people engaged in education, employment or training and we are beginning to see positive signs of recovery back to pre-pandemic levels, with performance in this area remaining consistently above 55% in every month since April 2022 (the highest being 66% in October 2022):

Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Dec 22
Number of former relevant care-experienced children and young people aged 19-21 in employment, education or training				46	52
Percentage of former relevant care-experienced children and young people aged 19-21 in employment, education or training	57%	54%	66% (55% LAIT)	44%	58%

We are committed to enabling young people to remain in education and actively support them in identifying and securing college and university places. We are currently in discussion with South Devon College to enable broader space educational offer to be available to care experienced young people and have also worked with a number of local businesses in respect of bespoke work experience and employment opportunities for care experienced young people. We have focused primarily on those young people who are not in employment, education and training, with nineteen offered bespoke opportunities through this joint work with local businesses. In addition, we are imminently piloting a project with our Human Resources department, to provide bespoke preparation for employment intervention, as well as targeted work experience opportunities, for both our care experienced young people and young people with SEND.

Our Human Resources department also ensure that all internal opportunities are provided to the Care Experienced Team on a weekly, basis so that bespoke matching to potentially suitable opportunities for our care experienced young people.

The broadening of our Corporate Parenting Offer has also enabled connections to be made in the community, which are proving beneficial in ensuring that opportunities for links to employment providers can be specifically matched to the individual aspirations

of cared for young people. For example, this approach is currently benefitting a cared for young person with an ambition to join the Army.

We will be looking to utilise the Transitions Panel, to undertake an aspiration audit in relation to all of our cared for young people aged fourteen and above, to enable targeted and bespoke opportunities to help these young people achieve their ambitions in line with their individual wishes and feelings.

Suitable accommodation

As at December 2022, 82% of the Former Relevant cohort aged 19-21 were in contact and considered to be in suitable accommodation during the four-month period around their birthdays. Twelve young people were in contact but not considered to be living in suitable accommodation.

Following the Ofsted inspection, immediate action was taken to address the small number of care experienced young people living in bed and breakfast, hotel or temporary accommodation. Any care experienced young person in such accommodation now has oversight not only through the Youth Homelessness Prevention Panel but also at DCS level through the Independent Placement Overview Panel. Unless a capacitated care experienced adult is actively choosing this type of accommodation, all alternative options are explored, to ensure that appropriate accommodation is secured without delay. A bespoke risk assessment has been created, to ensure that risks are appropriately identified for any young person choosing to live within such accommodation.

Like every Local Authority, we know that we need to do more in relation to living arrangements for our young people and we continue to work collaboratively with our colleagues in housing to ensure that our care experienced young people have access to safe, secure, sustainable, and affordable accommodation. Care experienced young people particularly are in need of move on accommodation, which offers them their first step into accommodation independence. Our young people are very clear that this should not be further types of supported accommodation, but safe and affordable housing options which do not further stigmatise them enable the young people to become fully part of their chosen community. Improved access to appropriate accommodation is not only a Children's Services priority but is also adopted as corporate priority for Torbay Council and their partnership.

We are also keen to support young people in living with their existing carers under Staying Put arrangements. As at December 2022, 12 of 23 young people who left care in the year aged 18, and who were in foster care at the point they left care, remained in Staying Put arrangements, which equates to 52% of the total. This is the same figure as in the 2021/22 year. There is no published comparable national figure, but the DfE expects performance to be in the 10% to 50% range.

To sustain this, the service has undertaken a co-produced review of the Staying Put Policy and Offer, with both cared for and care experienced young people and fostering families, and this is due to be presented for endorsement by April 2023.

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

“Care leavers are well supported by dedicated personal advisers who work hard to keep in touch with them and offer the support that they need, when they need it. This includes care leavers who are aged over 21. The local authority is in meaningful contact with the vast majority of care leavers. When this is not the case, determined efforts are made to re-establish contact.

The move to introduce personal advisers for all care leavers at age 16 has been well received. While not consistent, this has enabled some care leavers to build valued supportive relationships with their workers prior to the personal adviser taking on key-worker responsibility when the young person turns 18. This has enabled care leavers to be better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of adulthood.

A high number of care leavers are in higher education, with young people actively encouraged and supported to embark on such journeys. When care leavers are not in education, employment or training, personal advisers actively focus on trying to engage these young people in such activities. The local authority recognises it has more to do to expand opportunities for all care leavers to find employment, apprenticeships, and enriching opportunities in the wider council and in private industries and businesses in Torbay.

Some pathway plans do not consistently involve young people in their creation and are not updated in response to a significant change in circumstances. The majority of care leavers do know what actions are being taken as a result of their pathway plans and are making measurable progress against pathway plan objectives.

There is a range of supported accommodation for care leavers. Shortages in supply have meant that a very small number of care leavers have been placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. Oversight of these arrangements is not sufficiently robust, particularly in terms of visiting arrangements and supporting young people with everyday needs. During the inspection, the local authority took immediate and well-considered steps to strengthen the support offered to these young people.

Senior leaders are actively trying to respond to the lack of housing options through a range of approaches, including internal and external commissioning. The recent introduction of paying for a deposit and six months’ rent in advance has enabled some care leavers, who would not previously have been able to, to move into more suitable accommodation.”

Following the recommendations made by Ofsted, Torbay took immediate action to review the service and invited the National Advisor for Care Leavers, Mark Riddell, to visit Torbay on the 2nd and 3rd November 2022 in order to provide objective feedback on the plans to improve to provide outstanding services to our care experienced young people.

Strengths identified from this visit included:

*Impressive leadership and management which was ambitious and aspirational.

*Leadership reflected a passion and commitment to provide excellent services to care experienced young people.

*Exceptional offer in some areas.

*A Local Offer which is good and above statutory requirements.

*Strong strategic direction from the Corporate Parenting Board.

*Transitions policy and practice of allocation of Personal Advisors at sixteen is good.

*Use of data and performance is good, and stories are starting to be used as a new way of looking at data.

*Very positive feedback from care experienced young people.

Areas for further opportunity included:

*Broadening the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board.

*Asking partners to write and own their own offer to care experienced young people.

*Holding key partner and business events to broaden the Corporate Parenting Offer and EET opportunities.

*Create opportunities in the 'family businesses.

*Work on the transition's pathway with adults services, to ensure care experienced young people are given more than one chance to engage.

*Reconsider a priority definition for care experienced young people in terms of housing allocation.

*Housing to develop a care experienced approach in respect of debt and arrears.

*Formal development of a Guarantor Scheme.

*Consider a post-21 distinct offer within the wider Local Offer.

This feedback has informed an action plan aligned to the Strategic and Operational Corporate Parenting Board, which sets out immediate actions to progress the areas for development.

Areas for continued opportunity also include, through the Becoming an Adult Steering Group initiated as part of our Written Statement of Action SEND response, exploring more about what we need to do to help young people budget and manage any difficulties with their money and put in the right support for young people who are experiencing difficulties in this area. This will become a focus of the young person's future pathway plans.

We have updated our local offer, taking account of young peoples' experiences and views, in order to secure immediate improvements to the service while we consider its future direction and ensure that young people have access to the right practical, emotional and financial support at the right time for them. This has already reflected the feedback from the National Advisor, in terms of having concise 'golden nuggets' in terms of what care experienced young people can expect from us as their corporate parents, as well as distinct offers for care experienced parents, those in custody and those with SEND.

The Care Experienced Team has strengthened its links with our exploitation team, and now attend regular safety planning meetings with colleagues. We have built strong links to the Child Exploitation Missing Operational Group and use the exploitation tool to risk-assess our young people, when we have consent to do so. However, an area for further opportunity is the wider support available to those young people who do not meet Care Act eligibility.

Fostering

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

The social work staff establishment comprises

- Two Team Managers
- Two p Assistant Team Managers
- Seven supervising social workers (Fostering Support)
- Seven assessing social workers (Fostering Assessment)
- Five Community Care Workers
- One Recruitment and Events Co-Ordinator
- One Fostering Panel Chair
- Fostering Panel members
- Advanced Therapeutic Fostering Social Worker

In the whole of the service, we have one interim social worker which reflects a significant improvement in the stability and permanence when compared to the position in 2021-22.

The vision of the Fostering Service remains in line with Torbay's restorative model of practice and is fully outlined in the Fostering Statement of Purpose, the Fostering Annual Report and in Torbay's new Fostering Family Charter.

Our Fostering Assessment Team focuses on recruitment activity, assessments of prospective foster carers and support for prospective fostering families going through the Panel approval process.

Our Fostering Support team focuses on the support and supervision offered to approved foster carers, support through the Annual Review process, ongoing or updating assessments and investigations, participation and feedback work, training

and development and the implementation of support groups and other celebratory and collective opportunities for our cared for children and their fostering families.

Torbay has its own Fostering Panel that meets regularly to make recommendations for the approval of foster carer candidates as well as to receive reviews of approval. The panel also consider other matters that are brought to them by the social work team.

In line with the implementation of the restorative model of practice, the vision of Torbay Fostering Service is to place children and their needs at the forefront of everything we do. Considering the crucial and integral role of our fostering families in achieving this vision, the aim of the Fostering Service is to ensure that our foster carers feel like a central part of the team around the child.

Torbay Fostering Service strive to create a sense of 'family' assessment, planning and support for fostering families, whilst ensuring children always remain at the core. Every child and fostering family are different and has specific needs; the service wishes to fully understand these needs in order to achieve fully child and person-centred planning which is fluid and adaptive and considers change and development. The goal is to ensure the provision and delivery of a high-quality fostering service that focuses on achieving the best possible outcomes for children.

Torbay Fostering Service aspires to be self-aware, to be understanding of its strengths and able to quickly identify any vulnerabilities or opportunities for learning and respond appropriately. The service aims to provide a targeted and focused operational and strategic response to areas of service improvement, in order to be responsive and dynamic in adjusting and adapting to the needs of our children and fostering families.

Performance

As at December 2022, 97% of carers had completed the minimum TSD training. 100% of carers had an up-to-date DBS check. 97% had an up-to-date medical assessment. 91% of carers (excluding connected carers) had had their annual review within timescales.

Significant focus has been given to the tracking of these key performance indicators, which have remained consistently high over the last six months.

Fostering family level data is made available through the monthly performance surgeries, in order that the context and action required can be fully understood and progressed by the service.

Recruitment and Retention

The conversion of enquiries to approval during 2021/22 has decreased by 50% (to 9% enquiry conversion from 19% the previous year), even though recruitment activity generated only 12 less enquiries than the previous year. When analysing and exploring these figures, it is important to recognize a number of national factors which are impacting on fostering recruitment across the country. Firstly, the impact of the pandemic has been significant on our fostering community. Nationally, 66% of foster

carers are above the age of fifty; many, have underlying health conditions, or health vulnerabilities within their own families. This naturally has caused some of Torbay's carers to re-evaluate their ability to foster, when the expectation (in line with the child's best interest) has been to maintain face to face family time throughout the pandemic. This knowledge has been a factor which many new prospective carers have raised as personal concerns in terms of their decision to foster.

As a baseline expectation, the Fostering Service aim to increase the number of fostering households by a minimum of ten per year. While nine fostering family households were approved in the year (one less than the target), there were also a number of resignations which have impacted on the total number of approved fostering families which stands at 77 families as of the 2nd February 2023. It is therefore recognized that the overall number of approved fostering households has decreased overall since April 2020 (at which point we had 86 approved fostering families), despite our recruitment success. This decrease is in line with regional data and aligns with the cost of living crisis. As such, some prospective carers are re-considering whether now is the right time to pursue their ambition to foster. They are aware that there is no guarantee of a placement full time, and that placements are made on the basis of the matching process and the needs of the child in line with the skills of the carer. As such, some are seeking more consistent forms of employment at this time.

Despite these challenges, a range of activities are in place to promote Torbay as the right service for which to foster. The service continues to mature in relation to how it uses data and evidence to review and inform marketing strategies, with an evidence-based Fostering Recruitment Strategy due to be presented for endorsement by April 2023. Continued corporate wide efforts to build on and expand our corporate parenting offer to fostering families ensures that the Torbay offer to them is more than a financial package. Efforts to ensure consistent consultation and participation opportunities for our fostering families are implemented to recognize their value in cared for children's lives and helping them to feel supported as part of the Torbay workforce. It is hoped that these wider efforts will see an impact in terms of an increased cohort of fostering families in 2023-24.

Fostering Support

Torbay Fostering Service is absolutely committed to supporting and developing our fostering families and runs a number of support groups, which are organised at various times throughout the year and through various platforms. Torbay is committed to learning from feedback and participation and is constantly looking for ways in which we can make our training as accessible and purposeful and meaningful for fostering families as possible.

It is intended that support groups provide an opportunity for fostering families to meet with each other and share their views and experiences of fostering. In addition, fostering families can access support, guidance, and signposting through these groups, and receive information about recent changes to policies and guidance and practice.

Currently, Torbay Fostering Service offers:

- A group run by CAMHS which offers support through a therapeutic lens.
- Special Guardianship Support Group for all Special Guardians receiving support from the dedicated team.
- A general foster carer support group.

Torbay Fostering Service also commissions specialist support, for example mediation or advocacy services, in situations whereby this is required to support foster carers through the allegation process.

An additional role has been introduced to the service, the Advanced Therapeutic Social Worker, to ensure that fostering families have access to therapeutic support to enhance placement stability.

Feedback from fostering families

Torbay foster carer: “the feeling that your comments and feedback are being listened to and your thoughts/ideas are being taken seriously” [on what is working well].

Torbay foster carer: “overall it was probably the best event that I have personally participated in to date” [on the 2021-22 Foster Carer Workshop].

Torbay Special Guardian: “thank you to Torbay Council, I am very happy with the help and support I have received and I am very grateful”.

Torbay foster carer: “thank you for all the hard work you are all putting in to make a difference” [on the developed Corporate Parenting Offer].

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

“When family arrangements are not possible, most children live in alternative stable placements that meet their needs well and where they are making good progress. Children’s needs are well considered when matching and placing them with foster carers. When placements are at risk of breakdown, effective additional support is provided by the edge of care team and stability meetings are held to consider what other support can be provided to help make placements more resilient.”

Assessments of foster carers are timely and generally of good quality. Foster carers spoken to by inspectors commented positively about the ease and timeliness with which they can access support, including out of office hours. All foster carers spoken with were highly positive about the support that they receive from their supervising social workers. Supervising social workers have achieved a good balance between professional vigilance and challenge and providing support to foster carers.”

Audit activity

Dip sampling activity has evidenced:

- Fostering families access regular supervision.
- Training and continued professional development opportunities are discussed in a high proportion of supervisions.
- Strong compliance with DBS checks, medical reviews, training minimum standards and annual review.
- Involvement of fostering families in the endorsement of their supervision.
- Bespoke support being offered to all fostering families.
- Compliance with the expectation of at least one unannounced visit per year.

Areas for development:

- Ensuring that supervisions reflectively explore the progress of the cared for child's plan and the role of the fostering family in this.
- SMART actions to be recorded within the supervision visit.
- Greater specificity in regards to training that has been completed, including specific details.
- Clearer recording within supervision in terms of how foster carer's recordings are being seen, their appropriateness and the communication of these to children's social workers

Areas for development and opportunity are fully outlined in the Fostering Annual Report, and service plan. The service is keen to continue the work we are undertaking to enhance the ways in which fostering families can feel part of the service, and feedback their experiences and their ideas, including regular survey activity as well as monthly participation meetings with senior leaders.

Adoption & Permanence

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

Adoption is managed in Regulated Services, with two adoption focused social workers forming part of the cared for children's teams. They are in turn line managed and supported by one permanent Team Manager.

Adoption is consistently considered for all children, and there are some significant performance indicators which would suggest that the projected improvements as a result of the intensive work within this service and practice area are now starting to show in terms of the impact on performance.

There have been four children adopted through FFA in the 2022/23 year to date at December 2022. This is a decrease from the exceptional figure of 9 children in 2021/22 however early permanence remains a significant focus for the service moving forward.

Number of children adopted:

There were 16 adoptions in the 2021/22 year and there have been 16 to date in the first three quarters of 2022/23. This includes five children who were five or older (one private adoption). Of children ceasing to be cared for in the year, 26% were adopted. This compares to 16 adoptions in the full year for 2021/22, of whom six were five or older; this was 14% of children ceasing to be cared for. The statistical neighbour figure was 13% and for England 10%, and therefore the current year's performance is above average.

Placements for adoption:

13 children have been placed for adoption in the 2022/23 year. Two children have had their plans for adoption reversed in the year, the same figure as in the 2021/22 year. At the end December 2022, there were 12 children placed for adoption and two in FFA placements.

Plans for adoption:

There were an additional 10 children not yet placed for adoption with plans for adoption, of whom five are subject to Placement Orders. Five of the ten have been waiting for more than a year since their plans were made:

*one child for three years [this relates to a child with medical uncertainty whereby extensive family finding efforts have been made sadly without an imminent resolution

*two children for two years [this relates to a male sibling group of two who have experienced pre-Order disruption.]

*two children for 18 months [for one child, a period of time was required to update the psychological assessment in line with the plan endorsed by the Court; the other child has neurodiversity need, and therefore the matching process has to be sensitively considered].

The other five children have been waiting for less than six months.

As always, raw data does not always tell the full story of a multi-faceted and highly complex set of needs and circumstances for an individual child or sibling group. Whilst always mindful of the need for permanence to be secured for a child at the earliest point, a number of the children referenced above have been assessed as significantly likely to benefit from the enhanced permanence adoption can offer, and therefore ADM

review maintains the careful balance when considering the right and appropriate time to seek revocation for example.

Twelve decisions that adoption is in the child’s best interests have been made in the current 2022/23 year. This compares to 16 in the previous year. The number of best interest decisions therefore is lower than the previous year. These data need to be considered in light of the reduction in overall cared for numbers, and therefore an associated reduction in the number of children subject to proceedings and permanence planning.

Adoption timescales:

For adoptions in the current 2022/23 year, the average time from placement order to matching was 125 days. This compares to 317 in the previous year and to 199 nationally. Average time from becoming a cared for child to placement for adoption (adjusted for children adopted by their foster carers) was 402 days. This compares to 539 in the previous year and to 459 nationally. Local performance on both these timescales has improved in the current year and significantly exceeds national performance.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	YTD Dec 22
Number of children adopted	26	13	16	16
% of children adopted	18%	15%	14%	26%
Average time between entering care and moving in with adoptive family	421	624	539	402
Average time between court authority to place and deciding on the match	165	302	317	125

A monthly tracking meeting continues between the Head of Service for Regulated Services and Adopt Southwest and the Court Quality Assurance Manager.

An Adoption Tracker is maintained and is held by the Court Quality Assurance Manager to those children who have been adopted, who are placed for adoption or who are subject to Placement Orders. It also tracks the completion of life story books and later life letters. This ensures senior leadership oversight and reduces drift and delay.

Adopter Recruitment

Adopt Southwest are prioritising applicants who have expressed an interest in adopting older children, or children with additional needs. Prospective adopters are completing a training module in respect of sibling adoption and there is an accompanying adopter recruitment campaign in respect of sibling adoption.

Life Story Books and Later Life Letters

In February 2020, Torbay commissioned Families for Children to complete life story books for adopted children. Sadly, during March 2020, the pandemic resulted in those workers being furloughed and therefore there was no external or internal capacity to

complete the life story books for our children which meant that life story work was disrupted and some children did not have a completed life story book by the time of their adoption. As a result of this difficulty, Torbay made the subsequent decision to ensure that capacity has been created internally and there is now a dedicated worker in place who is prioritising the completion of life story books for our children.

The service continues to address this legacy and ensure that all children with a plan of adoption receive a later life letter and life story book of the highest quality in a timely way. The mitigating action has included the addition of additional resource within the cared for service. As of December 2022, 52% of children adopted in the last twelve months had received their later life letter; 67% of children adopted in the last twelve months had received their life story book. This is in comparison to 27% and 55% in November 2022 and reflects the incremental progress being made in this key area of adoption practice.

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

“For most children, permanent homes are being found in a timely manner. Children benefit from timely adoptions or placements with special guardians and connected carers. Early permanence and parallel planning are very well considered, foster to adopt is well established and a number of children have benefited from such arrangements. Staff are tenacious in finding adoptive families for children, including older children with additional needs.”

The service has also reviewed the ADM decision letter and the match letter for birth parents to bring these in line with our restorative model of practice.

The introduction of an ADM prompt and checklist for social workers has seen an improvement in the quality of CPRs and the information being presented as part of the ADM decision-making process. Similarly, the confidence of the workforce in terms of adoption practice is growing and is supported by the implementation of two one page process and practice guides, one in relation to adoption generally and one in relation to fostering to adopt.

Training in adoption practice for all social workers will continue to be offered in conjunction with the Learning Academy.

Building Futures Together

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

Ofsted found in March 2022:

“Targeted work has enhanced the impact of practice by ensuring that all out-of-hours staff have been trained in the local authority’s social care practice model. The creation of an edge of care service has reduced the number of children entering care in an emergency. Staff in this service now feel valued, as leaders are responsive, and

solution focused. Inspectors saw examples of recent tenacious work by police, health and the edge of care social care team helping to prevent harm to children.

When placements are at risk of breakdown, effective additional support is provided by the edge of care team and stability meetings are held to consider what other support can be provided to help make placements more resilient.”

The Building Futures Together team (previously, the edge of care team) currently consists of a Team Manager, a Senior Keyworker, and six Edge of Care workers, an increase in establishment from four in December 2021, reflecting further investment into this invaluable resource.

The Building Futures Together practice standards have been revised, with pathways of support including edge of care, reunification and placement stability. The team also plays a critical role in the youth homelessness response by re-examining the possibility of reunification as one of the options.

Building Futures Together are currently working with 27 children, a significant increase from quarter one of this financial year. Further evidence is being compiled in terms of impact and outcomes; this will form part of the monthly performance surgery, with a report provided on a quarterly basis.

All audit activity considers the use of FGC and edge of care, at appropriate points in a child’s plan.

No decision for a child to become cared for is made without appropriate oversight from the Divisional Director of Safeguarding and this includes review of all alternative options, and additional support, including the right for children and families to access an edge of care offer.

Formal feedback is being requested from young people and their families following the conclusion of every intervention and this information is used to identify how the service can be improved as well as what is working well. The resulting data are collated by the quality assurance team to inform future developments.

Through the Learning Academy, there are plans to promote further specialised training opportunities for existing and new practitioners. This will also include some wider work in terms of the training offer for support services (including Community Care Workers, enablers and Family Support Workers).

Exploitation Team

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

Following the service redesign in 2020, The Exploitation Team was formally established with additional resource (see below). The Team is structurally located as part of the Front Door response alongside Early Help and MASH and is responsible for addressing exploitation and supporting children who are at most risk. The Team does not case hold but provides support, guidance and challenge to social workers working with our most high risk and vulnerable young people.

The purpose of the Team is to:

- Prevent exploitation by developing an understanding of trends and patterns and directing resources accordingly. It identifies individuals who are at risk of or subject to exploitation and the team works with police colleagues to identify people of interest within the four Ps agenda [prevent, protect, pursuit, prosecute];
- Pursue and prosecute people involved in exploiting children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- Protect children and young people who are being exploited; and
- Disrupt exploitation.

The Exploitation Team comprises

three staff members, employed by Children's Services: a Team Manager; an Exploitation Co-Ordinator and a Business Support Officer.

Reports and intelligence are also regularly provided to the Torbay Safeguarding Partnership Exploitation Sub-Group and to a range of strategic meetings relating to safeguarding and community safety in Torbay. Practice and performance updates are also regularly shared across the South West Peninsula, and with neighbouring Local Authorities.

The Exploitation Team works closely with safeguarding partners to share information and continue to build a mature understanding of the needs of children within the community in relation to exploitation and contextual safeguarding. There are centralised processes to ensure robust oversight of all children in Torbay who go missing and/or are at risk of exploitation. Completed Missing Episodes documentation and Exploitation Screening Tools are inputted to our management information systems following quality assurance, and resultant aggregated information and intelligence is shared with colleague professionals and partners.

A PowerBI Dashboard as been created in relation to Missing Children and a partnership exploitation dashboard is in the process of being designed and created. The Missing Children dashboard allows practitioners and managers access to a live picture within a specified time period of:

- missing episodes by team;
 - missing episodes by case status;
 - missing duration;
 - the number of children returned;
 - the number of RHIs completed;
 - the number of RHIs completed within three days;
-
- the number of RHIs declined;
 - the overall number of missing episodes and children;

- the percentage of cared for children missing placed inside and outside of Torbay boundaries.

This is in addition to child level data.

This maturing use of data enables accurate assessments of current risks.

Key performance indicators are outlined in the table below:

Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	YTD 2022/23
Number of exploitation/vulnerability assessments completed	168	144	241	257	215
Number of exploitation/vulnerability assessments identifying children and young people as high risk	14	23	35	50	42
% of assessments where child was identified as at high risk	8%	16%	15%	19%	20%
Number of review assessments where risk has reduced	no data	no data	no data	55	39
% of review assessments where children's risk had reduced	n/a	n/a	n/a	22% (approx)	19% (approx)

In December 2022, we reviewed regular reports on children who are missing, and redefined some measures to ensure a clearer focus on outcomes. These measures are set out below.

	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Number of children			
Number of children going missing in period	40	47	31
Number of cared for children going missing	9	8	9
Number of children subject to CP plans going missing in period	6	5	6
Number of children in need and children with Other case status going missing	20	29	14
Number of children receiving EH services going missing	4	5	2
Proportions of children			
% of CiN going missing as a % of CiN at the end of the period	4.6%	5.3%	4.5%
% of CfC going missing as a % of CfC at the end of the period	2.8%	2.4%	2.7%
% of CP going missing as a % of CP at the end of the period	3.4%	3.1%	3.8%
Number of episodes starting			
Number of episodes starting of children going missing	59	71	53
Number of episodes starting of cared for children going missing	16	16	19
Number of episodes starting of children subject to CP plans going missing	12	12	11

Number of episodes starting of children in need and children with Other case status going missing	25	38	21
Number of episodes starting of children receiving EH services going missing	5	5	2
Number of episodes ending which lasted more than 24 hours	14	18	9
Number of episodes per child			
Number of children with one episode starting in the month	29	38	23
Number of children with two episodes starting in the month	5	2	2
Number of children with three or more episodes starting in the month	6	7	6
Return-home interviews			
Number of children returning home from being missing in period (count of children)	42	46	32
Number of children offered at least one RHI in the period	22	16	6
Number of children returning home who had at least one RHI following their return	16	13	5
% of children having at least one RHI in the period	38%	28%	16%
Number of children declining all RHIs	6	3	1
Number of RHIs taking place	17	14	5
Number of RHIs within 72 hours	8	7	3
% of RHIs within 72 hours	47%	50%	60%

This allows us to focus on the overlapping vulnerabilities of some of these groups of children, showing us that 22% of children during this three-month period who were missing were cared for children and 14% children who were subject to child protection plans.

We have internal and commissioned services responding to children for whom contextual harm is a concern, and we are in the process of considering how these services can work together to deliver evidence based, focused interventions for children and their families.

Torbay has an exploitation toolkit which is embedded and used by professionals across our Safeguarding partnership when there are concerns for any type of exploitation.

Torbay has clear and embedded missing children's protocols which trigger child protection strategy meetings for repeat missing episodes and episodes which are 72 hours or longer. These have now been captured within an agreed Missing Strategy. Torbay's Exploitation Team attend and contribute to as many meetings as possible for any child with an exploitation toolkit.

Torbay has three distinct operational/practice forums for multi-agency discussion about any child where there are contextual safeguarding concerns. These are embedded and include:

Triage – which meets weekly and considers all children who have had a missing episode in the previous month.

CEMOG (Child Exploitation and Missing Operational Group) Practice and Process Panel – which meets every twelve weeks and reviews the multi-agency response to children missing, subject to exploitation toolkits and at risk of being trafficked.

MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) Forum – which meets on a monthly basis and is a multi-agency meeting focusing on identifying and addressing adults and location of concern.

How do we know this?

Ofsted found during the inspection in March 2022:

“Significant progress has been made in addressing child exploitation in Torbay. Multi-agency strategic arrangements to track and assess risks are embedded. Tenacious work across the partnership ensures that most exploited and missing children are at the centre of all work and interventions. Staff are rightly proud of the strategic and operational improvements that have been achieved. Work has progressed from information-sharing to effective collaboration and joint working. This is making a tangible difference to how well children are protected from harm and how successfully their wider welfare is promoted.”

Dip sampling activity has noted significant improvements in terms of the use of assessment to inform planning with 20 of the 23 children considered (87%) found to have a comprehensive and up to date assessment in place.

Torbay has recognised that there is a need for a contextual safeguarding model of practice and pathway, which takes into account the mature understanding that has now been developed in respect of the holistic needs of our children and young people. As such, it has been agreed that a multi-agency Task and Finish is to be established through the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership to progress this work in line with the Exploitation Strategic Plan 2021-24.

The operational/front line practice that is being developed now needs to be supported by a clear framework and process. There is identified development work to be completed with our Child Protection Conference Chairs/IRO's, and we are in the process of identifying Practice Leads for training and supporting others to embrace the theories and principles of Contextual Safeguarding.

The Safeguarding and Reviewing Service

Child Protection Conferences and Chairs and the Quality of CP plans

What do we know about the quality of practice?

In December 2022, the number of children subject to a child protection plan was 159, a rate was 63 per 10,000 children, compared to 42 nationally and 61 for statistical neighbours. The number of child protection plans as of 31st December 2022 was higher

than the same point the previous year, (139 children, equating to 55 per 10,000). There was an unexplained but marked increase in the number of children becoming subject to child protection plans over the summer of 2022. Subsequent analysis and intervention has led to a steady and safe reduction in the number of children subject to plans We are confident that the downward trajectory will continue.

Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) continues to show improvement. The data for the year to date at December 2022 was 89% which compares favorably to the most recent national figures of 79% and 82% for statistical neighbours. Despite the sustained improvements over the last two years (data for 19/20 evidenced only 63.1% ICPCs were held within 15 days and data for 20/21 88% held within 15 days), this position is still not considered by Torbay leaders to be good enough. A concerted effort over the last four months of 2022 saw average timeliness over those four months increase further to 96.25% of ICPCs held within 15 days which is the position that is considered acceptable.

Compliance to timescales for review of child protection plans were 80% in 2021/22 and for the year to date at December 2022 are 91%. This is above national (89%) and statistical neighbour averages (90%).

At December 2022, 64% of children were categorised as at risk from neglect, 23% from emotional abuse, 6% from physical abuse, 1% from sexual abuse and 7% were at risk in multiple categories. This compares to 47% for neglect nationally and 41% for emotional abuse nationally. The challenges regarding neglect have been triangulated with the work undertaken in Torbay with The Medical Research Fund and the TSCP Neglect Strategy resulting in the implementation of the Graded Care Profile.

Child Protection Chairs (CPC) have now started to undertake formal midway monitoring reviews of each child's child protection plan. These mid-way monitoring reviews along with the use of the Dispute Resolution Process (DRPs) are in place to ensure that there is positive improvement in the lives of children who are subject to child protection plans. However, these processes are still not always leading to the consistent level of incisive oversight of plans by CP chairs that the service requires. In the year to date at December 2022, 68 DRPs had been raised (count of DRPs rather than children) which is low comparative to the number of challenges children have experienced within their child protection planning over the year. This is the focus of work for the Head of Service and new Service Manager with the support of the Divisional Director. To aid and formalise this process, a new CP Planning midpoint report has been mapped into the Liquidlogic child protection processes with auto-prompts being sent to the allocated IRO at the six week or three-month stage of the child protection planning cycle.

Too few young people and children attend meetings, or have their voices heard in others way, such as through advocacy or other means of participation. In the year to date in December 2022, six children attended their conferences. Advocates from Children's Rights and Barnardo's were recorded as attending conferences for 23 children and were consulted in the case of another two children. Participation is a major area for development over the next year and will be led by the new Service Manager to ensure work is linked up between the IRO, the allocated social worker and the advocacy service to ensure all children of a relevant age have the opportunity to

participate either directly or indirectly in their child protection conferences. Despite the picture portrayed by the data here, there have been some positive examples of children being supported to lead on their child protection conferences over this last year that have yielded positive outcomes for them. Nevertheless, there is a need to transform the pockets of good practice into routine expectations for all children.

	1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020	1 April 2020 – 31 Dec 2020	1 July 2021 – 31 March 2022	1 April 2022 – 31 Dec 22
% conferences quorate	44%	51%	89%	80%

How do we know this?

During the Ofsted inspection in March 2022, Ofsted stated:

“Child protection conferences take place within appropriate timescales and respectful work by social workers using restorative approaches supports parents to be engaged well in the process. Most child protection plans are detailed, with a good focus on children’s outcomes and the actions required to achieve them. Most work with children and families is purposeful. Workers take the time to get to know children well, visiting often to see children at home or in school and seeing them alone when this is appropriate. Core groups are timely and well attended by a good range of relevant professionals, but the plan is not consistently updated in response to progress made. Children are supported to contribute to meetings about them, either by attending themselves or ensuring that their views are shared in other ways.”

Monthly performance surgeries are in place and chaired by the Head of Service. Within these surgeries, the data is viewed from a child’s journey perspective. By this, it is meant the data is not just used to track and improve service performance. it also looks at what that means for the children in terms of impact analysis. The monthly performance surgeries are minuted and actions identified. The minutes are shared with both the Quality Assurance Service and the Divisional Director who collectively maintain oversight on service performance and development.

Throughout 2022, audits have identified that “the quality of child protection plans continues to be variable and CP chairs and IRO oversight is inconsistent.” Progress with regards to consistency has been hindered somewhat by the reliance on agency IROs during 2022, coupled with other challenges within the IRO workforce. To address this, a concerted effort was made to recruit to the vacant permanent IRO posts with a target to establish a fully permanent IRO team for the first time in over six years. At the end of December 2022, this aim was met with the service in the midst of inducting a number of new IROs into the team leading into the early part of 2023. Permanency and stability within the IRO team will allow for consistent practice standards to be established and maintained through a shared vision, culture and commitment to the children of Torbay and the eradication of short-termism that comes from an over-reliance on agency workers.

Family feedback at all conferences was introduced in December 2019. Key areas for feedback were:

- Preparation prior to conferences needs to improve;
- Engagement with families during the conference is variable; and
- The current model can be improved and simplified.

This feedback will further support the required improvements in this area.

Multiagency participation will be monitored, and performance will form part of a regular 12 weekly report to CSLT and the newly established TSCP Business Group so that partnership practice will be held to account.

In 2022, the feedback forms were digitalised and facilitated via a web link sent to parents and carers. Uptake to the new method of gaining valuable feedback has been slow which may mean that a hybrid method is considered going forward.

Independent Reviewing Officers

What do we know about the quality of practice?

In December 2022, Torbay were corporate parentings to 329 cared for children which is a reduction from 368 at our highest' this included 29 UASC. IROs are increasingly challenging delay in achieving care plan objectives both within the reviews and through the mid-point reviews. Early reviews are being held in response to significant events in children's lives.

At December 2022, 91% of reviews taking place were on time, and 95% in the year to date.

The IRO Service is continuing to make steady and purposeful improvement on many of its key activities. Children and young people continue to be provided with an IRO within three working days of becoming cared for or within two days of notification to the service, and changes in IRO have reduced and have been kept to a minimum during the year.

How do we know this?

During the Ofsted inspection in March 2022, Ofsted stated:

“The right support and interventions are in place for most children in care to enable them to flourish. Most children's care plans contain the right actions to promote progress for children. Children's plans are regularly monitored through timely reviews. Most independent reviewing officers contact children just before their review and maintain relationships with them.”

Robust challenge through effective use of the Dispute Resolution Policy is an area where improvement work is required as a priority. We have simplified the mid-point review format and have weekly automated reporting on the DRP. However, further action is required for this to become a robust process. This is a focus for the new Service Manager with the support of the Head of Service and Divisional Director.

Audits continue to highlight that the “footprint” of IROs is still not sufficiently robust and evident across all of the children’s records. While this is improving, the challenge of the IRO oversight is not yet having a significant impact for all our children and this is still variable. Discussions within supervision in relation to permanency and decision making at the second Cared For Review highlights that drift and delay is not being sufficiently challenged. It is envisaged that the new Service Manager being in post will address these matters via more robust supervision that is both supportive and challenging for the IROs.

Performance surgeries evidence that the participation of children in their cared for reviews is too low. As previously noted, this is an area of focus for the new Service Manager going forward.

What are our plans to improve practice?

The service plan continues into 2023 with the addition of the following actions that were identified as a result of the findings of the IRO annual report for year 2021/22:

- i. **Service stability** – this will include the appointment of a permanent Service Manager and the appointment of a full crew of permanent IROs to replace all agency staff by the start of Quarter 4.
- ii. **Address the long-term sickness issues** – this will include the utilisation of the Human Resource absence review mechanisms for current staff on long-term sick as well as monitoring and addressing further absenteeism as it arises.
- iii. **Ensure reviews are held within Statutory timescales** – this will include a revision of the invite reminder system and tracking of reports that inform the reviews to ensure they are completed prior to the reviews and reduce the risk of reviews being rescheduled.
- iv. **Increased participation** – This will be a piece of work allocated to the new Service Manager to ensure all children have access to advocacy and further work is undertaken to support children to chair their own reviews.
- v. **Partner attendance at reviews** – work will be completed with partner agencies to ensure the right professionals are present to inform reviews and care planning for children.
- vi. **Cared for children’s health needs are met** – more work to be undertaken with social workers and health partners to ensure health assessments, dental checks and immunisations are completed in a timely manner.
- vii. **Restorative relational work** – more link work to be completed across all service areas to ensure more improved understanding of the IRO role across service areas through stronger relational and partnership working.

- viii. **Parent and child feedback** – the implementation of an online feedback form so the service can learn from the experiences of children, young people and their parents regarding the care planning and review processes.
- ix. **Practice improvement** – this will include more wider use of the DRP procedure to ensure poor practice is identified and addressed appropriately by translating concerns into learning opportunities across all the service areas.

Torbay Youth Justice Service

The Torbay Youth Justice Service is a partnership service which consists of a Head of Service, two Team Managers, three Youth Justice Officers, a Youth Justice social worker, a Youth Justice police officer, a victim and reparation officer, a volunteer office, a substance misuse worker; a CAMHS worker, a speech and language therapist, an educational and attendance improvement officer, a parenting worker, a probation officer, a careers advisor, a business analyst, two senior admin officers and some sessional staff.

The vision of Torbay's Youth Justice Service is to:

Keep young people and their communities safe by working in collaboration with other services to help children recognise and repair the impact of harmful behaviour and develop a positive future.

The following strategic priorities have been agreed as part of the consultation for the Youth Justice Plan and will be the basis for the Service Improvement Plan for the next year:

- Child First approach to all we do.
- Secure access to suitable child friendly, safe, accessible premises for delivery of face-to-face work.
- Further development of the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) through an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach with Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
- Review the role and provision of CAMHS to the Youth Justice Service
- Increase Targeted Prevention and Early Intervention work with those coming to the attention of the youth justice systems.
- Ensuring children in contact with the Youth Justice Service are in appropriate education, training or employment.
- Swifter Justice - reduce delays across whole youth justice system.
- Hear and respond to the voice of the child and carers not only in the delivery of their intervention but in the development of the service.
- More positive activities and opportunities for children and young people.
- Improve the visibility and understanding of Youth Justice Service work – telling the good stories of children & the work of the YJS
- Be Victim focussed in all we do and develop further our restorative offer
- Improve communication between the Management Boards and the staff team.

- Improve the quality and quantity of data and analysis to ensure the board and the service is meeting the needs of children
- Revise and update quality assurance framework for the service
- To form and sustain working arrangements with all partnerships and service providers to ensure that children receive coordinated support that meets their needs.

The number of Torbay children who received an outcome for an offence in 2021/22 was the highest recorded over the last four years, an increase of 18 (22.5%) on 2020/21. This includes all outcomes including diversionary outcomes such as Community Resolutions and Deferred Prosecutions (Outcome 22), Pre-Court substantive outcomes (Youth Cautions and Youth Conditional Cautions), first tier outcomes (e.g., Referral Orders and Fines), community outcomes (e.g., Youth Rehabilitation Orders), and through to custodial sentences such as Detention and Training Orders.

Number	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of offences	179	154	162	160
Number of offenders	87	92	80	98

Despite the increase in number of offenders, the number of offences remained static. The number of offences per offender decreased from 2.03 in 2020/21 to 1.63 in 2021/22, highlighting the impact of more prolific offenders in 2020/21.

A higher proportion of children were diverted away from the formal Youth Justice System in 2021/22 than at any point in the previous four years. 80% of outcomes were within the pre-court tier, an increase of 12 percentage points on the year before. This has had a positive impact on the number of First Time Entrants in Torbay.

The children receiving an outcome for committing an offence are predominately male (87%) which is a similar percentage to the year before (88%).

As with most other areas, females are under-represented (13%) and this is much lower than in 2018/19 when they accounted for 24% of outcomes – a decrease of 38%.

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The age profile of Torbay children has remained constant for several years but there was an increase in younger children offending in 2021/22. The biggest increase was in the number of 13-year-old children from 14 (20/21) to 21 (21/22).

The large proportion of children and their families who are receiving additional support from Children's Services highlights the vulnerable nature of many of the children the

service works with. Torbay YJS and Torbay Children's Services are working to improve joint planning and working relationships through increased sharing of assessments, planning and risk management systems and processes.

A formal threshold and referral mechanism for prevention work has now been agreed and it is envisaged that a high proportion will be children that are likely to be coming to the attention of Children's Services but not yet being offered a service.

The Impact of Leaders on Social Work Practice with Children and Families

What do we know about the quality of social work practice?

The quality of social work practice is informed by reliable performance information and an established quality assurance framework. Quality Assurance tells us the identification of risk and risk being responded to in a timely way is a considerable strength.

There is robust evidence of collaborative practice where partner agencies are involved in assessment and planning meetings. Capturing the voice of children and young people within assessments and care planning has also been identified as an area of strength. Quality of reviews have continued to improve this year with a significant improvement within the cared for and care experience service.

Quality of assessment within the children in need of help and protection have shown significant growth in the numbers meeting good over the year. Audits indicate that assessments are timely and consider lived experience, have clearer analysis and are involving partner agencies.

Quality Assurance identifies we need to remain focused on strengthening:

1. Recording the use of direct work tools. A direct work tools champion group has been established.
2. Ensure supervision is reflective and provides a clear rationale for decisions. All audits and dip samples will now include a focus on supervision and management oversight. Reflective supervision training is being procured and a champions group has been established.
3. Care plans by ensuring plans are SMART, purposeful, reviewed and updated regularly. Care plan quality is a focus of the Principal Social Worker.
4. Family group conferences are being offered and supported at the earliest point of intervention for children and young people and their families. This should be

supported by the Family Group Conference Service being based within Early Help.

Through the triangulation of data and qualitative activity, leaders at every level fully understand the areas for improvement and work alongside the Learning Academy to take robust action to ensure that the services delivered are fit for purpose and have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The Quality Assurance Framework ensures audit activity has a direct impact on the lived experience for children which is tracked and reported on via our governance structure.

We hold practice weeks involving all members of the senior leadership team and key councillors. We have expanded practice week to include key partners and the findings are reported to the Children's Continuous Improvement Board.

We have also strengthened Quality Assurance through capturing the voice of children and families as part of an audit and widening participation and feedback through the development of a participation officer role.

Children's Services has achieved great success in maintaining a balanced budget without in any way compromising service quality. It is our strong assertion that by clear focus on what is right for our children and young people we have in fact significantly improved service quality and access. Characterised by the initiatives set out in this report, they have been unerringly focused on 'what it takes' to improve children and young people's lived experiences while keeping them properly safeguarded and protected.

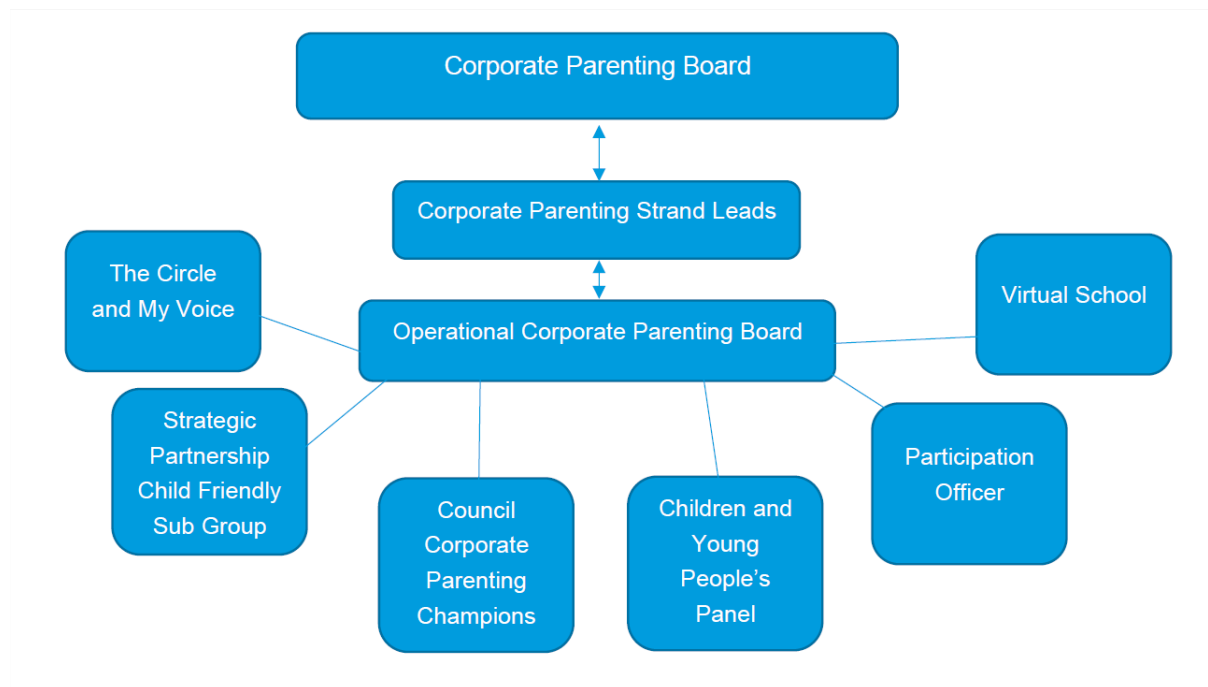
Children's Services have maintained a permanent and stable senior leadership team including DCS, Divisional Director, Heads of Service and Service Managers. The impact of stability means areas of strength are maintained and areas for improvement have consistent focus and clear direction.

The impact of all the changes that we have made and the relentless focus on improvement means that a child or family who require our support will receive a better-quality service than previously.

The Director of Children's Services, political leaders, and the local authority's chief executive has worked assiduously over the past three years, transforming the quality of help, protection, and care for their vulnerable children. A clear and ambitious improvement plan and associated sufficiency strategy, underpinned by a 'root and branch' analysis, have effectively addressed the long-standing history of inadequate practice in Torbay. The services that children now receive are consistently effective.

Corporate Parenting Board

Our Corporate Parenting Board continues to evolve and develop, as outlined by the visual representation below:



Corporate Parenting Board

This Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children and comprises of a wider group of members drawn from all political groups together with partner representatives and senior officers from Children's Services.

The Board meets every two months and forms a key element within the Council's Constitution, providing a forum for regular, detailed discussion of issues and a positive link with our cared for and care experienced children and young people.

An Operational Corporate Parenting Board has also been established, which is chaired by the Chief Executive. The Operational Corporate Parenting Board provides an operational oversight of all of the Corporate Parenting activities being undertaken and operationalises decisions of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Corporate Parenting Strand Leads

In line with the priorities outlined above, we have established five Corporate Parenting Strand Leads who focus on education; fostering and employment; housing; mental health and wellbeing; and participation. Each Strand Lead is an elected Member who

is also part of the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board They each have their own job description. Strand Leads meetings also include Lead Officer support and key officer and partner representation. Strand Leads take the strategic direction from the Corporate Parenting Board in respect of their area of focus, use the meeting to scrutinise and explore relevant performance data and information and this then feeds into the action plans which sit under the Operational Corporate Parenting Board.

In addition, there are two identified underpinning Strands: the Council Corporate Parenting Champions (see below); and preparing for and transition to adulthood.

Council Corporate Parenting Champions

All departments across the Council and our wholly owned companies will have designated officers as Corporate Parenting Champions. The Champions come together on a quarterly basis to help to shape their department's role in ensuring that we are good corporate parents and to contribute to Council wide initiatives to enhance our Corporate Parenting Offer.

The established aims of this group are:

- To become an authority who thinks first about our corporate parent role and ensure that it is fully embedded in all we do as an authority.
- To provide a corporate parent offer for our children on top of the care plan in place.
- To provide a corporate parenting offer for foster families.
- To raise awareness of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities.

Children and Young People's Panel

Torbay are in the process of establishing a Children and Young People's Panel, which will consist of a diverse group of young people that can represent all children within Torbay. The panel will include representatives from different educational providers, children and young people with SEND, cared for children and cared experienced young people. This would not only be a means of bringing together the existing participation groups as a way of centralising feedback from children and young people, but will also support the expansion of representation within these groups, thereby reflecting the voice of a wider range of children and young people.

In addition, this will create a sense of community and collaboration for our young people as they unite to advocate for themselves and their peers and have their voices heard.

Torbay Corporate Parenting Board in collaboration with key partner agencies is committed to working towards achieving its vision of delivering excellence for cared for and care experienced young people. It is well-researched that local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just

about keeping children safe, but also to promote security, resilience and well-being. We want our cared for and care experienced children and young people to have a happy and secure childhood which enables them to become confident and successful young adults. We will help them develop and achieve their aspirations as we would our own children. In addition, the Corporate Parenting Board will support and join with our foster families in a shared endeavour to enable our children and young people to benefit from their lived experiences.

This ethos and commitment is reflected in a revised Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25.

The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-25 outlines Torbay's corporate parenting vision, an introduction to the importance of corporate parenting, the legal context of Torbay's corporate parenting responsibilities, Torbay's key principles and priorities and our subsequent pledges to cared for and care experienced children and young people. It sets out the governance arrangements associated with corporate parenting and provides a valuable reminder and advice to children and young people about the mechanism through which they can continue to talk to and feedback to us.

In updating this Strategy, we have drawn upon a wide range of feedback sources. This has included but is not limited to: feedback from cared for children as part of the Your Life in Care survey undertaken in July 2021; feedback from care experienced young people as part of the Your Life Beyond Care survey undertaken in April 2021; specific consultation sessions undertaken by the Participation Officer, the Divisional Director of Safeguarding, the Divisional Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Children's Services; the views of care experienced representatives as individual contributors to both Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Corporate Parenting Board; feedback through the Circle and My Voice groups; and feedback through other surveys undertaken as part of a rolling schedule of ongoing consultation with our fostering families.

The Strategy is now out for wider consultation prior to presentation to full Council as a policy framework strategy, reflecting its significance and importance.

Children's Services Annual Conversation

March 2023

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Agenda Item 6
Appendix 2

TORBAY COUNCIL

LA Overview

LA challenges overview of issues and challenges as a LA

Housing and impact on families
Cost of living and increasing poverty
Partnership challenges
Asylum Hotels
Sufficiency, unregulated provision and registration
Workforce challenges

ILACS Inspection – March 2022 – Rated ‘Good’

Family Hubs

Safety Valve

WSOA

One Children’s Services Vision

Child Friendly Torbay

Our Children

Safely reducing cared for numbers 329 as at December 2022 – (26 USAC)

Literacy remains a key focus for cared for children – New literacy policy in place

Reduced use of residential and more children placed with Torbay Foster Carers

1022 children and family supported through Early Help

Sustained timeliness of responses of risk to children

Implementation of three localized Family Hubs as part of our wider early help model

Greater involvement of children and young people in service delivery

Exploitation Team continue to mature and develop

Next steps include:

- Continuation of our improvement journey to achieve outstanding services to Children and Young People
- Evaluation of restorative recording pilot
- Embed ways of working and SEND pledge
- Review of the exploitation team delivery and development of a contextual safeguarding

Our Practice



Implementation of the Family Hubs Delivery Plan



Focus on improving our offer for Cared For and Care Experienced Young People and embed our Corporate Parenting Strand Leads and our Corporate Parenting Action Plan including recommendations from National Advisor visit



Continue to enhance the transition experience for Children, Young People and Parent Carers



Focus on achieving permanence for children with particular focus on reunification pathways and edge of care provision



Continue to improve our partnership opportunities for unaccompanied Asylum seeking Children

Our Practice

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Celebrate our accreditation as a restorative organization and continue to embed restorative practice through our ways of working

Continue to seek and reflect the voice of Foster Carers through participation and collaborative audit and embed our new Fostering Friendly Policy

Continue to enhance opportunities to practice as a 'one children's service' with greater collaboration with Education, Social Care and Partners.

Next steps: Review of the supervision policy and update of workforce development plan, review of the fostering recruitment strategy, implementation of new reunification model and edge of care pathway.

Our progress

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Achieve 'Good' ILACS inspection March 2022

Family Hubs Trailblazer – December 2022

First Children's Services to achieve Restorative Organisation Status February 2023

Nominated and shortlisted for Children and Young People Now Awards for our Learning Academy and workforce transformation and highly commended for MJ Awards for workforce development.

Our Workforce

Succession planning and plans to establish greater senior management *stability*

Embedding a culture of co-production and participation: including Open Door Sessions and Listening Circles with the DCS, ASYE awards, staff celebration events, inclusion of frontline staff at the LGA Awards and inclusion of frontline staff in sufficiency workstreams.

Vacancy rate stands at 7.40% across social workers posts as of February 2023

Continue to embed and enhance the restorative practice model

Bespoke cross-service buddying and mentoring opportunities established to ensure that peer support is provided consistently to the workforce.

Developing and nurturing the future workforce: Our Learning Academy continues to offer a three-year program for newly qualified social workers as well as advanced and skills-based courses for our wider workforce, including non-qualified staff.

Development of neglect and graded care, domestic abuse and Parent Assess specialisms.

Supervision and Management remains a core priority – Supervision workstream in place to feed into the workforce development plan.

Next Steps include embedding a relational council approach, which combines both restorative and trauma informed practice & implement 4x4 model.

Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

What do we know from data or other information about the profile of these issues in Torbay?

All forms of exploitation presents – strong links to West Midlands

Maturing use of data – Exploitation Tracker, data provided on daily basis with 42 breakdown options

Older young people being criminally exploited have strong links to poly substance use and supply (peer on peer)

Younger children being criminally exploited becoming increasingly involved in vehicle crim (less substance use)

Youngest child with exploitation toolkit – 9
Dominant age group – 15-16
Increasing identification at ages 10-12

Sexual exploitation identified in respect of individual children – no current identification of organized child sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation within peer groups is a concern

Equal numbers of vulnerable boys and girls, with boys more vulnerable to CCW and girls to CSE

NRM referrals: 17 with positive grounds, 1 with conclusive grounds and 1 declined (UASC)

Links with education:

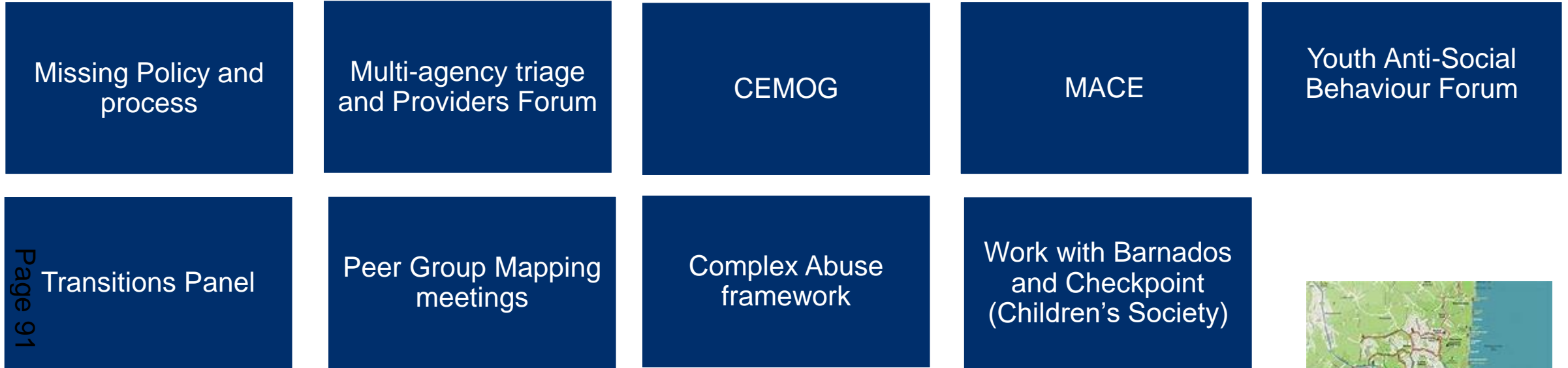
- 22% of those children subject to exploitation toolkits also have an EHCP. Area for development identified to extend analysis to those at SEN K through preventative work.
- Top twenty analysis: 7 (35%) had experienced suspension; 2 (10%) recently excluded; 19 (95%) experiencing poor attendance; 9 (45%) have EHCPs; 5 (25%) receiving support at SEN K.



Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

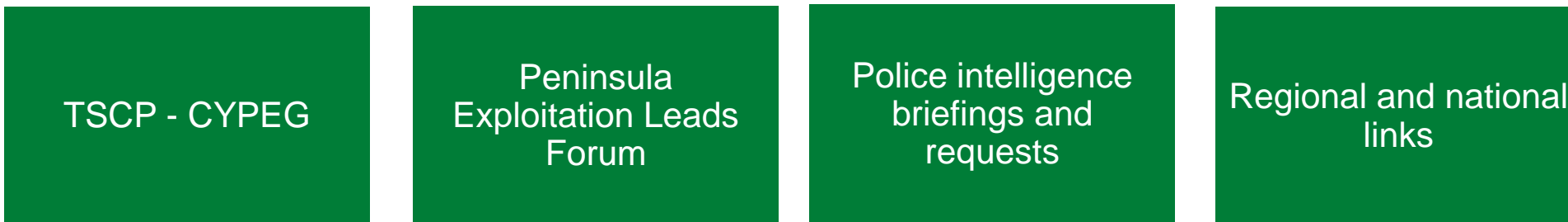
How does Torbay engage and share intelligence with key partners?

Operational forums



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Strategic forums



Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

What is the impact?

- High quality multi-agency partnerships based on high support/high challenge where needed to safeguard children.
- Strategic relationships and 'contacts' filter down to operational relationships to assist discussing and planning responses for individual children at practitioner level.
- Any process or practice queries are escalated, discussed and options for resolution identified
- Good information sharing in key meetings about individual children and families resulting in decisions also being contextually informed.
- Increased confidence of staff across all agencies to identify and have the appropriate routes to discuss and refer concerns regarding all types of child exploitation.
- Swift identification of individual children, peer groups, or adults of concern which leads to timely and appropriate information sharing to develop support and disruption plans.
- Engagement with parents and carers to promote safety/understanding of exploitation and safety planning with the family.
- Information movement between different operational panels (ASB, MACE, CEMOG and Transition) filtering down to operational staff.

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Other forms of exploitation

Moped theft and wider vehicle crime:

- High social media and public interest.
 - High impact on community.
 - High risk of serious harm or fatality.
- Operation Hawkbox and complex abuse framework initiated.
- Current evidence base identifies ASB and organized crime between small group of young people and some young adults identified of concern.
 - MACE being used for intelligence gathering.

County lines between Torbay and West Midlands:

- Use of MACE to track new adults moving into area where risk identified.
- Mapping of adults of concern and close joint work with domestic abuse services.
- Ongoing information-sharing between police and Children's.


Drug supply with indicators of organized crime/drug networks:

- Peer group mapping in place.
- Use of child protection processes initiated, incorporating consideration of safeguarding of siblings associated.
- Use of MACE in respect of addresses and adults of concern.

Other priorities



Independent Scrutineer undertaking report aligned to the JTAI as preparation, which will feed into a MACA focused on child criminal exploitation in February 2023.



Training provided commissioned to deliver training on child criminal and sexual exploitation, responding to missing and the NRM process, with separate modules for each. This is in addition to the TSCP training on offer in respect of the local profile and processes. Training for our fostering families has also been reviewed in February 2023.



Audit framework and cycle includes responses to exploitation and missing children through core audits, as well as dip sampling every three months.



The exploitation toolkit will imminently be embedded on LCS and PREVENT questions have been incorporated into this (as of January 2023). The conversion from Word to LCS will allow for 30 categories of data to be reported on.



Engagement with police activity including Operation Medusa (intensification of work tackling county lines) from 27th February 2023 to March 2023.

What next?



Continue to use performance surgeries to monitor and track performance in relation to toolkits and Return Home Interviews.



Continue to enhance how exploitation and missing risk is considered and responded to within the transition period for young people.



TSCP Task and Finish group established to progress a Torbay contextual safeguarding model.



Undertake the Missing Children's self-assessment tool, and embed outcome of this and Independent Scrutineer report into ongoing strategic action plan.



Continue to enhance the working relationship between Children's Services and Community Safety Partnership.

Meeting: Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 27th March 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: SEND Written Statement of Action – Update on SEND Improvement Work

When does the decision need to be implemented? (Update only)

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Cordelia Law, Cordelia.law@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services, Rachael Williams, Divisional Director of Education, Learning and Skills & Hannah Spencer, Head of SEND Improvement.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Following the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) inspection of the Local Area in November 2021, the inspection report issued in January 2022, requested that the Local Area develop a written statement of action showing how they intend to address the significant weaknesses outlined in the report. The Written Statement of Action, approved last May 2022, defines eight areas of improvement.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the board on the progress made so far in each of the eight areas of improvement.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The improvement work detailed in this report help us to ensure that the residents of Torbay can thrive with Children and young people reaching expected levels of progress as well as living fulfilling lives where their needs are met across the Local Area.
- 2.2 The provision of services to support children and young people with SEND is a statutory duty for the local area (local authorities and ICB). Provision of such services is a cornerstone of enabling the local community to thrive, and to supporting children and young people in having high aspirations. For children looked after with SEND, such services play an integral role in the Council delivering its duties as corporate parent.
- 2.3 Our recent second Monitoring Visit by the DfE (Department for Education) and CQC (Care Quality Commission) reported a pleasing level of improvement against our actions. As a statutory service, we are regularly inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). We need to continue to work at pace on our SEND improvements as a full re-inspection will be likely towards the end of 2023.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. We request that the updates regarding each improvement pillar are shared and understood by all board members so that they can continue to support with its implementation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Torbay Written Statement of Action (May22)

Appendix 2 - Torbay Monitoring Visit Update submission (17Jan23)

Appendix 3 - 'Agreed Note' – Monitoring Visit 2 (25Jan23)

Background Documents

SEND Code of practice 0-25 years (published 2014)

Inspection Report on the Torbay SEND Local Area Inspection

Green Paper on SEND March 2022

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

1.1 Joint Commissioning Pillar

We have made significant progress in our collaborative efforts as a local area in improving our services for children and families with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our contemporary Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Joint Commissioning Strategies have been co-produced and are fully aligned with the Whole System Approach (WSOA).

We recently organized an event inviting parents, carers, and local professionals working in SEND to explore how we can build on our progress and develop an associated plan. This exercise was productive, and we have identified a set of initiatives that will improve joint working and enable us to make better use of our collective resources.

Despite our clear objectives, we continue to face challenges in building commissioning arrangements that effectively and efficiently support our services. The complex nature of education, health, and care requires a coordinated effort from multiple stakeholders. However, we remain committed to this work and are confident in our ability to deliver the best outcomes for our children and families.

1.2 SEND Strategy Pillar

A new SEND Strategy has been coproduced by parents/carers and partners, using the feedback provided directly by children and young people through our cultural engagement work and participation survey. This identifies five key priorities for Torbay as a Local Area.

1. SEND is everyone's business – changing our culture.
2. Early identification and intervention
3. Understanding needs and making best use of our resources together
4. Making all settings more inclusive
5. Improving transitions to adulthood

Our new strategy represents a marked shift from previous area strategies and sets out a clear vision for our way of working. Our success criteria are focused on what children, young people, and their families will experience, and we are committed to improving their current lived experience.

We have also coproduced detailed action plans with SEND Family Voice and our partners, outlining how we will progress in each priority area. We will be tracking our progress monthly and reporting back to the SEND Strategic Board using a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating system. We are excited about the positive impact that this new strategy will have on the lives of our children

and families with SEND, and we look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our shared goals.

1.3 Culture Pillar

We are excited to announce that we will be launching a "new way of working" for families that includes the Pledge, Relational, and Co-production Charter. As part of our commitment to improving the experiences of families with SEND in our local area, we are consulting with families more consistently and frequently to understand the values and behaviours they would like to see as part of the foundation of the culture change we are striving to achieve.

At a coproduction event, families will have the opportunity to choose and own how the SEND culture will be measured and create the Key Performance Indicators. We believe that this approach is essential to ensuring that we are accountable to families and that their feedback is at the heart of our decision-making processes. We are committed to building a culture that is co-produced with families and that reflects their values and aspirations.

1.4 Joint Working Pillar

We are pleased to report that the lived experience and expertise of parents is increasingly informing all aspects of our SEND improvement work. Recent feedback from SEND Family Voice Torbay confirms that this is the case, and we are committed to continuing to listen to and learn from the experiences of families.

One of the key findings of our recent inspection report was the need to break down silos and work together more effectively across all sectors. We have taken this feedback and are working to develop new systems and protocols that promote collaboration and joint working, from the strategic to the operational level. While this is a challenging process that requires significant cultural change, we are encouraged by the progress we have made so far.

We believe that working together is the key to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and we are committed to embedding this approach as our "new normal". We are grateful for the ongoing support and feedback of our families and partners, and we look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our shared goals.

1.5 Graduated Response Pillar

The Graduated Response toolkits have been coproduced by specialist working groups. The pilot test, which was coproduced at the SEND Forum in conjunction with SENDCos and Headteachers,

is now live. The Graduated Response toolkits cover education, health and care and are accessible documents that support all those involved in meeting the needs of children at the earliest opportunity.

We believe that the Graduated Response toolkits will be a valuable resource for our local area and are in line with the Green Paper supporting the notion of right support, right place and right time and we are committed to continuing to develop and refine them based on feedback from families and professionals.

1.6 Becoming an Adult Pillar

The latest NEET figures are a cause for celebration as we have surpassed our targets, resulting in a positive impact on the lives of young people in Torbay. In addition to this, we have taken proactive steps to provide more options for young people, including securing apprenticeships and offering targeted job matching support to SEND care-experienced young people.

To ensure that young people with EHCP and complex needs are effectively supported, we are holding bi-termly meetings with Education Providers to discuss their potential trajectories and to promote multi-agency collaboration towards shared outcomes.

The Transitions Team is also actively delivering training events on Care Act eligibility to Education and Community Providers, highlighting our commitment to equipping our partners with the necessary tools to provide high-quality services to our young people.

1.7 Quality Assurance and Community Engagement Pillar

We have made significant progress in our SEND Quality Assurance work, we have co-produced a SEND Quality Assurance Framework, which includes a three-monthly cycle of audits and thematic dip samples. As part of our baseline audit, we have reviewed 70 new EHCPs and 50 amended EHCPs to ensure that they meet the needs of our children and young people.

To ensure that we are listening to the voices of our children, young people, and families, we have established a Multiagency SEND QA panel, which includes a representative from SEND Family Voice Torbay. This panel will begin its work in February, and we are confident that it will provide invaluable insight into the experiences of those who use our services and how best we can improve.

Our efforts to improve the Local Offer are limited until we have our joint Family Hubs website, however, we do have increasing hits and good attendance at parent engagement events. We are committed to continuing to involve families in all aspects of our work, and we will be holding a partnership meeting in January to explore how we can extend our reach even further.

1.8 Resilience

A key risk in the current climate of austerity is resilience. At present, securing staff capacity to deliver the improvement work, and at least maintaining the capacity of our parent/carer forum to continue with the level of involvement and pace, are challenges.

We are constantly challenged to find creative ways to ensure we are building a sustainable system which everyone buys into. Resilience is discussed through the Highlight report at every board meeting to ensure it remains a high priority.

1.9 Next Steps for the Improvement work.

We have a Monitoring Visit scheduled at the end of April, and our next quarter will be focused on achieving the following goals:

- Developing a data dashboard that is both robust and shareable with partners, enabling us to effectively manage performance and plan to meet the needs of the community.
- Publishing our workforce development plan by March, in order to roll out training with input from our expert parent reference group.
- Piloting and evaluating our new Graduated Response toolkits, with the final document scheduled to go live in September 2023.
- Using the Joint Commissioning strategy to enhance joint commissioning activity in our priority areas, with our action plans outlining this journey by April 2023.
- Co-producing action plans for the SEND Strategy by April 2023.
- Expanding the reach and engagement of parents and carers by supporting SEND Family Voice Torbay to build capacity by September 2023. As an example, we plan to reintroduce the popular Fair Play Day for all children and young people with SEND.

By achieving these goals, we aim to further improve the quality of our SEND provision and better support the needs of the community.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 For this board to have sight of the key achievements and continuing challenges in each area of improvement.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The Written Statement of Action does not, by itself, contain any financial implications. However, implementing the actions contained in the statement will require considerable staff capacity from Torbay Council and other organisations across the Local Area.
- 3.2 In addition, there is reference within the new strategy to address the significant overspend in the High Needs Block (the financial element that, in the main, is used to fund support for children and young people with SEND). The local authority is required by the DfE to take action to address the overspend and ensure it is reduced to within budget. This is integrated into the key performance indicators of the strategy.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Implementing the reforms as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice 2014 is a statutory duty for the local authority. Failure to carry out such duties can result in intervention from the Department for Education.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 There has been a huge culture shift in how we have coproduced our improvement work for SEND. Our new Participation Officer has started to embed Children and Young People's voices in our improvement work. Our Parent/Carer forum, SEND Family Voice Torbay, are noted as being "a full strategic partner, with coproduction becoming central to the new way of working in Torbay" in our recent 'Agreed Note' outcome of our Monitoring Visit.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 As the SEND Strategy is further developed there may be changes to provisions and services which are a result in the changing priorities of the new strategy.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 The Written Statement of Action does not address elements of the Council's plan to tackle climate change.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The key corporate risk remains the failure to deliver services for Children and Young People with SEND which enable them to thrive.
- 8.2 A key challenge, as nationally, is ensuring we can recruit enough capacity (specifically SALT, OT, EP) at pace to deliver on the improvement work across Torbay.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

9.1 The successful SEND improvement journey should enable children and young people with SEND to meet their expected outcomes and thrive in all aspects of their lives.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Young people 0-25		
People with caring Responsibilities	Yes – carers of children and young people with SEND.		
People with a disability	Yes – Children and Young People with a disability aged 0-25		
Women or men			
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			
People who are transgendered			
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general	Improved early identification of need and early support for a		

health of the population of Torbay)	special educational need.		
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 A SEND Strategy which is fit for purpose and for the future as well as a SEND system which functions effectively will enable the Local Authority to be assured that its responsibilities for children and young people with SEND are being met successfully.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 An effective SEND system will give positive outcomes for both children and young with SEND and their families because its implementation will mean that their needs are successfully being met.

Torbay Local Area Written Statement of Action



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One Torbay; working for all Torbay

Final Version 3.3

14th April 2022



Introduction from SEND Family Voice Torbay

As Torbay's parent/carer forum, we are delighted to have been central to the development of the Written Statement of Action as equal partners alongside other professionals in education, schools, social care and health. We know that many challenges face us as we all strive to offer the very best for children and young people with SEND and their families in Torbay. The co-production of this statement is a positive first step. We are keen that an ambitious SEND strategy, supported by a commitment from all partners to co-production, will be the driving force in rebuilding trust in SEND services for our families and their children and young people.

At the heart of rebuilding that trust will be a valuing of the lived experience of families and carers so that education, social care and health work alongside them to improve outcomes for our children, young people and our families. Our parents and carers need to feel confident they are heard at every level and in every interaction, and the needs of their children are recognised. This will require a culture of openness across the local area that supports everyone to learn from mistakes and to build an honest and supportive environment. The role of voluntary and community organisations and parent carer support groups in making our communities stronger will be valued and we are committed to building on the experience of that sector and all our partners. Together we will build a future that truly values our children and young people and their uniqueness and creates for them a world of opportunities where they can follow their own pathways and thrive as adults. This can only be achieved if parents are seen as an integral part of the solution for addressing these weaknesses.

Whilst we do not underestimate the challenges we face; this written statement is the first step in achieving that solution.

“We have been heard and our lived experience has been valued”

“There was a shift in language in the first and second meetings, which was really lovely to hear”.

‘What has been empowering to us as parents, is that our vision for the future is now very much aligned with the professionals we have been working with’.

‘It feels that whilst there is still much to be done, there is now a joint commitment and understanding to reach goals for our children and young people together.’

Torbay Local Area Vision and Principles

Our overarching vision, as set out in Torbay's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, is **'to create a healthy, happy Torbay where individuals and communities can thrive'**.

Children and young people are our future and our ambition of achieving this vision must start with them. Getting a good start in life and childhood, building resilience and getting maximum benefit from education are important markers for good health and wellbeing throughout life. Offering support to all children, young people and their families, as well as focusing on those who need help the most, reduces inequalities and improves health outcomes.

We know we must do better when it comes to delivering services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and their families – and we are firmly committed to doing so.

Placing children, young people, and their families at the heart of this work is key to achieving this and the principles of co-design and co-production will underpin everything we do.

Torbay's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SEND Strategic Partnership Board – which brings together people representing local families in Torbay, social care, education and health – will drive this work, with the main statutory organisations responsible for this work being Torbay Council and NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

As a Council, our mission is to support, enable and empower our residents, communities and partnerships. As a Clinical Commissioning Group, our mission is to work together to commission the right services which improve the lives of those who live in Torbay and the rest of Devon.

Torbay Council is committed to be forward thinking, people orientated and adaptable – always with integrity.

NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) core values include:

- One team – working together with staff, partners, patients, families, carers, communities and professionals to commission the right services for our population, and
- Quality in everything we do – developing safe, effective and accessible services.

Ensuring all these values are central to the work of the SEND Strategic Partnership Board and drive our cultural shift, will be vital.

The vision for the Integrated Care System (ICS) for Devon, which will replace CCG in July 2022, is “equal chances for everyone in Devon to lead long, happy and healthy lives” with six ambitions including:

- Children and Young People – ensuring access to a personalised, sustainable and coordinated system of care and support that meets needs early and improves quality of life from early years through to adulthood.
- Community and People-led Change – empowering communities to take responsibility for their health and wellbeing so they can help themselves.
- Equally Well in Devon – helping address all needs, mental and physical, equally and holistically.

In practice, this means, together, Torbay Council and NHS Devon CCG and the ICS are committed to working in partnership with SEND Family Voice Torbay as well as children, young people, parents, carers and partners to radically improve support for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities within Torbay so they have the very best life chances.

This Written Statement of Action explains the steps that we will take to improve services and the culture identified in the Local Area Inspection. We have taken the views from nearly 500 people and held over 50 meetings, alongside analysing our survey which sought feedback from parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, as well as, from children and young people themselves, to develop a robust statement which will drive improvement and significantly enhance outcomes for young people and their families.

As a Board, we are acting on the clear message that our children and families gave us through the joint area SEND inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. As a result, we are committed to:

- Working determinedly for a **child friendly Torbay** where children and young people with SEND and their families experience a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 and beyond.
- Aiming high so that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are able to **reach their full potential, receive the right support, at the right time**, with **choice and control** so that they can **lead fulfilling lives**.
- Aligning our resources to drive sustained improvement.

We want this work to be led by local families and young people. Leaders and professionals from the Council, the NHS and other local organisations will support, but will not direct, and we will be held to account for this in future.

As part of the work in implementing this Written Statement of Action, we will co-produce an aspirational vision and a shared set of key values around the concept of inclusion and develop a Local Inclusion Plan which will underpin our work with children, young people and their families.

We recognise the understandable dissatisfaction families must be feeling at the moment, and we appreciate whole-heartedly that nobody knows the individual needs of a child as well as their parents and carers. That is why we are determined to work together to ensure an improvement in the quality of outcomes for those children and young people with SEND.

As the young people have said,

***'When you listen to me it feels good. It makes it easier to be truthful, as I know I can trust you.'* Kieran**

***'When I have spoken with you, I feel heard, which means I matter.'* Jamie**



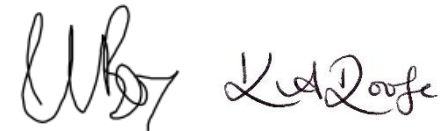
Councillor Cordelia Law
Cabinet Member for
Children's Services
Torbay Council



Nancy Meehan
Director of Children's
Services
Torbay Council



Darryn Allcorn
Chief Nursing Officer
NHS Devon CCG

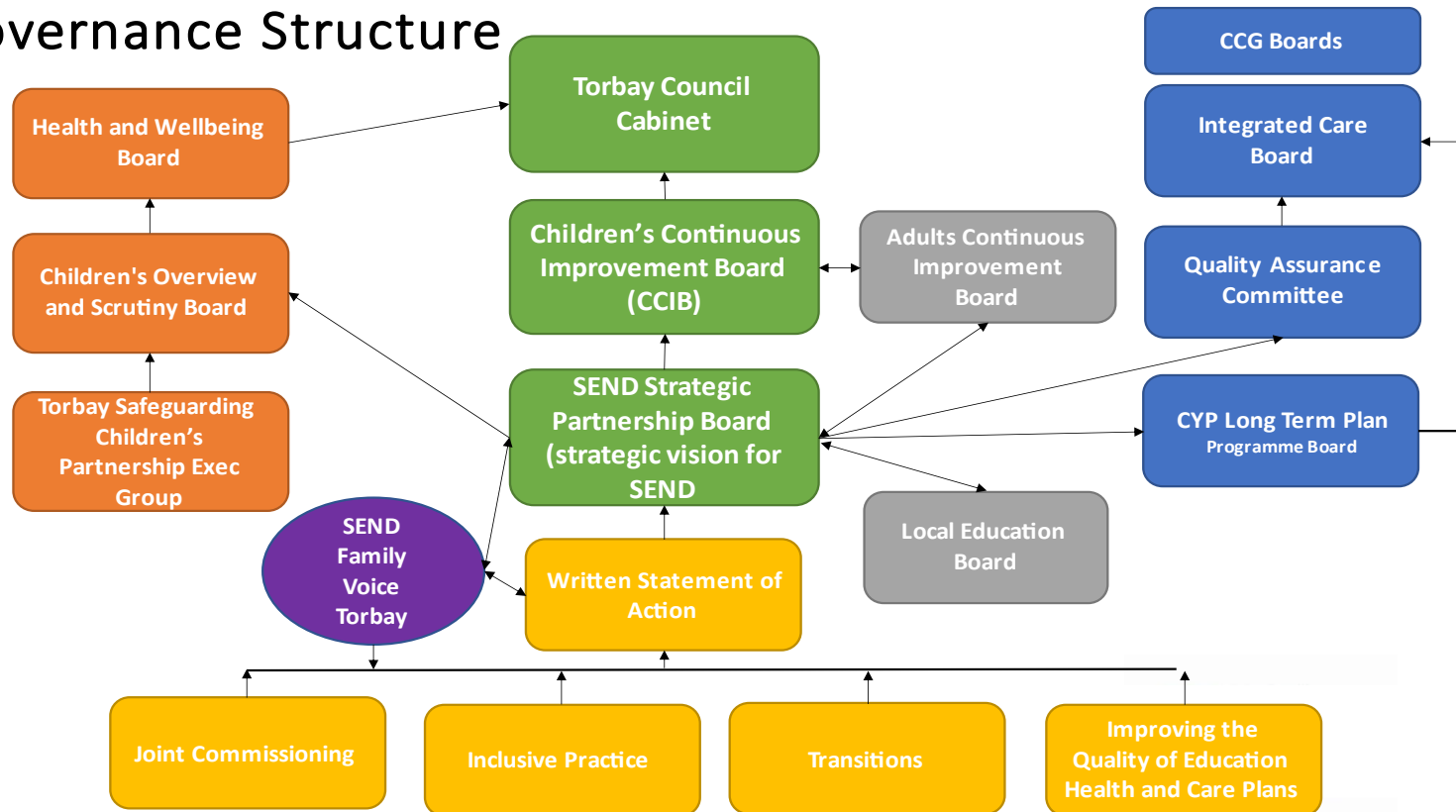


**Rebecca Box and
Karen Roofe**
Co-chairs
SEND Family Voice Torbay

1. Governance

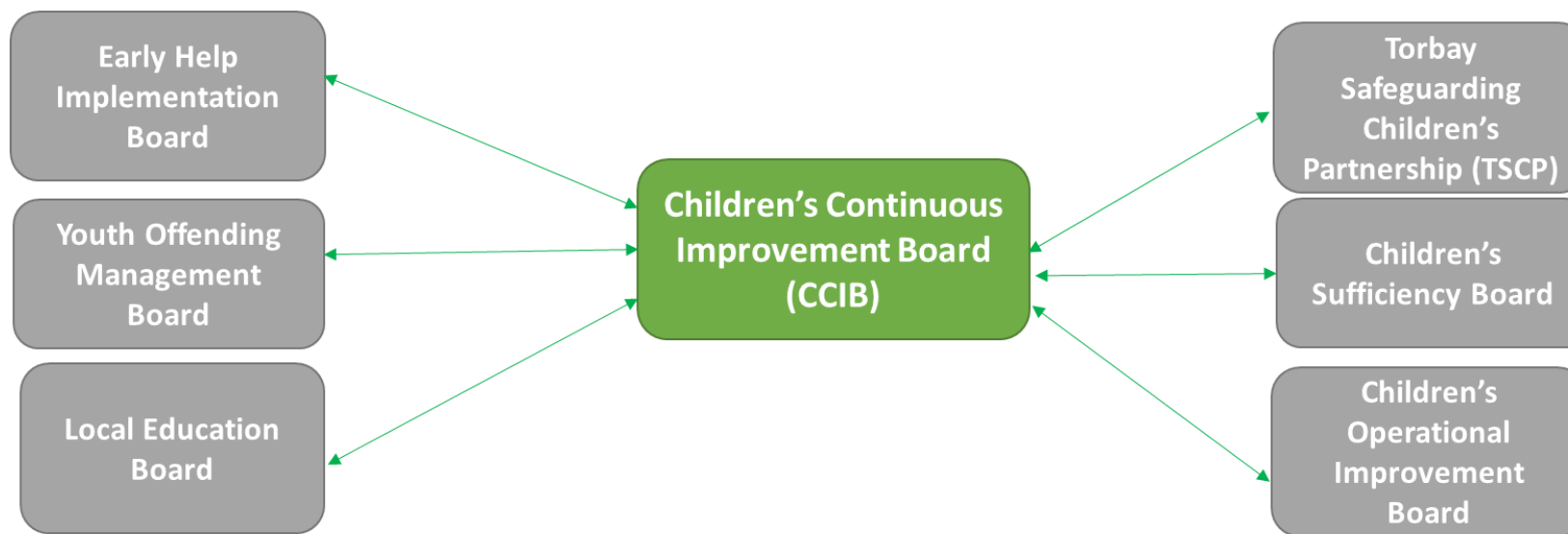
Our governance structures are at the heart of ensuring our commitment to improved services for children and young people with SEND and their families. The SEND Strategic Partnership Board, which includes representatives from SEND Family Voice Torbay and DfE and NHSE Advisors, reports into our Children’s Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB) ensuring that our work around SEND is embedded in a broader approach to improvement and securing the very best outcomes for children and young people. The CCIB feeds into Torbay’s Health and Well Being Board ensuring strategic alignment across social care, education and health. This ensures the voices of our children are heard and embedded at the most senior corporate levels of the Council. Where appropriate we are aligning the key objectives and values of corporate plans with the actions contained in our Written Statement.

Governance Structure



Sub-board Name	Chaired by	Meeting frequency
Torbay Cabinet	Leader of Torbay Council (Cllr SD)	Monthly
Children's Continuous Improvement Board	Independent Chair (SH)	Every Six weeks
SEND Strategic Partnership Board	Director of Children's Services and Chief Nursing Officer (NM/DA)	Monthly
Health and Wellbeing Board	Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health; Mental Health and Wellbeing (Cllr JS)	Monthly
Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board	Leader for the opposition (Cllr NB)	Bi-monthly
Torbay Safeguarding Children's partnership executive group	Chief Nursing Officer (DA)	Bi-monthly
Adults Continuous Improvement Board	Independent Chair (MM)	Quarterly
Local Education Board	Torbay Chief Executive Officer (AB)	Termly
Integrated Care Board	Chief Executive Integrated Care System for Devon and NHS CCG Devon (JM)	Quarterly
Quality Assurance Committee	Chief Nursing Officer (DA)	Eight times per year
CYP Long Term Plan Programme Board	CEO Livewell South-West (MT)	Monthly

The Children’s Continuous Improvement Board reports to Cabinet and brings together all aspects of children’s services at a strategic level thus enabling appropriate oversight and accountability.



Sub-board Name	Chaired by	Meeting frequency
Children’s Continuous Improvement Board	Independent Chair (SH)	Every six weeks
Early Help Implementation Board	Independent Co-Chairs (SH & MG)	Every six weeks
Youth Offending Management Board	Superintendent Devon and Cornwall Police (EW)	Bi-monthly
Local Education Board (LEB)	Chief Executive Officer, Torbay Council (AB)	Termly
Torbay Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Executive Group (TSCP)	Chief Nursing Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group (DA)	Bi-monthly
Children’s Sufficiency Board	Director of Children’s Services (NM)	Bi-monthly
Children’s Operational Improvement Board	Director of Children’s Services (NM)	Monthly

2. What We Are Aiming to Achieve

Our Partnership Commitment

- We have heard the message our children and families have given us through the inspection and in developing the Written Statement.
- We will work determinedly for a child friendly Torbay where children and young people with SEND and their families experience a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25.
- We will aim high so that all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are able to reach their full potential, receive the right support, at the right time, with choice and control so that they can lead fulfilling lives.
- We will align our resources to drive sustained improvement and enhance outcomes for children, young people and their families.



3. Action Taken

We have:

- acted promptly to publicly accept and apologise for the findings of the SEND Inspection and to commit, as a SEND partnership, to further develop our work with parents, carers, children and young people to ensure the support needs of the cohort with SEND are met.
- engaged with children and young people to hear their views and thoughts.
- begun a process of renewal in our relationships with existing parent / carer groups to understand themes coming from parents and identify ways forward and to embed co-production as our way of working.
- commissioned an independent review of our governance arrangements.
- embedded our Early Help approach to target intervention and prevent escalation into crisis and exclusion.
- ensured that the Head of the Learning Academy reviews and revises the QA systems and processes within SEND and adult services.
- ensured the Virtual School has provided training for almost 200 school staff as 'Attachment Leads', 60 of those at a strategic level. Ongoing training is delivered by the Virtual School staff within schools, social care and with foster carers to ensure that we take a 'team child', 'team pupil' approach.
- radically revised the membership and terms of reference of the SEND Strategic Partnership Board to ensure embedded system leadership and to include representation from SEND Family Voice Torbay.
- increased resource and joint funding for: Two Strategic Leads, full-time Project Manager, Auditor, Young Researchers, increased DCO funding, supported SEND Family Voice Torbay and commissioned the Participation Survey.

4. Linked Programmes – The Vehicles for Change

Early Help

For us, Early Help is not a specific service or team it is an approach to working that brings together professionals from a range of different services who will work with the whole family.

We believe that children and families need to be heard when they first ask for help to minimise the risk of problems getting worse and help them address them at the earliest opportunity by encouraging engagement.

Our principles for Early Help are:

- Always working **with** the child, young person, and family, and not “doing to” or “doing for”.
- Working in a relational and strengths-based way.
- Considering the whole family as part of the analysis of need and the solutions to that need.
- Identifying and addressing the problem at the earliest opportunity.
- Early Help being “everyone’s business”, promoting accountability, evaluation, and sustainability across the partnership.

Family Hubs will be placed firmly at the centre of our Early Help system in Torbay. Supported by our partnership with the University of Exeter, who are assisting us in our approach to sustainable co-production with communities. We are determined that children, young people and their communities will shape our vision and come to own it.

Our Early Help Model is embedded in our approach to community-based Family Hubs which will enable:

- A clear, simple way for families to access help and support.
- Services working together for families with shared outcomes and effective governance.
- Families telling their story once, and families get more effective support.
- Statutory services, the community, charities, and faith sector partners working together to get families the help they need.
- Strengthening relationships that carry us through life.

Mental Health in Schools Team

As part of the 2017 Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision Green Paper, Torbay has progressed the roll-out of Mental Health Support Teams in Schools. This whole school approach is designed to enable mental health to become a valued and intrinsic part of school culture. There are currently twenty schools being supported

through two waves of this programme. This is further supported by Mental Health Lead Training for senior and middle leaders to support systematic change and strategic planning to adopt whole school change for approaches to mental health support.

Restorative Practice

Torbay Children's Services are embarking on an ambitious journey to embed restorative practice across our workforce and partner agencies to build better relational and restorative ways of working with our children and families. When we work with and alongside children and families using a high support and high challenge approach, rather than make decisions about them in isolation, there is strong evidence to say that outcomes for children and their families are greatly improved.

Attachment and Trauma Informed Practice

In response to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines 2015 'Mental health and well-being of looked-after children' it was recognised that there was a need to support children and young people with attachment difficulties in schools and other education settings (including early years). The guidance was clear in that schools and other education providers should ensure that all staff who may come into contact with children and young people with attachment difficulties receive appropriate training in this area. Eight of our local schools have been part of the five-year Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Awareness in School Programme led by the Rees Centre in exploring the impact of 'whole school' attachment and trauma awareness training on experiences and outcomes for vulnerable young people. The final report will be published in October 2022.

Child Friendly Torbay

Taking inspiration from other Councils, Torbay is on a journey to make the area 'child friendly'. Our ambition is to put children at the heart of all that we do in Torbay, to ensure they have the best possible start in life and for Torbay to be a great place in which to grow up.

For the Child Friendly Torbay initiative to work effectively we will work with children and young people, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, statutory services, schools, emergency services and recreational groups.

We want to maximise opportunities for children and young people, raise their aspiration and for the whole of Torbay to play an important part in their development.

The Child Friendly Torbay Vision: 'We want Torbay to be a great place for all of our children and young people to grow up in. We want to work together to deliver this; every contribution counts, and we can all play a part in making a difference.'

New Integrated Care System for Devon

The new Integrated Care System for Devon has six key priorities one of which is Children and Young People – ‘investing more in children and young people to have the best start in life, be ready for school, be physical and emotionally well and develop resilience throughout childhood and on into adulthood’.

This work is being led at an ICS level, but we know that children’s and families’ lives are lived within their communities, schools and local health provision. All the programmes will therefore be locally delivered and co-produced with representation from local health, education and care. Most importantly with local children and young people, parents and carers and representatives of the communities and organisations that support them. Through this co-produced approach, we will:

- **Optimise the services for children and young people with Neurodiverse needs.**
- **Improve access to speech language and communication support.**
- **Develop Local maternity and neonatal transformation work.**
- **Align our Surgery in Children (SiC) work to the implement the National SiC model.**
- **Support improved acute hospital and community-based paediatric services through integration and enhancing the overall offer.**
- **Continue to support the Suicide Postvention Service Project.**
- **Continue to support the Children’s Society delivery of the School Based Family Self Harm Intervention.**
- **Support the Torbay Young People Wellbeing Service.**
- **Support the Children and Young People’s Crisis Services.**
- **Continue to support the Mental Health Support Teams.**

We will use a variety of measures to assess impact and progress including:

- **KPI – Key Performance Indicators and/or data reported via scorecards.** This will include local and national measures, analytics from Local Offer webpages, targets if applicable and benchmarking where available.
- **Audit – Planned audits or formal evaluations.** Developed for the relevant area, which will include audit tools and written reports. These will be used where qualitative measures are not possible or alongside quantitative measures to provide evidence of quality alongside measurable performance. This may also include progress against actions identified from audit work.
- **Voice – Feedback from children, young people, parents, carers and delivery colleagues.** This will take a variety of forms, such direct work with SEND Family Voice Torbay, minutes from user groups, capturing of voice from face-to-face work and the recent

- Participation Plan, analysis of compliments and complaints and analysis of supervision and 1:1 staff meetings.
- **Review – Feedback from evaluations, documentation that evidences action, reviews of minutes or observations of meetings, which confirm actions.** This will take a number of forms from simple confirmations of actions taken to more in-depth reviews and evaluations.
- **Minutes** – a record of actions having been agreed at Boards or groups.
- **Surveys** – These can be surveys issued and completed by any of the partners within the Local Area or external Surveys relating to the Local Area.

Definitions of Partnership:

Throughout the written statement of action, we have used the terms: partners or partnership to include:

- SEND Family Voice Torbay
- All Torbay education settings, from early years to post-16
- All health authorities
- Adult and children’s social care
- The voluntary and community sector
- All Council departments
- Local businesses where appropriate.

Ways of Reading the Action plan

We have intentionally repeated some actions across the four Pillars, from the Local Government Association Peer Review, in order to recognise the cross relationships but have indicated the main lead for the action.

The Schools White Paper and the Green Paper SEND review were published on 28 and 29 March 2022 respectively. Many of the actions in our written statement align with the key issues raised in those papers, however, through the process of implementation we will continue to embed changes in our local actions to respond to Government policies as appropriate.

Improvement Pillar 1 – Joint Commissioning

AFI 7 - Poor joint commissioning arrangements that limit leaders' ability to meet area needs, improve outcomes and achieve cost-efficiencies

Progress (BRAG)

Complete and embedded

Completed

Progressing to Timescale

Little or no progress/delayed

- Joint commissioning is underdeveloped. (P4 MF7)
- there remains a lack of joint working between services to tackle the issues with the pace of change that is needed. (P2 MF 1)
- This does not reflect what is needed to secure cost- efficiencies across the area to tackle bigger problems. (P4 MF7)
- opportunities to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families at the same time as saving money through joint ventures are under-utilised. (P4 MF7)
- Area leaders do not have a comprehensive knowledge of the needs of children and young people who receive support for their special educational needs but donot have an EHC plan (SEN support) in schools. (P6 AFD 2)
- Area leaders cannot commission with accuracy the services and support needed for this key group. (P6 AFD 2)
- Weaknesses in joint working across education, health and care, and the systems and processes for assessing children's and young people's needs are not strong enough (P13 AFI 6)
- Leaders' overall plans are not joined up enough to tackle the depth of these issues (P12 AFD16)
- Some young people with complex needs have little or no meaningful provision once they are 20 P12 AFD 17)

Focus Area 1. Create an effective Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) demonstrating current and future health, education and social care needs of those living with SEN and Disability to inform commissioning decisions

ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER(S): Director of Public Health (LS), Director of Children’s Services (NM),

Ref	Milestone Action	Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of FocusArea
1A	Create a JSNA Data group to:	Public Health Consultants (JC, BB)	April 2022	May 2022		Fully representative group in place to co-produce the JSNA	There is a co-produced JSNA including details of Health, Education, social care and community aspects of Torbay that allows, and is used, for developmental planning to identify and plan provision and services more effectively for SEND needs across Torbay.
1A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and develop the contents of a JSNA building on the current JSNA that integrates and incorporates health, education, social care and local area data 	Public Health Consultants (JC, BB)	May 2022	November 2022		A clear link between the JSNA and the local area's vision, strategy and framework for joint commissioning (Minutes)	
1A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate and review all existing datasets and determine whether they are fit for purpose 	+ Public Health Consultants (JC, BB) Head of Safeguarding, Reviewing Service and Early Help (SE)	May 2022	September 2022		Content list which shows link between health, education and social care IMPACT – data driven decisions on quantity, quality and location of provision Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 20 September 2022	
1A.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link this to the development of a data dashboard that is shared and understood by all that can drive strategic and operational planning 	Public Health Consultants (JC, BB) Head of Safeguarding, Reviewing	September 2022	November 2022		Joint agreement on relevant datasets that aid joint commissioning across education, health and social care. IMPACT – the cohesive agreement on appropriate data	

		Service and Early Help (SE)				use is in place across the partners (Audit)
1A.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure an appropriate data infrastructure that enables the sharing of key datasets. 	Public Health Consultants (JC, BB) Head of Safeguarding, Reviewing Service and Early Help (SE)	December 2022	January 2023		Easily accessible data dashboard that covers relevant areas of education, health and social care, linked to social demands is in place. IMPACT – data dashboard is used to drive decisions (Audit)
1A.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and launch the new JSNA 	Public Health Consultants (JC, BB) Director of Children’s Services (NM) & Director of Public Health (LS)	January 2023	March 2023 and subsequent years.		New JSNA provides joint agreements on the existing challenges where the partners should immediately focus its resources to achieve improvement/transformation and best value. (Minutes) Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board February 2023 IMPACT – more focused decision making that responds effectively to the demands across the Local Area. (KPIs, Reports, Minutes)
1A.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure monthly updates to the JSNA and explore the possibility of a ‘live’ JSNA model 	Education business and performance manager (MG) & Public	April 2022	March 2023 and subsequent years.		The JSNA is updated both with ‘live’ data and with statutory information so that users can plan more effectively. IMPACT – More effective data

		Health Consultants (JC, BB)				access for focused planning. (KPIs, reports, minutes)	
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Focus Area 2. Establish a vision, strategy and governance for joint strategic planning and commissioning and planning of services between education, health and care

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM) & Head of Procurement, Contract Management and Commissioning (TF), Director of Primary Care, Community and Mental health Commissioning (JT)

Ref	Milestone Action	Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
2A	Establish a Joint Commissioning Group consisting of all partners that will:	Head of Women’s and Children’s Commissioning (HP), Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	April 2022	April 2022		Fully representative co-production group in place to lead the Joint Strategic Planning and Commissioning is in place to undertake the following actions.	A Joint Commissioning Group is in place across the Local Area leading to more effective and efficient commissioning that meets the needs of the young people and families in Torbay and provides greater value for money and contributes to a reduction in the High Needs Block overspend.
2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a joint vision of commissioning with children, young people and their families at its centre and link the impact of commissioning to reducing the High Needs Block (HNB) overspend. 	Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	April 2022	June 2022		<p>Draft vision produced and</p> <p>Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 20th June 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – there is shared vision of how joint commissioning works for the benefit of parents, carers and young people leading to measurably more efficient and effective provision, reducing the HNB overspend. (AUDIT)</p>	

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2A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a joint commissioning strategy building on the SEND strategy and the existing JSNA (by September 2022). 	Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	May 2022	November 2022	<p>There is a clear picture of all the commissioning activity for SEND across the Local Area and all agencies.</p> <p>Strategy to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 28 November 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – identification of inefficient use of resources, gaps in provision and duplication of effort so needs are met more effectively and rapidly. (KPI)</p>	
2A.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing progress in mapping gaps in provision and consistency of governance and that there are plans in place to ensure such gaps are filled 	Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	September 2022	April 2023	<p>There is a clear picture of all the commissioning activity for SEND across the Local Area and all agencies.</p> <p>IMPACT – identification of inefficient use of resources, gaps in provision and duplication of effort so needs are met more effectively and rapidly. (KPI)</p>	
2A.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and monitor the strategy (from April 2023 to align with new financial year) 	Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	From April 2023	Each financial year	<p>Commissioning decisions are more effective, and resources are targeted to areas of need.</p> <p>IMPACT - identification of inefficient use of resources, gaps in provision and duplication of effort so needs are met more effectively and rapidly. (KPI)</p>	

2A.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify best practice for contract monitoring and performance and ensure it is embedded in the new strategy. 	Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	April 2022	September 2022	<p>Contract management and performance meets the highest standards for public sector procurement.</p> <p>IMPACT - There is an increased knowledge of where elements of joint commissioning have occurred allowing them to be used further.</p>	
2B	Communicate the joint commissioning strategy so that all partners know how to engage in the commissioning cycle and understand and implement the strategy and decision making for provision is clearly understood.	Heads of Communication in Torbay Council and Health (KS and AC JG)	May 2022	November 2022	<p>Joint commissioning communication strategy is presented to and agreed by the SEND Strategic Partnership Board.</p> <p>Strategy to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnerships Board 28 November 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – all organisations are aware of the strategy for joint commissioning and understand the need for its existence. (Minutes, Feedback)</p>	
2A.5	Address the overspend in the High Needs Block through a variety of mechanisms including producing a reduction strategy building on the current recovery plan and DfE support if appropriate, as agreed by the Schools' Forum.	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW)	1 April 2022	September 2023	<p>Schools' Forum minutes show agreed strategy for reducing the deficit and steps towards to achieving that reduction.</p> <p>Recovery plan or equivalent agreed by DfE</p> <p>IMPACT - There is a termly reduction from September 2022 in the overspend of the high needs budget to a balanced In-year budget by September 2023 and a balanced budget overall by September 2024</p>	

Improvement Pillar 2 – Inclusion

AFI 1 - The lack of a suitably ambitious SEND strategy based on robust self-evaluation, and open co-production, and with the buy-in of all services across education, health and care and that includes measurable criteria for success	Progress (BRAG)	
		Complete and embedded
		Completed
		Progressing to Timescale
		Little or no progress/delayed

- Children and young people with ASD, SEMH difficulties or similar associated needs do not experience improved outcomes as a result of the reforms. (P12 AFD 16)
- Poor timeliness in identification and variability in inclusive practice (P12 AFD 16)
- There is too much variability in the implementation of the reforms across services. (P9 AFD 16)
- Some schools show a lack of commitment to the reforms. (P3 AFD 3)
- The rate of exclusion of pupils with SEND from school is too high (P3 AFD 6)
- The need to improve children’s social care services has contributed to the stalled development of a useful SEND strategy. (P7 SFD 8)
- Children’s needs are not met well, particularly in the mainstream school system (P7 AFD 8)
- Variability in the desire to be inclusive among some schools. However, there is a lack of a coherent strategy to improve this (P7 AFD 8)
- There is not a strategy in place to address this (exclusion) as robustly as is needed (P9 AFD 19)
- The proportions of children and young people excluded from school in the area are high and much higher than is typical (P9 AFD 19))
- Too often, this presentation (behaviour) is seen as a SEMH need or owing to weaknesses in parenting, rather than understanding that it has come about because of an underlying unmet need (P9 AFD19)

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Focus Area 3. Create an ambitious co-produced SEND Strategy that embodies the recommendations in the Green Paper for SEND.

ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER(S): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area	
Page 127	3A	Establish a SEND Strategy Group to develop a co-produced aspirational vision and a shared set of key values around the concept of a local inclusion plan	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW) Head of Women and Children’s Commissioning (HP)	April 2022	June 2022		Report presented to SEND Strategic Partnership Board to propose a co-produced aspirational vision and set of key values and agreed by the Board. Report to be considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 18 July 2022 IMPACT -there is an agreed vision and set of values encompassing inclusion that can be used to develop further work across the Local Area. (Report, Minutes)	There is a shared and co-produced Local Area vision of inclusion that leads to an aspirational approach for children and young people with SEND across Torbay providing them appropriate and timely support and services to ensure they achieve the best outcomes for children and young people.
	3A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-produce a SEND strategy including an inclusion plan if appropriate, building on analysis of the recent SEND Participation Plan, that has the lived experience of children, young people and their families at its core., This should take into consideration best practice from other authorities and engage all partners in the local area and be aligned with the ‘Child Friendly Torbay’ initiative, the Health and Well Being strategy with a particular focus 	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW) Head of Women and Children’s Commissioning (HP)	July 2022	October 2022	SEND Strategy Group established and begins to develop the SEND Strategy with all partners contributing to the development, particularly in gathering evidence of the ‘lived experience’ of families. IMPACT – All parts of the Local Area including parents, carers and young people are involved in defining an inclusive SEND		

	on neurodiversity, and other key corporate/local area strategies as appropriate.				Strategy (Minutes, Reports, Family Voice Torbay) SEND Strategy, Local Inclusion Plan to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 28 November 2022
3A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the local offer content and information so that it is parent friendly and accessible to all by using SEND FVT as a 'critical advisor' to drive the refresh 	Head of SEND service (DH)	April 2022	April 2023	Current Local Offer is reviewed and improved so that it has accessible and up to date information. IMPACT – The Local Offer is now fully accessible, more utilized and well regarded by all (Reports, Analytics Tracking)
3B Page 128	Launch the SEND strategy and ensure it is communicated across the Local Area so that the centrality of families, children and young people is embedded in all Council and Health departments	Director of Children's Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)	October 2022	November 2022	The SEND Strategy is in place. IMPACT – There is a clear understanding of the Inclusive vision and the inclusion plan across the Local Area and is evident in practice. (Minutes, Reports, Surveys, KPIs, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS)
3D	Build on existing good practice in other Local Areas, of SEND identification and provision, to ensure Torbay young people achieve the best possible outcomes wherever they are placed.	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW) Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP)	September 2022	August 2023	The successful work in other Local Areas helps to inform future identification, provision and outcomes practice in Torbay. IMPACT – There is consistency in inclusive practice for all Torbay young people wherever their needs are being met, leading to improved outcomes, as early as possible, for young people with SEND in Torbay. (Reports, KPIs)

Focus Area 4 – Establish a Self-Evaluation process to ensure the effectiveness of the Strategy

Accountable Officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM) Chief Nursing Officer (DA), Head of Commissioning and Procurement (TF)

	Milestone Actions	Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
4A	Build on the existing partnership quality assurance process, with parents, carers and young people, producing termly audits, to ensure that there is confidence that the SEND Strategy is being implemented across the Local Area (Within 4B)	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	April 2022	October 2022 QA Implementation from January 2023 including monthly reports to Board		The vision and values embodied in the SEND Strategy are seen to be carried out across all services and agencies. Report to be considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 28 November 2022 and then monthly reports to Board from January 2023. IMPACT – there is confidence in all users, but particularly parents, carers and young people, that there is a more inclusive SEND response. (Range of data – Exclusions, Needs Assessments etc.)	The local area knows its strengths and areas for development and appropriate early action is taken to ensure weaknesses are addressed and there is evidence that improvements have been made leading to increased trust across all partners but particularly parents, carers and young people.
4B	Offer a training and support package for schools and settings and their governors, building on best practice in early identification and intervention activities, to ensure they understand their responsibilities for inclusion and system leadership.	Head of Learning Academy (RS), Head of School Improvement (DH)	September 2022	July 2023 and further academic years		Learning academy implements locality-based solutions to providing support. IMPACT – Data on inclusion shows improved provision to meet needs across all mainstream schools. Reduction	

					<p>in requests for Assessments.</p> <p>Current average Requests for assessment (Jan/Feb 2022) 28 pcm</p> <p>Target September 2022 – 20 pcm</p> <p>July 2023 – 15 pcm</p> <p>Overall absence rate to be reduced for those with a plan to below the National Mean. (Audit, KPIs, Family Voice Torbay)</p>
4C	<p>Build on the existing multi-disciplinary pilot programme, in collaboration with schools and settings, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proactively support pupils at risk of exclusions / experiencing poor attendance. (Cross reference to: 14A, C, D) 	Head of Vulnerable Pupils (DH)	September 2022	July 2023	<p>All schools agree, through Schools' Forum, to participation in a support programme for pupils at risk of exclusion or poor attendance. Reduction of suspensions (fixed term exclusions) from 33.7% (2019/20) to at or below national average by September 2024</p> <p>Reduction of permanent exclusions of those with EHCP from 0.08% (2019/20) And 0.31% for those with SEND Support to at or below national averages by September 2024</p> <p>IMPACT – reduction in exclusions. (Audit)</p>
4D	All settings and the Council to pilot a pre-exclusion 'case conferencing' system to strengthen inclusive approaches (cross ref to: 14A, C, D)	Head of Vulnerable Pupils (DH)	September 2022	July 2023	Group of schools agree to pilot a pre-exclusion case conference format.

						IMPACT reduction in exclusions as above (Audit)
4E	Existing Alternative Provision Group to:	Education Safeguarding Lead (DF), Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	September 2022	Sept 2022		Representative group is in place and undertaking quality assurance and monitoring processes.
4E.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing good practice, confirm quality standards for Alternative Providers with outcomes for young people at their heart. 	Education Safeguarding Lead (DF), Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	September 2022	November 2022		<p>Agreed quality standards for Alternative Providers are co-produced.</p> <p>Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 28 November 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – Assured quality framework in place for all Alternative Providers (Linked to Joint Commissioning) (Audit, Reports)</p>
4E.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing timescales for reviewing the AP Framework informed by the standards with a view to informing commissioning decisions. 	Head of Vulnerable Pupils (DH) and Strategic Commissioning Manager (TF)	September 2022	January 2023 and subsequent years		<p>Programme to review the Alternative Provision framework is in place.</p> <p>IMPACT – There is confidence that Alternative Provision is meeting the needs of young people and conforming to the agreed standards. (Data, KPIs, Reports, SEND Family Voice Torbay)</p>

Improvement Pillar 2 – Inclusion

Area for Improvement 2 – Cultural Change

The deep cultural issues leading to weak co-production and the inability of children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers to be equal partners in strategic and local decision-making

Progress (BRAG)

	Complete and embedded
	Completed
	Progressing to Timescale
	Little or no progress/delayed

- Area leaders have only just started to work together to implement the SEND reforms. (P2 MF1)
- Leaders have been slow to turn their focus to this important work the impact of this new commitment is limited. Consequently, there remains a lack of joint working between services (P2 MF 1)
- The views of parents and carers are often treated as trivial in the decisions that are made about their children and young people. (P2 MF2)
- Many front-line professionals' express views that parents and carers are difficult to engage with because of their social deprivation and own personal needs. (P2 MF 2)
- Too often, this is used as an excuse for poor co-production. (P2 MF 2)
- However, a lack of central leadership over many years has led to an entrenched culture among services to solve the challenges they face on their own. (P2 MF 3)
- The rate of exclusion of pupils with SEND from school is too high. (P4 MF 7)
- Too many pupils are not accessing education because they are excluded. (P4 MF 7)
- Occasionally, parents state that school leaders are a barrier to children's and young people's needs being identified. (P6 AFD 5)
- too often, the default position is that presentation by children is assumed to be a behavioural issue because of poor parenting, rather than an indication of need. (P4 MF 7)
- children's needs are not met well, particularly in the mainstream school system (P7 AFD 8)
- Variability in the desire to be inclusive among some schools. However, there is a lack of a coherent strategy to improve this (P7 AFD 8)
- A legacy of mistrust and poor identification and meeting of needs means that many families still feel that they need to fight for their children's rights (P8 AFD 14)

Focus Area 5 - Partners agree a set of values led behaviours which are the basis of creating a shared culture across the local area leading to a co-produced SEND system.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of FocusArea
5A	Establish a Culture Group of all partners to:	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills and Head of Women and Children’s commissioning (RW and HP)	April 2022	May 2022		A fully representative group of members is in place and meeting schedule agreed. IMPACT – (Minutes indicate planning to achieve delivery within timescale)	All partners act in accordance with the values and a shared culture focused on delivering the very best for children, young people and their families is embedded. Families feel their views are valued and a culture of trust is in place. A culture of acceptance of responsibility and multi-agency working for children in crisis or accessing the risk support quadrant of the THRIVE framework is in place
5A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-produce an agreed set of values led behaviours incorporated into a Partnership pledge. Partners to include the pledge in all appointments and induction. 	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills and Head of Women and Children’s commissioning (RW and HP)	May 2022	July 2022		SEND Strategic Partnership Board and CCG agree the report from T&F group along with plan for adoption of the values and beliefs across the Local Area Report to be considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 22 August 2022 IMPACT – there is a published agreement across the Local Area of the necessary values led behaviours that reflect the 2014 reforms and build on the content of the Green Paper (Minutes, Report)	

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5A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the values led behaviours across all parties, agreed in the Local Area pledge, including schools and create an annual survey which measures the degree of trust, transparency, and co-production within the systems and processes. 	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills and Head of Women and Children's commissioning (RW and HP)	July 2022	September 2022	<p>Plan is agreed and in place across all agencies, covering where young people are from or from whom they receive services, is communicated widely and is improving trust within the Local Area</p> <p>Action Plan to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 24 October 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – reports from families show an increasing and high level of trust (Over 90% positive responses in the survey by February 2023)</p>	
Page 134	All partners to co-produce and implement the values-led behaviours between themselves and families to cover all forms of communication.	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills and Head of Women and Children's commissioning (RW and HP)	September 2022	January 2023 and following years	<p>Changes to interactions with parents, carers and young people are published on the Local Offer through a 'You said – We responded' section and there is a 'feedback loop' so all are aware of issues.</p> <p>IMPACT – Families are aware of the interactions they can expect, through the co-production charter and report that they are happening. (Over 85% positive responses in the survey by February 2023)</p>	

Focus Area 6 - Ensure the lived experience of families informs all operational and strategic work across the SEND System.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA), Director of Adults Services (JW), Head of Commissioning and Procurement (TF), Director of Public Health (LS)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of FocusArea
6A	Using the Culture Group in Focus Area 5, and involving families as critical advisors, to:	Divisional Director of Safeguarding (BT and Head of Women and Children’s commissioning (HP)	May 2022	June 2022		Group is in place and membership fully agreed.	Professionals understand and value the lived experience of families and use that knowledge to help shape provision of support and services. Oral and written communication
6A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and improve on current practice - particularly the work on restorative practice to identify through a report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board how the lived experience of families should be embedded in the work of all Local Area agencies to inform their work and that parents no longer feel ‘blamed’ for children and young people’s needs. (Incorporated into Task and finish group in 5A) 	Divisional Director of Safeguarding (BT and Head of Women and Children’s commissioning (HP)	May 2022	June 2022		<p>Report presented to SEND Strategic Partnership Board and agreed.</p> <p>Report to be considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 18 July 2022</p> <p>IMPACT - The lived experience of families is understood by the Senior Leadership of all agencies and strategies to improve the experience are embedded across the Local Area. (Minutes, Reports)</p>	demonstrate the dignity and respect necessary for children, young people and their families. There is an improved ‘satisfaction’ rating in the annual survey.
6A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make improvements in the use of both written and spoken language in 	Head of Learning	April 2022	June 2022		Task and finish group produce a report and recommendations to	

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	communication with parents and young people such as that made already in Education Psychology communication with families, as well as between services and SENDCOs, including the use of 'restorative language' in line with 'Language that Cares'	Academy (RS)			be shared across all agencies. IMPACT – there is a greater understanding of the issues around use of written and spoken language demonstrated in feedback from. (Reports, Minutes, School Survey, Family Voice Torbay)	
6B	Ensure that there is shared communication through the local offer of all developments for parents, carers, young people and partners.	Head of SEND service (DH)	April 2022	July 2023 and following academic years.	The Local offer contains all information in an accessible manner about developments across the Local Area. IMPACT – Parents, carers and young people are aware of developments in the Local Area around the culture across all agencies. (Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, reports)	
Page 136	Workforce development strategies include a focus on the use of accessible written and spoken language across the Local Area (As in 8A)	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	June 2022	September 2022	There is greater understanding and use of accessible spoken and written language strategies across the Local Area. IMPACT – Parents, carers, young people and other users report improvement in the use of spoken and written language. (at least 90% satisfaction rating) (Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Teams)	

Focus Area 7 – Ensure that Leaders across the Local SEND Area understand the impact of culture work and hold each other to account.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of FocusArea
7A	Identify in a workforce development plan that agreed values led behaviours are embedded at all stages from appointments through to senior leadership across the Local Area that places culture centrally building on Torbay’s People Strategy. Ensure that schools are a part of the plan and its implementation.	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	September 2022	January 2023		There is a strategy to ensure values led behaviours are understood and demonstrated at all stages of the work of the Partnership IMPACT – there is a clear understanding throughout the Partnership from appointment through to Senior Leadership of the agreed values led behaviours and this is recognized and adopted by all. (1:1 /Supervision / Appraisal meetings, Family Voice Torbay. SENDIASS)	Staff live the values of the organisation and those not living the values are held to account. Children, young people and their families are treated with respect and dignity and their lived experience is valued, demonstrated throughout the quality assured work and communication.
	Work with parents, carers and young people to assess how well values led behaviours are being implemented to ensure the accountability for ‘culture change’ across the Local Area.	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills. Head of HR (RW & SW)	September 2022	August 2023 and subsequent years		Continuing assessment process of the effectiveness of the ‘culture change’ is ensured. IMPACT – there is evidence that there are rapid improvements taking place in the adoption of the values – led behaviours. IMPACT – There is increased confidence amongst parents, carers and young people that their views and trust in the Local Area are improving. (At least 90% positive responses) (Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Surveys,	

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					reports).	
7C	Move away from 'them and us' culture to develop a shared approach using a published programme of workforce development and training that involves and is based on children and young people and their families 'lived experience' and develops trust between services and agencies.	Heads of Human Resources, Torbay Council (SW) and Director of Children and Family Health Devon, (BM)	April 2022	For implementation from September 2022	A shared approach to workforce development is created moving away from the 'them and us' culture. IMPACT – Parents, carers and young people are involved in the design of courses so that needs and concerns are met. (Family Voice Torbay, Audit, Surveys, Reports, 1:1, Appraisal, Supervision)	

Improvement Pillar 2 – Inclusion

Area for Improvement 3 – Joint Working

The lack of joint working between services, which prevents area leaders working collaboratively to secure more consistent outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families

Progress (BRAG)

Complete and embedded

Completed

Progressing to Timescale

Little or no progress/delayed

- Area leaders have only just started to work together to implement the SEND reforms. (P2 MF 1)
- Children and young people with SEND and their families are not at the centre of leaders' work to implement the reforms. There are no formal arrangements in place for leaders to engage with children and young people with SEND. (P2 MF2)
- Too often, this is used as an excuse for poor co-production (P2 MF2)
- children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers are not able to contribute to strategic and individual planning. (P2 MF2)
- The views of parents and carers are often treated as trivial in the decisions that are made about their children and young people (P2 MF2)
- Joint working between services is limited. (P2 MF3)
- Some schools show a lack of commitment to the reforms (P4 MF4)
- However, a lack of central leadership over many years has led to an entrenched culture among services to solve the challenges they face on their own. (P2 MF3)
- This leads to inequality and varied access for children and young people with SEND in the area. (P2 MF3)
- The quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans reflects the lack of joint working between education, health and care. (As in section 6)
- they do not include the holistic outcomes that are planned to be achieved through joint working between services. (As in section 6)
- slow autism spectrum disorder (ASD) assessment pathway, have led to a lack of timeliness in identifying the needs of children and young people.
- Variability in the strength of school provision means that some pupils go through the system without their needs being properly understood or met. (As in Section 4)
- Little evidence that children and young people with SEND and their families benefit from a more joined-up experience.
- Area leaders' response to the pandemic has been hampered by weaknesses in joint working and checks on the effectiveness of their initiatives
- The 0–19 service now has two teams in response to challenges created by the pandemic, this did not help services reach the children and young people with SEND and their families in the way that was intended.
- Many children and young people with SEND needing support as a result of their additional needs were not identified.
- Weaknesses in joint working across education, health and care, and the systems and processes for assessing children's and young people's needs are not strong enough (As in Sections 6 & 7)
- those working with families are not able to contribute fully to meeting children's and young people's wider needs, particularly in preparation for adulthood (As in Section 5)
- There is variability in the implementation of the SEND reforms across health and care services. (As in Section 8)
- The uptake of the annual health review for young people with SEND aged 14–25 years with their GPs is lower than is typical.

- Area leaders have failed to sustain effective ways of engaging with parents and carers. Weaknesses in parental engagement leading into the pandemic meant that when PCF members needed to look after their own children, the PCF stopped operating.
- Parents and carers have not been involved in the development of the website.
- Leaders' overall plans are not joined up enough to tackle the depth of these issues.

Focus Area 8. Ensure we understand and embed the lived experience of families so that it informs all operational and strategic work across the SEND system

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children's Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Page 140	Milestone Actions	Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
	Establish a group of partners (within the Culture Group) to produce a Co-production Charter/Strategy for Torbay	Head of SEND (DH), Senior Children and Young People's Commissioner (SO'G)	April 2022	July 2022		An agreed Co-production Charter is in place and is communicated throughout the Local Area with 'sign up' by all agencies. IMPACT – there is co-production throughout the Local Area that is recognised as being successful by all parent/carer, voluntary and community groups. (Survey, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS) (Survey responses show over 90% adherence to the co-production principles)	The lived experience of families is valued and embedded in all decisions. Families have trust in the system and that professionals will treat them with dignity and respect.

8B	Create opportunities to allow professionals working with families in education, social care and health to work with parents, carers and young people to hear and understand the 'lived experience' of families in the Local Area	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	April 2022	April 2023	Regular programme of meetings of teams within the partnership with families or Groups to hear the 'lived experience' IMPACT -Greater understanding of the lived experience is reflected in documentation. (Audit, Reports, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS)	
8B.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a partnership communication plan which has communication with families, including a central point of contact at its centre. 	Heads of Communication, Torbay Council and Health (KS, AC and JG)	April 2022	July 2022	Partnership Communication Plan is in place and there is a plan for a central point of contact. Plan to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 22 August 2022 IMPACT – Parents report a high degree of satisfaction (at least 90%) of communication processes with all agencies. (Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Surveys)	
8B.1	Determine and implement a strategy involving partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for training 'peer support (Parent Graduates)' to support parents and carers to provide continuity of support and building capacity for SENDIASS and produce report for SEND Strategic Partnership Board 	Head of SEND (DH), Head of Learning Academy (RS)	June 2022	May 2023	Task and finish group presents its findings to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board for the appropriate implementation. Report is considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board May 2023 IMPACT – Parents and carers feel more supported in meetings and discussions leading to better decision making. (Feedback is 90% or better (Audit, Reports, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS))	

Focus Area 9. Implement a tell it once approach for parents across all agencies.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM) Director of Primary Care, Community and Mental health Commissioning (JT)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
Page 142	9A Within the SEND Strategy group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the processes within SEND across all agencies and schools to a ‘tell it once’ approach, addressing how families currently experience telling their story 	Head of Service safeguarding, reviewing and early help (SE) Head of Women and Children’s Commissioning (HP)	April 2022	June 2022		Report from Task and finish group is presented to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board who examine how to take this forward. Report is considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 18 July 2022 IMPACT – Clear view and definition of agency roles of what is needed to create a ‘tell it once’ approach agreed by parents (Report, Minutes)	There is a significant reduction in the number of times that families have to tell their story. Time, resources and energy are ‘freed up’ by an effective system to focus on supporting children and young people to thrive.
	9B Implement a consistent system, with input from parents and carers and young people so that relevant information is carried forward to those who are involved with the family, based on the concept of health passports or similar as highlighted in the Green Paper	Head of Service safeguarding, reviewing and early help (SE) Head of Women and Children’s Commissioning (HP)	July 2022	March 2023		A tell it once system is in place across the Local Area. IMPACT – Parents and carers feel that they are being listened to and that there is an understanding of their ‘lived experience’ by all professionals. Complaints are reduced from the current number of 6 to at most 3 by July 2023(Audit, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS).	

Focus Area 10. All stakeholders to be committed to the principles of working together with equal voices, to shape a co-produced approach to meeting the needs of children young people and their families at all levels

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
10A	Develop a plan to ensure health and social care advice is embedded in EHCPs and that health and social care colleagues are involved at an earlier stage through co-production.	Head of SEND service (DH) Head of Learning Academy (RS)	April 2022	July 2022		Health and Social Care inputs are embedded in all EHCPs. IMPACT – There is a consistent input to EHCPs that is valued by all, including parents, carers and young people. (Survey, SENDIASS, Family Voice Torbay). Quality Assurance shows above 95% satisfaction rate.	Co-production is embedded in the day-to-day culture of the local area. Children, young people and their families are valued and treated with dignity and respect and their needs are met.
10B	Ensure EHCPs reflect the provision available from the voluntary and community sector where appropriate.	Head of SEND service (DH)	April 2022	July 2022 and subsequent years.		There is shared work undertaken with the voluntary and community sector and where appropriate this is reflected in the EHCP. IMPACT – Voluntary and Community sectors report that they are valued as equal partners. (Survey, Reports) Audit of EHCPs. (Quality Assurance shows that this aspect has always been considered.)	
10B.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the plan across all teams in all agencies in a co-ordinated manner 	Heads of Communication, Torbay Council and	July 2022	July 2023 and subsequent years.		Partnership Communication Plan is implemented across all teams in all agencies. Annual report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board.	

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		Health (KS and AC)				IMPACT – There is a consistent approach to gathering information which is valued by parents, carers and young people)	
10D	The Council and CCG issue a public statement of commitment to working with a wide range of parent carer groups	Heads of Communication, Torbay Council and Health (KS, JG and AC)	April 2022	June 2022		The Local Offer contains a public statement of commitment. Statement to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 20 June 2022 IMPACT – The statement is well received by the parent carer groups. At least 95% satisfaction rate). SEND Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Uptake of surveys.	
10E Page 144	The Council and CCG to agree respective senior officers, within SEND Strategic Partnership Board, with lead responsibility for co-production in their organisations, who receive regular reports on the outcomes of the quality assurance framework for co-production.	Director of Children’s Service and Chief Nursing Officer (NM and DA)	At SEND Strategic Partnership Board 17 May 2022			Senior Officers with a responsibility for co-production are in place within the SEND Strategic Partnership Board. IMPACT – There is specific oversight of co-production and joint working at a strategic level and challenge is evidenced through minutes and report. (Minutes, Audit)	

Improvement Pillar 2 – Inclusion

Area for Improvement 4 – Graduated Response

The variability in the implementation of the graduated response, leading to slow identification, high levels of exclusion, some poor inclusive practices, and inequitable access and experience of the system across education, health and care

Progress (BRAG)	
	Complete and embedded
	Completed
	Progressing to Timescale
	Little or no progress/delayed

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- The rate of exclusion of pupils with SEND from school is too high. (P3 MF6)
- Variability in the strength of school provision means that some pupils go through the system without their needs being properly understood or met. (P3 MF6)
- Some children and young people with SEND develop behaviours that challenge. Others lack self-esteem because their needs have not been met for prolonged periods of time. (P3 MF6)
- The high proportion of pupils identified as having primary social, emotional or mental health (SEMH) difficulties. There is a high demand on (CAMHS), (P3 MF6)
- Too many pupils are not accessing education because they are excluded. (P3 MF6)
- Many children and young people’s needs are not identified accurately or quickly enough. This contributes to challenges in the behaviour because their needs are not met well or early enough. (P5 AFD 1)
- A higher proportion of children and young people than is typical being issued with an EHC plan. (P5 AFD 1)
- The neurodevelopmental pathway, which includes the ASD pathway, is not effective. (P5 AFD 3)
- The effectiveness of early identification in schools is too varied. (P5 AFD 5)
- Too often, the default position is that presentation by children is assumed to be a behavioural issue because of poor parenting, rather than an indication of need. (P5 AFD 5)
- Several parents experience shock and feelings of isolation when their children’s needs are identified late. (P5 AFD 5)
- Not enough is being done to enable children and young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to have their needs identified in a timely manner. (P5 AFD 5)
- The implementation of the graduated response reflects the lack of consistency in the area. (P7 AFD 8)
- A legacy of mistrust and poor identification and meeting of needs means that many families still feel that they need to fight for their children’s rights. (P8 AFD 14)
- Too often, this presentation (behaviour) is seen as a SEMH need or owing to weaknesses in parenting, rather than understanding that it has come about because of an underlying unmet need. (P9 AFD 19)

Focus Area 11 - The Graduated Response is used effectively so that needs are identified in a timely way to enable children, young people, parents, carers and professionals to access appropriate support and resources

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Director of Primary Care, Community and Mental Health Commissioning. (JT)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
11A	Establish a Graduated Response group comprising representation from all partners to:	Divisional Director, Education, learning and skills (RW) Head of Women’s and children’s Commissioning (HP)	May 2022	May 2022		Fully representative group is in place to review and implement	The revised Graduated Response is used effectively along with specific pathways to identify needs at the earliest possibility and decide the provision to meet those needs appropriately, removing waiting times and
11A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the content and implementation of the current Graduated Response documents, including the embedding of Early Help approach, and report to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board 	Divisional Director, Education, learning and skills (RW) Divisional Director Safeguarding (BT) Head of Women’s and Children’s Commissioning (HP)	May 2022	July 2022		<p>There is a clear understanding of existing strengths and areas for improvement within the current Graduated response as well as its current usage.</p> <p>Report to be considered at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 22 August 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – Understanding of the areas for improvement in the Graduated Response and how its use can be extended and broadened. (Report, Minutes)</p>	reducing significant delays in the diagnostic pathways.

11A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish comprehensive packages of coordinated support across a range of statutory and voluntary agencies for those children at risk of crisis, particularly related to neurodiversity. 	Divisional Director, Education, learning and skills (RW) Divisional Director Safeguarding (BT) Head of Women's and Children's Commissioning (HP).	July 2022	December 2022	There are packages of coordinated support across both statutory and voluntary agencies that lead to more effective provision for children with neuro diverse needs at risk of crisis IMPACT – Children at risk of crisis have their needs met more rapidly. (KPIs, Report)	
11A.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-produce a refreshed graduated response which includes health and social care and ensure it is known and used throughout the system and is of value to parents, carers and young people. This will be grounded in a 'needs led' rather than diagnostic approach. 	Divisional Director, Education, learning and skills (RW) Senior Divisional Director Safeguarding (BT) Head of Women's and Children's Commissioning (HP)	September 2022	April 2023	The Graduated Response is rewritten incorporating all partners Refreshed Graduated Response to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board May 2023 IMPACT - There is evidence of increased use by those bodies and is valued by parents, carers and young people (Audit, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Reports from SEND Assessment)	
11B	Build training to develop the knowledge in all schools, settings and alternative provision (including Early Help), to ensure a level playing field for children and young people with SEND, mapping available	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	September 2022	July 2023 and subsequent years	The Learning Academy develops a learning programme to increase knowledge about effective implementation of the Graduated	

	pathways and create a plan to fill any gaps which focuses on raising standards, catch up programmes promoting safeguarding.	Head of School Improvement (DH)				Response IMPACT – There is more evidence of the effective use of the Graduated Response across education, health and social care and increased knowledge by parents, carers and young people about how the Graduated Response can be used. (Audit, Reports, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS).
11C	Schools, settings and other agencies, along with parents and carers, agree to implement the outcomes of the review and use the Graduated Response as part of any requests for assessment	Divisional Director Safeguarding (HP) Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW). Head of Women's and Children's Commissioning	April 2023	April 2023		There is a more consistent and effective use of the Graduated Response and evidence that it is being used prior to as well as part of the Assessment process. IMPACT – Increase in needs being met in schools, reduction in number of requests for assessment, more detailed information in requests for assessment. Current average Requests for assessment (Jan/Feb 2022) 28 pcm Target September 2022 – 20 pcm July 2023 – 15 pcm (Data, Audit, KPIs, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS)
11D	Develop coordinated and streamlined diagnostic pathways founded in an integrated model of provision across health, social care, and education for those children with high levels of need	Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP), Director for	July 2022	December 2022 with implementation from January 2023		More developed diagnostic pathways. IMPACT – the high-level needs are identified more rapidly and provision is put in place earlier.

		CFHD (BM)				
11E	Integrate diagnostic pathway for children presenting with neurodiverse conditions building on the First Steps approach	Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP), Director for CFHD (BM)	May 2022	From December 2022		More developed diagnostic pathways. IMPACT – the high-level needs, including those with neurodiversity are identified more rapidly and provision is put in place earlier. (DATA)
11F	Establish a comprehensive drive focusing on prevention as well as early identification and intervention for Children and Young People across health, care and education to improve speech and language and communication and support. Building on the successful early years work, reducing waiting times and improving advice and guidance	Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP) Director for CFHD (BM)	May 2022	From December 2022		Assessment pathways integrate aspects of prevention as well interventions. IMPACT – there is a reduction in the waiting times and number of diagnoses due to increased preventative measures.
Page 149	Continue to work with local schools and Burdett trust team to encourage awareness and uptake of annual health checks for 14-17year old's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular meetings with children's services, parent carer chairs and primary care to agree and coproduce a sustained promotional campaign to improve awareness and promote the uptake of AHC. Promote and embed the use of EHCP Year 9 reviews and Children in Care reviews to identify and promote ACH/LD registers for CYP with LD Learning disability nurses to pilot a toolkit to support staff to identify and diagnose CYP with Learning Disability and help to increase the numbers of CYP on the GP register. 	Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP) Director for CFHD (BM)	May 2022	From September 2023		The annual health checks for young people aged 14 – 17yrs increases and matches, at least, the national figure. IMPACT – There is increased knowledge of the needs of this group of young people, leading to more relevant provision. (DATA, Family Voice Torbay)

11H	Develop a more accessible, online version of all key documents including the Graduated Response identifying ordinarily available provision, and ensure they are accessible to parents, carers and young people.	Heads of communication, Torbay Council and Health (KS and AC)	January 2023	April 2023 and subsequent years.		On-line version with alternative hyperlinked pdf version is produced which is easier to use and provides more effective strategies for 'plan, do, review' IMPACT – the Graduated Response is easier to use, provides more guidance, reduces the number of requests for assessment and is used more effectively. (Audit, Plans, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS)	
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Focus Area 12 – Identification of availability of support for Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Wellbeing as a part of the graduated response.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Director of Commissioning for Primary Care, Community and Mental Health (JT)

	<i>Milestone Actions</i>	Lead officer (s)	Milestone start date	Milestone end date	RAG	Outcome and evidence of impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
12A	Within the graduated response task group:	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills and Head of Women and Children’s Commissioning (RW and	May 2022	May 2022			Children and young people have access to early support through greater knowledge by appropriate partners in the Local Area

		HP)				
12A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on the Early Intervention Self Harm Service (EISH) and the Torbay Young people Well-being Service to identify how teachers/SEND/COs/parents can access support for identified needs at the earliest stage including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional wellbeing needs 2. Mental health concerns 3. Mental health and emotional wellbeing needs for pupils with neurodiverse conditions 	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills and Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills, Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (RW and HP) and Head of Mental Health Commissioning (LA)	May 2022	Implementation from July 2022		<p>There is greater and readily available support for all partners working with young people with these specific needs.</p> <p>IMPACT – There is a reduction in referrals for mental health and well-being concerns (Baseline and targets to be established)</p>
12A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on available national initiatives for school improvement ensuring our schools are identified for programmes and initiatives to encourage Quality First Teaching at SEND support levels. 	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills				There is greater evidence of Quality First teaching being in place through early years to secondary level of schooling. (Survey)
12B	Improve access to speech and language support for children with mental health needs to improve effectiveness of treatment and intervention	Head of Women and Children's Commissioning (HP)	September 2022	April 2023		Access to speech and language support is available at early stages to encourage identification and more effective treatments and interventions.

						(Baseline to be established and appropriate targets set)	
12C	Ensure there is 24/7 mental health crisis care provision for children and young people, which combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions	Head of Mental Health Commissioning (LA)	May 2022	April 2023		By April 2023, ensure there is 79% coverage of 24/7 mental health crisis care provision for children and young people, which combines crisis assessment, brief response and intensive home treatment functions	
12D	Continue to deliver Mental Health Support Teams in schools, offering evidence-based interventions and a whole school approach to emotional wellbeing. Consider the approach to schools not involved in the scheme and to pupils not in schools	Head of Mental Health Commissioning (LA), Head of School Improvement (DH)	May 2022	April 2023		At least 20% -25% coverage of school population in Torbay by April 2023	

Focus Area 13- Exclusion data is analysed sufficiently to direct input so that exclusion rates are reduced.

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
13A	Establish Subgroup of the SEND Strategy group for Behaviour focus, including all partners in order to:	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills (RW)	September 2022	September 2022		IMPACT – there is a reduction in variation between schools’ approaches leading to a reduction in exclusions. (Audit, KPIs).	There is a consistent approach to behaviour policies and practices across the Local Area so that both exclusions and suspensions are reduced for young people with SEND
13A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore how there can be parity of behaviour and policy/practices across schools to reflect the recent changes in DfE guidance. 	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills (RW)	September 2022	January 2023		Work is undertaken to increase parity of behaviour policy and practice. Learning opportunities take place to extend the knowledge and application of restorative and attachment awareness practices Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 23 January 2023	Reduction of suspensions (fixed term exclusions) from 33.7% (2019/20) to at or below national average by September 2024
13B	Review the quality and use of alternative provision and its impact based on existing procedures and the use of bespoke packages of support and personal budgets.	Head of Vulnerable Pupils (DH)	May 2022	September 2022		Review is undertaken examining the current procedures. IMPACT – there is assured quality in Alternative provision.	Reduction of permanent exclusions of those with EHCP from 0.08% (2019/20)

13C	Use the business intelligence and data relating to exclusions to support partners increasing understanding of the need for a coordinated response	Head of Vulnerable Pupils (DH)	May 2022	June 2022		Shared ownership of the high rate of exclusions leading to an overall reduction to at minimum national averages. IMPACT – targeted support for high excluding schools leading to reduced exclusions within individual schools.	And 0.31% for those with SEND Support to at or below national averages by September 2024
13D	Develop an area wide exclusions strategy, building on the Local Inclusion Plan	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills	May 2022	December 2022 for implementation from September 2023		Agreed exclusions strategy in place. Strategy to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 23 January 2023 IMPACT – reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions.	

Improvement Pillar 3 – Becoming an Adult

Area for Improvement 5 – Becoming an Adult

The poor range of opportunities and choice for children and young people with SEND when they reach 16 or transition to adulthood

Progress (BRAG)	
	Complete and embedded
	Completed
	Progressing to Timescale
	Little or no progress/delayed

- Their EHC plans focus too much on education, rather than on supporting independent living as they move into adulthood. (P3 MF 4)
- Progress in delivering a cohesive offer for young people with SEND post-16 and up to age 25 across education, health and care has been slow. (P3 MF 7)
- Some areas of strength, such as the specialist school offer, are not maintained for young people when they turn 19. (P3 MF 7)
- Many areas of the health offer for young people end when they turn 20. (P3 MF 7)
- The uptake of the annual health review for young people with SEND aged 14–25 years with their GPs is lower than is typical. (P8 AFD 10)
- Opportunities and choices for young people as they transition into adulthood are limited. (P3 MF 8)
- Limitations in provision within the area. (P4 MF 8)
- Those working with families are not able to contribute fully to meeting children’s and young people’s wider needs, particularly in preparation for adulthood (P7 AFD 7)
- Opportunities and choices for children and young people in the area when they reach 16 significantly reduce. (P8 AFD 12)
- There is very little choice for young people to access education post-16. Some young people with complex needs have little or no meaningful provision once they are 20. (P8 AFD 12)
- Area leaders’ work to improve the life chances of young people with SEND as they move into adulthood has had limited impact. (P9 AFD 18)
- The proportion of young people with learning disabilities who secure paid employment is low (P9 AFD 18)
- Some young people with complex needs have little or no meaningful provision once they are 20 (P9 AFD 17)

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Focus Area 14 – There a comprehensive approach to the provision of Post 16 opportunities for those with SEND in Torbay

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM)Chief Nursing Officer (DA), Director of Adults and Communities (JW)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area	
Page 156	14A	Embed Traineeships, supported Internships, Apprenticeships and School Leaver Schemes, across Torbay and beyond, setting targets for uptake in individual organisations.	Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills (RW) Deputy Director Adults (SO)	May 2022	June 2022 and ongoing yearly		Greater use of Post 16 and Post 18 option for School Leavers. IMPACT – Greater proportion of young people in education, Employment or Training Reduce the number who are available but not in Education, employment or training from 16 to 8 in 2023 and then to 0 in 2024. Reduce the number who are not ready for education, employment or training by at least half from the current number of 30.	There is an increase in the proportion of young people in education, employment and training and in the proportion of young people achieving Level 3 qualifications and that there are greater employment opportunities for these young people within the Local Area. KS5 students with EHCP
	14B	To develop pathways for Post – 16 Provision and employment for young people with mainstream and special schools identifying gaps in commissioning alternatives.	Post-16 lead (DH) Strategic Commissioning Manager (TT)	June 2022 to July 2022 for exploration	September 2024 for implementation		Schools supported to create a forum for improving communication around vocational offers. IMPACT – Evidence of closer working between schools and increased communication about opportunities leading to increased EET. (Data, minutes, Reports, SEND Family Voice Torbay)	in education, employment or training increases from 79.7% (2019/20) to at or above National average by September 2023 Increase the percentage of 19year old’s with EHCP qualified to Level 2 from 11.4% (2019/20) to

					Curriculum change allows numbers not ready for education employment or training to be reduced to 15, from 30, by Sept 2024.	at or above National average. Increase the percentage of 19-year old's with EHCP qualified to Level 3 from 5.7% (2019/20) to at or above National average. Increase the number in Apprenticeships overall in the 16 to 19 group from 7 to 14 by September 2024 And in the 20 to 25 group from 6 to 12 by September 2024
14C	Build on the existing transition protocol between children and adult services to enable young people to be supported as they move from one service to another including decision making and resolution arrangements.	Divisional Director, Safeguarding (BT)	April 2022	May 2022	Protocol to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 18 July 2022	
14D	Analyse 'ceased' plans and 'excellent' EHC plans to identify what has worked well and what could be better and share this practice, including feedback from young people and what worked for them.	Senior SEN officer (HS) Head of Learning Academy (RS)	April 2022	December 2022 and then termly for analysis	Analysis undertaken on a termly basis to identify successful outcomes and why they were so, along with those where improvements could have been made. Reports provided to SEND Strategic Partnership Board. IMPACT – More effective plans leading to successful outcomes for young people.	

Improvement Pillar 4 – Quality Assurance and Community Engagement

Area for Improvement 6 – Quality of Education, Health & Care Plans

The wide variances in the quality of EHC plans caused by weaknesses in joint working, fair access and the timeliness of assessments

Progress (BRAG)	
	Complete and embedded
	Completed
	Progressing to Timescale
	Little or no progress/delayed

- The quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans reflects the lack of joint working between education, health and care. (P3 MF 4)
- Plans are generally education plans, with little and often no input from health and care. (P3 MF 4)
- The views of parents and carers are often treated as trivial in the decisions that are made about their children and young people. (P2 MF 2)
- Many front-line professionals' express views that parents and carers are difficult to engage with because of their social deprivation and own personal needs. (P2 MF 2)
- EHCPs do not include the holistic outcomes that are planned to be achieved through joint working between services. (P3 MF 4)
- Joint commissioning is underdeveloped. (P3 MF 5)
- slow autism spectrum disorder (ASD) assessment pathway, has led to a lack of timeliness in identifying the needs of children and young people. (P3 MF 6)
- Their EHC plans focus too much on education, rather than on supporting independent living as they move into adulthood. (P3 MF 4)
- A higher proportion of children and young people than is typical being issued with an EHC plan. (P5 AFD 1)
- Weaknesses in joint working across education, health and care, and the systems and processes for assessing children's and young people's needs are not strong enough. (P5 AFD 4)
- Children and young people with ASD, SEMH difficulties or similar associated needs do not experience improved outcomes. (P9 AFD 16)
 - Many service leaders have lost faith that any central direction will now make a difference. (P7 AFD 8)
 - parents talk about meeting several different social workers and having to retell their stories each time. (P3 MF 3)

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Focus Area 15. The assessment process results in high quality EHCPs and Annual Reviews that fully meet the statutory requirements and is part of a co-produced, consistent and cohesive Torbay policy

Accountable officer(s): Divisional Director, Education, Learning and Skills (RW)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
15A	Within the SEND Strategy Group,	Head of SEND service (DH)					Every child or young person has a high quality EHCP which is annually reviewed. Annual reviews are appropriate and build on the lived experience of young people and their families.
15A.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an end-to-end review of EHCP and Annual Review processes using SEND FVT and partners as critical advisors (cross ref to: 14G) 	Head of SEND service (DH)	April 2022	December 2022		Review of the EHCP and Annual review processes identifies areas for development and strategies to make those improvements. IMPACT – System gaps and inefficiencies are identified so that they are co-produced and fully meet statutory requirements (Audit, QA process, SEND Family Voice Torbay)	
15A.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current formats for seeking parent, carer and young people’s views to ensure it is fully accessible and seeks a breadth of information and implement, building in the ‘tell it once’ action (cross ref to 16E and 9A) 	Heads of Communications, Torbay Council and Health (KS and AC)	April 2022	June 2022		Processes allow partners to present their information and aspirations to be carried forward through a ‘tell it once’ approach. IMPACT – There are more detailed facts relating to information and aspirations gathered from parents, carers and young people’s input. (Audit, Survey, SEND Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS)	

15A.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create assessment process where parents, carers and young people understand and feel part of the process creating a feeling of trust in a system that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and publish on the Local Offer. 	Head of SEND service (DH)	June 2022	July 2023 and subsequent years	The system and processes are modified so that parents can be, and feel, more part of the system. IMPACT – Parents, carers and young people report that they feel part of the system and that their trust is improving. (SEND Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS, Audit, QA Annual survey, Oxford Happiness Survey)	
15B	Create a short-term pilot, with all agencies, to develop 'drafting meetings' to create more collaborative EHCPs and amended plans and roll-out if appropriate	Senior SEN officer (HS)	May 2022	June 2022	<p>Decision made to devise a format for 'drafting meetings' and is presented to SEND Strategic Partnership Board. Report to be considered on 18 July 2022.</p> <p>IMPACT – all EHCPs are judged at least good and all areas for improvement are followed up with learning opportunities. (QA, Audit, Report) Baseline to be established</p>	
15C	Build on current practice to develop a rigorous multi-disciplinary quality assurance process with partners which establishes a baseline of the quality of EHCPs.	Senior SEN officer (HS)	April 2022	July 2022	<p>Results of high-level audit are fed through into education, health and social care teams for improvement.</p> <p>IMPACT – all EHCPs are at least good and all areas for improvement are followed up with learning opportunities. (Audit Report).</p> <p>Report on Baseline to SEND Strategic Partnership Board on 22 August 2022.</p>	

					<p>Timeliness 2020 – 53%, Target 100%</p> <p>Report on timeliness and quality to SEND Strategic Partnership Board monthly.</p>	
15D	Ensure regular high-quality assurance of EHCPs is undertaken before plans are issued.	Head of SEND (DH)	September 2022	July 2023 and subsequent years	<p>Reviewed QA process is undertaken on a regular basis by SEND Team manager and reported to SEND Strategic Partnership Board.</p> <p>IMPACT – there is greater consistency in EHCPs that are issued.</p> <p>IMPACT – All EHCPs issued are good or better. (QA, Audit)</p> <p>Baseline to be established.</p>	

Focus Area 16. There is high quality co-produced advice from all providers (particularly with parental and young people's views) within timescales where provision and outcomes are clear from 0-25

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children's Services (NM), Chief Nursing Officer (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area	
Page 162	16A	Partners refresh quality assurance processes to ensure good quality advice is provided in a timely manner and devise and implement co-produced training to support and advise professionals.	Divisional Director Education, Learning and Skills (RW)	May 2022	July 2023		There are published processes for the quality assurance of advice from all partners IMPACT – Advice of good quality is received in a timely manner contributing to high quality assessments. (Audit, KPIs, Family Voice Torbay, SENDIASS).	Every child or young person has a high quality EHCP based on high quality co-produced advice. Annual reviews receive high quality input in order to judge the effectiveness of the provision and the appropriateness of the existing EHCP.
		Review the processes within SEND across all partners to enable a 'tell it once' approach, so families are required to give information once.	Divisional Director Safeguarding (BT)	April 2022	June 2022		There is a process that is reported to SEND Strategic Partnership Board for agreement Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 18 July 2022 IMPACT – There is an agreement across partners of how to achieve the tell it once approach.	
	16C	Implement the 'tell it once' approach so that there is consistent use between partners	Divisional Director Safeguarding (BT)	July 2022	December 2022		A 'tell it once' process is in place and working efficiently. IMPACT – Parents report that the	

						process of providing information to a range of agencies is coordinated so that they do not have to keep repeating information. (Family Voice Torbay, Audit, QA, SENDIASS) Survey -90% satisfaction rate	
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Focus Area 17. There is a clear thread throughout the plans that reflects the desired outcomes for the young person, through to becoming an adult

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Deputy Director, Adult Services (SO)

Page 165	Milestone Actions	Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
165	Partners to build on the experience of South Devon College to expand vocational pathways thus increasing life chances for young people, particularly for those with Autism (cross ref to 17D)	Divisional Director, Safeguarding Head of SEND service (BT and DH)	September 2022	July 2023		<p>There is extensive work undertaken to work towards increasing the life chances for young people especially those with autism.</p> <p>Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board, 18th July 2022 (Report to include targets for increased opportunities)</p> <p>IMPACT – there are improved outcomes at level 3 leading to</p>	<p>Increased vocational opportunities for young people post 16 and post 19</p> <p>Increase the number in Apprenticeships overall in the 16 to 19 group from 7 to 14 by September 2024 And in the 20 to 25 group from 6 to 12 by September 2024</p>

						better opportunities for young people on leaving school or college. (Audit)	Increase the percentage of 19year old's with EHCP qualified to Level 3 from 5.7% (2019/20) to at or above National average
17B	Attach greater importance to each child and young person's aspirations so that they are fully considered and are individual to their plan.	Senior SEN manager (HS)	April 2022	July 2022 and subsequent years		EHCPs include statements of aspirations for becoming an adult. IMPACT – For individual young people the plan clearly shows the steps to becoming an adult and matches their aspirations.	
17C	Build on the existing practices and processes within the Preparing for Independence Strategy including Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)SEN at all relevant stages ensuring that PfA includes all young people, including those not in settings and/or those in alternative provision, and produce a plan and system	Divisional Director, Safeguarding Head of SEND service (BT and DH)	May 2022	July 2022 and implementation of plan from September 2022		Revised systems are in place for including PfA at all stages. IMPACT – There are better opportunities for young people through PfA and these are evident in outcomes. (Audit, Data) Report to SEND Strategic Partnership Board 22 August 2022	
17D	Promote the use of apprenticeships, supported internships and traineeships for young people with SEND, within the local area employers, specifically Torbay Council, health and schools and make families aware via Local Offer website	Divisional Director, Safeguarding Head of SEND service (BT and DH)	May 2022	July 2022 and subsequent years		A system is in place to increase and maintain apprenticeships and supported internships within Council, health and Schools. IMPACT – Young people are taking up apprenticeships supported internships and traineeships within the Council, health and Schools. (Audit, Data) There is an increase in apprenticeships and supported internships and traineeships offered across the local area.	

Focus Area 18. There is a learning and development programme for all teams to address consistency in advice, plan writing, Annual Reviews and casework

Accountable officer(s): Director of Children’s Services (NM), Chief Nurse CCG (DA)

Milestone Actions		Lead officer (s)	Milestone Start Date	Milestone End Date	RAG	Outcome and Evidence of Impact	Overall Impact of Focus Area
18A	Develop and implement a learning and development programme across all partners to address consistency in identification and provision of advice to support plan writing and raising standards.	Head of Learning Academy (RS)	June 2022	September 2022 for implementation		<p>Learning and development programme is established .</p> <p>Programme to be approved at SEND Strategic Partnership Board 22 August 2022</p> <p>IMPACT – There are improvements in the quality and provision of advice to support plan writing. (Audit, QA)</p>	<p>There is greater knowledge of identification of needs leading to earlier interventions and provision and a reduction in requests for assessment as needs are being met in the host school or setting.</p> <p>Current average Requests for assessment (Jan/Feb 2022) 28 pcm Target September 2022 – 20 pcm July 2023 – 15 pcm</p> <p>Training Target Within 1 year of implementation at least 80% of workforce have attended an appropriate course</p>

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Appendices

Workstream membership

Drawing on the LGA Peer Review and our SEND inspection, we developed four pillars that guide our Written Statement and ensure that our actions are focussed on tackling our weaknesses and facing our challenges. The membership of each pillar reflects the centrality of co-production with representatives from SEND Family Voice Torbay, adult and children's social care, health and all education settings represented in and guiding the development of the Written Statement. We have listed below the membership of the four pillars, their job title and (in brackets) the initials of the person holding this role.

Pillar 1 - Joint Commissioning

- Business and Performance Lead, Torbay Council (MG)
- Child Health Service Manager, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (SD)
- Children's Alliance Director, Children and Family Health Devon (BM)
- Consultant Paediatrician, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (JG)
- Consultant Paediatrician, Royal Devon University NHS Foundation (HB)
- Deputy Director of Adult Services, Torbay Council (SO)
- Designated Clinical Officer, Devon Integrated Children's Services (JP)
- Designated Clinical Officer, Devon Integrated Children's Services (PL)
- Divisional Director of Education and Learning, Torbay Council (RW)
- Education Safeguarding Lead, Torbay Council (DF)
- Head of Service SEND, Torbay Council (DH)
 - Head of Service Vulnerable Pupils, Torbay Council (DH)
 - Head of Women and Children's Commissioning, Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (HP)
 - Headteacher, Mayfield Special School (SH)
 - Public Health Specialist, Torbay Council (SF)
 - Representative, SEND Family Voice Torbay (JN)
 - SENDCo for Autism, Brixham College (CB)
 - Service Manager- Placements, Day Care Services, Short Breaks, Torbay Council (GP)
 - Strategic Commissioning Manager, Torbay Council (TT)
 - Strategic Director, Torbay Community Development Trust (SS)

Pillar 2 - Inclusive Practices

- Business and Performance Lead, Torbay Council (MG)
- CAMHs Operational Lead, Children and Family Health Devon (CB)
- Chief Executive Officer, Coast Academies (KK)
- Chief Executive Officer, Riviera Trust (SB)
- Children's Alliance Director, Children and Family Health Devon (BM)
- Consultant Psychiatrist and Associate Clinical Director, CAMHs, Children and Family Health Devon (SG)
- Designated Clinical Officer, Devon Integrated Children's Services (JP)
- Director, Play Torbay (TS)
- Divisional Director of Education and Learning, Torbay Council (RW)
- Head of Centre, Chestnut School (SW)
- Head of Service SEND, Torbay Council (DH)
- Head of Vulnerable Pupils, Torbay Council (DH)
- Head of Women and Children's Commissioning, Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (HP)
- Headteacher, Burton Academy (SH)
- Headteacher, Torre Academy (SJ)
- Manager, SENDIASS (KG)
- Mental Health Support Team Lead, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (EW)
- Neurodiversity Lead, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (RW)
- Principal, Brixham Academy (ME)
- Professional Lead Nurse – Learning Disability Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust (KW)
- Professional Lead Occupational Therapist – Learning Disability Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust (RD)
- Restorative Practice Lead, Learning Academy (RR)
- SEND Family Voice Torbay Co-Chair, (RB)
- SEND Service Manager, Torbay, South & West Devon Adult Service Directorate (JW)
- SENDCo at Medical Tuition School and Furzeham Primary School (NS)
- SENDCo, St Cuthbert Mayne School (ST)
- Senior Educational Psychologist, Torbay Council (PW)
- Senior SEND officer, Torbay Council (HS)
- Strategic Commissioning Manager, Torbay Council (TT)
- Team Leader for 0-19 Service, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (NA)
- Vice-Principal, Torquay Academy (BC)

Pillar 3 – Transition ‘Becoming an Adult’

- Assistant Principal, Paignton Academy (HW)
- Business and Performance Lead, Torbay Council (MG)
- Child Health Service Manager, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (SD)
- Clinical Psychologist and Lead for Psychological Therapies, Children and Family Health Devon (LT)
- Deputy Director of Adult Services, Torbay Council (SO)
- Designated Clinical Officer, Devon Integrated Children’s Services (PL)
- Director, Play Torbay (TS)
- Divisional Director of Education and Learning, Torbay Council (RW)
- Divisional Director of Safeguarding, Torbay Council (BT)
- Head of College, Mayfield Special School (RH)
- Head of Service SEND, Torbay Council (DH)
- Headteacher, Combe Pafford Special School (ML)
- Interim Head of Integrated Nursing and Therapies, Children and Family Health Devon (AP)
- Manager, SENDIASS (KG)
- Neurodiversity Lead, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (RW)
- Positive Intervention Lead, South Devon College (LL)
- Post 16 Review Officer, Torbay Council (MR)
- Post 16 Senior SEND Caseworker, Torbay Council (LW)
- Project Worker ASC, Children’s Society (SP)
- Representative, SEND Family Voice Torbay (TP)
- SEND Monitoring Officer, Torbay Council (KL)
- SENDCo, Brixham College (SL)
- SENDCo, Virtual School (AW)
- Senior Educational Psychologist, Torbay Council (PW)
- Senior Manager CAMHs, Children and Family Health Devon (CB)
- Senior Operational Manager Learning Disability Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust (LM)
- Senior Operations Manager for Child Health, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (AH)
- Senior Social Work Practitioner, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (SF)
- Strategic Commissioning Manager, Torbay Council (TT)
- Team Leader for 0-19 Service, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (NA)
- Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Team, Torbay Council (KF)
- Transitions Manager, CSW Group (DR)

- Transitions Social Worker, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (NH)
- Turning Heads, Windmill Centre (AT)

Pillar 4 - Quality Assurance and Community Engagement

- Assistant Headteacher, Paignton Academy (HW)
- Business and Performance Lead, Torbay Council (MG)
- Child Health Service Manager, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (SD)
- Clinical Lead for CAMHs, Children and Family Health Devon (LT)
- Co-Chair, SEND Family Voice Torbay (KR)
- Consultant Community Paediatrician, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (LT)
- Coordinator, Imagine This! (JA)
- Deputy-Head of Communications and Engagement, Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (AC)
- Deputy-Headteacher, Torre Church of England Academy (LK)
- Designated Clinical Officer, Devon Integrated Children's Services (PL)
- Director of Children's Services, Torbay Council (NM)
- Director, Play Torbay (TS)
- Director, Torbay Youth Trust (JM)
- Divisional Director of Education and Learning, Torbay Council (RW)
- Joint Head of Communications for Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust & Interim Communications Lead for Children and Family Health Devon (JG)
- Head of Communications, Torbay Council (KS)
- Head of Service for Integrated Nursing & Therapies, Children and Family Health Devon (AP)
- Head of Service SEND, Torbay Council (DH)
- Head of the Learning Academy, Torbay Council (RS)
- Interim Deputy Director, Children and Family Health Devon (CT)
- Lead Psychologist – Learning Disability Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust (MC)
- Manager, SENDIASS (KG)
- Neurodiversity Lead, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (RW)
- Post 16 SEND Senior Caseworker, Torbay Council (LW)
- Professional Lead Nurse – Learning Disability Services, Devon Partnership NHS Trust (KW)
- Project Worker ASC, Children's Society (SP)
- SEND Advisor and Data Officer, Torbay Council (GB)
- SEND Monitoring officer, Torbay Council (SD)

- SENDCo, Brixham College (SL)
- Senior Educational Psychologist, Torbay Council (PW)
- Senior Manager for CAMHs, Children and Family Health Devon (CB)
- Senior Operations Manager for Child Health, Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust (AH)
- Senior SEND officer, Torbay Council (HS)
- Speech and Language Therapist Interim Clinical Manager for the Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service, Children and Family Health Devon (SM)
- Team Leader for 0-19 Service, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (NA)
- Team Manager, Children with Disabilities Team, Torbay Council (KF)
- Youth Practice Programme Manager, Torbay Council (RK)

Glossary

CCG	NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
CCIB	Children’s Continuous Improvement Board
Child Friendly Torbay	An initiative which seeks to make ‘Torbay to be a great place for all of our children and young people to grow up in’.
CYP	Child or Young Person
DCO	Designated Clinical Officer
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EISH	Early Intervention for Self-Harm
FTE	Fixed Term Exclusion
Graduated Response	The Graduated Response is a document that sets out how pre-schools, schools and colleges can provide the right level of support to meet a child's special educational needs.
ICS	Integrated Care System – Replacing CCG from July 2022
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, bringing together data and information across a local area to inform planning
Local Offer	An explanation of support and services available for young people with SEND in Torbay.
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence, role to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services
PfA	Preparation for Adulthood, preparing young people from the earliest years. to achieve paid employment, independent living, housing options, good health, friendships, relationships and community inclusion.
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Coordinator, a schoolteacher who is responsible for assessing, planning and monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDIASS	Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Services
THRIVE	An initiative that supports the relationships that help children and young people to flourish and learn.

End of document



Torbay Written Statement of Action - WSOA Review Meeting 2 – 25th January 2023

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General update on progress:

Key Areas of progress

At our last Monitoring visit, we acknowledged the need to realign our focus on which impacts our SEND families would see from our improvement work and therefore much of the work in the last three months has been focused on this area.

Our key progress across all areas in this quarter has been the real tangible changes to our culture. Across the system, colleagues and parents are reporting that the first changes of a new culture are being seen for example their involvement in co-producing documents across the local area.

Headline improvements to date:

- Strong governance and scrutiny around SEND
- Evidence of a culture shift and change to strong partnership working where the lived experience is central to all improvement work.
- A Torbay “New way of working” being launched as part of our wider culture change to deliver a co-produced, system wide improvements to all SEND processes
- Building the capacity needed for true coproduction with parents to be ‘business as usual’ – this is a marked shift from six months ago.
- Partnership wide collaboration at strategic and operational levels.
- The development of key documents (SEND Strategy, Joint Commissioning Strategy, Belonging Strategy, QA Framework) to secure a shared understanding of direction of travel and shared vision.
- Governance Review which has resulted in the development of a common language and shared understanding that SEND is everyone’s business.
- Specific efforts to continue to engage School leaders in the new SEND agenda
- Enhanced offer of support for our SENCO’s in schools from the SEND team
- Increased capacity and capability with new SEND Quality Assurance Officers specifically to tackle joint working and EHCP quality.

We have been acutely conscious throughout this improvement journey, that our starting point for this was further back than we would have wished. Therefore, we have focused in on the initial phases of ensuring that the solid foundations for a service that can confidently aspire to good and better standards need to be laid in the first instance. We have made good progress and we believe we are on track to achieve the timescales and content set out within our WSOA plan. However, we are realistic enough to understand that building the infrastructure in itself does not immediately enable us to demonstrate immediate impacts. These will come in the short, medium and longer terms, although we are confident that we are already seeing some very encouraging signs.

Parent Views – from SEND Family Voice Torbay

"Since the last monitoring visit, SEND Family have held numerous well attended events, advertised on Facebook, our website and through emails and through networks. Any parent carer of a SEND child or young person can book on to these events. We have shown with events we can be flexible, and responsive to our parent and carers feedback and provide useful input for the local area. We have approached parent carers support groups in Torbay to establish links. We are building a good relationship with the lead for the 0-19 parent carer support group, and they regularly attend events, share information about issues and trends and have provided feedback for this visit note. We are building contact and support from families with children and young people with particular and less pervasive conditions such as Downs Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. We also have a Home Educator joining our Steering group. We provided a thank you event for parent carers and their families at Christmas taking over 50 on the Train of Lights, this event included local families experiencing financial strain and housing problems as well as being SEND families. We have also been working with Susanne Hughes from Exeter University, who has introduced us to groups and parents that are not getting support elsewhere. There is value in working with existing practitioners, partners and support workers to build a wider network. Going forward we are going to better utilise the areas school network, link to more local family support community groups, and increase the promotion of our group through other services and partners.

Working with our partners is feeling different, our events have been well supported by professionals from the local area both in them attending, hosting, and supporting the organising of these events. We are very grateful for the ease of, and care taken with these working relationships. Parent carers attending local area meetings report feeling welcomed, respected, valued, and listened to. Parents and carers are recognising and welcoming the difference their voice around the table can make. Parents and carers attending our events have reported appreciating seeing the right professional at the event to listen to them. They report feeling comfortable and confident to share their stories and views in these meetings. However, they also report it needs to be demonstrated that this is not a just short term, and that it will continue and will lead to meaningful change. Some parents feel proposals and plans made in meetings will affect families in ten years and are not offering change quick enough for children currently in the system, using phrases such as 'writing them off'. Parents and carers would also like more listening events where they can share their lived experiences with professionals, they use phrases such as 'what its really like' and 'the impact on us'.

Everything produced so far through WSOA and shared with our wider parent carer groups such as the charter, the pledge, the SEND drop ins are being well received however no one is reporting feeling the difference in their lives yet. Waiting times and pathways for referrals remain confusing, families report their child is poorly supported in school and across all sectors provide examples of practise which is not child or family centred. This translation to making a real difference remains the biggest priority for us and we are committed to trying to be part of finding those meaningful changes. We anticipate in the next few months that the trial of the graduated response, the Autism in Schools project and First Steps project will give opportunity for parent voice and make some impacts which will be felt."

Becky Box, Co-Chair of SFVT, On Behalf of SEND family voices.

Feedback from schools –

Collaboration and co-production have continued since the last period of monitoring and schools have had a significant voice in the re-writing of the updated Graduated Response for Torbay. Attendance from schools at the various WSOA workstreams generally remains high and the input for schools is clearly valued. Embedding the requires systemic cultural change remains the greatest aspiration and accomplishing this tangibly, in a timely manner and with universal by in is the biggest hope and source of frustration. A good example of progress towards this culture change is the work of the post 16 send commissioning group where historic silos have been broken and genuine understanding of each members' part has been developed.

Has there been any school inspections? Have these inspections seen differences?

Three inspections have taken place since the previous monitoring visit, these schools either maintained their grades of good or improved their grade from Requires Improvement to Good. In the Spring/ Summer Term 2022, three schools received a downgraded judgement. Two schools received a requires improvement judgement, one from a good judgement and another from a historic outstanding judgement, another school received an inadequate judgement from a previous good judgment, within the reports aspects of the judgement related to SEND provision. The feedback from the inspection process, recognised that there was a scrutiny and focus on children and young people with SEND. This learning has been shared by the schools inspected through the TASH and TAPS forums. It is recognised that where there is high levels of inclusion there is likely to a positive correlation between this practice and the Inspection outcome.

Stuart Heron, Headteacher of Mayfield school and spokesperson for Torbay Headteachers.

Resilience

There has been marked and positive changes in the capacity within the SEND service, with 2 new SEND Auditors and a full time Amendments post as well as a new Senior Officer being recruited and a Head of Service for SEND and Inclusion being advertised. Long term absence through illness has inevitably impacted upon aspects of our improvement work, to mitigate the effects of these absences, the Project Manager and Head of SEND Improvement have stepped in to prevent critical slippage and disruption. There are advertisements for further recruitment with the SEND service including a SEND Officer role and Advice line.

We are working with our SEND family voice to ensure that their reach is extended and to promote engagement in the volumes of co-production events needing attendance and contribution.

Across the local area, we acknowledge that there are issues with recruitment and retention which are both national and local. Particularly impacting upon SALT, mental health and wellbeing and Autism assessment and Educational Psychology. As a partnership we are working together to look at alternative solutions and support for families where they are awaiting access to support services.

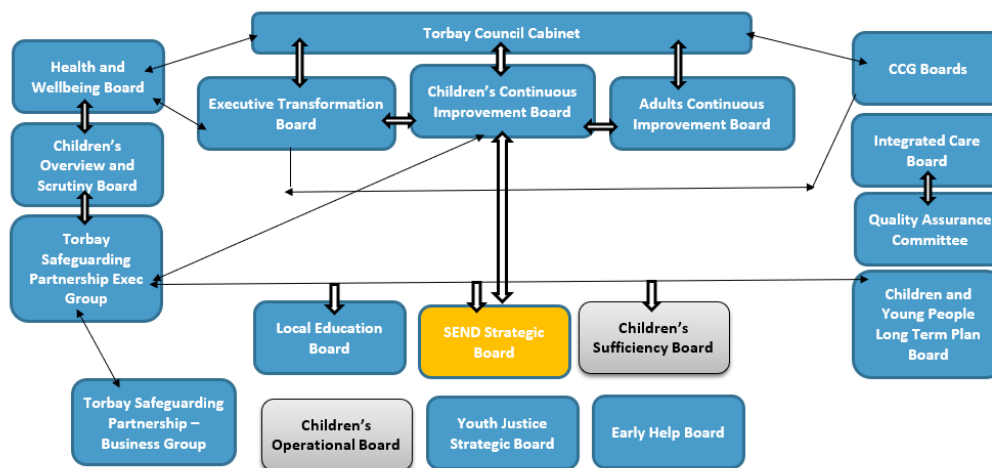
Governance

As we have outlined above, we have developed strong governance arrangements to ensure that we evaluate progress at each stage and, where necessary, taken action to adjust our improvement plan and activities. The SEND strategic board is chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Children Services, ensuring a strong local area approach, and is solely dedicated to the SEND improvement work in the Written Statement. A dedicated independent “Check and Challenge” Group quality assures board’s actions and decisions following SEND Strategic board and holds a reflective lens to our improvement work.

The SEND agenda is a standard item on the Children’s continuing improvement board CCIB which is chaired by an independent chair. CCIB is attended by Strategic leads from across the partnership as well as the Chief Executive, the Lead member for Children’s and the Chair of Children’s overview and scrutiny board, also including members of the ICB and Torbay and NHS trust.

A Transformation Board has been created chaired by the Chief Executive of Torbay Council this ensures that the SEND improvement work filters through to all boards and is heard and owned across our Local Area. This also ensures that concurrent projects and initiatives such as the Safety Valve and Family Hubs can be collaborative ventures alongside our SEND improvement work. An example of this is the establishment of Parent/carer family hub panels which are being hosted by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

Please see our new governance diagrams showing the interrelationships between the boards here -



SEND Strategic board are updated on the monthly Parent/carer engagement through a rolling document which captures the key themes for strategic leaders to consider and respond to. Although we are pleased that we have made some progress in expanding our reach to parents, we are continuing to work with SEND family voice Torbay and to seek and take opportunities to expand this further to give us the broadest reach.

There is an invitation system for strategic leads to attend the steering group for SEND family voice Torbay.

Our determination to use and understand data to support our improvement work, has resulted in the completion and subsequent submission of our Safety Valve documentation which is aligned to

the WSoA due to the clear interdependencies. The evaluation of our progress is further supported by the data dashboards which are bespoke to both pieces of work.

Key outputs this quarter:

JSNA and Joint Commissioning

Contemporary JSNA and Joint Commissioning Strategies have been coproduced and are aligned with the WSOA. There has been an event held inviting parents and carers and local area professionals working within SEND to consider how to take forward the learning from the exercise and to develop an associated plan.

SEND Strategy

Torbay's co-produced and revised SEND Strategy completed and approved by SEND board and action plans for each priority co-produced.

New Graduated Response Toolkits -

The Graduated Response toolkits have been coproduced by specialist working groups. The pilot test coproduced at the SEND Forum in conjunction with SENDCos and Headteachers has gone live. The Graduated Response toolkits cover education, health and care and are accessible documents that support all those involved in meeting the needs of children at the earliest opportunity.

Culture Work -

A planned launch of a 'new way of working' for families will include the Pledge, Relational and the Co-production Charter. Families are being consulted more consistently and frequently in terms of the values and behaviours they would like to see as part of the foundation of the culture change we are trying to achieve. A coproduction event will see families choose and own how the SEND culture will be measured.

Quality Assurance -

Two Send Auditors commenced in post. A SEND Quality Assurance Framework has been co-produced which includes a 3 monthly cycle of audits and thematic dip samples. A baseline audit is being undertaken which includes auditing 70 new EHCP and 50 amended EHCP's. The Multiagency SEND QA panel, included a rep from SEND Family Voice Torbay, has been set up and will commence in February.

Local Offer hits are increasing and attendance at parent engagement events are increasing. Children, young people and families are beginning to see a shift in terms of the value placed on their views, and their lived experiences and the feedback from SEND Family Voice is that parents are feeling this, we are having a partnership meeting in January to see how we can extend reach.

Key Next Steps for the Project

In the next quarter our focus is to:

- Further develop robust data dashboard that iterates and can be shared between partners and used effectively to understand and manage performance and plan to meet needs
- Create and publish our workforce development plan by March for an April roll out to all partners and begin co-designing and developing training with our expert parent reference group.
- Pilot and evaluate our new Graduated Response. With a finalised document going live in September 2023.
- Use the Joint Commissioning strategy to enhance joint commissioning activity in our priority areas with our action plans outlining this journey by April 23.
- Co-produce the action plans from the SEND Strategy by April 23.
- Expand reach and engagement of parent and carers by supporting SEND Family Voice Torbay to build capacity by September 23, for example we will be promoting engagement in the SEND family voice through reintroducing the popular Fair Play Day for all children and young people with SEND.

WSoA Actions/timescale check		
Are there any actions behind schedule?		AP quality standards and AP framework – running two months behind (Nov and Jan deadlines)
Action	Reason	Mitigation/remedial action
4E.1 & 4E.2	When reviewed it became apparent that a larger piece of work was needed to review and confirm the quality standards before the framework (informed by the new standards) could be created.	This work has been re-scoped and is planned for a completion in March 23.

Support received in this reporting period		
1) WSoA area of work	Support from independent, DfE and ICB advisers to Check and Challenge our SEND improvements. Established development plan with Islington as Torbay's Sector Led Improvement Partner.	
Support/Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Running workshop for new Impact Lead colleagues. - Monthly Check and Challenge meetings to provide internal monitoring and challenge. - Agreed the scope of work with Islington and timeframe for delivery from January 2023 onwards. - Independent SEND strategic lead was guest speaker at SEND forum on the new Ofsted Framework 	Provider
		Independent, DfE and ICB Advisers SLIP – Islington
Impact/Outcomes from the activity	Ensuring our actions are challenged and focused upon impact.	
2) WSoA area of work	Planned support for training from DfE Advisers	
Support/Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating and supporting Annual Review Training for both colleagues involved with reviews and strategic leaders between Feb – March. 	Provider
		DfE Advisers
Impact/Outcomes from the activity	Ensuring Annual Review quality is improved across the Local Area.	
3) WSoA area of work	All pillars - We also benefit from linking in with other Local Authorities such as Bristol, Wakefield and Wiltshire on specific issues.	
Support/Activity	Various mentoring activity with leads from other Local Areas.	
Impact/Outcomes from the activity	Sharing our learning with members of the SEND Strategic Board with scheduled reflection events which then formulate action plans for our further improvement.	

Area 1	Joint Commissioning
<p>The current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been established and developed with all partners and provides a baseline and template for understanding the needs of our children and young people with SEND in Torbay.</p> <p>Some of the headlines from the JSNA are detailed below and highlight the extent of the challenges to Torbay:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In the last five years requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have risen by 42%. Children between ages 5-10 are most likely to receive a new EHCP.2. The most common primary needs for those with an EHCP are Social, Emotional and Mental health3. The most common primary needs for those with SEN Support are speech, language and communication needs.4. There are very significant differences in SEND rates between the electoral wards in Torbay. Requests for an EHCP assessment disproportionately come from areas of Torbay that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England.5. 33% of cared for children have an EHCP which is significantly higher than the national rate for cared for children.6. For 2021, 9.5% of those with an EHCP in Torbay achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSE A to C grades, 54.5% of those with SEN Support achieved this level and 75.3% of those with no recognised SEN achieved this level7. Rates of permanent exclusions (2015/16 to 2020/21) for those with SEN Support were significantly higher than those with no recognised SEN or EHCP. Rates of exclusion in Torbay for those with SEN Support are significantly higher than rates in England. Since 2019/20, over a third (37%) of those young people who had an intervention from the Youth Justice Service had an EHCP.8. Average “wait times” have risen considerably from June 2019 to June 2022 across most health services. Wait times for the Specialist Autism Spectrum Assessment Team have increased significantly from an average of 19.9 weeks in June 2019 to an average of 71.7 weeks in June 2022.9. 64% of Supported Living Service clients in adult social care aged 18 to 24 had a primary support reason of learning disabilities, 26% mental health, 9% physical disabilities. <p>We have organised coproduction events to analyse this data and information so that we can evidence our understanding and identify and agree our key priorities for action. These priorities and the principles that underpin them are reflected in our draft Joint Commissioning Strategy.</p>	

We have identified seven key priorities for Joint Commissioning from our co-production events and from the JSNA, these are listed below, and it is important to note that these are not in order of priority– these include a timeline of how we will achieve this:

1. Neurodiversity (linking to points 2,3 and 8)
2. Emotional health and wellbeing (linked to points 4, 7 and 5)
3. Speech, language and communication (linked to points 8 and 3)
4. Joint funding for individual children
5. Better working arrangements for the most complex children (link to 7)
6. Focus on prevention and early intervention
7. Preparation for adulthood. (Link to 9)

The priorities identified through the co-production events, joint commissioning and JSNA data are aligned to the priorities identified through the detailed work conducted on creating our Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan and Safety Valve proposals. As a system we have taken action to understand our data and trajectory further and have built targets for reductions that align with improved responses to children and young people at an early phase leading to a reduced need for an Education Health and Care Plan and the maintenance of a plan when outcomes are being achieved. These key areas of delivery identified through joint commissioning are essential and aligned to actions within our wider financial plans.

Evidence of impact

There is a significant difference in the way we are working together as a local area. The most recent JSNA/ Joint commissioning workshop held on the 6th of January demonstrated this through the outputs that were achieved including a set of initiatives that will improve joint working and use of collective resources.

Although we are very sighted on our objectives, work continues to build commissioning arrangements that will support us in effectively and efficiently delivering our services to children and families.



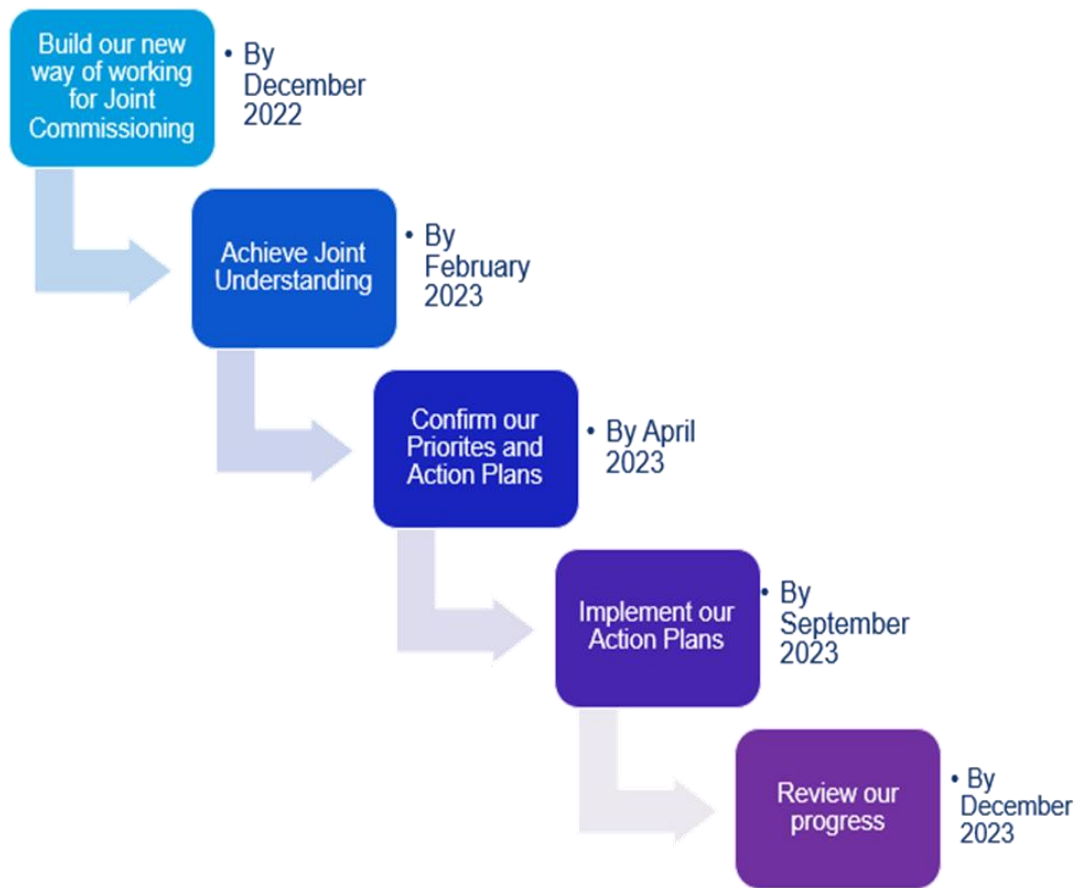
Key next steps

Our next steps are to approve and mobilise our new Joint Commissioning Strategy and we have a four-step process to accomplish this.

Within this we are developing plans for how the local area will respond to the increasing waiting times for some health services.

Through robust integration across the WSoA we are ensuring that we avoid duplication in the improvement tasks that are undertaken and securing integration across the work plan. A good

example of this is how learning from the graduated response work will feed into the joint commissioning priorities and work plan.



Progress on key actions

A new SEND Strategy has been coproduced by parents/carers and partners, using the feedback provided directly by children and young people through our cultural engagement work and participation survey. This identifies five key priorities for Torbay as a Local Area.

- . SEND is everyone's business – changing our culture.
- . Early identification and intervention
- . Understanding needs and making best use of our resources together
- . Making all settings more inclusive
- . Improving transitions to adulthood

The strategy sets out a new way of working and represents a marked shift from previous area strategies. The strategy has success criteria which is focused on what children, young people and their families will see and is based on improving the current lived experience for all children, young people and families with SEND. Draft action plans have now been coproduced by SEND family voice and partners so each priority area has a detailed plan of how progress can be made. Our progress towards each priority will be RAG rated monthly and reported back to SEND Strategic board. The co-production and adoption of the SEND Strategy is progressing through SEND family voice, Council Cabinet and the ICB Board to ensure that it's aspiration and ambition can be fully taken forward. The strategy priorities provide a current framework for embedding the actions being taken as part of our Written Statement of Action whilst also taking forward work to improve and develop services for a longer period of time.

The workforce development plan is aligned to the strategy and further work is being conducted to ensure that this is further co-produced with parents/carers to continue the cultural change that is set out within the strategy.

Significant work continues to be taken forward to drive forward change of practice regarding inclusion and exclusions. The work conducted to date has not resulted in a decrease of exclusions/suspensions, for this reason a review of the actions and the impact of our current approach has been conducted with further actions being taken to identify and support a different response. This has formed the basis of a new "Belonging Strategy" which can hold together the work of the local area with agreed actions and accountability measures. Further support mechanisms have been identified with all secondary schools now involved with a joint project with SEND Family Voice and Devon Parent Carer Forum to jointly train and co-produce solutions for children and young people with neurodivergent needs through the joint receipt and delivery of Autism Education Training on leadership, management and culture.

Framework for collating evidence of impact

The new SEND Strategy agreed by Board in December has been co-produced directly by parents/carers. The Strategy is built from the lived experience of our children and young people and the deliverable outcomes/aspirations are taken from direct feedback from children and

young people. The strategy represents a marked shift from our previous local strategies and has been written to ensure accessibility by young people, parents, carers and professionals. Initial feedback has indicated that the strategy is better aligned to parental priorities which is also impacting upon their confidence in the service. Practitioners through the co-production of the strategy have gained a better understanding of the strategic intent and the action plans are owned across the system rather than within the SEND service.

Data for recent exclusions and suspensions have been further analysed and individual representation for children and young people has been made, including attendance at individual meetings with children and families for Governors Decision Meetings. Key trends and causes are now further understood, influencing the content of the Belonging Strategy and the direct work with school leaders.

Key next steps

- Take our SEND Strategy to our SEND family voice and through the governance process of Torbay Council and ICB to maximise on parental confidence and strategic investment and buy in to the actions.
- Implement our action plans, creating a schedule for the delivery against milestones and KPI's.
- Build upon the impact measures that have been created with parents/carers and young people to ensure that these are being monitored and reported through the QA cycle.
- Publish the SEND strategy as part of our local offer, following the further consultation and assurance period. Focus on lowering our exclusions and suspensions implementing the action plans for which all partners take responsibility. Develop further detailed plans resulting from the Co-produced belonging strategy to ensure that everybody is clear on their role, responsibility and accountability measures to review the mechanisms that have been built to consider their impact, revising our strategy and actions as needed.

1. Progress on key actions

Children and young people have been fully involved in the design and creation of the Partnership Pledge and have seen that this pledge is built on their direct feedback, language and desired changes. The launch week for the Pledge is planned for January 2023, with children and young people very much involved in this launch and in work being undertaken to co-produce the questions required as part of feedback to measure impact.

A number of consultation measures are now in place to ensure that people with lived experience are consulted as a matter of course as part of this ongoing work. This includes a wide variety of participation events, co-production events and workshops, consultation activity and training opportunities. Examples of this include the inclusion of a care experienced young person with SEND as a critical advisor and core member of the Corporate Parenting Board and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board, the wider parent/carer forums, the consultation work undertaken as part of the preparation of the SEND Innovation Fund application and parent/carers with lived experience now being involved in the training delivered to the children with disabilities team in respect of end of life care.

We are in the process of established Parent/Carer Panels, aligned to each of the Family Hubs in line with Torbay's delivery plan. Recognizing the value and power of this being community-led, each Panel will be facilitated by the voluntary and community sector, to ensure maximum engagement and enhanced potential for those who find it more difficult to have a voice to be heard. Similarly, procurement activity has been completed in relation to the virtual hub environment, which will serve as a one-stop shop for children and families in Torbay, enhancing the accessibility of the Local Offer.

The workforce development plan has been drafted and shared with SEND Family Voice Torbay, to gather feedback on theirs in relation to essentially training and continued development opportunities across the Local Area; it is anticipated that this will be finalized and implemented from January 2023.

Evidence of impact

Children, young people and families are beginning to see a shift in terms of the value placed on their views, and their lived experiences. They are being consulted consistently and frequently in terms of the values and behaviours they would like to see as part of the foundation of the culture change, we are trying to achieve. An example of this is the co-production of the Partnership Pledge.

Relational practice and language are understood by the Local Area as the means by which cultural change is embedded and increasingly children and young people are seeing this reflected in their interactions with professionals and within their plans. More families are seeing how their feedback is making a difference, for example the immediate changes to the Local Offer made following the parent co-production event.

A co-design event is planned for the 2nd of February 2023, which will be an opportunity for parents and carers to inform the approach to a 'Tell It Once' system and ethos, as well as the foundational design for a one-stop virtual hub environment, alongside the implementation of our Family Hub

model, which will consist of a web and application platform. The concept of the single access point will be applied to this virtual hub offer as well as points of contact through the SEND Advice line and the Hub Contact leads. The family journey will be considered at all points in the design of the Family Hub model and, in line with the tell it once ethos, the Family Hub workforce will be aware of and sensitive to family experience, to minimise the risk of retelling and traumatization and to ensure as smooth a connection to the services and information required as possible.

A coproduction event is planned for 31st January so that parents will coproduce and own the way in which our culture change is measured. We recognize that culture is particularly difficult to measure and should not be reduced solely to quantitative measures and we want our children, young people and parent/carers to fully inform the way in which we measure success in respect of this pillar. As such, a provisional set of KPIs has been formulated based on the following

Key next steps

1. Establishment of the Parent/Carer Panels within the Family Hubs and consideration given to how this work feeds into our understanding of lived experience.
2. The establishment of the Children and Young People's Panel and consideration given to how this work feeds into our understanding of lived experience.
3. The impact of the implementation plan to be evaluated in terms of how the Partnership Pledge is being embedded across the Local Area.
4. Further roll out of the relational practice training across the Local Area.
5. Workforce development plan to be finalized, to address gaps in Local Area training and development.
6. Further participation survey to be undertaken at a key point, to enable comparators in terms of the experiences of children, young people and parent/carers.

Progress on key actions

The Lived Experience and lived expertise of parents is beginning to filtrate through all aspects of our SEND improvement work and recent feedback from SEND Family Voice Torbay confirms this.

The 'silo' approach to working so strongly messaged in our inspection report is being broken down. Across all our sectors new systems and protocols are being formed to work together from strategic to operational processes. This is challenging and is taking time but our changes to culture are now meaning "working together" is becoming our 'new normal'.

Evidence of impact

- SEND Strategy for the Local Area coproduced and co-created by young people, parents and multi-agency colleagues.
- Creation of a Partnership Pledge led by young people views and coproduced by parents and colleagues. The implementation of this pledge is also being led by a multi-agency group.
- A Torbay 'New way of working with families' initiative is being created area-wide which will encompass a Restorative approach, coproduction charter and partnership pledge.
- New Graduated Response toolkits have been coproduced and co-created parents and by specialist multiagency teams consisting of health, care and education. The pilots of the new toolkit will be completed by young people and teachers, parents, health and care.
- Young people transferring into Adult Services are seeing an improved experience due to the better joint working between education, health and care (see section 6 for further detail).
- SEND Quality Assurance Panel started – this panel is made up of parents/carers and colleagues from all sectors.
- Joint working with schools is also improving and can be evidenced in the reduction of our RSAs; all schools' behaviour policies were analysed and special SEND forums, networks and workshops have been set up to work on this area, the pilots for the Graduated Response encompass a range of schools.
- JSNA and Joint Commissioning – recent event saw parents and colleagues from all sectors collaborate to analyse the JSNA.
- Planned pilot projects for SEND commissioning where sectors will work together to align or jointly commission pilot provision.
- The new SEND website (encompassing the 'Tell It Once' tool) is being coproduced and co-created within the Family Hub work.
- The new workforce development is currently being coproduced by a multi-agency group for dissemination across the whole local area.
- A new transformation board to connect all projects, making SEND everyone's business, has been created.

Key next steps

- 1) Work alongside SFVT and the culture pillar to measure how well our new Joint Working systems are having an impact on our families experience in the system.
- 2) Continue to work on increasing the reach of the communications for SEND.
- 3) Coproduce the Tell it Once web-based tool.
- 4) Draw in the VCS to wider strands of improvement through our transformation board.
- 5) Implement the charter and pledge alongside the 'new way of working' when it is launched in February.

Progress on key actions

There is an acknowledgement that children and young people in Torbay were not having their needs identified and met at the right time and with the right level of intervention, leading to an increase in the number of request for EHCP's. The graduated response has been developed to ensure that children and young people with SEND experience early identification and timely support in line with the Code of Practice.

The development of the Graduated Response toolkits has been over a period of 3 months, co-produced with parents and carers and with lead professionals from education, health, and care with expert knowledge on the four areas of the code of practice. Parents and carers fed back that they wished to have a separate toolkit for those who are Neurodivergent, which we responded to by creating.

The schools and colleges have been consulted on the Graduated Response at the SEND forum on 08.12.22 and co-designed the pilot in schools to be implemented during the Spring Term. Parents and carers have been informed about the progress of the Graduated Response through the monthly drop-in sessions.

There will be parent co-production evenings throughout January run by the leads of the Graduated Response toolkits to get parent/carer feedback on the toolkits and their accessibility and any views from those those experiencing change through the pilot phase. The SEND 'drop-in' acknowledged that the majority of parents and carers didn't know about Graduated Response or SEND Support in Torbay. Raising its profile is imperative and Officers are working with Comms on the marketing of the new Graduated Response once the pilot is concluded.

The multi-agency aspect of the Graduated Response is being tested within the pilot phase by health visitors and colleagues in the SEND service as well as in the Early years. Social workers within statutory teams will be engaged in the pilot also. Teachers and SENCO's that are both newly qualified and experienced will be piloting the documents and using them with families to ensure that progress is understood.

The measure of the success of the Graduated Response pilot will be that children and young people who are registered as needing SEND support, have made progress from their starting point. Further, their provision changed as a consequence of the whole school approach and the application of the toolkits relevant to the child's needs. This is going to be measured through feedback questionnaires for children and young people and their parents/carers and views on the documentation will be collated from SENCOs from Early Years through to Post 16.

We have met our WSOA target for a reduction of Requests for Statutory assessments for the past 3 months, indicating that the local area are looking to meet children and young people's needs more often without the need for an EHCP. Our Next steps meetings, for children and young people who get a 'no to assess' decision have been impactful in parents and carers and mutli agency professionals understanding more about the Graduated Response and the rationale for decision making. Whilst we have an increase in the number of Tribunals, these do not include an increase in the appeals on a decision to assess. It is our understanding that parents and carers are more

aware of their right to appeal and as a Local Authority we are being more consistent with decision making for Section I.

NHS England were looking at extending the learning from the Mental Health in schools' teams and health colleagues are meeting in January 2023 to look at extending the pilot to ensure that that impact from the MHIST teams is felt in more schools.

Suspensions and exclusions remain of concern. A new Belonging Strategy, the graduated Response toolkit and the "Torbay New way of working" are key developments in achieving culture change that will secure a reduction in exclusion data in the short term.

Evidence of impact

- Our WSOA target of reduction of RSA's being submitted has been met for 3 months.
- Tribunals and Appeals are known about and accessible which is evidenced in the increase to Appeals and Tribunals
- All schools and some Early Years settings, health visitors and the SEND team are committed to piloting the new Graduated response
- SEND K figures are close to national targets

Key next steps

- In accordance with parents and families wishes to ensure that the Graduated Response is accessible and layered on our new Local Offer and Family Hub website when it is developed.
- Evaluation of the Graduated Response pilot programme working with parents/carers to seek a revised title which reflects its function within the early help sphere
- Embedding the new Graduated Response and promoting its value to all who need to understand its purpose
- A plan to ensure SALT waiting times are reduced
- Mental health and wellbeing support data to support benchmarking
- Neurodiversity pathway through the Gamechanger

Progress on key actions

The NEET Figures demonstrate that more young people are accessing education, employment and training. We are exceeding our target resulting in a direct impact on young people. We have also proactively worked to secure apprenticeships as an option for young people, we are meeting our target and have additional plans in place for an identified group of SEND care experienced young people to have support for job matching.

We are holding twice termly meetings with Education Providers to discuss potential trajectory of Young People with EHCP and complex presentations to support multi agency working towards shared outcomes.

The Transitions Team are delivering a number of Care Act eligibility training events to Education and Community Providers.

The updated and co-produced protocol has been approved by the Board and is now in use. The one-page guide to transition is now in place also and has been shared with the workforce, alongside the guide and resource pack. This is available on the Local Offer website.

Transitions Panel TOR has been updated to include young people with SEND. Plans are in place to undertake an aspiration audit, to aid discussions about training, work experience and employment opportunities from an earlier age, and this will be co-ordinated through the Transitions Panel.

Closer working between Adults Social Care, Education and Children's services have produced significant benefits including; people being seen sooner, continuity of support delivered via an outcome focussed engagement process driven by the Young person whose aspirations and wishes remain central to their EHCP.

Fluid and responsive reviews are now embedded within practice so that aims and objectives are adapted according to the person's emerging need and commissioning intentions can be modified appropriately.

Transition plans for all children and young people with SEND support needs are now subject to multi-agency oversight of their transition plans from the age of fourteen. This enables practitioners and senior leaders from Children's social care, adult social care, carer's support, Education, SEND and Health to have oversight of transition planning from a much earlier stage, and ensure that relevant actions are progressed to ensure that the young person and their parent/carer's needs are fully understood and met throughout this journey.

A learning and development programme has been established for Social Care Practitioners to progress improvements in the quality of support plan writing.

Evidence of impact

Apprenticeship and NEET targets have been met showing an improvement for these young people.

Key next steps

- Reviewing the new transition protocol with Young People and their Parents/Carers and continue to make improvements based on their feedback.
- Service leads and commissioners are working closely with independent providers to develop support programmes that will enable people to be successfully employed and/or reaching their identified aspirations.
- Torbay Council's HR are currently working on a proposal to aid employers to support care experienced young people and young people with SEND to gain internal employment.
- A number of smaller projects are underway to consider how links with local area employers can be strengthened, and employment opportunities for young people can be supported.
- An application has been made to the SEND Innovation Fund, in respect of a proposed project entitled 'Preparing for our Future, which will expand the Short Breaks offer for 16-25 year olds with SEND who are unlikely to meet Care Act eligibility.
- A Transitions parent/carer guide is being drafted.
- Professional analysis and feedback sourced from young people and parents is undertaken on a termly basis to identify; successful outcomes and why they were so, and those where improvements could have been made. A report detailing the outcomes will be provided to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board and taken forward into a learning plan.
- There is an increase in apprenticeships and supported internships and traineeships offered across the local area. Plans are in place to include this information within the building of the Family Hubs website, which will incorporate the Local Offer and information relating to transition and preparing for independence. There is purposeful delay to enable this to be incorporated in the family hubs web development, to ensure that families in Torbay have access to the information they need, in one place.
- Engaging with commissioning managers to progress a 'hub and spoke' model that can meet the core business of Care Act eligible support, whilst also flexing to provide satellite services to non-eligible but vulnerable cohorts, e.g., a specialist Foyer for young adults with moderate to severe LD, but with satellite provision for vulnerable neurodivergent young adults. Anticipated delivery date 2024/25.
- Impact Lead to progress engaging Young People and their Parent/Carers through attendance at the Parent/Carer forum.
- Identified Impact Lead to oversee and pull together improvement work across Health, Education and Social Care to ensure actions begin to have an impact.

Progress on key actions

Following an end-to-end review there have been changes to SEND processes as part of our commitment to ensure that children and young people receive services at the earliest point after identification and for those children who require EHCP's we will work to ensure that they are timely, comprehensive and correctly focused involving those professionals who are required to make contributions. The SEND auditors have worked with SEND Family Voice Torbay and the participation officer to co-produce how child/young people and parent/carer contributions will be captured as part of the QA framework. Plans are being made to involve parents and carers in the development and delivery of QA training. We met with Send Family Voice Torbay to get feedback on what good looks like, this is included in the framework and alongside feedback from children and young people for the SEND pledge, will form the golden thread throughout all quality assurance activity.

SEND auditors have finalised the co-produced SEND QA Framework. A baseline audit of 70 new EHCP and 50 amended EHCP's is being undertaken, once completed the report will go to SEND strategic board for review and approval of actions. This is externally moderated by our SLIP Islington also and any feedback will be taken on board. Learning for individual services will be shared and impacts of actions will be evaluated by the SEND Strategic Board. The first QA panel was held on the 13/01/22 in which the TOR was co-created. The purpose of the QA panel will be to review the draft audit report as a multi agency group and the group will moderate 4 of the 25 EHCP's and share their findings. Learning required from feedback, data analysis and service development has been collated into a workforce development plan. This includes understanding the learning requirements of the local area workforce from the perspective of SEND Family Voice Torbay. A coproduction event with parents will be held in February to codesign a workforce development plan for the whole area and plans are being made for parents to codesign and co-deliver individual training and learning sessions. The impact from training and learning will be measured via the Quality Assurance Framework.

Improvements have been evidenced within the work experience placements and apprenticeships strand within the data set

Evidence of impact

The improvements within the data set for work experience placements and apprenticeships has meant young people preparing for independence have received more opportunity to access and gain meaningful employment..

30 SENCO's attended the Annual Review training on 12.01.23 to support the quality and compliance of Annual Reviews and subsequent Amendments.

Key Next Steps

- NASEN training on providing quality advice and guidance to be delivered.
- Strengthen internal QA process for each agency writing advice and guidance
- Recruiting Designated Social Care Officer to improve advice, guidance and timeliness.

- Recruiting SEND advice line officer.
- Commence 3 monthly Audit Cycle
- Share learning and actions from Baseline audit
- Implement Invision 360 Audit and Annual Review Tool

End of Report

WSOA (N)

Draft Note of Standard WSoA Review Meeting

Local Area:	Torbay
Date:	25 th January 2023
Venue:	Town Hall Torquay

Present:

Emma Brown	DfE (Chair)
Heather Campbell	DfE Regional Lead for SEND Improvement
Claire Gallagher	DfE Case Lead
Keith Thompson	SEND South West Professional Adviser (DfE)
Mark Tucker	SEND Adviser (NHSE) for the South West
Gemma Blackmore	SEND Manager, NHSE
Anne-Marie Bond	Chief Executive, Torbay
Nancy Meehan	Director of Children’s Services
Darryn Allcorn	Chief Nursing Officer, for the ICB
Lincoln Sergeant	Director, Public Health
Sharon O’Reilly	Deputy Director of Adult Services, Torbay Council
Becky Thompson	Divisional Director for Safeguarding
Rachael Williams	Divisional Director for Education, Learning and Skills
Beverley Mack	Children’s Alliance Director, Children and Family Health Devon
Graham Pirt	Consultant Project Lead, WSOA
Matt Gifford	Business and Performance Manager for CS, Torbay
Hannah Pugliese,	Head of Women & Children’s Commissioning
Rebecca Box	Representative SEND Family Voice Torbay
Sam Hadjiantoni	PA to DCS
Stuart Heron	Headteacher of Mayfield School
Rachel Setter	Head of Learning Academy, Torbay Council
Hannah Spencer	Senior SEND Officer, Torbay
Kelly Givens	SENDIAS
Kaye Spencer	Head of Policy and Performance, Torbay

Update on any Actions jointly agreed at the end of the last meeting

During the meeting the follow-points and actions from the previous monitoring meeting were referenced during the presentation, in the supporting documentation or discussions.

Note detailed pre-meeting Information provided by Torbay:

- WSOA Monitoring Report
- Slide pack/Dashboard

General update on progress or areas of significant impact

The development of the **governance arrangements** (see p5 of the Monitoring Report) for overseeing the WSoA (and SEND improvements in general) was elaborated, with particular reference to ‘shifting culture’ and accountability across the local area. Key outputs over the past 3-4 months were also noted (see p6 of the Monitoring Report). The **growing network of parent carers engaging with the send improvement agenda** in Torbay was noted. There is a desire for more dialogue between parent carers and professionals to relay the real-life experiences of families and for tangible changes in SEND services to be made in the short-term (see p3 of the Monitoring Report). In terms of coproduction activity, the SEND strategy was highlighted.

The **view of education leaders** is that since the inspection there has been growing levels of collaboration and coproduction not previously evident in Torbay (see p4 of the Monitoring Report). The embedding of the Graduated Response across the key agencies was cited as an example.

The **spectrum of inclusivity** across schools in Torbay was discussed along with the support provided locally.

Follow-up:

- Further examples of coproduction activity.
- Multi-agency collaboration with educational institutions to prevent the suspension and exclusion of CYP with SEND (with and without EHCPs).
- Evaluating cultural change in Torbay – evidence of change and views of SEND leaders.

WSoA Actions/timescale check

Are there any actions behind schedule?	AP quality standards and AP framework – running two months behind (Nov and Jan deadlines)
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Action	Reason	Mitigation/remedial action
4E.1 & 4E.2	When reviewed it became apparent that a larger piece of work was needed to review and confirm the quality standards before the framework (informed by the new standards) could be created.	This work has been rescoped and is planned for a completion in March 23.

Follow-up:

- Check progress – confirmation of quality standards and completion of framework.

Support received in this reporting period (see p8 Monitoring Report)

Follow-up:

- Summary of work undertaken with SLIP in the past quarter.

Progress on the WSoA Strands

ASW 1	The lack of a suitably ambitious SEND strategy based on robust self-evaluation, and open co-production, and with the buy-in of all
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	services across education, health and care and that includes measurable criteria for success.
See slides 25-28 and p12-13 of monitoring report:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Strategy has been co-produced. 	
<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the SEND Strategic and CC Improvement Board will monitor the progress against the 5 priorities, address barriers and evaluate impact in terms of outcomes for CYP and the lived experience of their families. Attendance levels, suspensions and exclusions of CYP with SEND – what is the latest data telling us? 	
Area 2	The deep cultural issues leading to weak co-production and the inability of children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers to be equal partners in strategic and local decision-making.
See slides 29-32 and p14-15 of monitoring report:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Pledge to be launched. Participation and co-production events and other methods being used. Alignment of Parent Carer Panels with Family Hubs. Draft workforce development plan. 	
<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of a cultural change – what are the current dimensions for improvement identified by SEND leaders? Local Offer – progress in improving communication routes to provide the information needed by CYP, their families and professionals – and to receive their feedback. Roll-out of the workforce development plan. 	
Area 3	The lack of joint working between services, which prevents area leaders working collaboratively to secure more consistent outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.
See slides 33-36 and p16 of monitoring report:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working together becoming the new normal Recognised to be a cross-cutting theme Launch of the 'new way of working' in February 	
<i>Follow up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that all SEND staff, including SENCOs, understand and are committed to the new way of working. Evidence that parents are reporting a change following interactions with frontline services and the SEND team. 	
Area 4	The variability in the implementation of the graduated response, leading to slow identification, high levels of exclusion, some poor inclusive practices, and inequitable access and experience of the system across education, health and care.
See slides 37-40 and p17-18 of monitoring report:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilots underway Early signs of a reduction in requests for EHCNAs Impact on suspensions and exclusions not yet evident 	

<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of request for EHCNAs. • Responsiveness and expertise of specialist services – are they helping educational institutions identify and address the difficulties children have with learning? 	
ASW 5	The poor range of opportunities and choice for children and young people with SEND when they reach 16 or transition to adulthood.
<p>See slides 11-15 and p19-20 of monitoring report: Comprehensive and detailed account of work underway in Torbay to make improvements in this area, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough analysis provided indicating improvement in post-16 metrics. • Post-14 work onwards reported to be well supported by all agencies. • The importance of hearing the voice of older children and young people noted. • Arrangements to re-engage young people NEET back into in education through the EHCP annual review process was explained. • Grant received to support internship work 	
<i>Follow -up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation from, or a case study of, a young person who has benefitted from the new arrangements in Torbay. • Destination data for YP with EHCPs and those previously at SEN Support. 	
ASW 6	The wide variances in the quality of EHC plans caused by weaknesses in joint working, fair access and the timeliness of assessments.
<p>See slides 15- 20 and p21-22 of monitoring report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End to end review of SEND processes has been completed • CYP/Parent contributions being captured as part of the QA arrangements for EHCPs • Base line audit currently underway in volving SLIP • Outcome of QA process to inform workforce development • DSCO and SEND advice line officers to be appointed • Decline in the timeliness of new EHCPs but improvement in finalizing annual reviews 	
<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of advice from <i>all</i> advice-givers and actions to correct performance where necessary, noting statutory requirements. • Size of 'backlog' in issuing EHCPs (those not finalised within 30 weeks & 52 weeks). • Workforce improvement priorities arising from QA activities. • FTT outcomes – have any commented on the quality of the EHCPs in question. • Ensuring special educational provision arrangements – SEND leaders addressing barriers. 	
Area 7	Poor joint commissioning arrangements that limit leaders' ability to meet area needs, improve outcomes and achieve cost-efficiencies.
<p>See slides 21- 25 and p9-11of monitoring report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JSNA review focused on Torbay has established a useful contextual data and helped identify areas for improvement and future priorities • Joint Commissioning priorities established – alignment with DSG management plan and Safety Valve proposals established 	
<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in taking forward jointly commissioned activity. 	

Area 8	The lack of impact and of resilience to sustain improvement of recent initiatives due to low capacity in area teams.
No slide provided – see p4 of Monitoring Report	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in capacity • Issues with recruitment and retention 	
<i>Follow-up:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How HR sections within the different agencies are working with service areas to address recruitment and retention issues. What are exit interviews revealing? • How are shortages of specialist and support staff being communicated to service - users? 	

Agreed actions/support following this meeting		
Action	Who	When
No additional actions were identified.		
Date and venue of next meeting		
Next monitoring meeting - date, time and venue tbc		
Conclusion and summary information		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the local area is beginning to make tangible progress across the eight areas of significant weakness. SEND leaders are committed to making the necessary changes to improve SEND services. • Governance arrangements and collaboration across the local area have strengthened further. • Key stakeholders remain fully engaged with changing the SEND system and culture in Torbay. • The PCF is a full strategic partner, with coproduction becoming central to the new way of working in Torbay. • As a whole, the local partnership is aware of the pace of change required to fully implement the WSoA and address the areas of significant weakness identified by Ofsted/CQC. • As with many local areas at the current time, recruitment and retention of specialist and support staff pose significant risks to maintaining progress. 		

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 27 March 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Young People – Housing Strand Update

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Cordelia Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
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Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the current situation and progress made regarding 16/17 year olds and care experienced young people and their accommodation needs.

2. Reason for Proposal and its Benefits

- 2.1 This report will provide an update on the current situation evidenced with a scoping exercised and summary of work and completed and actions being taken forward.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: MAIN REPORT

Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

1.1 See main report

2. Options under consideration

2.1 See main report

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 See main report

4. Legal Implications

4.1 See main report

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 N/A

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (including those with mental and physical disabilities).		
Women or men	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (for males, females and gender neutral).		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (for all ethnicities).		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (for all religious beliefs).		
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (for young people of all gender orientation).		
People who are transgendered	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people		

	across Torbay (for all identities).		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay (including young parents).		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay and the impact of poverty on them.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Raises the profile of housing challenges for vulnerable young people across Torbay – stable housing invariably results in positive health.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 See main report

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 See main report

APPENDIX 1 – Main Report

Context

Torbay is the corporate parent to our cohort of cared for children, from 0-18, and is also the corporate parent to all care experienced young people from the ages of 16-25, under the extended duties. As of the 15th March 2022, the care experienced team is supporting a total of 246 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 (up from 177 in April 2022). Of this group 168 are 18 – 25 care experienced young people. This demonstrates a potentially significant amount of need in the immediacy as the services across children's services, adult services, and wider housing services, will need to work together to ensure the requirements of this cohort are met in relation to their accommodation needs. During the 2022 Ofsted inspection, the challenges faced by Torbay with regards to the lack of accommodation provision and affordability were noted, however there was a clear direction from the regulators that accommodation for care experienced young people must be a corporate and strategic priority for Torbay, in recognition of those challenges.

Why is accommodation and housing so important?

Safe, sustainable and appropriate accommodation and housing for anyone is considered, in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943, 1954), as the very basic of needs; it fits within the foundation of physiological need which is required to then meet needs such as safety, belonging and love, esteem and self-actualisation. Having a safe base to call home is vital to achieving a sense of security and containment, which then allows for other identified needs to be met. This is particularly important for care experienced young people, whose early life experiences may have featured chronic insecurity and instability for periods of time. Only when permanent individuals have safe permanent accommodation can we expect them to have a sense of connection to their community and take ownership of their surroundings.

A lack of secure and affordable housing also places young people at a disadvantage with work opportunities as well as resulting in potential deprivation issues. For example, getting a bank account without a permanent address can be a challenge for young people but obtaining housing and other benefits without a bank account is also a challenge which perpetuates a circle that is hard to break. Often this can lead to young people becoming street homeless and creating an accommodation track record that is not attractive to both landlords and employers.

Types of accommodation used by care experienced young people post-eighteen

Our current care experienced cohort live in a range of arrangements and settings:

1. Independent living either through social housing or private rental sector.

This is often the preference for many care experienced young people, either at the age of eighteen or shortly thereafter. However, this comes with significant challenges currently. In conjunction with our semi-independent providers, the following barriers to accessing these options for care experienced young people were identified:

- **Lack of overall housing availability and affordability.** Finding affordable accommodation in the private rented sector is a challenge and has been exasperated by the current housing crisis and is by far the most common feedback from our care experienced young people. Due to the level of social housing in Torbay and availability of accommodation (approx. 220 properties advertised through Devon Home Choices per year) available this is not a realist option, due to the lack of supply.
- **Devon Home Choice** – Cases go to a panel meeting and if appropriate are B banded. This process has been streamlined to avoid any delays and therefore not disadvantage any

decision. However, availability of accommodation is limited and therefore not a realistic option.

- **Transition Planning** - The lack of proactive action which can be taken prior to a young person's eighteenth birthday.
- **Suitability of accommodation** - Issues relating to accommodation suitability i.e. size, condition, type.
- **Landlords** - Resistance from landlords to rent to tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit or under 25s due to supply and demand and financial viability. A guarantor scheme is being explored to Children Services to help mitigate the risk.

2. Semi-independent transitional accommodation or supported lodgings

In recognition of the pressure points with regards to accommodation that can happen at the 'cliff edge' of eighteen, a tender and procurement process was initiated in 2021, with block contracts awarded on the 1 April 2021 as outlined below.

- **Lot One: Supported Lodgings:** for young people aged 16 -21 who are cared for children and/or care experienced young people to 25 if eligible and for homeless or at risk of homeless young people aged 16 – 25.

Awarded provider: Young Devon: This was originally a contract consisting of 24 units (5 of which are for 'enhanced support needs'). However, due to a shift in young people's needs coupled with Young Devon struggling to recruit hosts, a new contract has been agreed based on a 16 bed model, 3 tier model: 5 standard, 6 semi-enhanced and 5 enhance,

- **Lot 2 A: Multi-occupancy units** for cared for children and/or care experienced young people with more complex needs aged 16- 18.

Awarded Providers: Young Devon: 6 units (Grosvenor Road) and Livewest: 3 units.

- **Lot 2 B: Multi-occupancy Units** for cared for children and/or care experienced young people as part of a stepdown from care and/or step-down from more intensive post 16 accommodation provision and for other Young People (16-25) homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Awarded Provider - Livewest: 20 units.

- **Lot 3: Semi-independent Accommodation and Support for Young Parents** who are aged 16-24 years old.

Awarded provider: Westward Housing: 12 units.

Apart from Livewest Lot 2 A units, the other units were not vacant units on 1st April 2021 as young people were currently living in these provisions. These block contracts are not same day emergency accommodation or a permanent accommodation provision. The maximum length of stay for Supported Lodgings and Lot Two should be no longer two years and if over one year stay, this should be for evidenced based reasons.

Through-put and planning move-on at the right time is key to ensuring the most efficient and effective use of these provisions. What has been acknowledged however is that, should there be a lack of move on accommodation available, this has a range of adverse consequences for young people.

Should young people remain in transitional accommodation for long periods of time, there is the risk that this cohort of young people become the "hidden homeless": whilst not considered homeless, they do not have a forever, permanent home. Many of them can become literally and psychologically stuck and can regress in terms of their ability to be independent when we cannot

act when they are assessed as ready to move to greater independence. These young people do not have a Personal Housing Plan or a specialist Housing Officer to assist them in their next steps. In addition, this can cause placement sufficiency challenges for cared for and care experienced young people who may need this accommodation in the future.

3. Adult social care or adult mental health placement or provision

This would only be the case should a young person meet Care Act eligibility or eligibility for support through mental health services and assessment determines that a placement or provision as an adult is proportionate and in line with assessed need. In certain circumstances, a placement or provision may be joint funded by Children's Services and adult social care, often with the split in cost being accommodation provided by Children's Services (if this cost cannot be met by the young person) and support provided by adult social care.

4. With parents and relatives

This is often an arrangement made directly between the young person and their family. This option for care experienced young people can carry fragility, especially when we consider that care experienced young people may be more likely to experience relational difficulties in terms of their family relationships. Should arrangements such as this break down, and quickly, this escalates the risk of temporary accommodation or other hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation being the only option to consider in the short term.

Despite the risks for care experienced young people, this is the preferred option for 16/17 year olds and a great deal of preventative work has been developed to support 16/17 year olds to remain with their families. The use of Family Group Conferencing more effectively is supporting this work.

5. Staying Put

The term "Staying Put" is used to define the following arrangements where:

- a. A young person who was cared for immediately prior to their eighteenth birthday (as an eligible child) continues to reside with their former foster carer/s;
- b. The carer/s were acting as foster carers to the child immediately prior to the young person's eighteenth birthday (that is, the carers were approved as foster carers in accordance with the Fostering Service (England) Regulations 2011 and the child had been placed with them by the local authority, or via an Independent Fostering Agency);
- c. A young person is deemed an eligible child, within the meaning of paragraph 19B(2) of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989, immediately before he/she reached eighteen;
- d. The "Staying Put" arrangement is set out in the child/young person's Pathway Plan;
- e. A proportion of the allowance paid to the "Staying Put" carer/s is paid by the Local Authority Children's Services under section 23C of the Children Act 1989;

The "Staying Put" arrangement extends until:

- the young person first leaves the "Staying Put" arrangement;
- or the young person reaches their twenty-first birthday, if continuously, and still living in the arrangement;
- or the young person completes the agreed programme of education or training being undertaken on their twenty-first birthday, if continuously living in the arrangement since their eighteenth birthday.

As such, what is important to note, is that whilst some Staying Put arrangements may convert into private arrangements between the care experienced young people and their Staying Put hosts at twenty-one, this will not always be the case and accommodation will be required for those whose arrangement comes to an end. This poses similar challenges in respect of independent living options and move-on accommodation as outlined above. Similarly, there is always a risk that a Staying Put arrangement may break down, and that the young person affected will require accommodation urgently.

6. Hospital

A small number of care experienced young people may find themselves in hospital; intensive planning is therefore required from the point of admission, to ensure that appropriate accommodation which meets the young person's health needs is identified and available at the point of discharge.

7. Custody

A small number of young people may be in custody as care experienced young people, for varying periods of time. The local authority has a responsibility and a duty to provide enhanced support for these young people, both during and after their custody period ends, including working with other professionals to source appropriate accommodation or housing post-release. This can be particularly complex for example when taking into account conditions of release or any identified risks. Again, when considering independent living options post-release, the same challenges are faced as outlined above.

8. Emergency or temporary accommodation

This option for care experienced young people is avoided wherever possible. All care experienced young people at risk of becoming or experiencing homeless are tracked and monitored through the Youth Homeless Prevention Panel and are referred at the earliest point of identification to ensure that preventative work is undertaken to support the young person in securing a more sustainable and suitable accommodation option.

We always look to secure alternative options to emergency or temporary accommodation through:

- The use of FGC to explore potential family accommodation options.
- Exploration of transitional, semi-independent options on our block contract.
- Consideration of short term agreement to higher cost semi-independent provisions, should there be no option through the block contract.
- Liaison with adult social care in regard to any other accommodation types that could be utilised.
- The short term use of Nightstop.
- Using the Building Better Future team to support 16/17 year olds at home.

However, these options can quickly be exhausted and temporary or emergency accommodation then becomes the only avenue by which to secure a place for the young person to stay in the short term.

9. Homeless/no fixed abode

As above, this is avoided wherever possible. However, there are situations whereby young people may choose to stay with friends, or sofa surf, and unless they lack capacity under the Mental Capacity Act or there are significant adult safeguarding concerns, this has to be supported as the decision of the young person, regardless of the professional view about the suitability of this. That

said, significant attempts will then be made to secure alternative accommodation options for that young person.

Demand and management of Demand over the last 12 months

It is difficult to make comparisons with demand for housing for the 18 – 25 year old care experienced cohort with previous years for a number of reasons, the main one being duty to refer (DTR) when a young person is at risk of homelessness in the following 56 days not being consistently submitted up until the last 12 months. This matter has now been remedied with staff training and rigorous management and Youth Homeless Prevention and Resource Allocation oversight. Nevertheless, the last 12 months data is reliable and demonstrates the challenges for 18 to 25 year old care leavers in Torbay with 233 homeless applications being made by this group between 28.02.22 and 08.02.23. Supporting and managing the risks around this group of young people as well as 16 and 17 year olds who are at risk of homelessness has been a priority for Children's Social Care over the last 18 months. Progress has been made in this area and is evidenced in the fact that there are currently 21 young people on the risk of homelessness tracker compared to 38 at a similar time last year.

What has been done already?

In recognition of the housing challenges, Torbay have already:

- **Introduced of a Transitions Panel**, which tracks planning for all cared for and children with disabilities from fourteen to eighteen and identifies placement or post-eighteen challenges much earlier in the young person's care experience.
- **Regularly used Access to Resources Panel** to secure six months' rent and deposit for care experienced young people, to overcome guarantor barrier.
- **Tracked and monitored all unregulated placements** through the Independent Placement Overview Panel.
- Created and approved the **Preparation for Independence Strategy** which is now operational.
- Recruited a **Placement Auditor** who is working intensively with providers in respect of intervention provided to young people to prepare them for transition and independence, including tenancy management.
- Established a **Young Researchers group** through South Devon College who are focused on preparation for independence, in conjunction with an ongoing task and finish group.
- Met with the founder of the **Guarantor Scheme** with a Torbay model being drafted.
- Established a **sixteen plus provider forum**.
- Recruited to the DfE funded **homelessness prevention Personal Advisors** roles who works very closely with both the care experienced Personal Advisors and the Housing Officers to find creative solutions to risk of homelessness situations.
- Revised and approved the **joint protocol in respect of youth homelessness**.
- Established a **Youth Homelessness Prevention Tracker**, tracking final destination of each young person.
- **Youth Homeless Prevention workers** are taking up prevention duties much earlier and, where safe to do so, will work with wider Early Help services (such as FGC and Make Amends) and other agencies to support 16 and 17 year olds to remain at home with their family. Early identification has been further helped by work the Youth Homeless Prevention Workers have been doing with other agencies such as South Devon College whereby they have been delivering staff training so the signs and symptoms of youth homelessness are identified early so that preventative work can be delivered as opposed to waiting for escalation into a responsive position.

- A **skills for life programme** has been developed by the Youth Homeless Prevention Workers. This programme builds on other work to help develop young peoples' skills and knowledge in order to reduce the risk of repeat episodes of homelessness.
- **Night Stop** are now well established in Torbay as a service delivered by the YMCA. Night Stop provide valuable emergency temporary accommodation for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 typically between 1 and 3 nights. The work that Night Stop undertakes has proved extremely valuable for a number of reasons. Firstly, it allows time for risk assessments and referral work to be completed to support young people into the commissioned accommodation. Secondly, it allows some respite for parents and young people whilst mediation work is completed to get them back home.

What needs to happen now?

There is an urgent need to create housing stock which provides independent living options and move-on accommodation options for our care experienced young people. A scoping exercise has been undertaken, taking into account the number of properties which have been and will be required for care experienced young people year on year. This scoping exercise uses our current demographic in terms of cared for and care experienced young people and would be based on what is known currently in respect of mandated numbers of allocations for Torbay in respect of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

	No. of cared for that were turning 18	Those care experienced young people who remained staying put at 18	Total of staying Put through the year	Those care experienced young people that remained in a supported Lodgings post 18	16+ cared for spend on accommodation	18+ Spend on accommodation/Lodgings
19-20	37	12	16	14	£2,888,468	£ 399,218
20-21	35	9	20	22	£ 2,050,501	£ 648,876
21-22	41	10	29	26	£1,582,320	£ 356,465
		Projected		New Projected		
22-23	32	11	36	10	£ 2,600,000	£ 750,000
23-24	28	21	40	12	£3,000,000	£ 800,000
24-25	28	28	56	15	£ 3,500,000	£ 1,000,000
	UASC					
21-22	2	0	0	2	£82,215	£ 11,250
22-23	7	2	2	7	£192,920	£ 85,680

As a result of this scoping exercise, we have been able to project on the basis of young people's dates of birth (in terms of accommodation needs at the point of turning eighteen), and projected end dates in relation to semi-independent transitional accommodation and Staying Put

arrangements the accommodation need for care experienced young people per quarter over the next three years.

Year	Q1 (April, May, June)	Q2 (July, August, September)	Q3 (October, November, December)	Q4 (January, February, March)	Total
22-23	24	19	20	26	89
23-24	31	27	22	21	101
24-25	28	41	32	26	127

A new housing strategy that will be presented to Council on 29 March for approval, postponed from 7 March. A copy of the papers can be viewed on the following link. [Agenda for Council on Tuesday, 7 March 2023, 5.30 pm \(torbay.gov.uk\)](#). This makes reference to the importance of accommodation for Care Experienced young people. The strategy draws upon the evidence base and assessment of need in Torbay.

A project plan is in place to deliver the strategy. Project 1.2 under Improving Housing Supply has been included: Provide a flexible approach to allow access to a mix economy of 101 units of varying types of accommodation, to improve the housing outcomes for care experienced leavers by 2023/24 Q4. The quantum of the need is based on the Temporary Accommodation Care Experienced Young People Accommodation and Sufficiency Plan 2022)

Risks

Financial risk: should this housing stock remain inaccessible for care experienced young people, there is a significant financial risk associated with other options, for example ongoing funding of hotel and bed and breakfast options (on average at a cost of £900 a week) or short term use of high-cost semi-independent provisions (often at a cost of £2500 a week).

Reputational risk: as highlighted by Ofsted and in line with best practice in relation to care experienced provision, the aim should be that no care experienced young person is homeless or placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. Failure to address this would lead to mistrust in services by care experienced young people themselves, and a lack of confidence in Torbay as a corporate parent. In addition, failure to resolve this highlighted issue would be a significant barrier to the further developmental journey for Torbay in line with their regulatory inspection framework outcome.

Sufficiency risk: the current sufficiency mapping in regard to placements relies on throughflow in the system, particularly in relation to the availability of transitional semi-independent provision through the block contract. Should there not be sufficiency move-on accommodation available, this will in turn have a knock on impact on the availability of semi-independent provision for those cared for children between the ages of 16-18 who may be identified for these provisions in line with their transition planning. This will potentially lead to an increase in the use of higher cost semi-independent provisions, and this in turn will have a significant impact on the management of the overall placements budget.

Overview and Scrutiny from Outside Agencies

DHLUC Visit

A monitoring visit was conducted in person by the DHLUC on 22.09.22. This followed a virtual visit the previous year to monitor progress in Torbay following a visit prior to Covid. It is true to say that the visit prior to Covid revealed significant deficits within the services provided to all young people at risk of homelessness between the ages of 16 and 25 with a number of 16/17 year olds being accommodated in bed and breakfast and no plans to move them into appropriate, safe accommodation. The visit in 2021 demonstrated significant progress mainly due to the Youth Homeless prevention Team moving over into Early Help along with a joint CSC/Housing protocol being well established.

The visit in September 2022 is summarised as follows:-

1. Temporary Accommodation and Youth Homelessness is on the corporate risk register for scrutiny, commitment and oversight.
2. Corporate Parenting Board has key leads to champion areas of priority, with a dedicated lead for Housing.
3. Housing Strategy is being refreshed.
4. New process and commitment to ending use of B&B with DCS sign off and oversight.
5. Recommissioned Housing Related Support with block contracts for YP aged 16-24 and care leavers - x65 bedspaces.

The above demonstrates progress against section 3.1.9 of what was the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) at that time.

6. Joint working protocols updated, and this includes advocacy for all 16/17 year old's that present as homeless.

The above fulfils the criteria of 3.1.10 of what was the CCIP at that time. However, it should be noted that further work needs to be completed regarding aware and applying the Southwark judgement consistently. Training is planned to be delivered regarding this across CSC and Housing.

7. DFE funded program of new Family Hubs planned, to include a response to youth homelessness within x 3 areas (which we now know we are successful by being one of the first 75 LAs notified).
8. Applying for Youth Investment Fund and consider if there is an opportunity to use this for 'Trauma Informed Approaches' joined up with Housing. This application was submitted on 29.09.22 and amounts to potentially a £750k investment into the Windmill and Acorn sites in Torquay.
9. Working with BetterGov to develop and improve data join up and reporting across Housing and Children's Services.

The above demonstrates progress against section 3.1.14 of what was the CCIP at that time. In general, Kim Davies (the leader reviewer) was satisfied that Torbay has made progress following on from her visit in 2021, significant progress following her visit in 2018 whereby the service was judged not fit for purpose and, was leaving young people in vulnerable and at times dangerous situations.

Despite the above noted progress, the DHLUC noted that Torbay needs to progress further and specifically in areas of work with homeless young people as follows:-

1. There is a detachment between housing HCLIC data and CSC LL data. The lack of a

consistent approach with collecting, collating, and analysing data makes for a confusing view of the situation in Torbay for young people and their housing needs. **This will be addressed once the Business Intelligence team is established.**

2. Housing information for young people is not easily accessible and the websites across all Council areas are under-developed. This includes what to do in an emergency as well as the Local Offer to care experienced young people. **This will be addressed via the virtual Family hub Website.**
3. Young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with complex needs have limited wrap-around multi-agency support on offer to them via Adult Services. **This is being addressed now via a multi-agency 'virtual team that meets quarterly, with the first meeting held in November 2022. Young people to be discussed at the panel will be identified at the YHPP. The object of the panel discussions is to produce a purposeful support plan for the young people that meets their needs holistically as adults which in turn allows them to live as independent as possible.**

Mark Riddell Visit

Mark Riddell (DFE advisor for Care Experienced Young people) visited Torbay in the latter part of 2022 in order to evaluate services provided to care experienced young people. Following this visit he made a number of recommendations that form part of the overall corporate parenting action plan. With regards to the Housing strand, the objectives and actions are as follows:-

- 1 Work effectively to identify the risk of homelessness amongst our care experienced young people and ensure early intervention to address this?

Actions:

Undertake an audit of pathway plans, to consider how well the risk of homelessness is considered within this assessment.

- 2 As corporate parents across the Council and the partnership, do more to ensure that all care experienced young people have access to safe, affordable and sustainable long term permanent accommodation at the right time?

Actions:

Develop a Torbay Rent Guarantor Scheme.

- 3 Is there more we could be doing as corporate parents amongst our cohort of private landlords, to enhance their understanding of the needs of care experienced young people and what support they could access in their role as landlord?

Actions:

Plan an awareness raising event for private landlords regarding the role of Personal Advisors in supporting tenancy sustainability for care experienced young people.

- 4 How can we more effectively support providers and fostering families, to support preparation for independence and independent living?

Actions:

Review and refresh the current Preparation for Independence Strategy.

Summary

The challenges in general regarding housing in Torbay are well documented. However, securing appropriate housing is particularly challenging for young people with these challenges being amplified for 16/17 year olds and those young people who are care experienced. Despite the high number of 16/17 year olds and care experienced young people finding themselves at risk of homelessness over the last 12 months the overall number requiring Youth Homelessness and Resource Allocation Panel oversight has reduced. This has been due to a number of factors including more robust mechanisms to manage and support this cohort (joined up work between CSC and Housing Options) and ensuring early identification allows enough time for meaningful preventative work to be delivered. Nevertheless, as the data demonstrates in this report, there is a high level of dependence on interim commissioned accommodation coupled with a significant number of young people that will be turning 18 over the next 12 to 24 months. The requirement to deliver the housing strategy and accommodation that properties for vulnerable young people is imperative and could result in a perfect storm in the not too distant future that will put a high number of vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness.

Torbay are both being supported and scrutinised by Government agencies (DLHUC, DFE, etc). This support is being translated into robust action plans going forward that is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Housing Stream. Nevertheless, no matter how comprehensive this plan is and how robust the operational work is, this does not detract from the fact that the absence of housing stock for vulnerable young people is a significant risk that escalate over the next 12 to 18 months.

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

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
30/1/23	24	<p>That the Cabinet be recommended to approve the revised Corporate Parenting Strategy as set out in the submitted report subject to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. amend paragraph 1.2 to read 'wider partnership'; 2. to include photos and membership of the whole of the Corporate Parenting Board and not just the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services in the forward to show that this was their collective responsibility; 3. to include reference to the housing needs for care experienced young people and reference to the Torbay's Housing Crisis Review recommendations set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to consider paying private landlords more than the standard one month deposit (normally the equivalent to one month's rent) to encourage them to rent properties to care experienced young people to give them more confidence they will not be left out of pocket once the young person has moved on; • to request that provision of new accommodation for care experienced young people should be a priority 	Report submitted to the Cabinet on 21 March 2023

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		<p>for TorVista Homes and other registered housing providers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to explore options to enable more care experienced young people to remain longer term with their foster carers; • to explore options for Banding in Devon Home Choice to see if care experienced young people can be given a higher priority and what processes are in place; and • to request that officers look at good practice from other local authorities when refreshing the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to see how we can encourage the development of more larger family homes, single units, units for care experienced young people or units to assist adults with a disability to live independently; and <p>4. page 12 of the Strategy to be amended to reflect that The Circle and My Voice participation groups are no longer facilitated by Torbay Youth Trust and have been brought back inhouse.</p>	
30/1/23	25	<p>1. that the Sub-Board requests that Children and Family Health Devon be invited to attend their next meeting to provide an update on what they were doing to resolve the lack of a CAMHS support for the Youth Justice</p>	Complete – they have been invited to the next meeting and confirmed attendance.

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		<p>Service to ensure that provision of at least one day a week is commissioned as soon as possible as well as responding to overall issues in connection with the lack of access for young people to CAMHS services; and</p> <p>2. that the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board supports the proposal for Youth Provision at the One World Café.</p>	<p>An email was sent to the TDA and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing – Councillor Swithin Long expressing the Sub-Board’s support on 2 February 2023.</p>