

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

23 July 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillors Fellows (Vice-Chair), Nicolaou, Spacagna and Twelves

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Tanny Stobbart, Play Torbay

Jim Funnell, Voluntary and Community Sector and Alternative Provider (Education)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Chris Lewis and David Thomas,
And Kole Gjokolaj (Youth Parliament))

12. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Cook (Non-voting Co-opted Member, who was represented by Jim Funnell), Jo Hunter (Voting Co-opted Member) and Hayley Costar (Non-voting Co-opted Member).

It was reported that Laura Colman was no longer a Parent Governor Co-opted Member on the Sub-Board as she had reached the end of her term of office.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Sub-Board held on 19 May and 2 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

14. Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2025-26

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Bye and the Head of Torbay Youth Justice Service – Jon Ralph presented the report on the new Youth Justice Plan for 2025-26 and responses to key lines of enquiry around actions to reduce antisocial behaviour in Torbay and responded to Members' questions. The Plan had been submitted to the Youth Justice Board by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025, with a note that it would be reviewed by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board and ratified by the Cabinet.

It was noted that good progress had been made since the last update on the Youth Justice Plan with a single action remaining as red relating to accommodation, which had now been approved but would not be operational until Autumn due to adaptations required and delays as asbestos was found on site.

Members noted that Hayley Costar from Devon and Cornwall Police was unable to attend the meeting but had provided a statement that she had considered the Youth Justice Plan and confirmed that the Police had played an active part in shaping the document and therefore were in broad agreement with its aims.

Sadie Hall, Assistant Director for Women, Children and Young People, NHS Devon (Integrated Care Board – ICB), welcomed the ICB being part of a partnership working together to help reduce youth offending. Sadie advised as well as working with Torbay Council that she also sat on the Youth Justice Boards in Plymouth and Devon County Council and was committed to working together as part of the ICB's statutory duties.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- was the antisocial behaviour real or a perception;
- the data sets were small e.g. 36% of children known to the Service have special educational needs or an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), what was the reoffending rate of this cohort (it was noted that this was one of the areas that was disproportionate often due to speech and language difficulties - a written response would be provided);
- feedback from young people was that there was a lack of things to do in Torbay, meetings had been held with the Divisional Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure about using some of the empty shops in Torquay Town Centre for cafes and spaces for young people and how was data being used to create better opportunities for young people, and young people want to know what progress had been made;
- how much was it a perception from young people that there was not enough to do and how much was the Council not getting the message out to young people;
- 70% of child First Time Entrants (to the formal youth justice system) young people had experienced one or more fixed term exclusions prior to their offence, how many of these had an EHCP (a written response would be provided);
- there had been a rise in theft and handling stolen goods in 2024/25 with this being the most prevalent category of offending, how many of these cases related to food theft and what proportion of the 73% of children working with the Service in 2024/25 were on free school meals (a written response would be provided);
- was there a reduction in numbers coming through the Service when the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme was running;
- could the shoplifting figures be higher with some chains not taking action;
- what support was offered to the family if a young person was caught stealing food; and
- was there a problem with county lines and young people getting involved.

Members received the following responses:

- there were low numbers of young people behaving in an antisocial manner coming through the system. The focus was around prevention and linking with

the work of Operation Town Centres. The feedback from young people was they would like more things to do, and this would be picked up by the new Youth Hub Manager. The Youth Justice Service had started providing their own activity programmes and linked into others due to a maximum of five young people on activity programmes. There was some funding through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and Community Safety and this would be used to extend a programme of support to young people.

- there had been discussions with traders in Fleet Walk but further work was required about the potential impact of different uses and how it may impact on the businesses (a written update would be provided by the Director of Pride in Place).
- the report referred to several activities including camps and water sports available for young people but Kole Gjokolaj (Torbay Youth Parliament) advised that he was unaware of them and that some of these activities were less attractive to 15 year olds and over. It was recognised that there was a need to develop a strategy and ensure better communication of activities to encourage more young people to participate in them;
- there was praise for the Youth Justice Service and the work they do with young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as part of the recent SEND Area Inspection report;
- the theft and shop lifting incidents included some stealing alcohol with the highest amount being food. It was acknowledged that more work was required to explore the root cause and challenges for people living in deprived communities and what deprives them of outcomes for a better life to see where work could be targeted;
- there was no obvious change in numbers coming to the Service when HAF programmes were running. There was a need to build on the strengths of the HAF programme, with the Service taking young people to activities until they were able to go to them on their own as they do not always have family networks or support to take them to activities. There was also an impact on the young people due to an absent father or lack of positive male adult role models. The Police Intervention Clinic look at all factors and what else was happening in the young person's life and look at appropriate intervention to support the individual;
- not all shopkeepers were reporting theft, especially where there was insufficient evidence to prosecute. All the prevention work was voluntary so young people only engage with the Service if they want to. It was noted that the Police in Paignton were working with local supermarkets in Paignton as they had seen a spike in shoplifting. Whilst there had been a spike in 2024/25, Members were advised that there had not been many thefts reported to the Service in the last two months;
- a lot of families were known to Children's Services and the Youth Justice Service would liaise with the Social Worker to identify appropriate support. The Parenting Support Worker would look at what support was being provided to the family from Children's Services, but do not have any cash to support the families financially. They would signpost and use other provisions to support families, including helping to ensure they have access to relevant benefits and support. Some of the offending was influenced by people outside the family who may not be known. Exploitation was linked to those young people who were not attending school; and

- young people were at risk of county lines activities, including moving of drugs but there was a higher risk of five or six young people involved in high end vehicle theft involving domestic burglary breaking into people's houses to steal the car keys and taking the car, this could also lead to young people driving cars without licences and had contributed towards the increase in theft occurrences. There was a Police operation targeting adults and young people involved in these crimes.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board welcome the progress made by the Youth Justice Service and partners and thank them for their work in implementing and updating the Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-26; and
2. that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the Youth Justice Plan for 2025-26.

15. Youth Provision and Physical Activity

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Bye and Director of Public Health - Lincoln Sargeant introduced the submitted report on youth provision and physical activity. Torbay on the Move is a strategic approach to promoting more physical activity across the board with the submitted report focussing on children and young people. It looked to build a shift in behaviour for children and young people linking to climate change and the environmental benefits from shift to active forms of travel in the future as well as seeing the benefits of physical and mental health from physical activity.

The Director of Active Devon - Louise Marshall and the Senior Partnerships Manager, Active Devon - Rebecca Skinner highlighted the work that Active Devon were involved with in supporting Torbay on the Move, which was a system and place based approach, recognising the partnerships in place and looking at the ways that more people could move around in their communities, as well as working with schools on ways to support people's mental health using the benefits of physical activity.

The Divisional Director Children's Services Transformation - Shaun Evans highlighted the links to the Youth Hub and work within Children's Services and wider Council but acknowledged that we need to work more collaboratively and holistically to join up to help realise the benefits of physical activity on good physical health and mental health. The redesign of Children's Services had enabled the Council to develop a Youth Offer which would be supported by the Youth Hub Manager and wider Team from 1 September 2025.

The Sub-Board asked questions in relation to the following:

- the report refers to additional opportunities for early years and school readiness, was any work being done to get parents to ditch buggies and prams similar to previous initiatives around ditching pacifiers and how much work was being done with early years providers;

- how many schools were involved in the Open Schools Programme work and did they work proactively with Active Devon;
- there were lots of free activities during the Summer for young people, what would the offer look like in the winter months;
- of the 11-18 years olds that were surveyed only 54% think there were clean, safe spaces to hang out in Torbay, what has been done to drill down into this statistic;
- how do we replicate the good work in some schools across Torbay to encourage others to do the same e.g. opening up their sports fields more, using learning from the Open Schools Programme;
- what percentage of the HAF places were aimed at elected home educated (EHE) children;
- how were young people from deprived communities enabled to access sports and other activities, which may be prohibitive due to costs;
- were there gaps in provision, especially for people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND);
- the Council was reviewing its Play Park Strategy, was Torbay on the Move involved;
- was there anything in place for partners to lower the cost or provide free opportunities such as free taster days for young people to try different sports as previously provided; and
- was there anything to help children be able to swim and increase the use of leisure centres, beaches and pools and raise awareness of water safety, linked to UNICEF child friendly work.

Members received the following responses:

- The Public Health Lead for Early Years was looking at how to engage with Family Hubs around early skills development. There was a need to identify priorities which put children and young people high up on the list of work on physical activity and there were a number of proposed campaigns. This included working with the support workers for parents and children, practitioner training for those working in early years settings and child and parent clubs to learn and do things together. Active Devon are exploring opportunities with South West Early Years Stronger Practice hub to role out a programme such as Healthy Movers Devon wide, alongside an opportunity of funding from Torbay on the Move;
- Paignton Academy, Torquay Academy and Oldway Primary School were involved in the Open Schools Programme but it had now come to an end. The Paignton Academy gym was funded by the project and was continuing. There were new School Sports Partnerships and the Open Schools Programme may be rebranded in the future. There was varying participation from schools with the Programme for example Ellacombe Academy was not able to take part and Torquay Academy only took part in the first year and not years two and three. The importance of ensuring that Active Devon were talking to the right people within the school was highlighted;
- Appendix 1 just set out the additional offer during the Summer, the main report identified all the different activities available throughout the year. The HAF Programme also ran during Easter and in between Christmas and New Year;

- there had not been an opportunity to drill down into the statistic around young people feeling there were clean, safe spaces to hang out in Torbay and it was recognised that there was a need to gain a higher level of understanding about the young people's perception and what they were trying to convey and what they need or want and compare perception against reality. It was intended that further work would be done to drill down the responses further and how that could be translated into something positive that we could do with the young people. There were some discussions around how we may prioritise bringing back play areas and other spaces to make them fit for purpose as well as physical work, working with communities and young people so that they could embrace the areas as theirs. Tanny Stobbart from Play Torbay highlighted the work they were doing in the communities running activities in their parks, working with Community Partnerships and various Council departments and other organisations such as the Greenspaces Partnership with three pilot areas being explored (Dart Park, Abbey Park and Victoria Park, Chelston). Play Torbay was keen to work with Torbay on the Move to see how they can work collaboratively to make the spaces safer and more accessible. The benefits of bringing young people and communities together highlighting their right to play and provide activities that work was endorsed by all. Part of the work of the Imagine This Partnership was to listen to children through their engagement groups. Members acknowledged the benefit of codesigning and partnership working to improve outcomes for young people;
- Torbay on the Move now have information, tools and resources from the Open Schools Programme that could be used to help other schools make their facilities open to the community outside of the school day;
- The eligibility for the HAF programme was based on free school meals, with 15% to target other young people, which may be children with disabilities who need opportunities for play activities during holiday time, this element was discretionary with the rest based on eligibility. EHE was one of the targeted areas where the Council was making progress, but there was a need to understand the reasons for EHE as this could be for a number of reasons, the biggest being due to social anxiety, sometimes HAF could be a hook to get the young people into social environments and get them involved in activities and slowly get them back into the school environment;
- part of the work of the Torbay on the Move was to look at lower socio-economic barriers, working in partnership to look at how we could make activities as accessible as possible. National programmes ensure they were as accessible as possible or free. There were two funds to support groups to apply for funding to make accessible opportunities, including Believe to Achieve to help those who can perform at County or national level. The Team was looking at how they could engage as many children and families as possible to design them to ensure that the facilities were right for them;
- Torbay on the Move identified SEND as a gap in provision and want to work with partnerships looking at what the provision was. There were some opportunities already but a gap in ensuring there was something for everyone. The VeloPark have adaptive cycles but they were not used, Torbay on the Move want to engage with Cycle Torbay and deliver regular adaptive cycle activities which could be supported by British Cycling and Limitless looking towards having something in place from Spring/Summer 2026. There was a need to ensure it was sustainable past an initial Stage. There was also a need

to link up with wider statutory partners as well as the voluntary and community sector to join up all provisions and use existing resources smarter or together looking at the place and transport as well. Outdoor Partnership had identified Torbay as an area to identify more outdoor activities e.g. walking and water sports, with 50% funding available with a need to see how we could match the funding;

- Torbay on the Move had not been actively involved in the development of the revised Play Park Strategy but would welcome the opportunity to be involved; and
- Swimming was part of the schools' curriculum but there had been a gap with children who missed out due to Covid-19. There did not appear to be consistency across schools in terms of swimming and water safety. Some schools took children to swimming pools or the beach whilst others did not. The cost of families taking children to swimming pools could be prohibitive for some people.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board welcome and thank colleagues for the report in relation to the overall transformation work on physical activity for young people and the Torbay on the Move work;
2. that Tanny Stobbart provide an update to the next meeting on the work with the play parks and community as part of Action Tracker;
3. that the Cabinet be recommended:
 - a. that Torbay on the Move and Councillors be recommended to engage with more schools to support them in opening up their facilities to the community outside of the normal school day;
 - b. that Torbay on the Move be recommended to engage with early years providers and family hubs as part of the joined-up partnership working to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity in early years development;
 - c. that the Director of Pride Place be recommended to engage with Torbay on the Move in the development of the Play Parks Strategy;
 - d. that opportunities be explored to provide free sports taster days for children and young people;
 - e. to provide targeted physical and sports activities to children and families in the deprived wards within Torbay; and
 - f. to explore why 46% of children and young people perceived that spaces were not safe or accessible and report back to a future meeting.

16. Family First Partnership Programme - 6 Month Update

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Bye and the Divisional Director Children's Services Transformation - Shaun Evans provided an overview of the submitted report on the Family First Programme, which was a programme of change in partnership with the Council, Health, Police, Education and the voluntary and community sector to focus on prevention rather than response. This involved moving resources into early help rebranded as Family Help and the development of Youth Hubs aligned with the Family Hubs as part of the implementation of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill that comes into effect in 2027. There were ten pathfinder authorities who had all interpreted the reforms differently and implemented them differently over a two-year period which each receiving circa £5m. The Council and our partners have 12 months to implement the changes with approximately £660k to implement as this was based on the children's population of the area, which would be particularly challenging for Torbay.

Sadie Hall, Assistant Director for Women, Children and Young People, NHS Devon (Integrated Care Board – ICB), highlighted the challenges for the NHS due to large scale national changes e.g. NHS 10-year plan, neighbourhood working and realigning NHS to cover the same boundary as the Police i.e. Devon and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. The ICB was committed to Family First working with Torbay, Plymouth and Devon colleagues and looking at how this would work with the wider footprint and what elements would need to be shaped locally. The secondment of a health post would give the best opportunity to share intelligence and work in partnership to codesign a way forward. Multi-Agency Child Protection Team (MACPT) workshops had already been held in Plymouth to strengthen partnership working and ensure the localised element comes through. Children remain a priority for the NHS.

Members noted the Family First approach looked at whole family thinking, having multidisciplinary systems in place to help the family including links with Adult Social Care, ensuring they receive the right service at the right time by the right practitioner. The report identified 4 national workstreams and 5 local workstreams to take this work forward looking at needs across education and social care and how to make the best use of resources. The Council had been successful in its bid for a Children's Home and was looking to have potentially two, one for children with complex needs who would traditionally be placed out of area and one for 12-week assessments looking at reunification with the family where this was likely to happen. The implementation of free school meals opt out would be a step towards addressing some of the poverty and deprivation, so that parents opt out rather than applying as it was known that the application process could be difficult for some parents – this initiative was as a result of a previous recommendation from the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board. As Pupil Premium arises from free school meals, which was being rolled out to nurseries and early years settings, more funding would be available to support those settings.

It was noted that the Council had been proactive in preparation for the Family First approach as part of its redesign of Children's Services with many of the structural changes due to be in place from 1 September 2025 to get the Family Help side up and running internally. The impact on partners was acknowledged as this was a very

different way of working, looking at training practitioners and helping them to be able to deliver on the help required.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- software issues were identified, was there a solution;
- it was expected to be implemented in 12 months (by March 2026) but it may be extended, what were the expectations; and
- would funding be extended if the timescale was extended.

The following responses were provided:

- there was an issue with the Liquid Logic software which 80% of local authorities were using, early help was in one module and the statutory elements were in another and they were unable to integrate. The Council had a work around due to be implemented in September, but the Government had advised not to do any localised change as there would be a roll out of a full system nationally;
- it was anticipated that the local workstreams would take more than 12 months to implement; and
- the Government's Spending Review referred to funding being agreed moving forward but not how much the fund would be. There would be some funding, however, most of the funding identified replaced the Supported Families Funding rather than being new funding.

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted report, the progress made and challenges going forward to implement the Family First Partnership Programme.

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

The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted action tracker. It was agreed that Councillor Fellows would provide an update on the Exeter YMCA Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) site visit that took place on 15 July 2025 at the next meeting under the Action Tracker item.

Chairwoman