

Friday, 07 November 2025

**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, 17 November 2025

commencing at **3.00 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left
corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Board

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillor Fellows (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicolaou

Councillor Tolchard
Councillor Twelves

Co-opted Members of the Board

Jo Hunter, Church of England Diocese

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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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** (Pages 5 - 10)
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 29 September 2025.
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 Chair decides are urgent.
5. **Young and Young Adult Carers Update** (Pages 11 - 12)
To review the refresh of the Young Carers Under 25 Strategy and make recommendations to the Cabinet.
6. **Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Children and Young People - October 2025** (Pages 13 - 60)
To consider the submitted report which provides an update on the support available for children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, with a focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
7. **Wraparound Programme** (Pages 61 - 98)

To review the delivery of the Wraparound Programme, including early years and Family Hubs.

- 8. Fostering Annual Report 2024 - 2025** (Pages 99 - 136)
To consider the Fostering Annual Report 2024 – 2025 and make recommendations to the Cabinet.
- 9. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker** (Pages 137 - 140)
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).

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

29 September 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillors Fellows (Vice-Chair), Nicolaou and Tolchard

Co-opted Members

Jo Hunter (Church of England Diocese)

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Mike Cook (Voluntary and Community Sector and Alternative Provider (Education)
Tanny Stobbart (Play Torbay – Representing Voluntary Children and Young People
Sector)

Nigel Yelland (Devon and Cornwall Police)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye and Chris Lewis)

18. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Twelves.

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 23 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

21. Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services - Councillor Bye and Director of Children's Services – Nancy Meehan outlined the submitted Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2024/2025 which had also considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and responded to questions. The Deputy Director of Safeguarding and Patient Safety, NHS Devon – Michele Thornberry also attended the meeting to respond to questions.

The key issues from the report included:

- The report was a statutory requirement and must be submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by 30 September 2025;
- The format of the report would be changing to a standardised format from next year to support national AI analysis of safeguarding trends;
- each statutory partner (Police, Health and the Council) had contributed to the report;
- key developments included the implementation of the Families First programme, restructuring of internal teams, and a renewed focus on mental health; and
- Torbay remains an outlier in terms of children in need, which has implications for future service delivery and funding.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- Why were hospital admissions for tooth decay in 0–17 year olds in Torbay more than double the South West and England averages? Was this primarily an NHS issue?
- Operation Compass had seen a rise in notifications. Was there support in place for children in early years and primary schools?
- In the child protection plan data, one category was blank. What does this represent? (A written response would be provided to clarify the blank category.)
- 10% of strategy meetings were not quorate. Was this affecting decision-making, and what was being done to improve it?
- What were the timescales for implementing the next steps, and how was capacity being managed?
- Education was not a statutory partner. How were we ensuring their involvement in safeguarding?
- Was attendance at Core Group meetings monitored, and were social workers always present?

The following responses were received:

- There were multi-factorial causes of tooth decay in 0-17 year olds, this included issues with parental awareness around dental hygiene, and access to dental services in the South West was limited. The NHS was prioritising children in care, with nurses supporting this vulnerable group. The issue remains a high priority.
- Operation Compass was a national programme where police notifications were sent to schools. In Torbay, the partnership extended this to early years settings and health visitors to ensure children under five were supported. Weekly meetings were held to review cases and ensure trauma was addressed.
- Strategy meetings should include the three statutory partners. While some meetings were not quorate, quality assurance and dip sampling were used to ensure decisions were sound. The move to Family Protection Teams aims to improve quoracy as all Teams will include statutory representatives.
- Transformation of Families First had started and was due to be completed by the end of the financial year. A plan had been submitted to the DfE, and key performance indicators (KPIs) were expected to be identified by the end

of November 2025. Capacity remains a challenge, especially with external pressures.

- Schools were invited to strategy meetings when relevant. Efforts were underway to secure education representation on sub-groups. A meeting with the DfE National Safeguarding Partner was scheduled for 3 November 2025 exploring this.
- There was no statutory requirement for quoracy in Core Groups. Every child protection case must be led by a qualified social worker. Dip sampling could be undertaken to review attendance.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to undertake a dip sampling of attendance at Core Group meetings to confirm that the correct people are attending to ensure that they are meeting the children's needs and provide a written update to the Sub-Board; and
2. that the Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note and endorse the contents of the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

22. Exploitation and Children Missing Update

The Team Manager – Exploitation – Katie Buckley outlined the submitted report which provided an update on exploitation and children missing and responded to questions. The key points included:

- A reduction in missing episodes in 2025, with notable improvements except in February. Although this may not tell the whole picture as not all children were being reported missing.
- Hidden missing children remain a concern, this was often linked to parental reluctance to report.
- The Philomena Protocol was being used to improve police responses.
- Multi-agency communication was strong, with escalation processes in place.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- What percentage of children go missing multiple times?
- Were children placed in Torbay from other areas going missing because they want to return home?
- What were children doing when they go missing?
- What was the new Police initiative for early intervention?
- Was the Philomena Protocol shared with others?
- How many missing children were also at risk of exploitation? (A written response would be provided.)
- Who conducts return home interviews for children placed in Torbay?
- Do we collect data on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and excluded children who go missing?

- What proactive work was being done in primary schools?

The following responses were provided:

- In May 2025, there were 46 missing episodes involving 29 children. Internal reviews were triggered when a child goes missing more than three times in three months.
- Some children attempt to travel long distances, including to airports to return to their home when placed out of area. Reciprocal conversations with placing authorities were held to ensure appropriate support was in place.
- When children go missing their activities vary from walking to clear their head, seeking substances, climbing buildings, or avoiding home due to mental health or exploitation etc.
- A child-centred Policing Team had been established to co-ordinate with safeguarding services and provide one-to-one support for vulnerable children.
- The Philomena Protocol was shared with others and Members were encouraged to raise the profile of this – more information could be found at <https://www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/notices/pp/philomena-protocol/>. It was best practice to complete it with carers and share it with the Police to aid in locating missing children.
- The placing authority was responsible for return to home interviews, but oversight was maintained to ensure interviews were conducted and information shared.
- Data was collected on SEND and excluded children who go missing. 55% of the most vulnerable children have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Work was ongoing with schools and youth centres.
- Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) training was available to all professionals including Primary Schools. Capacity had increased, and targeted work was being done with Years 5 and 6.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the submitted report on exploitation and children missing and endorse the proposed next steps; and
2. that the future report includes a case study to show the difference that has been made to children and their families and provides an update on the move of the Exploitation Team within the communities.

23. Exclusions and Absence

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Bye and the Divisional Director – Education – Hannah Baker outlined the submitted report which provided an update on exclusions and absence and responded to questions. The key points highlighted included:

- Improvements in attendance and exclusions across Torbay schools.

- EAOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) programme had been streamlined from 72 bespoke programmes to 36 high-quality offers.
- Over 500 children were currently in EAOTAS, with more than half returning to mainstream or specialist settings.
- Concerns raised about off-rolling practices and the rise in elected home education (EHE), particularly in secondary schools.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) locality pilot underway with speech therapists and educational psychologists supporting schools.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- How were college places for children EOTAS funded?
- Was there any evidence that Year 11 children were being off rolled to protect exam results?
- Of the 501 children in EHE, 183 were secondary age. How many of the 160 attending college were Torbay children? (A written response would be provided.)
- Were children being excluded or suspended due to uniform issues, and what support was in place for them?
- Was there sufficient capacity within the EHE Team to ensure children were safe?
- Play Torbay was working with universities on forest school models. Could this be an alternative for EHE children? (Note: Hannah Baker agreed to meet with Play Torbay to explore this further and maximise outcomes for children.)
- Were families of children in EOTAS being informed that they were prioritised for specialist placements?

The following responses were received:

- The college places for children EOTAS were not overseen by the local authority. South Devon College offers a re-engagement programme for Key Stage 4 students, funded through general grant allocations. The students were not on the college roll and do not attend full-time courses. The programme was designed to encourage post-16 enrolment.
- Anecdotal evidence suggested that some parents feel they had no choice in elected home education for their children. One example involved a child being sent home due to wearing the wrong blazer. The Council was working with schools to understand the narrative and ensure that EHE was genuinely a parental choice.
- There were instances where children were sent home due to non-conforming uniforms. Support varies, and future reports will detail what provisions were in place during suspensions or exclusions.
- There was no legal framework that allows services to enforce visits or monitor education quality for EHE. This remains a challenge.
- Families of children in EOTAS were being consulted on specialist provision. Annual reviews were used to assess readiness for reintegration. The Council now has greater sufficiency in specialist provision and is committed to re-engaging children in formal education.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the submitted report on exclusions and absence; and
2. that the next exclusions and absence report includes:
 - breakdown by gender and age of primary school children in EHE;
 - identification of children who have not started school in EHE;
 - number of pupils on free school meals who are excluded or suspended;
 - number of suspensions due to uniform issues;
 - support available during exclusions/suspensions and whether children are actually at home;
 - detailed information on Year 11 pupils and actions to reduce school changes; and
 - whether EHE children are known to the Exploitation Team.

24. 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 confirmed that all actions were now completed.

Tanny Stobbart provided a verbal update on the Play in the Park events and agreed to circulate a written report once it had been signed off by the Trustees.

Councillor Fellows provided a verbal update on the YMCA Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) project in Exeter that Councillors Bye, Fellows and Tolchard visited on 15 July 2025. It was noted that each YMCA operates separately under a franchise type arrangement and was responsible for raising their own funds. Councillor Fellows reported the success of the projects in Exeter and how they had been integrated sensitively within the community and was assured that the project in Paignton would also have a positive impact and provide much needed accommodation to homeless young people in Torbay.

Chair

Young Carers (0-18)

What support is available to Young Carers?

Overview

The Young Carer team have been focused on direct work over the last few years due to changing management oversight since the upheaval of moving from the Youth Trust back into Torbay Council in 2023. As part of the recent Children's Services restructure to support the government's Families First Partnership programme reforms, the service now sits within the Youth Hub as part of Family Help. This brings together services specifically for young people, including the Youth Service and Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service. This will enable a wider offer, more flexible use of resources and improved collaboration with-partners to improve access and engagement from young people in Torbay.

As part of the ongoing work to define and establish the Youth Hub within the community, we are currently reviewing the service offer in line with the needs of young people.

This will include:

- Making referral pathways clearer and easier for professionals and individuals to access and submit. We have had a downward trend in referral numbers over the last 12 months. Further analysis is required to understand the reasons for this reduction.
- Implementation of clear timeframes and expectations for assessments and reviews to include improved recording on Liquid Logic. This will include the introduction of a home visit for the initial meeting following a new referral to ensure the assessment factors in the parents' views and understanding of life at home for the young person.
- Mapping the support and respite opportunities available in each locality to improve signposting and engagement.
- Focusing on the impact of targeted interventions, activities and support provided to ensure needs are being met and inform future developments. Explore barriers to engagement, particularly around transport needs and out-of-school activities. Consider Youth Service cross-over.
- Working with the Young Adult Carers (YAC) service to support smooth transitions into adult services and improve the transitional support between primary and secondary school.

The current support for Young Carers if assessed as appropriate includes:

- Weekly 1 to 1 intervention with a named Young Carer project worker for a minimum of 6 weeks. These all currently take place in school. Workers have strong relationships with most local schools.

- Optional check-in opportunities with Young Carer Project Worker at school. 1 per term in primary age range and weekly lunch club at secondary age.
- Group sessions with other Young Carers facilitated by Young Carer Project Worker take place once per month at primary age and once per fortnight for secondary groups. Average attendance: 7 young people per session.
- Invitations to attend 'one-off' events and activities to enable protected family time including half-term Forest School, Train of Lights and Circus tickets.

In addition, there is support from the Young Adult Carers Services (16-25), (Torbay Carers Services, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT)), for Young Adult Carers aged 16 or 17 (as well as those up to and including age 24).

Carers of this age can be supported by either or both services, depending on which service the young carer feels is most appropriate to them. The YAC Service offers 1 to 1 support tailored to the individual's identified needs, access to group drop-ins, and access to a wide range of activities (funded by its charitable strand). Whilst some Young Carers choose to continue to receive ongoing support from the Young Carers service alongside accessing the activities run by the YAC service, others may choose to receive all support through the YAC service.

How are opportunities for Young Carers promoted?

This is currently communicated through email notices to those Young Carers on the register and shared with schools. Young Carers Service is looking at introducing a menu of events as part of the assessment process and exploring the use of social media to engage more directly with Young Carers.

For Young Carers aged 16 or 17 who are accessing the Young Adult Carers Service (16 – 25), opportunities are communicated individually through 1-1 sessions, emails and text messages, and Instagram (an NHS-approved social media). The wider promotional material for the service is distributed through a wide range of organisations – e.g. South Devon College and other educational establishments, GP Surgeries, NHS premises, Carer's Centres etc. Also promoted on TSDFT website ([Carers under 25 - Torbay Carers Service - Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust](#)), Torbay Council Website ([Carer support - Torbay Council](#)), and the YAC website ([Torbay Young Adult Carers](#)).

The refresh of the Young Carers Under 25 Strategy is now commencing – this has been delayed whilst waiting for the new staffing structure in Young Carers Services, which is now in place.

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny board

Date: 17/11/2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Children and Young People - October 2025

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

Cabinet Member Contact Details: [N/A](#)

Director Contact Details: N/A

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 support available for children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health, with a focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

2. Reason for Report

- 2.1. To provide assurance to the members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board relating to the Key Lines of Enquiry below;
- 1) Delivery of the outcomes framework for mental health in schools.
 - 2) Access to mental health services for children and young people diagnosed with autism.
 - 3) Support provided to assist families when young people are on waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or who don't meet the threshold, including how the community and voluntary sector support.
 - 4) How access to Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) (previously CAMHS) has improved and updated waiting list position.
 - 5) Action being taken to reduce waiting lists to ensure young people get access to support sooner.
 - 6) How the access to the Schools Mental Health Programme has been improving outcomes for young people.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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

4. Appendices

N/A

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 Appendix 1: NHS Devon Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategy. (Attached)
- 5.2 Appendix 2: NHS Devon Neurodiversity Strategy. (Attached)

6. Supporting Information

NHS Devon's Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing and Neurodiversity strategies bring together several strategic drivers, the current context of services and gaps in need to inform the future commissioning of these services. Development of implementation plans within each local area are currently underway with each of the local authorities and partner organisations with these anticipated to be signed off in December.

Services commissioned by NHS Devon that support children and young people with their Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health needs are inclusive for all young people, including those with Autism, ADHD and other neurodiverse conditions, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

These services include; Mental Health Support Teams (MHST), MyWay (Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Service), Mood, Emotions and Relationships (MERS) (previously known as Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the PINs project, Key Workers and the Dynamic Support Register.

1) Delivery of the outcomes framework for Mental Health Support Teams.

The Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) Outcome Framework has been developed from the National Template. Devon Mental Health Support Teams report into the Mental Health Services Data Set which is compiled by NHS England. This records function and activity regarding the requirement to 'Deliver evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs.'

The outcomes framework includes measures around referral numbers, wait times, numbers of whole school approach interventions and type of activities, number of CYP, staff and parents supported with advice and guidance and where they were signposted onto. On-going work is underway between commissioners and Mental Health Support Team providers to formalise reporting against the Outcomes Framework.

The Mental Health Support Teams are overseen by the Mental Health Support Team Steering Group which is formed by representatives from the Children's Devon system including; Local authority representation, Mental Health providers, Mental Health Support Team leads, Commissioners and voluntary and community sector organisations.

This group has the oversight of the rollout of the Mental Health Support Teams Programme. Teams began being implemented in September 2019 with the NHS England National Target for all areas to reach 100% coverage by 2029/2030. A prioritisation matrix was developed and is regularly updated to inform the prioritisation of geographical rollout, taking into account the pupil population and the needs of the cohort. This is used to map the gap between current provision and predicted need to inform rollout in areas of priority using weighted prioritisation.

The prioritisation matrix considers;

- Average % of Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Number of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Number of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities whose primary need is Social Emotional and Mental Health
- Number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium
- Current Coverage: Number of Pupils with access to Mental Health Support Teams
- Estimated Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities whose primary need is Social Emotional and Mental Health

Mental Health Support Team's currently report against the access target though the Mental Health Services Data set which is submitted to NHS England. The access target is being achieved for the NHS Devon Footprint covering Torbay, Devon and Plymouth.

The teams within the Devon ICB footprint are seeing a higher number of children and young people referred within Torbay, Devon and Plymouth, than in any other area of the Southwest.

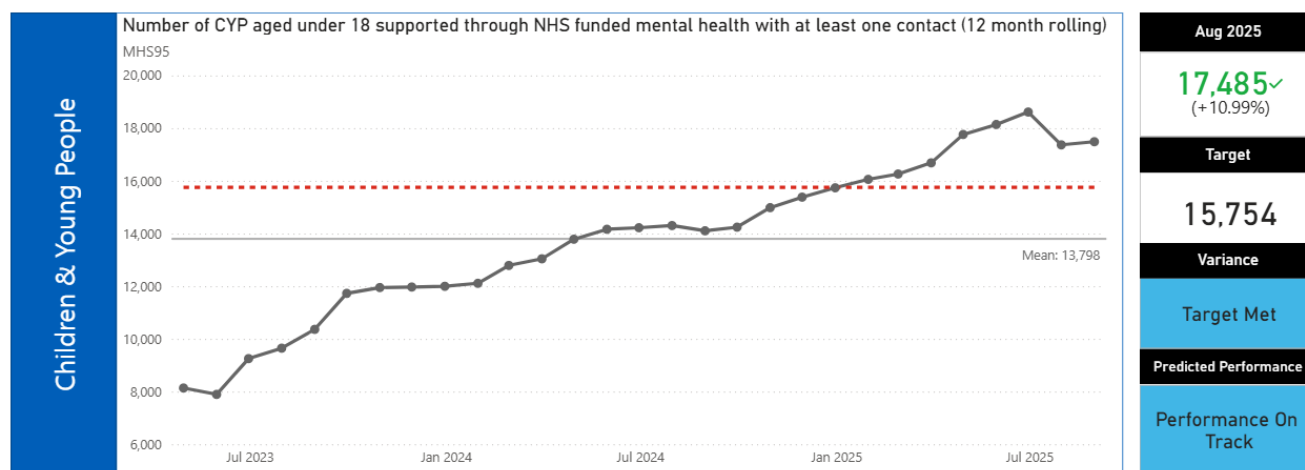
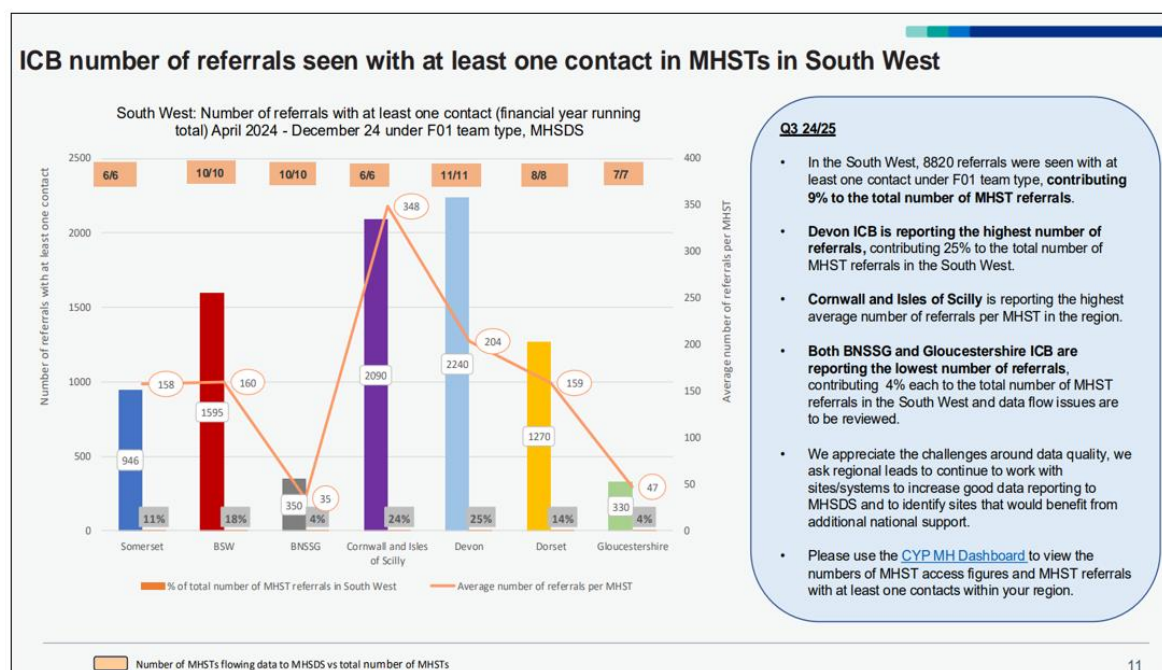


Diagram 1: CYP Access Target- Demonstration of achievement of access target at NHS Devon footprint



Picture 1: Extract from 2024-25 Q4 Devon Quarterly Check in slides report

2) Access to mental health services for children and young people diagnosed with autism.

Children and Young People diagnosed with autism can access the commissioned emotional mental health and wellbeing offers in Devon. The staff teams access training and support to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to support the individual needs of children and young people, including those with neurodiversity and other presentations that require adaptations to the service.

MyWay, Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Service provides a range of interventions to support children and young people with their wellbeing, their way. The service offers include; community based advice and guidance, community based therapeutic interventions, digital based advice and guidance and digital therapeutic interventions. The service is self-referral and accessible to all 11-17 year olds, with extended access for 8-25 year olds who are care experienced or who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The service has been commissioned with flexibility within the model to ensure it is accessible to a wide range of cohorts. The providers have focused on co-production within mobilisation to ensure that young people have been involved in the development of the service to help shape it to meet the needs of children and young people with a variety of needs, including Autism and other neurodiversity.

Mental Health Support Teams offer individual and group Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT) evidence-based interventions. Access to the teams is through self-referral. The emotional wellbeing mental health practitioners working in mental health support teams complete a unit focused on neurodiversity within their training and have specific resources available for various cohorts of young people including those who are neurodiverse, have special educational needs or who are care experienced.

NHS England have announced a 'MHST enhancement' to have teams focused on specific cohorts such as neurodiversity and trauma. Devon ICB has expressed an interest in being a pilot site. This will be an effective way of combining current work within the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) Programme and whole school approaches to supporting young people's social emotional and mental health needs, including those with neurodiversity, including Autism, ADHD and other conditions.

The offer can be found here: [The Mental Health Support Team in Schools \(MHST\) - Children and Family Health Devon](#) and includes; Mental health workshops for children and young people, parents, carers and education staff, mental health audits of schools, consultations for school staff and time to reflect/supervision spaces, mental health ambassador programme, Personal Social and Health Education lessons, parenting support and groups, including coffee mornings and training.

Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) (previously Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS)

Children and young people referred to Children Family Health Devon with a diagnosis of autism can access all pathways including those addressing mental health needs.

Children and Family Health Devon (CFHD) deliver specialist mental health services in Torbay. The Mood, Emotion and Relationships (MERS) Pathway (previously known as CAHMS) includes Children's Wellbeing Practitioners who provide low-intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy support, both on an individual and group basis within the community. These practitioners provide a specific offer to children and young people who are electively home educated. This service can be

accessed via referral from schools, primary care and also by self-referral from the young person or their parent/ carer.

In addition, if Children and Family Health Devon are assessing a young person for autism and recognise additional mental health needs, support for this will be provided in a number of ways including;

- Support from within other specialist Children and Family Health Devon pathways, including the Key Worker Team.
- Signposting to other relevant providers of support such as Mental Health Support Teams, Parental Minds, Young Devon etc.

3) Support provided to assist families when young people are on waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or who don't meet the threshold, including how the community and voluntary sector support.

There are a variety of emotional wellbeing and mental health support services available to children, young people and their families from both the NHS and community and voluntary sector organisations. These can be accessed before being referred or accepted to specialist health services, while waiting to be seen and after having received specialist treatment.

The MyWay (Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing) service has recently been commissioned to improve access to timely support, with the aim of reducing demand on acute mental health services and improving access to support.

[MyWay](#) is commissioned to provide support to 5000 young people a year with the aim to improve their mental health and wellbeing through timely access to preventative care and tailored support.

Children and Young People aged 11-18 are eligible to access the service with those who have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities or who are care experienced being able to access the service between the extended age range of 8-25.

The service is provided by the Young Devon Partnership bringing organisations together to ensure the best possible support is available for young people within their area.

Organisations that form the partnership are;

- **Young Devon**- delivering wellbeing support in local communities for three decades
- **Kooth**- years of experience in digital wellbeing nationally and internationally.
- **Space**- delivering open access youth services across Devon.
- **Encompass**- providing the right support and advice to local people
- **Plymouth City Council**- developing wellbeing in youth groups

The service is made up of four main offers;

1. **Community-Based Advice and Guidance:** Providing face-to-face support to increase hope, resilience, and engagement in education and community life.
2. **Community Based Therapeutic Interventions:** Delivering evidence-based counselling and cognitive-behavioural therapy to support recovery from mental health issues.
3. **Digital Based Advice and Guidance:** Offering online resources, self help tools, and peer support forums accessible 24/7 to promote emotional wellbeing.
4. **Digital Therapeutic Interventions:** Digital delivery of therapeutic treatments with rapid response times to referrals, emphasising flexible and accessible support.

The service can be accessed via self-referral, and there is an online booking system available through the Young Devon website.

Mental Health Support Teams are based within education settings providing support to children and young people with mild to moderate mental health needs. They are accessible by self-referral and provide a range of interventions, with support tailored to the needs of the individual young person seeking support.

Each team supports between 8000-8500 CYP and provides three functions;

1. Deliver evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs.
2. Support senior mental health leads in education settings to develop and introduce their whole-school or whole-college approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.
3. Provide timely advice to staff and liaise with external specialist services so that children and young people can get the right support and remain in education.

Within Torbay there are two Mental Health Support Teams providing support to 20 education settings with Primary, Secondary and Special Schools being supported by teams.

[Lumi Nova, Tales of Courage](#) can be accessed by children and young people in Torbay and Devon as part of the Mental Health Support Team offer.

Lumi Nova is an engaging child-led, parent/guardian supported therapeutic intervention (game) that can be used on most smartphones or tablets. It is designed for 7-12 year olds facing difficulties with anxiety and is free and immediate to access (no waiting list). It is evidence based with built-in safeguarding feature and was co-created with young people, guardians, teachers, clinicians and gaming experts.

Since its launch in Torbay and Devon Lumi Nova has been used by more than 1,100 children. Over three-quarters (79%) of users demonstrated clinical need when first accessing the service and more than 90% saw their condition reliably improve or stabilise after engaging with the service.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have seen significant outcomes after accessing the service, with 97% of children with SEND showing reliable improvement or stabilisation of their condition.

4) How access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – known as Mood, Emotions and Relationships Team (MERS) in Devon and Torbay, has improved and updated waiting list positions.

Waiting times for children and young people requiring specialist mental health support from the Mood, Emotions and Relationships team (MERS), previously known as CAMHS, have reduced in Torbay. Trajectories indicate that no young person will be waiting over 18 weeks for an initial assessment contact by January 2026.

Children and Family Health Devon operates a Single Point of Access for all referrals with all referrals undergoing a multi-professional screening. This screening process ensures that any young person referred who may have a need for mental health support will be identified and offered support from the right pathway from the beginning.

5) Action being taken to reduce waiting lists to ensure young people get access to support sooner.

The waiting list for children and young people requiring mental health support in Torbay has reduced significantly during 2025. This is due to several initiatives, including increasing initial contact sessions available to patients. There are no children waiting over 52 weeks in any area and trajectories indicate that no young person will be waiting over 18 weeks by the end of January 2026.

Commissioning of services that provide easily accessible intervention earlier to children and young people, such as MyWay and Mental Health Support Teams, is anticipated to reduce the demand for more specialist services. By providing accessible support earlier we aim to meet the needs of children and young people and their families sooner, reducing deterioration of their mental health and therefore the need to refer on to specialist services.

6) How the access to the Schools Mental Health Programme has been improving outcomes for young people.

Data and feedback evidencing the reach of the Mental Health Support Team's provided by Children and Families Health Devon (CFHD) is included below. To note this is Devon and Torbay Teams.

**Devon and Torbay Sept
2022- Sept 2025:**

	Number of workshops:	Parent/Carers who have attended the workshops:
Parents and Carer workshops/training:	253	4,211
	Number of workshops:	Education staff who have attended the workshops:
Education staff Workshops/training:	2,191	14,050
	Number of consultations:	
Consultations:	1,974	
	Number of workshops:	Children/Young People who have attended the workshops:
Children/Young People workshops/training:	1,962	52,545
		Total:
Referral led interventions:		13,397

An additional 13,035 children and young people have also been seen for 1-1 or group work by the teams in this same period across Torbay and Devon.

This demonstrates a huge reach of the service, and over 70% of school aged children now have access to a Mental Health Support Team practitioner in their school.

The average wait for children accessing Mental Health Support Teams for referral-led Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is 7 weeks.

Mental Health Support Team testimonials.

The names below have been changed.

Feedback from a family:

- The support that Terry has had at school has been extremely helpful and we as his parents and, more importantly, Terry himself feel that it has been very helpful
- He is now a lot more comfortable at school and enjoys most days
- His resilience and self-esteem have definitely been boosted and he is able to deal with life's problems and people with more confidence
- The request for help and subsequent communication with your service and the school in general has been dealt with very sensitively
- I know that lots of young people are struggling and would benefit from support
- I think your service is extremely important and I hope that it can continue to be there for other children indefinitely
- If I was asked to consider recommending the school, it would definitely be a factor

Feedback from a child:

'Hi Sarah, I hope you are well. I don't know if this is a bit odd but I just wanted to let you know how well I'm doing. Once we had our last chat I worked really hard in the summer holidays and recovered from my eating problems and my depression and anxiety is so so so much better. I am so happy and only anxious about what I consider "normal" like exams. I have been happy and healthy for about a year and I just wanted to thank you for your kindness and help. I am getting a bit emotional about how far I've got and looking back it so so so awful. I appreciate your work thank you so much.'

Feedback from a headteacher:

'Mental Health Support Team has made the most incredible difference to our children and families. Through the Timid to Tiger and Decider skills courses and individual work, our community has benefitted from learning skills and strategies to help them feel confident and thrive. The strategic support for school leaders and the training provided to staff is invaluable in supporting us improve the support we can offer to our school community. We are really grateful to the team for everything they add to our personal development curriculum.'

Other relevant services supporting children and young across Torbay

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

The ICB has co-ordinated strategic delivery across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth, of the Department of Education funded Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools, (PINS), Programme for primary schools in 24/25 and 25/26. This has been led in nine Torbay schools by Torbay Council's Children's Commissioners and Learning and Development Hub Lead in partnership with SEND Family Voice Torbay, (SFVT).

Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools takes a whole school approach enabling better identification and meeting of needs, for neurodiverse pupils; and building sustainable relationships between schools and their families. Circa five days of individualized support, training and resources based on needs identified by schools, their families and pupils is offered. In addition a mandatory core offer from SEND Family Voice Torbay supports co-production and engagement between schools and families based on the Four Cornerstones model. Offers to schools have included a wellbeing bookshelf of resources, training on culture for senior leaders, neuroinclusive strategies for all school staff and guidance on sensory informed changes to school environments. Speech, Language and Communication Needs, (SLCN), identified as part of the programme are additionally being met through the roll out of the Balance System Speech and Language Therapy model in 25/26.

The Department of Education national Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools evaluation team are clear that impactful change will take place in the longer term as learning is embedded in schools and shared through Multi Academy Trusts, leading to reductions in suspensions and exclusions and potentially supporting a reduction in Requests for Statutory Assessment. Locally our early qualitative feedback suggests that schools are developing more open relationships with their families, and finding new ways to approach challenges for individuals e.g. those with emotional based school avoidance. A national response to the Partnership for the Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools learning for all schools is anticipated following the end of year two.

Dynamic Support Register (DSR)

The Dynamic Support Register identifies young people who have a learning disability and/or Autism diagnosis who are at risk of hospital admission or placement breakdown. It enables keyworkers to work with service providers to ensure children, young people and their families can access the support they need at the right time, including education.

Within Devon the Learning Disability and Autism Programme (LDAP) has oversight of the register to ensure effective collaboration between health organisations and the local authority partners.

Referrals are triaged using The Cheshire and Wirral Partnership dynamic support database clinical support tool, to support risk stratification and RAG rating and identify the risks regarding education needs.

The Dynamic Support Register identifies those young people who would benefit from a Care (Education) Treatment Review (CETR) which considers SEND/educational needs. These reviews ensure partnership working and strengthen the consideration of education in them for children and young people who may not be in school or accessing education.

Children young people with a learning disability, autism or both aged 0-25 years with the most complex needs have a designated key worker.

Keyworkers support children, young people and their families to avoid admission to a mental health hospital wherever possible. Where admission to hospital cannot be avoided, the keyworker remains as a core member of the professional network throughout the person's period of admission and be included in care and treatment reviews and support through to discharge.

The Dynamic Support Register has a single point of contact and is a self-referral process. Information can be found on the Torbay local offer page and OneDevon & CFHD websites with contact information around accessing support and self-referral.

The referral form for keyworker support includes consenting to being placed on the Dynamic Support Register.

Summary

When commissioning services to support children and young people with their emotional health and wellbeing, we have ensured that a range of services are available. These services, where possible, are self-referral and are all inclusive to young people from various cohorts, with support tailored to individual needs for those with neurodiversity including Autism, ADHD and other conditions as well as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who are care experienced. We work with providers to ensure services are co-produced with children, young people and their families, so that they meet the needs of those who require support.

7. Options under consideration

7.1. N/A

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

8.1. N/A

9. Legal Implications

9.1. N/A

10. Engagement and Consultation

10.1. N/A

11. Procurement Implications

11.1. N/A

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

12.1. N/A

13. Associated Risks

13.1. N/A

14. Equality Impact Assessment

14.1. N/A

15. Cumulative Council Impact

15.1. None

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

16.1. None

DRAFT

Devon Children & Young People's Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Strategic Planning & Priority Setting Summary

March 2025 Version 8

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Agenda Item 6
Appendix 1

Purpose



The purpose of this document is to bring together the following strategic drivers, aligned to the strategic planning phase of the commissioning cycle:

- Understanding Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health
- Voice of Children & Young People and their Families
- Assessment of Needs and Prevalence
- Evidence Based Approaches
- Overview of Current Provision

So that we can begin developing a Devon-wide strategic response through identification of:

- Principles
- Vision & Purpose
- Strategic Objectives
- Strategic Initiatives

Understanding Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health

What is emotional wellbeing?

Positive emotional wellbeing is when people manage emotions well and have a sense of meaning, purpose, and supportive relationships. Young people who have positive emotional wellbeing can regulate their emotions and behaviours and develop positive relationships. They are more likely to have good mental health, and to avoid risky, harmful or antisocial behaviour such as self-harm and youth violence. Emotional regulation is at the heart of many of the challenges currently concerning policy makers. Research shows better self-regulation is strongly associated with mental well-being, good physical health and health behaviours, and socio-economic and labour market outcomes.

However, if a child's emotional environment causes them to feel unsafe or fearful, or if they experience toxic stress in the absence of relationship which can help them regulate or buffer their stress, this will be reflected in their psychological and neurological development and will influence how their brain develops to deal with stress in later life.

What is mental health?

Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes. Mental health conditions include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm.

How is mental health changing?

Changing societal views relating to mental health have brought both positive and unintended consequences. Greater public conversation has reduced stigma and encouraged people to seek help. However, it has also reshaped how emotional struggles are perceived, challenges. Some people think that what might once have been considered part of life's normal ups and downs are now more likely to be identified as mental health problems, others think that the impact of the changing pressures and demand on children and young people are giving rise to increased need.

Strategic Drivers: Voice of Children Young People, Parents & Staff

Children & Young People tell us...

- that all young people should be able to **get help when they need it**, at the time they are ready and not waiting until they are at breaking point
- they need **safe, non-judgemental places** and people who are **trauma informed and culturally competent**
- that places to get help should be in their community and offer **flexibility and choice**
- schools need to be more accountable in supporting young people with mental health needs to get help and support
- adults should have more education around how to help with difficult topics
- around half (53%) are unaware of the support available apart from seeking help from their GP

Parents and Carers tell us...

- 76% of parents believed their child's mental health deteriorated while waiting for support
- they want support in ensuring they have the skills to respond to their young people's concerns and specific mental health training for foster carers
- they want teachers to be properly trained in mental health and understand wellbeing

Staff tell us...

- young people sometimes have long waits for services that when accessed don't meet the needs of the young person- suitable support should be available earlier in the young person's journey
- expectations of young people and parents can create reluctance in trying other interventions, education of wider emotional health and wellbeing and how this can impact mental health is important
- there are services that work well but these offers aren't always consistent or available across the footprint, such as mental health support teams

Strategic Drivers: Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions

Devon is home to 1.2M people, 2% of England’s population, including 223,700 CYP. The incidence of probable mental health problems, based on national prevalence (above right) it is estimated as 24,160 CYP in Devon. However, in Devon Social Emotional Mental Health needs in school pupils are consistently above the regional and national average.

The 2024 Darzi report identifies that (green box):

“it is our mental health that appears to have deteriorated most significantly in the past decade... the rise in need for mental health services is not evenly distributed in the population. For adults, mental health referrals have been increasing at a rate of 3.3 per cent a year . But for children and young people, the rate of referrals has increased by 11.7 per cent a year”.

	Type of Mental Health Problem			
	Probable		Probable & Possible	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
11 -16 years	22.3%	22.9%	33.7%	35.5%
17-19 years	15.4%	31.6%	30.1%	47.6%
20-25 years	13.4%	30.4%	29.9%	44.6%

What causes mental health problems?

The brain is our bodies most complex organ containing over 100 billion neurones with over a trillion synaptic connections. It is, therefore, unsurprising that mental illness is complex and difficult to delineate. For any individual, mental illness relates to the unique confluence of variables acting across a lifetime.

Prior to and following birth, babies and young children remain highly malleable and responsive to parental inputs and their immediate environment, they are susceptible to social stressors and their family experience. After the family, school becomes the biggest single influence on a child’s mental health. As children enter adolescence and early adulthood there is a period of significant neurodevelopmental change, this coincides with the peak time in the life course for development of mental health problems.

Not all CYP are equally likely to develop mental illness. Our identity, personal characteristics, circumstances or economic status do not give us mental health problems; however, the experience of trauma, health inequalities and marginalisation are associated with increased prevalence of mental health problems. Darzi (2024) notes wider determinants like income, education, work, housing, relationships, families and our natural and physical environment can have enormous impacts on our health. **Many of these are moving in the wrong direction.**

Strategic Drivers: Factors Relating to Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions

Changing Family Life:

- Society and family life has changed.
- In 2022 married or civil partnered couple families made up 66% of families, co-habiting couples 19% and lone-parent families 15%.
- The use of formal children care has increased to 47%. of children, aged 0-14 years.

Economic Status:

- People from the lowest socioeconomic groups are 2-3 times more likely to develop mental health problems.
- The CYP living in debt are 5 times more likely to be unhappy.
- More than 25% of children from the poorest families said they had been bullied because they couldn't afford school costs.

Children and Social Care Services:

- Children in care (CIC) and Children Looked After (CLA) are among the most socially excluded in England and experience profound inequalities.
- CIC are more likely to experience mental health problems than other CYP.
- 65% of CLA are looked after because they were at risk of abuse or neglect.

Gender & Sexual Orientation:

- People who identify as LGBTQI+ are 2–3 times more likely than heterosexual people to report having a mental health problem, more likely to have suicidal thoughts, attempt suicide, and report self-harming.
- Marginalised gender and sexual orientation identities have very different prevalence's in different generations.

Wider Socioeconomics:

- Mental ill health is the second-largest cause of burden of disease in England.
- A 2020 updated study undertaken by the Centre for Mental Health estimated the annual cost of mental health problems in England to be £119BN.
- Suicide costs c.£1.67 million. In Devon there were 389 suicides between 2018-2020.

Education:

- Poor educational attainment and attendance are associated with adverse life and health outcomes.
- Education helps CYP overcome inequality.
- Untreated, mental health disorders create distress, consequences can be long lasting including lower educational achievement and attendance.

Strategic Drivers: Factors Relating to Prevalence of Mental Health Conditions

The Changing Nature of Mental Health

Nationally rates of probable mental disorders doubled between 2017 and 2023. Mental health issues among young people are becoming more prevalent – and more visible. This shift suggests both a greater willingness to disclose struggles and a changing culture. Most experts agree that the rise in mental health problems are likely to be associated with a range of factors, such as:

Changes in education: Perceived pressure to excel at school and extended school hours.

Changing role of technology: Overuse of social media and/or negative impacts of social media apps or certain online sites.

Stigma: Stigma can prevent people from getting help, and perpetuate inequalities.

Bullying and cyberbullying: which can be worse for certain groups of youth such as members of marginalised people.

COVID-19: Over the past few years, the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic added to these factors.

Increased awareness of biological and development: more is known about the dramatic changes in brain structure and function that shape young people's ability to regulate emotions and adapt to stress.

Changes in social/cultural life and expectations: The social and cultural landscape experienced by children and young people has altered profoundly. Family life, expectations of CYP, how CYP chose to identify themselves have all changed significantly in recent generations.

The rise in mental health problems in CYP is not an isolated issue but a reflection of broader societal change.

Strategic Drivers: Thrive framework

The THRIVE Framework for system change (Wolpert et al., 2019) is an integrated, person centred, and needs led approach to delivering mental health services for children, young people and their families.

It conceptualises need in five categories; Thriving, Getting Advice and Signposting, Getting Help, Getting More Help and Getting Risk Support. Emphasis is placed on prevention and also the promotion of mental health and wellbeing across the whole population. Children, young people and their families are empowered through active involvement in decisions about their care through shared decision making, which is fundamental to the approach.

The Thrive principles include common language, needs-led, shared decision making, proactive prevention and promotion, partnership working, outcome informed, reducing stigma and accessibility.

When we apply the predicted percentage of needs for each needs-based grouping, as defined by Thrive Elaborated against our population figures for children and young people, this gives us an indication of the number of children and young people with a probable and possible mental disorder that may need support within each of the categories.



Thrive Segment	%	Type of Mental Disorder	
		Probable	Probable & Possible
Getting Advice	30%	7,248	11,331
Getting Help	60%	14,496	22,662
Getting More Help	5%	1,208	1,888
Getting Risk Support	5%	1,208	1,888
Total		24,160	37,770

Context: NHS commissioned services

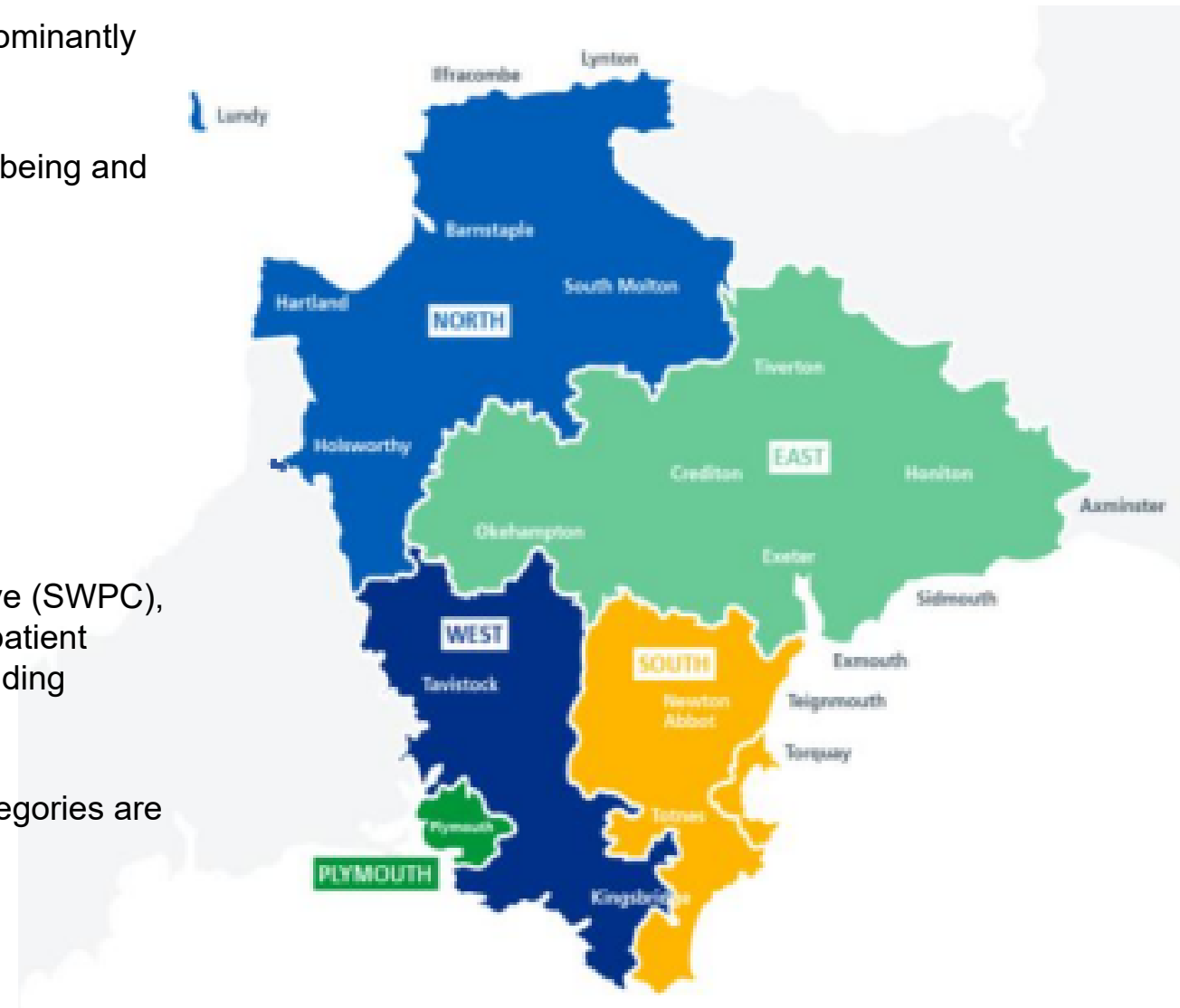
At present CYP community mental health services in Devon are predominantly commissioned by NHS Devon.

NHS Devon commissions children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health services in Devon from the following providers:

- Children & Family Health Devon (CFHD)
- Young Devon and Young Devon in Partnership (YD)
- Livewell South West (LSW)
- Devon Partnership NHS Trust (DPT)
- South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST)
- Pete's Dragons

The NHS also commissions, via the South West Provider Collaborative (SWPC), nationally designated 'specialist commissioning' such as specialist inpatient care for children and young people with mental health problems, including eating disorders and low secure care.

NHS commissioned provision, mapped to the THRIVE framework categories are identified on the following slide.



Context: Current NHS Provision

Area	Thriving	Getting Advice	Getting Help	Getting More Help	Getting Risk Support
Whole of Devon		Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Service (YD)			
	Family Hubs				
	Mental Health Support Teams in Schools				
		Children's Wellbeing Practitioners*			
		Behaviour Support Team**			
		Community Mental Health Services			
		CIC Mental Health Service			
			Eating Disorder Services		
			CYP In-Reach Discharge Service		
				Crisis Response Services	
				Paediatric Wards	
				Place of Safety	
				Tier 4- Inpatient Care	
				Specialist Eating Disorder Services	
All Age		First Response Crisis Line			
		SWAST MH Desk & MH Vehicle			
		Pete's Dragons- Suicide Bereavement			

Context: Gaps & Challenges

Capacity, Access & Wait Times:

- Capacity is not sufficient to meet demand or predicted need, particularly in 'getting advice & guidance' and 'getting help', this leads to longer wait times and increased thresholds to access help.
- "Childhood is precious because it is brief; too many children are spending too much of it waiting for care. It is apparent that the NHS must do better." Darzi 2024.

Growth & Change in Nature of Eating Disorders:

- There are three types of eating disorder identified in NHS England's data, anorexia, bulimia or other. Eating disorders are most common in 17-19 year old women.
- The prevalence of eating disorders has risen significantly over time:
 - in 11 to 16 year olds prevalence increased from 0.5% in 2017 to 2.6% in 2023
 - in 17-19 year olds prevalence increased from 0.8% in 2017 to 12.5% in 2023

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Nationally the use of restrictive interventions such as NG feeding under restraint has increased. Since 2019/20, there has been an 82% increase in admissions for eating disorders and, between 2020 and 2023 the number of restrictive interventions on CYP in hospital rose from c100/1,000 bed days to c400/1,000, for 18-24 year olds there was a modest increase to around c50/1,000. In all other age groups the rate remained below c25/1,000.
In parallel, national guidance pertaining to specialist provision identifies a need to adjust delivery approach across the pathway.

Developing Crisis Response Offer:

- At present in Devon crisis assessment and brief intervention for CYP is not available 24/7 as expected by national guidance.
- Nationally, suicide rates are now at their highest levels this century. Some areas in Devon are outliers in terms of the suicide rates and admissions for self-harm.
- National guidance pertaining to specialist provision identifies a need to adjust response to support CYP in crisis and in inpatient care.

Building Capacity Aligned to i-THRIVE:

- There is a shared national and local ambition to rollout Mental Health Support Teams in Schools to 100% of Devon's CYP which support 'thriving' 'getting advice & guidance' and 'getting help'.
- National investment is no longer ringfenced to support this ambition.
- Devon is preparing to mobilise new provision aligned to 'getting advice & guidance' and 'getting help'.

Strategic Drivers and Context: Summary

‘A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. In the absence of these experiences, there is always suffering’ - Brené Brown

Across a broad range of strategic drivers, the pervasive impact of societal change upon the emotional wellbeing and mental health of our CYP is apparent. It is heard in the voices of CYP their families and the professionals who are alongside them; it is seen in the graphs which show prevalence increasing faster than services could grow, and it is felt as we weigh evidence and competing priorities and try to bend services to respond to societal challenges which they were never designed to meet.

We must fundamentally shift our approach to help children & young people and their families cultivate and maintain good mental health.

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This document sets out an approach which more fully responds to the Thrive Framework, underpinned the concepts of ‘Radical Help’ and collective social capital so that we move towards increasing human, relational and community driven approaches.

We need to shift towards:

- prevention and promotion
- positive, progressive and enabling response which are trauma and shame informed, foster relationships and connection, build on and use collective social capital to support children and young people to build capability, competence and autonomy
- inclusive and equitable outcomes
- increasingly accessible & responsive support

To deliver this we need to change how we work to be more collaborative, work with CYP & Their Families and ensure constant learning, and evolution.

Strategy Overview

Vision & Purpose

We want improved emotional wellbeing and mental health so that more children and young people can live happier and healthier lives with mental health problems prevented, recovered from and/or better managed.

Strategic Objective 1:
Building Capacity To THRIVE

Strategic Objective 2:
Building Connection & Collaboration across
Communities & Education

Strategic Objective 3:
Targeted Improvements

Strategic Initiative 1
Improve Access,
Responsiveness & Equity

Strategic Initiative 2
Enshrine the Voice of
CYP, Families &
Communities

Strategic Initiative 3
Strengthen Partnership
Working Across
Communities & Education

Strategic Initiative 4
Improve Specific
Responses: CYP in MH
Crisis

Strategic Initiative 5
Improve Specific
Responses: Eating
Disorders

Enablers: Achieved through a co-ordinated and collaborative, evidence-based offer, delivered flexibly and responsively to needs of CYP across the system, localities and communities.

Principle 1
Prevention & Promotion

Principle 2
Positive & Progressive Enabling

Principle 3
Inclusive & Equitable

Principle 4
Accessible & Responsive

Principle 5
Integrated & Collaborative

Principle 6
With CYP & Their Families

Principle 7
Learning, Evolving & Improving

Emerging Principles

Across Devon there are a number of principles which guide the approaches and provision including locally developed principles and principles from established national models like THRIVE and Radical Help. The principles below align to and consolidate these principles into a single set for Devon ICB. This is envisaged as an emergent position with the ambition that these principles will be superseded by a set of co-produced principles which are owned and recognised by children and young people and their families.

What we will work to achieve:

Prevention & Promotion

- Building capacity to help CYP thrive, preventing avoidable need and responding sooner in the development of need.
- Exploring alternatives to traditional models of provision.

Positive & Progressive Enabling

- Trauma & Shame Informed.
- Relatedness & Connectedness.
- Collective Social Capital.
- Building Capability, Competence & Autonomy.

Inclusive & Equitable

- Reducing stigma.
- Ensuring equity of access, outcome and experience.
- Reaching out to the most vulnerable, inc those who may find it hard to engage.

Accessible & Responsive

- Building capacity to meet need.
- Reducing wait times.
- Adapting to the needs and wants of CYP and their families and communities.

How we will work:

Integrated & Collaborative

- Working together for CYP and their families.
- Ensuing clear communications and co-ordination.
- Shared understanding, solving problems together.

With CYP & Their Families

- Actively responding to CYP in the context of their family.
- Working with CYP & their families as partners in improving mental health.

Learning, Evolving & Innovating

- Responsive to emergent evidence and information.
- Open to exploring opportunities in new modalities (media, technology).

Strategic Initiatives

Improve Access, Responsiveness and Equity:

CYP should grow up able to thrive with good mental health. We need to ensure that we commission more support which prevents the development of mental health problems, responds sooner in their development and aide recovery. If mental health problems develop CYP and their families should be able to get the help they need to meet their needs quickly, without long waits.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

- Capacity is sufficient and balanced across the THRIVE framework.
- CYP don't experience long waits to access help.

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To do this we will:

- Mobilise the CYP Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health service.
- Continue rolling out MHSTS across Devon.
- Implement improvement plans to reduce long waits to access CYP mental health response.
- Seek opportunities to commission services which respond to wants and needs in accordance with our principles.
- Develop a system wide approach to supporting birthing individuals, bring together perinatal, maternal, parent and infant mental health support.

Strategic Initiatives

Enshrine the Voice of CYP, Families and Communities:

CYP and their families are the experts of the own experience, never is this truer than in relation to mental health where there is seldom a diagnostic to reveal a concrete shared reality. So, the quality of our listening, is of paramount importance to the impact we can achieve.

In CYPMH there is already a good foundation of listening and responding but to date our approach has been more sporadic and opportunistic.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

CYP and family voice is part of our strategic approach and is purposeful for CYP and their families and the system.

Is part of a wider network of listening across CYP Commissioning.

To do this we will:

- Develop and populate a systematic approach to collating CYP voice feedback which enables cumulative understanding of voice.
- Work with the with wider CYP commissioning team, develop a community/network for listening to CYP and families' voice.
- Co-develop a programme of continuous and one-off actions to engage.

Strategic Initiatives

Improve Quality of Specific Responses - CYP in Crisis:

CYP should be able to access support, care and treatment if they experience mental health crisis as close to home as possible, in appropriate environments, in a timely manner, delivered by appropriate professionals.

Whilst services are divided into specialities delineate mental health, physical health, neurodiversity and social care needs, the experiences of humans, particularly those in crisis, rarely neatly occupy single specialities.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

- Help is sufficient and appropriate to need in terms of capacity, hours of provision, location of provision and staffing.
- There is co-ordination and collaboration between services and partners to respond holistically to the needs of CYP and their families.

To do this we will:

- Continue working to implement national guidance for CYP mental health crisis services working towards expanding the operating hours of CYP mental health crisis provision towards 24/7
- Work in partnership with specialist commissioning to implement new guidance and broader community-based approaches to meeting the needs of CYP in mental health crisis and their families avoiding admission and enabling discharge.
- Work in partnership with local authorities and VCSE partners to promote co-ordination and collaboration.
- Invest in and explore expansion of the in-reach discharge service to support CYP get the help they need in the community.
- With acute partners to ensure in acute settings CYP in crisis are supported through consistent and evidence-based approaches.

Strategic Initiatives

Improve Quality of Specific Responses – Eating Disorders:

In recent years the prevalence and nature of eating disorders has changed with growth in prevalence and emergence of 'other eating disorders' which often relate to avoidant, restrictive or disordered eating, sometimes presenting with other neurodevelopmental conditions.

As demand rose rapidly so did restrictive practice in acute settings alongside a range of different management approaches nationally and locally.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

- Needs are identified and responded to sooner and more consistently
- Support is always delivered as close home possible.

To do this we will:

- Work with partners to optimise pathways, ensure accessibility, early identification and proactive intervention
- Establish a clinical reference group to develop our approach to supporting and managing 'other eating disorders'/ disorder eating.
- Work in partnership with specialist commissioning to implement new national guidance and broader community- based approaches.
- Work in partnership with clinical colleagues from across our system to ensure consistent high-quality support, care and treatment for CYP with eating disorders in acute settings.
- Work collaboratively to ensure effective integrated multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working, including clear escalation process and multi-agency workforce development plan.

Strategic Initiatives

Strengthen Partnership Working Across Communities:

CYP grow in the context of families, schools and communities. There are a wide range of societal changes which are associated with adverse impacts on mental health of CYP. Connection, collaboration and community are part of how we counteract these societal challenges.

Across Devon the NHS and Local Authorities already work in partnership and work has and is taking place to ensure that mutual priorities are progressed collaboratively.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

- We have a clear set of agreed priorities and ways of working with local authority partners in relation to CYPMH.

To do this we will:

- Maintain the positive working arrangements in place to support the implementation of mental health support teams in schools.
- Establish clear and agreed priorities and ways of working with local authority partners aligned to NHS strategic priorities and shared SEND and Safeguarding priorities.
- Develop a broader approach to working with communities and the VCSE which exemplifies the approach to connection and social capital embedded in our principles.

Strategic Initiatives

Strengthen Partnership Working Across Communities: Devon County Council

CYP grow in the context of families, schools and communities. There are a wide range of societal changes which are associated with adverse impacts on mental health of CYP. Connection, collaboration and community are part of how we counteract these societal challenges.

Across Devon the NHS and Local Authorities already work in partnership and work has and is taking place to ensure that mutual priorities are progressed collaboratively.

To improve this changes are needed to ensure that:

- We have a clear set of agreed priorities and ways of working with local authority partners in relation to CYPMH.

To do this we will:

- Maintain the positive working arrangements in place to support the implementation of mental health support teams in schools.
- Establish clear and agreed priorities and ways of working with local authority partners aligned to NHS strategic priorities and shared SEND and Safeguarding priorities.
- Develop a broader approach to working with communities and the VCSE which exemplifies the approach to connection and social capital embedded in our principles.

Strategic Initiatives

Strengthen Partnership Working Across Communities: Torbay Council

CYP grow in the context of families, schools and communities. There are a wide range of societal changes which are associated with adverse impacts on mental health of CYP. Connection, collaboration and community are part of how we counteract these societal challenges.

Across Devon the NHS and Local Authorities already work in partnership and work has and is taking place to ensure that mutual priorities are progressed collaboratively.

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Strategic Initiatives

Strengthen Partnership Working Across Communities: Plymouth City Council

CYP grow in the context of families, schools and communities. There are a wide range of societal changes which are associated with adverse impacts on mental health of CYP. Connection, collaboration and community are part of how we counteract these societal challenges.

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- Establish clear and agreed priorities and ways of working with local authority partners aligned to NHS strategic priorities and shared SEND and Safeguarding priorities.
- Develop a broader approach to working with communities and the VCSE which exemplifies the approach to connection and social capital embedded in our principles.

Tackling Inequalities: Aligned Strategic Initiatives

Improve Access, Responsiveness and Equity:

Health Inequalities Improvement Plan: Following the commencement of the CYP Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health service a Health Inequalities Improvement Plan will be agreed which will set out key actions for the provider to progress in relation to tackling health inequalities.

MHSTS: As Devon has rolled out mental health support teams in schools (MHSTS) we have and will continue to prioritise Prioritised Continue rolling out MHSTS across Devon.

Enshrine the Voice of CYP, Families and Communities:

Voice Network: As we progress with the development of a CYP and families voice network we will work to ensure that partners include representation of groups who experience health inequalities including SEND and Care Experienced CYP.

Strengthen Partnership Working Across Communities:

Age Related Transition: Through work that has commenced in partnership with Devon County Council under the SEND programme, Devon ICB will work in partnership with system partners to develop improved approaches to supporting CYP with complex needs and/or vulnerabilities approaching age related transition points.

Measuring Impact

CYP experience improved access to mental health services across Devon with shorter waits and increasing capacity in 'Thriving', 'Getting Advice' and 'Getting Help' by March 2026.

There will be 24/7 community-based mental health crisis assessment and brief intervention for CYP across Devon by March 2027.

The needs of CYP with disordered eating will be described and there will be a consistent clinical pathway, including those who are admitted to acute settings by March 2027.

There will be joint approaches to responding to shared needs and priorities related to SEMH (Safeguarding & SEND) across Devon, Torbay and Plymouth.

There will be a systematic approach to capturing the voice of CYP in across Devon which is maintained and reflected in how plans are developed and prioritised so that improvements are meaningful for CYP and their families across Devon.

System Next Steps

Strategic Objective 1:
Building Capacity To THRIVE

Strategic Objective 2:
Building Community Connection &
Collaboration

Strategic Objective 3:
Targeted Improvements

Strategic Initiative 1
Improve Access,
Responsiveness &
Equity

Strategic Initiative 2
Voice of CYP,
Families &
Communities

Strategic Initiative 3
Strengthen
Partnership Working
Across Communities

Strategic Initiative 4
Improve Specific
Responses: CYP in
MH Crisis

Strategic Initiative 5
Improve Specific
Responses: Eating
Disorders

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Whole Devon:

Across Devon:
Continue working in partnership through the system CYP Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Group and CYP JFP Group to implement shared action plans aligned to this strategy.

Devon County Council:

SEND and Children in Care: Working with the SEND Transformation Board, Corporate Parenting and Building Inclusive Communities programme area to progress shared priority areas, including supporting development of enhanced age-related transition approaches for care experienced CYP and those with complex needs.

Torbay Council:

Children's Improvement Board: NHS and Torbay Social Care partners met in January 2024 to re-commit to collaboratively improving CYP emotional wellbeing and mental health in Torbay. This included establishing shared priorities, principles and ways of working.

Plymouth City Council:

Healthy & Happy: NHS Devon, Livewell South West and Plymouth City Council continue to work collaboratively in response to SEND inspections and shared priorities for CYP and families in Plymouth.

References



Reference List

Devon's Neurodiversity Strategy for Children and Young People (CYP) 0-25 Years

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2025-2030

Agenda Item 6
Appendix 2

Introduction

Why do we need this strategy?

This strategy is the culmination of the thinking of parents, carers, NHS, Social Care and education partners. It brings together learning from experience and professionals, evidence and best practice, policy and wider strategy (including the SEND Strategies of One Devon Local Authorities) to offer a One Devon view on how together, we can better support children and young people and families who are neurodiverse to achieve their potential and live their best lives.

What is the national context?

This strategy is developed at a time of significant change in the national landscape and architecture of the NHS and Local Authorities. There are emerging legislative and policy changes, and national long-term plans and priority shifts on the horizon. Across One Devon partners must therefore maintain an ability to adjust and adapt plans to respond.

For children and young people and families, both nationally and locally, these changes will not change their immediate experiences, more children and young people are seeking to understand their neurodiversity through diagnosis than ever before, and they continue to experience long waits to access this help. Nationally, evidence is growing to ensure support and help are available with or without a diagnosis to help more children and young people to live their best lives in inclusive communities, where their needs are responded to early by integrated and co-ordinated support offers.

Who has prepared this strategy and how has it been prepared?

The production of this strategy has been led by NHS Devon, working in partnership across One Devon with experts by experience and profession. NHS Devon has long aspired to a cohesive core strategy to underpin future work. In developing this document, the intention is to ensure a One Devon, shared strategic intent, whilst recognising, through Local Authority aligned implementation plans, a local context for delivering meaningful improvement.



Strategic Drivers: Needs in Devon

Population: There are 223,736 people aged 0-17 years in Devon, making up a total of 18.2% of the population.

Prevalence of Neurodevelopmental Conditions:

The estimated national prevalence for some common neurodevelopmental conditions is set in the table. This list is not exhaustive.

Condition	Estimated National Prevalence	Estimated Prevalence in Devon ICB	Estimated Prevalence in Devon CC	Estimated Prevalence in Plymouth	Estimated Prevalence in Torbay
Autism	1 in 24	9,323	6,111	2,165	1,047
ADHD	3-4 in 100	6,713 (lower)	4,400	1,559	754
DLD	7.5 in 100	17,985	11,798	4,174	2,013

Changing Prevalence of Neurodevelopmental Conditions: Estimating the prevalence of some neurodevelopmental conditions is complex because of inconsistent reporting and it changing with increased recognition. An example of the changing prevalence of neurodevelopmental conditions is autism:

- In the general population autism is frequently identified as having a prevalence of 1 in 100 people.
- A range of studies indicate significant variation in prevalence by age, one 2018 study identifies prevalence in people aged over 70 of around 1 in 8,000, whereas in 10–14-year-olds the prevalence was closer to 1 in 24.
- The 1 in 24 estimated prevalence is the most contemporary and age specific source and triangulates with national and local information. This equates to over 9000 across the ICB. A similar number would also be estimated to have ADHD (3-5 per 100).

Neurodevelopmental Conditions in Context:

- Children and young people with neurodevelopmental conditions account for the biggest group of disabled children in England.
- The South-West as a region, has the highest prevalence of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in England.
- In this context, the level of need in Devon is, overall, greater than the average prevalence in the South-West.
- Around 8.3% of children and young people with SEN have a diagnosis of autism.
- SLCN is often a primary need of many neurodevelopmental conditions. Taking the prevalence rates of language disorders and the risk factors associated with social disadvantage, the predicted level of SLCN in 0-18-year-olds is 59,919 (25.3%) across Devon ICB.

Note: Pathways of support for children with autism, ADHD and other neurodevelopmental conditions should be improved, and children and families should receive excellent support with or without a diagnosis

Current Offer In Devon

Children and young people's community services in Devon are predominantly commissioned by NHS Devon. The exception to this is services that are designated nationally as 'specialist commissioning' such as specialist inpatient care for children and young people with mental health problems and autism.

In Devon, autism and other neurodevelopmental diagnostic assessments are part of complex multi-agency and multi-organisational pathways, including services provided by:

- Livewell Southwest (LSW)
- University Hospitals Plymouth
- Children Family Health Devon (CFHD)
- Royal Devon University Hospitals (RDUH)
- Torbay & South Devon (TSD).

Devon is not alone in grappling with this complexity, nationally systems have similar local complexities and unique local solutions, this culminates in a significant national challenge understanding data from multiple national reporting systems.

In addition to this core commissioned provision, statute enables children and young people and their families to access independent sector provision, under 'Right to Choose' legislation.

At present in Devon pre- and post- diagnostic services are limited and inconsistent. In the majority of Devon, and nationally, long wait times for assessment are a persistent challenge.



Strategic Drivers: Voice of Children, Young People, Parent/Carers & Staff

Children & Young People tell us...

- they are frustrated with the long waiting times for autism assessments which negatively impacts their education, mental health, and overall well-being
- there is a need for better support in schools. They called for more understanding from teachers and tailored interventions to help them manage their needs effectively
- they want support and help which is easy to navigate and provide comprehensive support for their needs

Parents and Carers tell us...

- they want better, more regular communication and the chance to talk to someone about assessment processes
- communication about waiting times and what happens during and after an assessment were the most important information for them.
- they want details of how to get advice, support and signposting to other services, learning, groups and online resources.
- they would like peer support opportunities

Staff tell us...

- wait lists, poor experience, sustained pressure, and limited ability to recruit to vacancies adversely impact motivation and retention of workforce.
- that whilst some schools offer outstanding provision for neurodivergent pupils, this is inconsistent within and across schools, leading to inconsistent outcomes
- they identify that a lack of some types of capacity can result in increased assessment referrals

Principles: The Voice of Children & Young People & Families

Child and family centred
Needs-led rather than
service-led
Consider the whole person



Child centred

Meet us where we are
Make things easier, not harder
Children, young people and
families as true partners
We can work together



Work with us

The right support at the right
time. It shouldn't matter where
you live or who you are
People around you who
understand



Early support

Seeing the whole, real person
Recognising strengths
Open up hope
Not just good enough



Aspiration

This should start early –
transitions are stepping
stones
Individual approach
Celebrating achievements
Consider independence



Independence

Experience of families



Families are respected, heard,
considered and believed
Sharing your experience
makes a difference

Inclusive communities



Communities understood and
meet our needs
Misconceptions are
challenged and corrected
We are not excluded

Recognise needs



More people should know and
be confident about
neurodiversity
Look beyond behaviour
Take aware hoops to jump
through

Long term thinking



Most neurodiversity is lifelong
Planning for next steps
Impact and value rather than
short term cost

Communication



Keep in touch
Give us the right information
Treat us with respect

Devon Parent Carer Neurodiversity Expert Reference Group, 2024 (see Glossary)

Principles & The Four Cornerstones

The principles identified and articulated by the Parent Carer Neurodiversity Expert Reference Group in 2024 are well aligned to the unified approach being adopted by Local Authorities, the Four Cornerstones, as illustrated in the chart below. The Four Cornerstones will form a key part of how impact is evaluated.

Welcome & Care		Value & Include	Communicate	Work in Partnership
Page 57			Child Centred	
			Works With Us	
			Early Support	
			Aspiration	
			Independence	
			Experience of Families	
			Inclusive Communities	
			Recognise Needs	
			Long-Term Thinking	
			Communication	



Drawing it all together to create a powerful and purposeful strategy

Vision & Purpose

Children and families who are neurodiverse can achieve their potential and live their best life.

Strategic Objective 1:

Inclusive Communities

Strategic Objective 2:

Identify & Support Needs Early

Strategic Objective 3:

Integrated Services

Strategic Initiative 1

Enhanced Universal Provision

Strategic Initiative 2

Support for Parent Carers

Strategic Initiative 3

Support for Schools

Strategic Initiative 4

Needs Led Support

Strategic Initiative 5

Integrated Diagnostic Assessment

Strategic Initiative 6

Support If Needs Are Overwhelming

Enablers: Co-Production, Workforce, People & Culture, Finance

Principle 1

Child Centred

Principle 2

Work With Us

Principle 3

Recognise Needs

Principle 4

Early Support

Principle 5

Aspiration

Principle 6

Communication

Principle 7

Inclusive Communities

Principle 8

Experience of Families

Principle 9

Long Term Thinking

Principle 10

Independence

Foundational Elements: Alignment of Strategy, Vision and Effort

Evaluation: QI & Cultural- Four Cornerstones

(across different programmes and organisations)

Strategic Initiatives

Enhancing Universal Support:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from:

- Increased ND & SLCN support into family hubs
- alignment of early help and graduated approach
- Promotion of more neuro- affirming and neuro-inclusive cultures, environments and communities.

Supporting Parent Carers:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from support for parent carers that:

- Responds to what parent carers need through an enhanced and co-produced online offer.
- Offers Peer Led Parent Support Programmes and Parenting Support Programmes.

Supporting Schools:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from support for schools which that:

- Promotes neuro-affirming and neuro-inclusive cultures, is responsive to children and young people's experiences and aligns to the graduated approach
- Includes training and ND / SLCN resources through PINS and Autism in Schools Programmes, linked therapists.

Needs Led Support:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from:

- support being needs led and available for all, with or without diagnosis.
- This will be achieved through Neurodiversity Navigators, locality SLT, and other Early Help Services.

Improved Integration, Timeliness & Efficiency of Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Assessment:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from:

- Continuing waiting list reduction activities and ensuring effective support through Right to Choose and validation of private diagnostic assessments.
- Improving integration, efficiency and effectiveness by implementing Integrated Neurodevelopmental Assessment Pathway (INAP) & <5 pathways.

Support If Needs Are Overwhelming:

Neurodiverse children and young people and their families will benefit from:

- Additional support through the National Keyworker Programme and local serious violence strategy & workforce development.

Evaluating Impact

The One Devon neurodiversity Strategy incorporates aspects of cultural change and quality improvement. Implementation Plans will include a description of the intended impact, and the metrics and measures used to understand delivery, however, wider evaluation will bring together oversight of evaluation. To understand the impact of the strategy the evaluation approach must consider understanding and evaluation of culture change (aligned to the Four Cornerstones) and, more traditional quality improvement approaches, as set out below:

Domains of Four Cornerstones Evaluation Methodology

Welcome & Care

Value & Include

Communicate

Work in Partnership

Overall Approach: Collaborative and broad qualitative insight driven approaches which track cultural and experiential shifts aligned to the four cornerstones. Iteratively and collaboratively developed.

- Measures:** Qualitative and experiential factors
- Mechanism:** Collaboration to be defined.

Domains of Quality Improvement Evaluation Methodology

Experience

Effectiveness

Equitable

Efficient

Overall Approach: Many small, measurable changes: Evaluation of pilots/ projects to deliver a 'mosaic' of changes and measures. Refining improvements through use of iterative approaches (continuous PDSA cycles) to promote continuous improvement. Include an Adopt, Adapt, Abandon reflection space to critically evaluate and collaboratively agree next steps.

- Measures:** Qualitative and quantitative spanning experience, performance and efficiency align to healthcare quality domains
- Mechanism:** Collaboration through evaluation and research partnership.

	Officer's Name	Date	Comments
<i>Section 151 officer</i>	Malcome Coe	25/2/25	Approved our 2 nd delivery plan and finances
Finance Team	Alison Karssens	Multiple dates	Each school application sent with SLA as evidence to be approved
Procurement team	Chloe Farquhar	Multiple dates	Procurement

Meeting: Children's overview and scrutiny board **Date:** 17th November

Wards affected: All wards

Report Title: Wraparound programme delivery

When does the decision need to be implemented? n/a

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Bye

Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, director of children's services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Government's Wraparound Childcare Programme aims to ensure that all school-aged children in England have access to wraparound care from 8am to 6pm during term time. This initiative is designed to support working families by expanding access to high-quality, flexible childcare before and after school.
- 1.2 We are seeking active support from stakeholders to champion the importance of equitable access to high-quality childcare for all families across Torbay. This includes advocating for inclusive wraparound provision that meets the needs of working parents, supports children's development, and ensures no child is left behind due to socioeconomic barriers. By working together — across schools, trusts, local authorities, and community partners — we can build a system that reflects the values of fairness, opportunity, and sustainability.

2. Reason for proposal and its benefits

The proposal aims to raise awareness and promote the benefits of wraparound childcare. By spreading the word more widely, schools and local authorities can encourage uptake and ensure families understand the value of these services. The reasons for the proposal, and need for the decision is to help spread the wider word about wraparound

According to the Department for Education, wraparound childcare supports:

- Emotional wellbeing through consistent routines
- Social development via peer interaction outside of formal lessons
- Reduced stress for families by offering reliable care options

Morning wraparound sessions (e.g., breakfast clubs) help children:

- Arrive at school calm and nourished
- Settle into the day with structured activities
- Be mentally and emotionally ready to learn

After-school wraparound provides:

- A safe space to relax and decompress
- Opportunities for creative play, reading, or light activities
- A smoother transition from school to home life

The government's ambition is for wraparound childcare to be universally available to all primary-aged children by September 2026. Schools can offer:

- On-site care before and after school
- Partnerships with local providers (e.g., nurseries, childminders)
- Flexible options tailored to community needs

Wraparound funding can be used for:

Staffing costs to extend hours

Equipment and materials for activities

Training staff for delivering wraparound care

Marketing and outreach to increase awareness

Administrative support to manage bookings and logistics

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 1.1 Create structured opportunities for direct engagement with school leaders and Trust representatives to discuss the wraparound childcare proposals.
- 1.2 Ensure every board member is fully briefed on the contents of the wraparound childcare report. This will empower them to confidently advocate for the initiative, respond to queries, and represent the programme effectively in their respective roles.

1.3 Encourage board members to actively share key information within their local Ward communities. By raising awareness, we can build momentum around the wraparound offer and reinforce its value to families across Torbay.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Blank Application Form- A template for schools to complete when applying for wraparound funding.

Appendix 2: Torbay Guidance- Local authority guidance outlining expectations, eligibility, and best practices for wraparound provision in Torbay.

Appendix 3: Panel Notes- Summary notes from the funding panel, including key considerations, feedback, and decision-making criteria.

5. Background Documents

- Document 1- Table outlining which schools and their associated Trusts have received funding to support the government's wraparound childcare initiative.
[National Wraparound Childcare Programme Handbook - a guide for local authorities](#)
- Breakfast club Early Adopters costing breakdown [Breakfast clubs early adopters: methodology for April to July 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

With the current funding set to end in April, we must act swiftly to maximise the opportunity for our children — especially given the high levels of deprivation across Torbay. Every investment made now can have a lasting impact on access, equity, and outcomes.

It's important to recognise and celebrate that all schools in Torbay currently offer some form of wraparound care. This provides a strong foundation to build upon and demonstrates a shared commitment to supporting families.

Schools are understandably concerned about how to sustain provision once funding ends. Exploring strategies such as marketing their wraparound offer and identifying income-generating opportunities will be key to long-term viability.

With a falling birth rate, settings must be proactive in promoting their unique value. Many schools offer free curriculum clubs — so what makes the paid-for wraparound clubs stand out? Clear messaging around enrichment, convenience, and quality will be essential to attract families.

There is a need to improve understanding of tax-free childcare and how parents can access it. Raising awareness could significantly increase uptake and affordability, making wraparound care more accessible to working families.

7.Options under consideration

The process is being delivered in accordance with government guidance, using the financial model we provide to ensure transparency, consistency, and alignment with funding expectations.

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

Financial planning was aligned with the grant funding available through the council to ensure responsible budgeting and prevent any risk of overspending.

9. Legal Implications

All schools enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in coordination with the procurement team to ensure consistency, accountability, and compliance with funding and delivery expectations.

10. Engagement and Consultation

Emails- Regular email correspondence has been used to share updates, resources, and guidance with schools and stakeholders.

Phone Calls- Direct phone conversations have supported relationship-building and allowed for more personalised discussions around wraparound provision.

Face-to-Face Meetings- In-person meetings have provided valuable opportunities to explore challenges, share best practices, and strengthen collaboration.

GAP Meetings with Childcare Works- We've actively participated in GAP (Group Action Plan) meetings with Childcare Works to review different aspects of our approach and identify areas for development.

Challenges in School Engagement- Despite ongoing efforts, engaging schools consistently remains a significant challenge, particularly in securing responses and commitment to next steps.

Parental Surveys- Schools have been encouraged to distribute parental surveys to gather insights into childcare needs and preferences, though uptake has varied.

Annual Sufficiency Report- The annual sufficiency report is shared with schools to forward to parents. However, the data collected does not always provide a fully accurate picture of local demand and unmet need.

11. Procurement Implications

Advice and guidance have been actively sought throughout the process to ensure informed decision-making and alignment with best practices. We have designed the supporting documentation and contributed to the structure of the decision-making panel. For further detail, please refer to the panel notes in Appendix 3.

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

School-led activities — such as eco initiatives, themed assemblies, student-led campaigns, and curriculum-linked projects — can play a vital role in raising awareness of climate issues and inspiring positive change within the wider community.

13. Associated Risks

The funding already secured will not be withdrawn; however, the full allocation will only be released once we can provide evidence that schools intend to use it. Any money allocated will continue to support wraparound provision beyond the official programme end date, ensuring sustained impact.

14. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.	No adverse impacts anticipated. Wraparound care provides several benefits to children: Adaptable environments: Spaces and resources are flexible to accommodate a range of ages and interests.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

	27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	Staffing and training: Staff are trained to differentiate their approach based on age and developmental stage.		
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound can support young carers and carers by: - Extended care hours give adult carers time to rest, attend appointments, or manage other responsibilities. - After-school clubs relieve older siblings from caregiving duties. - Flexibility allows families to tailor care to their needs, whether for work, health, or personal time.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound offers an inclusive environment by: - Extended access to learning and play ensures children with SEND are included in all aspects of school life, not just during core hours. - Consistent routines and familiar staff help reduce anxiety and support emotional regulation. - Funding for Additional Adults.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

		- Targeted support from trained staff enables personalised care and attention. - Funded childminders can offer a more nurturing, home-like setting for children who benefit from quieter spaces.		
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No adverse impacts anticipated. When wraparound is integrated into the school's ethos, it ensures children receive consistent support throughout the day.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No adverse impact anticipated.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound supports families by: - Many providers offer adaptable hours, helping families manage changing needs during pregnancy. - Wraparound ensures older children have consistent routines and supervision.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

	numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	Eligible families can use schemes like Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare to reduce costs.		
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound should reinforce a school's equality policy by: - promoting respect, diversity, and inclusion in all interactions and activities. - Activities, books, and resources used during sessions can reflect diverse cultures, languages, and backgrounds, helping all children feel seen and valued. - Staff aware of cultural sensitivities, dietary needs, and family traditions, fostering a sense of belonging.	Schools to provide multilingual materials to support families in their community. Visual aids: Use clear visuals, icons, and diagrams to support understanding for families with limited literacy or English proficiency. Ensure online registration and information pages are easy to navigate on smartphones.	Not Applicable
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound can support religions and beliefs by: Incorporating cultural festivals, stories, and music into activities to help children feel represented and foster awareness among peers.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No adverse impact anticipated Wraparound provision can support parents through: - Extended hours support shift work, commuting, or unexpected delays. - Reliable routine ensures children are cared for consistently, even when one parent is juggling multiple responsibilities. - Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare can make wraparound more affordable for low-income or single-parent households.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No specific impact anticipated. Reflecting the school's commitment to equality, ensuring all children feel safe, respected, and valued regardless of their family structure.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	No adverse impact anticipated Wraparound will support families by: - Offering flexibility, stability when parents are on duty, deployed, or working irregular hours. - Consistent routines and familiar environments help children cope	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

with the emotional impact of parental deployment or relocation.

Additional considerations

Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)

Access to child tax credits and understanding how to use them

No adverse impact anticipated
Wraparound can support vulnerable families by:

- providing stability for children from families experiencing hardship, housing insecurity, or domestic challenges.
- wraparound care ensures children are in heated, safe environments while parents work or manage other responsibilities.
- Tax-Free Childcare scheme and Universal Credit Childcare

Schools to avoid jargon and use simple, direct wording to explain services, costs, and registration steps. Provide printed flyers, posters, and paper registration forms for families without reliable internet access. Explain eligibility for schemes like Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit Childcare. Help with completing forms or accessing financial support.

Not Applicable

Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)

No adverse impact anticipated.
Wraparound supports public health by:

- providing balanced food options that meet Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Children learn about healthy choices through mealtime routines, cooking activities, and exposure to diverse foods, which

Not Applicable

Not Applicable

		can influence long-term eating habits.		
Human Rights impacts		No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound supports human rights by: Ensuring all children—regardless of background—can benefit from extended learning, play, and social development.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	No adverse impact anticipated. Wraparound supports children by: - Implementing effective safeguarding policies. - Alignment with school values and policies helps maintain consistency in behaviour expectations, inclusion, and emotional support.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

9. Cumulative Council Impact

none

10. Cumulative Community Impacts

none

Wraparound Programme Funding Application Form

Section 1: Contact details					
a. Name and address of Provision	Name and Address:		Postcode:		
b. Current Ofsted Number and grading	Ofsted Number or school DfE number		Current Ofsted Grading and Date		
			Grading		Date received
c. Please confirm your legal governance structure e.g. Company Limited by Guarantee, Limited company, partnership. Include your company and charity number that relates to this application.		Governance	Company number		Charity Number
		Choose an item.			
		NB. If you are a voluntary management committee with registered charity status please indicate this. It is important to note that your members should give serious consideration to formalising their governance status to reduce any business liabilities by formally incorporating the setting.			
d. Main contact for this application		Name:		Position:	
Main contact – Tel number					
e. Provider Type -tick all that apply					
Nursery		Pre-School		Childminder	
Standalone Breakfast Club		Standalone After School		OOS Holiday	
School		Other:			

Section 2 – Grant Funding	
Method Statement 1: Full details of proposed project – please detail how you will use the revenue funding and what this will allow you to offer including timings, places, food, transport and any other relevant information. When providing a response to this question, please consider local need. Please submit costed delivery plan using the template provided.	

What are your proposed start dates for your Project?	
Proposed Start Date	
What is your proposed date for opening the places?	
Proposed opening Date	
Method Statement 2: Mobilisation – What will your organisation need to do in order to put the proposed new or extended provision in place? What timelines would you anticipate meeting to complete these activities? Please set out your mobilisation plan below with timelines	
Method Statement 3: Staffing - How many staff will you need to deliver the proposed new or extended service? How many staff do you already have in place for this and how many will you need to recruit (please respond in terms of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)). What will be the minimum qualifications for the workforce delivering this service? What training will be provided?	
Method Statement 4: Quality – What steps will you take to ensure the quality of the proposed new or extended provision, including how this supports accessibility and inclusion?	

Section 5 – Delivery Model and charging structure		
	Current	Proposed
What are your opening hours?		
What are your fees?	£ per hour £ per session	£ per hour £ per session
How many weeks of the year are you open?		
How many Breakfast places do you offer?		
How many Afterschool places do you offer?		
What is age range of your provision?		
What ratio do you implement within your provision?		
Funding – Total funding request from the Local Authority in this application (see funding allocation in guidance)		
£ Breakdown of funding request (e.g extended times, new places)		

Method Statement 5: Impact - How are you planning to achieve long term sustainability?

Declaration
I understand: - the funding requested in this application may not be offered in full or declined - the money awarded can only be used for the purpose of wraparound childcare - any unspent award will be recovered by the Local Authority - any funding received should be shown separately in your annual accounts - further information may be requested to support this application - the expectation to work collaboratively in partnership with the local authority to deliver the project - termly monitoring will take place to apprise progress of project, demand and financial position - termly data (incl. take up and demand) must be supplied to the local authority - conditions may be applied to the award

and confirm that:

- I have the authority to apply for funding on behalf of the business
- the information I have given within the application is true to the best of my knowledge.

Print Name		Signature	
Position		Date	

Note: This form must be signed by a member of your executive/managerial committee and not a paid employee of your organisation.

Please return completed application form to: earlyyears@torbay.gov.uk

Wraparound Programme Funding Guidance 2024-2026

Introduction

Wraparound Programme grant funding is available for providers to develop or expand on before and after school places throughout Torbay. The funding will be delivered based on the aims of the National Wraparound Programme and guidance from the Department for Education.

Background

The National Wraparound Childcare Programme is part of the childcare reforms announced at the 2023 spring budget. The governments ambition is that by September 2026, all parents and carers of primary aged children who need it, will be able to access before and after school term time childcare in their local area from 8am - 6pm. This will enable parents to access employment more easily and improve the labour market participation.

The government has provided Torbay Council with start-up funding to distribute during the programme delivery period. This will support childcare providers and schools in Torbay to develop or expand wraparound childcare provision on either side of the school day to meet parental demand which does not displace existing provision.

The term 'wraparound childcare' refers to provision directly before and after the school day during school term time for primary school age children. This provision can be offered by schools, private, voluntary, and independent (PVI) providers (including childminders and early years settings) and can be run on a school site or at another setting in the area. The provision should not require parents to pick their children up from school and drop them off at another location or include enrichment or extra-curricular activities that many schools currently provide.

The aim of the programme is that over the delivery period (2024-2026) a sustainable system is developed to ensure long term viability of the wraparound services available. The three key areas to be considered are:

- **Availability** – Improve the availability of wraparound provision by increasing the supply and take up of wraparound places, removing the barriers to setting up new or expanding current provision, both in terms of increasing places and/or hours that are available.
- **Affordability** – The programme seeks to ensure that wraparound provision is affordable. This means that all parents accessing wraparound childcare can access the support available to them through their eligibility for Universal Credit or Tax-Free Childcare.
- **Quality** – The programme must deliver provision that is child centred, inclusive, easily accessible and responds to the needs of the families, including those of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Type of delivery required in Torbay

The majority of primary phase schools in Torbay already have some kind of offer in place, but schools are invited to work with us to look at what needs to be developed to meet parental demand.

Funding will be available to expand existing provision which might be an increase in the number of places offered, additional staff or an extension of session timings. We want to fill gaps where they exist based on estimates of demand, and work with schools to ensure that children who may be on a waiting list have access to the places that they need.

Funding could support different delivery options and help meet shortfalls between expenditure and income from parental fees in the initial establishing phases.

Provision is expected to be financially sustainable through income from parental fees going forward.

Fees and charges will need to take into account affordability for working parents and offer the ability for parents to access financial support through the government's Childcare Choices (<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>). Many schools and childcare providers are already registered to receive this childcare support. Parents will be able to use Universal Credit childcare support for up to 85% subsidy of their costs, and eligible parents can use Tax Free Childcare to subsidise costs, covering 20% of costs up to £2000 a year.

Within Torbay we have also allocated some funding to support a communications campaign to parents/carers and to employers to raise awareness of the Tax-free childcare offer, and we will work closely with the Family Hubs and Libraries to deliver face to face advice and support. The aim will be to help maximise the use of the programme to ensure that it is sustainable for schools and partners into the future.

We have also allocated a small amount of funding for staff delivering breakfast and afterschool clubs to receive training on SEND and effective 'Play' strategies.

Funding Aims

The programme funding aims to remove barriers to setting up new provision or expanding current provision, including removing the financial risk of setting up new provision when demand is not guaranteed. This is based on a 'pump priming' model, whereby funding is provided to spur growth. Applications will be assessed based on the priorities listed below. This will ensure that funds are directed to the places where maximum impact can be achieved.

- Projects that help the local authority meet its sufficiency duty and the aims of the Wraparound Childcare Programme.
- Projects and applications that represent best value for money.
- Projects that develop innovative delivery models that result in sustainable childcare that meets the needs of parents.
- Projects that do not destabilise existing wraparound childcare places in the community.
- Projects that provide an inclusive service for all children.

Eligibility to apply for funding

The grant is available to all schools and trusts educating primary school aged children within the Torbay local authority area.

Childcare providers, including childminders, may apply if a school endorses them to deliver provision.

To ensure minimum safe standards in wraparound childcare provision, all PVI providers and childminders funded through the Wraparound Programme must be registered with Ofsted, or in the case of childminders, Ofsted, or a childminder agency. Dependent on the nature of the provision and the age range of children, this includes registration on the General Childcare Register (GCR) and the Early Years Register (EYR).

Schools providing wraparound childcare directly, as part of their governance arrangements, do not need to register on either the GCR or EYR, however they must adhere to the same standards. More information on Ofsted registration, including exemptions, is available here: [Registering school-based provision with Ofsted \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/registering-school-based-provision-with-ofsted/registering-school-based-provision-with-ofsted).

Further eligibility includes:

- Providers must have a good or above grading from their regulator such as Ofsted or be in the process of initial registration with Ofsted.
- The Local Authority may at its discretion award a grant to a provider who has received a grading of less than good or are new to the market, if the places that it delivers are needed for sufficiency and a local authority assessment shows confidence in the quality of provision.
- HAF providers that are registered with Ofsted will be eligible to apply for grant funding.
- Settings must not be up for sale or planning to sell their business in the next 12 months and will be required to sign a declaration on the application form confirming this.
- Settings must have a valid legal governance structure to apply for LA funding; If you are a registered charity you will need to be legally incorporated to be eligible for funding in order that risk to the Local Authority is minimised.
- Providers must not be applying for a grant to settle any debts.

What can be funded with the grant

Childcare provision funded from this grant must meet the definition of wraparound childcare, i.e., be available directly before and after the school day, from 8am to 6pm (or equivalent, if data shows that local demand is for different hours) during school term time for primary school-age children. It may be run on a school site or at another setting. It should not require parents to pick their children up from school and drop them off at another location.

Examples of eligible spend include:

- Starting new wraparound childcare at or near schools where there is no current provision
- Expanding existing provision either by increasing the number of places offered, employing additional staff or an extension of session timings
- Collaborative working between schools to secure provision across a range of providers/schools.

- Working with local childminders, hubs/clusters, community-based provision, or adopt another delivery model
- Covering costs including staffing, training, and transport costs such as minibus hire (not purchase), as well as resources.
- Contribute to running costs whilst demand builds, to remove any financial risk to providers of offering additional places before demand is guaranteed.
- Pay for training for wraparound staff, including specialist training for staff to ensure they feel equipped to support children with additional needs

Grant funding cannot be used to:

- Subsidise parental fees and charges
- Replace existing provision delivered by another childcare provider, unless that provision is due to close
- Start provision in direct competition with an existing provider, unless there is proven demand
- Subsidise existing provision where no expansion is required

Predicted funding allocation based on the Development Plan submitted to the DfE

The table below highlights the total amount of funding that can be allocated per 'offer' which is based on the Development Plan submitted to the DfE.

The table is divided to show the creation of brand-new provision and the expansion and extension of existing provision

Offer	Amount
Brand new wraparound provision (before and afterschool)	£1000 per space
Support towards core startup costs	£300 per space
Brand new breakfast club	£300 per space
Support towards core startup costs	£100 per space
Brand new afterschool club	£500 per space
Support towards core startup costs	£200 per space
Expanded spaces (on top of existing wraparound offer)	
Breakfast Club	£150 per space
Afterschool Club	£350 per space
Expanded hours – afterschool club.	£350 per space

Schools that meet the success criteria will be awarded an additional £500 to invest in resources aimed at enhancing their educational provision.

Application process

All applications for grants need to be submitted using the Torbay Wraparound Funding Application form, complete with the costed delivery plan, and we ask that all applications are returned to the Early Years team via email earlyyears@torbay.gov.uk

The timetable below outlines the key dates of the application process:

Application Stage	Dates
Publication of Funding Application	29 th April 2025
Funding Application Return Date	24 th November 2025 by 11.00am
Funding Application Outcome Notification	28 th November 2025
Awarded Funding to be Spent by	April 2026

The Early Years Team will accept clarification questions in relation to the Application process until the 21st of November, any questions received past this date may not be responded to.

The deadline to submit the Application is the timestamp at the top of the email received and will be used to determine whether an application has been submitted on time.

On agreement, a grant agreement will be drawn up and signed before the funding is transferred. One key area that will be included in the grant agreement is the Management Information providers will be required submit once funding has been received. The Management Information will cover the following areas:

- Current/previous offer for before and after school – Timings, days of the week
- New offer for before and after school – Timings, days of the week
- Numbers of children accessing the offer – including children with SEND
- Numbers of staff
- Fees

All grant applications must comply with the DfE criteria outlined in the [Wraparound childcare guidance for schools](#)

Declaration of Application

All applications must be submitted by the person responsible as outlined in the table below.

Organisation Type	Permitted Responsible Person
Section 27 Maintained School	Governing body
Academy Trust – Registered with Companies House	An authorised signatory of the company e.g., director, company secretary
Limited Company (i.e., a company registered	An authorised signatory of the company e.g.,

with Companies House)	director, company secretary
Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee (Registered with both Companies House and the Charities Commission)	An authorised signatory or signatories of the company e.g., director, company secretary
Community Interest Company (CIC)	An authorised signatory of the company e.g., director, company secretary
Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)	Authorised signatory or signatories of the CIO N.B. This cannot be the Provision Manager
Unincorporated Charitable Organisation:	All charity trustees

How will the grant be evaluated?

Mandatory Requirements

The Mandatory Requirements that will be assessed on the basis of a Pass/Fail are:

- The application is approved by the school on which it operates/is in the local catchment area
- Childcare providers and childminders delivering wraparound childcare must be registered with Ofsted, or in the case of childminders, Ofsted, or a childminder agency.
- The application is submitted by the appropriate responsible person/body as indicated in the above table
- The funding will be used to create or expand wraparound childcare provision.
- All questions on the Application Form have been completed

Providers must meet these Mandatory Requirements to enable their application form to be assessed.

Whilst a minimum requirement is that Providers must have a good or above grading from their regulator such as Ofsted or be in the process of initial registration with Ofsted, the Local Authority may at its absolute discretion award a grant to a provider who has received a grading of less than good or are new to the market, if the places that it delivers are needed for sufficiency and a local authority assessment shows confidence in the quality of provision.

Method Statements

Each Method Statement in the Application Form will be evaluated using the scoring system below:

Score 5 - Excellent	Excellent demonstration by the Applicant of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the funding aims, with evidence to support the response. Response identifies significant added value and/or innovation.
Score 4	Good demonstration by the Applicant of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the funding aims and some or most of the additional requirements, with evidence to support the response. Response identifies potential added value.
Score 3	Satisfactory demonstration by the Applicant of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the funding aims, with sufficient evidence to support the response.
Score 2	Demonstration by the Applicant of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the majority of the funding aims and/or limited evidence to support the response.

Score 1	Poor demonstration by the Applicant of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the funding aims, with little or no evidence to support the response.
Score 0 - Unacceptable	Does not comply and/or unacceptable demonstration by the Applicant of the ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource & quality measures required to deliver the funding aims, with little or no evidence to support the response.

Funding will be awarded on the basis of the Applicants who achieve the highest scores once the evaluation has been completed. There are 5 Method Statements (MS) that will be assessed using the above scoring criteria, therefore there is a maximum of 25 marks that can be awarded.

Please see below an example of how the scoring will be calculated:

Applicant	MS 1 Score	MS 2 Score	MS 3 Score	MS 4 Score	MS 5 Score	Total Score
Applicant A	4	3	2	4	3	16
Applicant B	3	4	3	3	2	15

As the funding is finite, Applicants may not be awarded the full funding allocation put forward in their application form where it is evident that it would lead to a gap, or a disproportionate spread of availability based on local need and available data.

Agreement Monitoring and Support

- Funding is dependent upon compliance with the terms and conditions of the award.
- Grants awarded will be subject to a grant agreement which sets out the Council's expectations of organisations in accepting grant funding. No monies will be transferred until signed copies of the agreement and all required documentation are returned to the local authority.
- Applicants will need to provide complete management information as part of the grant agreement on a termly basis and self-monitor to the wraparound childcare quality framework
- Supportive monitoring visits will be conducted by the Early Years team throughout the term of the contract to ensure that funding is spent in line with the terms and conditions of the award.
- The school or provider receiving funding must maintain reliable, accessible and up to date accounting records with an adequate audit trail in case Torbay Council, the Secretary of State or an appropriately qualified auditor require access to or copies of the accounting records.
- Failure to supply required evidence will result in the grant being reclaimed from the provider as set out in the contract.
- Each project will be assigned direct support from the Early Years team. They will work closely with you to develop your plans.

Expectations of Providers

- Work collaboratively with the local authority.
- Respond to data collection requests from the local authority promptly.
- Adhere to statutory guidance, including to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensure their provision is inclusive and has considered the needs of all children, including those with SEND and additional needs.
- Where appropriate, promote availability of government childcare subsidies to parents, including - Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit childcare elements.
- Deliver provision that aligns with the quality principles.
- Schools and providers will be required to adhere to the Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014 (referred to as the School Food Standards). This applies to all food and drink provided to pupils on school premises and during an extended school day (up to 6pm).

Additional Key Information

The local authority cannot fund either existing or new places that have opened prior to grant award, nor can they fund projects retrospectively, for example if you have already completed some work, we are unable to include that within the grant payment.

Application assessors will take into consideration potentially higher costs of projects that involve the expansion of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Providers will need to ensure that provision is equally accessible for all children.

Whilst we are choosing to communicate directly with Primary Schools, we do recognise that there is provision in place, or potentially new provision that could be delivered by PVI (VCS) Providers. In this instance, we would expect you to have a written agreement in place outlining the conditions of this funding with the provider, and they **MUST** be Ofsted registered and able to operate from the

school address to ensure that all the childcare is eligible for parents/carers wishing to access the Tax-free Childcare scheme.

Contact Details:

earlyyears@torbay.gov.uk / 01803 207895

Tranche 3 – Wraparound Application Panel Notes

Applicant: Warberry

MS1 Feedback: The provider is oversubscribed for current provision and the intention is to increase current provision by 15 places and move year 1 into the nursery setting to free up additional space from year 2. Thorough was response which Covered everything required.

M2 Feedback: Provider identified a mobilisation plan with timescales, including clear actions to be completed.

M3 Feedback: Response listed number of staff that will be needed for the provision, including what the recruitment process would look like. The response did not identify what training would be undertaken, or the minimum qualifications that the staff will need to have in place.

M4 Feedback: The response highlighted that the provision would be overseen by a teacher, with a monitoring role to evaluate and support. Have mentioned training and monitoring within their response to this question. The response considered SEND and environment with reference to the estates team.

M5 Feedback: Whilst little detail was provided to support the response as this is for additional spaces to an already established, and oversubscribed, provision, the likelihood of the provider to be able to continue meet need is high.

Total Funding Cost: £7,500

Considerations: within the proposal, have only mentioned 3- to 4-year-olds, will need the fees for the older children. This will need to be updated before funding is released. Would want a conversation with them to see if they can do an earlier start

MS 1 Score	MS 2 Score	MS 3 Score	MS 4 Score	MS 5 Score	Total Score
5	4	2	4	3	18

Applicant: Sherwell Valley

MS1 Feedback:

M2 Feedback:

M3 Feedback:

M4 Feedback:

M5 Feedback:

Total Funding Cost:

Considerations: will need to speak with the school again as there is very limited information within their application to understand what they will use the funding for and so on.

MS 1 Score	MS 2 Score	MS 3 Score	MS 4 Score	MS 5 Score	Total Score

Applicant: Eden Park

MS1 Feedback: Provider identified what the funding will be used for. It was noted that they have staff in place for the after-school club and covered their relevant qualifications.

M2 Feedback: A mobilisation plan with clear actions, including an action around risk assessment was provided.

M3 Feedback: Required qualifications of staff was listed, including what the internal recruitment process would look like and the staff FTEs

M4 Feedback: The response covered activities, monitoring and how quality will be maintained.

M5 Feedback: Response covered how they will promote and increase awareness of the clubs, with the inclusion of incentives. The provider will gain feedback from children and parents. The response noted that club would also be promoted by the children who have attended as word of mouth.

Total Funding Cost: £14,000.

Considerations: will need to check timings of their breakfast opening. Need to clarify what we can provide for the funding, their expenditure is more than what we're offering to ensure that they're aware of this.

MS 1 Score	MS 2 Score	MS 3 Score	MS 4 Score	MS 5 Score	Total Score
4	4	4	4	4	20

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	Non-Trust schools	Funded/not funded	Funding amount	Current provision	Challenge
1	Hayes	Not funded		Equivalent hours	Kinetic run- may wish to expand hours/places.
2	Homelands	Funded Autumn 2024	£5250 15 afterschool	Partial hours	Parental demand low.
3	Sherwell Valley	Funded Spring 2025	£4250 5 breakfast, 10 afterschool	Full wrap	High demand- could be open to 2 nd round of funding to offer more places.
4	St Margarets Academy	Not funded		Not quite equivalent hours	Current finish 5.15pm. Could be partial provision.
5	Watcombe primary school	Funded Autumn 2024	£5700 10 breakfast, 12 afterschool	Partial-5pm finish	Sustainability Could be open to 2 nd round of funding.

	Trust schools	Funded/not funded	Funding amount	Current provision	Challenge/focus
Riviera Trust					
1	Oldway	Funded Autumn 2024	£5000 10 breakfast & 10 afterschool	Full wrap	Interested in 2 nd round of funding to continue success of programme.
2	Shiphay	Funded Autumn 2024	£5250 15 afterschool	Full wrap	Want to expand spaces Interested in 2 nd round of funding.
3	Roselands	Funded Autumn 2024	£5000 10 breakfast & 10 afterschool	Full wrap	Focus on developing quality of provision.
Ace Academies for character and excellence					
4	Torre	Not funded		Full wrap	Not interested in funding.
5	Galmpton	Not funded		Equivalent hours	Separate breakfast club provider. After school club run by school staff. Concern around sustainability.
6	Collaton S Mary	Not funded		Full wrap	Not interested.
7	Brixham	Not funded		Currently finish at 4.30pm	Could have funding for partial hours. New Headteacher started in September.
LAP Learning Academy Partnership					

8	Ellacombe	Not funded		Full wrap	Conversations with the headteacher. Needs to ensure sustainability.
9	Ilsham	Not funded		Equivalent hours	Not interested
10	St Michaels C of E	Funded Autumn 2024	£7000 10 afterschool & extended hours Further £2000 in 2 nd year	Full wrap	Expanding numbers to be sustainable.
11	Warberry	Funded Spring 2025	£7500 15 breakfast & 15 after school	Full wrap	Funded in Spring, provision expanded in September.
Thinking school academy trust					
12	Curledge street	Not funded		Partial hours Finish at 5pm.	Have spoken with school. May apply in November.
13	Furzeham	Not funded		Partial hours	New 2-year nursery opening September.
14	Kings Ash	Just completed successful application.	Due to receive £13,250 15 breakfast, 15 after school & extended time.	Currently finish at 4.20pm. Will now operate until 5.00pm	Sustainability. New onsite nursery means parents have more need for wraparound provision.
Plymouth Cast Academy					

15	Priory	Funded Autumn 2024	Brand new wraparound provision for 10 places. £13,000 Further £5000 in 2 nd year	Full wrap	Balancing school curriculum clubs with paid for afterschool club.
16	St Margaret Clitherow	Funded Spring 2025	Brand new wraparound provision for 13 places. £16,900 Further £6500 in 2 nd year.	Full wrap	Balancing school curriculum clubs with paid for afterschool club.
17	Our lady of the angels	Not funded		Equivalent hours	Nursery run afterschool provision. Interested in applying in November.
18	Sacred Heart	Not funded		Full wrap	Existing full wrap. Not keen to expand numbers.
Lift schools					
19	Barton Hill	Not funded		Full wrap	Existing full wraparound.
Connect Academy Trust					
20	Eden Park	Funded Spring 2025	Brand new after school club	Equivalent hours	Low numbers of attendance- Need to build parental trust.

			£14,000 for 20 places. Further £6000 in 2 nd year.		
21	Cockington	Not funded		Full wrap	School run Breakfast club. Nursery run Afterschool club.
22	Preston primary	Not funded		Full wrap	Existing full wrap. Have shown interest but not actioned.
St Christopher's Trust					
23	Upton St James Full wrap	Funded Autumn 2024	Brand new after school club £7000 for 10 spaces.	Full wrap	After school club not viable until 6.00pm- lack of parental demand.
24	All saints Babbacombe	Funded Autumn 2024	£3550 5 breakfast & 8 afterschool	Partial hours	Provision not expanded until September 2025.
25	St Marychurch C of E	Not funded		Full wrap	Breakfast club run by school. After school club run by husband-and-wife team.
			£132,150 (£118,900 actual without Kings Ash)		

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Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board / Cabinet

Date: 17 and 18 November 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Fostering Annual Report 2024 - 2025

When does the decision need to be implemented? For Information

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Lead Cabinet Member Children's Services,
nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk

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

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Fostering Annual Report sets Torbay's vision for the Fostering Service, its core principles, its key aims, main priorities and actions, the role of the Fostering Service and its various functions, the Fostering Service organisational structure, recruitment performance information, an outline of the fostering recruitment and marketing strategy and campaign, improvements in terms of foster carer support and retention, information relating to number of initial enquires received in the period of the 1 April 2024 to the 31 March 2025 and the next steps for the service.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement established by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering for each Local Authority to produce and publish an Annual Report. This Annual Report should be considered in conjunction with the Fostering Service Statement of Purpose, required under the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, which is available on Torbay's fostering microsite.
- 2.2 Torbay's vision is one whereby its people are able to thrive, and our fostering community is an integral part of the service provided to our cared for children. As outlined within Torbay's Corporate Parenting Strategy, we want our cared for and care experienced young people to be safe, happy and healthy, in order that they can reach their full potential, and as

corporate parents, we wish to give our cared for and care experienced children and young people the access to all of the opportunities that good parents afford their children. The dedication and commitment of our fostering families plays a critical role in how we are able to achieve this vision.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

Recommendation to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board:

1. That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board endorse the Fostering Annual Report 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

1. That the Cabinet endorses the Fostering Annual Report 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report and that it is published in accordance with Council's requirements.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Fostering Services Annual Report 2024/25

Background Documents

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fostering Annual Report provides an overview of the activity within the fostering assessment and support service in the period of the 1 April 2024 and the 31 March 2025.
- 1.2 It includes an executive summary, a profile of the cared for children being supported by Torbay, a review of the key priorities and actions of the service, the role of the fostering service, an overview of the organisational structure, information relating to the fostering recruitment priorities, an overview of events attended, an overview of developments in relation to fostering, an overview of Special Guardianship support, and key priorities and actions.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 N/A – No other options have been considered.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 N/A

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement established by the National Minimum Standards for Fostering for each Local Authority to produce and publish an Annual Report. There are no legal implications as a result of the decision to endorse this Annual Report.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 A priority of the Fostering Service has been to enhance and develop the opportunities for participation, engagement and consultation with our fostering families.
- 5.2 Fostering families are encouraged to share their views regularly and in a variety of ways, from attendance at the quarterly Fostering Forums, through quarterly thematic surveys and through direct one to one conversations and communications with the fostering service and senior management.

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 Should this report not be endorsed Torbay will not be compliant with the statutory requirements in line with the National Minimum Standards for Fostering. There will no change in terms of the fundamental function of the service however the report would not be published, and could not be transparently shared with our foster carers which would limit the ability of the service to share learning in respect of patterns and trends, and achieve clarity with our fostering families about the priorities for improvement.

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	The Fostering Annual Report outlines the strengths, areas to strength and the priorities for the fostering service, in addition to the vision and strategy to enhance the local in house provision of high quality placements for our cared for children		
People with caring Responsibilities	The Fostering Annual Report outlines the strengths, areas to strength and the priorities for the fostering service, in addition to the vision and strategy to enhance the local in house provision of high quality placements for our cared for children		
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)	The ambition of the Fostering Annual report, particularly in respect of fostering recruitment, is to ensure that any child, no matter their level of need or their socioeconomic status, has access to the highest quality in-house fostering provision where possible.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	The role of the fostering service is to ensure that all cared for children have access to the highest quality in-house fostering provision where possible; as such, the provision of this service can have a significant, positive impact on the longer term health outcomes for cared for children and care experienced young people. The provision of high quality support		

	to fostering families also impacts positively on their emotional health		
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None

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As a service, we aim to be:

F – forward-thinking and focused on the continued professional development of our staff and our carers
O – open to transparent communication and participation with our fostering families
S – safe, secure and stable
T – trustworthy and reliable
E – encouraging and proactive in respect of our fostering families' education and training
R – robust in respect of statutory and regulatory compliance
I – innovative in terms of service organisation and development
N – nurturing, supportive and caring
G – guided by best practice

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1. Executive summary

This document is intended to read alongside the revised Torbay Fostering Statement of Purpose 2024-25.

Torbay Council have continued to revise their sufficiency strategy. The aims of the Sufficiency Strategy 2021-25 are summarised below:

Torbay's Sufficiency Strategy

Torbay Council's vision is to provide sufficient care in the community and high-quality placements for children and young people in its care which meet their needs and offer the necessary support to enable their aspirations to become their reality.

Torbay aims to:

- Strengthen the delivery of edge of care, early help, early intervention, and prevention services.
- Increase the numbers of in-house foster carers and review our existing bank of carers to develop and match their skills to the needs of our children.
- Reduce the use of out of local area provision which may disadvantage our children and young people.
- Increase the number of adopters who can adopt children who are known to be harder to place.
- Provide young people who are leaving care with a variety of placement choices and support to independence.
- Provide a robust commissioning framework which is effectively responding to the sufficiency challenges and driving up standards.
- Improve the overall data capture and data management of cared for children to better inform this strategy and improve accurate responses to sufficiency challenges.

- Raise our aspirations for educational attainment and other outcomes for cared for children.
- Continue to build on the strength of the Torbay Corporate Parenting Board.

This report will identify some of the improvements and challenges made in terms of performance, participation, fostering recruitment and the implementation of a restorative model which incorporates our fostering families.

This is a report of the Fostering Service and covers the period of 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

This report will address the roles and functions of the Fostering Service and should be read in conjunction with the Fostering Statement of Purpose 2024-25.

Throughout 2024-25 the Fostering Service has continued to ensure that there are a range of placement options for children which offer both high quality and cultural appropriateness.

Please note, for the purpose of this document, the word 'placement' is used throughout. In line with the implementation of the restorative model, it is fully recognized that this word may not be the right choice for individual children; however, each child will wish for the place where they live to be called something different, and home can have powerful connotations for cared for children and young people and therefore 'placement' is used in this instance.

2. Profile of cared for children

As of the 31st March 2025 Torbay were corporate parents to 280 cared for children; this overall figure also incorporated nine Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who Torbay had welcomed either as part of the National Transfer Scheme or through representation as UASC by residents placed at local asylum hotels. The number of cared for children decreased over the year 2024-25 and stood at 280 as of 31st March 2025, compared with 297 at the same point the previous year. The decrease was due to a combination of preventative work that reduced the number of children becoming cared for in the year along with a substantial reduction in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) presenting in Torbay.

There is evidence to suggest that permanency for Torbay's cared for children has continued to improve with further progress in adoptions and staying put arrangements coupled with SGOs all outperforming statistical neighbours and national averages.

There were 10 children adopted throughout the year 2024/25 out of 101 total children who ceased to be cared for, equating to 10%. This compares favourably with the Torbay figure of 4% in 2022/23 and 3% in 2021/22 and demonstrates the strength that Torbay is showing in leading the way across the South West Peninsular with regards to adoption performance. 35 young people ceased to be cared for in the 2024/25 year who were aged 18 or over at that point. 18 of those were in foster placements at the point they ceased to be cared for. Of those 15 remained Staying Put with their foster carers. That is 83% of children in foster care ceasing to be cared for aged 18 or over who Stayed Put.

As of 31st March 2025, 64% of children in foster care in Torbay were living in 'in-house' provision. Although this is close to the national average of 65% and significantly lower than last year's figure of 77%, there remain challenges with in-house foster placement sufficiency connected to factors such as the aging profile of long-term foster carers who have retired and the challenges in recruiting new foster carers against a backdrop of a cost of living crisis. 42% of children in foster care were in long-term placements at the end of the year, a decrease from 49% in the previous year which is a reflection of more robust permanency planning and tracking through Permanence Panel. Long-term matching also allows decisions to be made with children and their foster carers around reduced visiting which in turn allows cared for children to experienced childhoods that feature less intrusion from the Local Authority.

The number of children placed more than 20 miles away at 35% is still significantly above the statistical neighbours and national average at 20%. The figure of 35% for 2024-25 is higher than the previous year which was 34% in 2023/24, and 31% in 2022/23. There are many reasons a cared for child might be placed out of county and at a distance from the address they lived in at the point of becoming cared for, and significant analysis of our cared for population identifies many of these reasons to be in line with the distinct and bespoke wishes and feelings or best interests. For example, 13% of those children are placed for adoption, and 9% placed with family or friends in the locality of their address; similarly, in line with their wishes and feelings, 1% of this cohort are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who have expressly asked to be placed in more urban areas. Those children and young people who require specialist settings, such as secure or residential provision, 10 out of 11 children, are placed within twenty miles away from the address they lived in at the point of becoming cared for also.

Torbay continue to recognise the increased vulnerability of children placed at a distance from Torbay, and this is reflected in the Out of County Placement Protocol which advises of the specific role of the Social Worker, Team Manager and Senior Leadership Team in supporting these cared for children and tracking and monitoring their placements, as well as particular expectations in terms of placement and care planning. This Protocol is updated on a quarterly basis.

Torbay continues to focus on expanding the range of foster placement options available to our children. This understanding of the needs of our cared for children is used continuously to inform and enhance our fostering recruitment strategy and planning which continues to be focused on expanding the in-house placement options available to:

- Cared for children between the ages of 13-17.
- Cared for children who require placements alongside their siblings.
- Cared for children with additional or complex needs.
- Cared for children who are transitioning from residential settings into fostering families.
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

As outlined in previous Annual Reports, it remains imperative that placement sufficiency, and in particular the development of our in-house fostering provision, remains a key strategic priority and the work with the regional fostering hub and the implementation of the Mockingbird project are just two examples of how this work will continue to develop over 2025-26. There is a continued need for a collective view that our cared for children have a right and a need for high quality, safe placements in their local area.

Cared for children on 31st March 2025 by placement type:

Placements at 31st March 2025		Number	%
Total in-house placements		137	49%
Foster placement with relative or friend	Inside local authority	25	9%
	Outside local authority	9	3%

Placements at 31st March 2025		Number	%
Placement with other foster carer:	Inside local authority	113	40%
	Outside local authority	51	8%
Secure unit		0	0%
Homes and hostels (residential care, K2 code)		18	6%
Hostels and other supportive residential placements (H5 code)		11	4%
Residential schools		0	0%
Other residential settings (codes R1, R2, R3, R5)		1	0%
Placed for adoption (including placed with former foster carer)		13	5%
Placed with own parents		20	7%
In lodgings, residential employment or living independently		8	3%
Other placements (Z1) (DfE guidance suggests use for unregulated foster care only)		11	4%

NOTE: The national data groups several codes together (K2 children's homes, H5 supported living and K1 secure units), so comparisons are not straightforward, but in general the national and local pictures are similar.

The national picture is as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Foster care (U codes)	70%	54%	67%
Placed for adoption (A codes)	3%	3%	2.5%
Placed with own parents (code P1)	7%	9%	6%
Children's homes (code K2) and secure unit (code K1) combined	9%	10%	10%

Residential schools (code S1)	-	-	-
Other residential (adult residential care homes, NHS provision, family centres, mother and baby units, YOIs or prison - R codes)	1%	4%	3%
Independent living (code P2)	2%	5%	7%
Other (mostly unregulated foster placements with family / friends, code Z1)	2%	4%	5%

NOTE: The national data groups several codes together (K2 children's homes, H5 supported living and K1 secure units), so comparisons are not straightforward, but in general the national and local pictures are similar.

3. Key Priorities and Actions of the Service in 2024/25

The key priorities and actions of the service in 2024/25 have been:

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- Continuing to identify and enhance ways to capture the voice of our fostering families and use this feedback to improve and enhance fostering assessment and services. ***This action is ongoing and forms a foundational aspect of the Regulated Service Plan.***
- Expanding and developing the Corporate Parenting Offer for fostering families, cared for children, care experienced young people, parent/carers and Special Guardians throughout the year. ***Ongoing.***
- Reviewing the training provided to foster carers on a regular basis. ***Ongoing.***
- Running high quality and varied support groups, both internally to provide foster carers with therapeutic and emotional support. ***Ongoing.***
- Providing bespoke and individualised plans of support, to enhance placement stability, inclusive of out of hours support from the Building Futures Together team and intensive support programmes which last up to sixteen weeks, when needed to stabilise the placement. ***Ongoing.***
- Reviewing the Fostering Recruitment Strategy. ***Achieved.***

- Home for Good finalised their contract after three years of commissioning by Torbay Council. Home for Good is a national Christian fostering and adoption focused charity working to inspire Christians to foster or adopt and equipping the church communities to support those who are caring for vulnerable children. Home for Good works with local authorities to develop and strengthen connections with local churches around foster carer recruitment and retention so they can best meet their obligations as corporate parents to the children in their care. Home for Good made 1 referral in 2023/24 which progressed to assessment. Prior, in 2023-24, one family was identified through the charity and subsequently approved through Panel. **Achieved.**
- Enhancing the impact of our Quarterly Fostering Forums, to ensure that they provide a direct platform for collaboration on our model and implementation of services and provide an open portal of discussion relating to current live issues/events between our carers, social workers, managers, the Virtual School and the Head of Service. The Participation team also regularly attend Foster Carer Support Groups and meet with our Cared for Council. This also supports the development of our collaborative working response, with our carers, thereby embedding the restorative and co-produced approach to our improvements. **Achieved.**
- Torbay Council received Fostering Friendly accreditation from the Fostering Network in May 2023. We launched this during our Fostering and Social Worker Celebration Event on all social media channels and the Council website. We continue to actively promote this to local business groups and the plan is to continue to roll this out more widely in the Torbay community. **Achieved.**
- Celebrating the commitment and achievements of our fostering families through the Letters of Thanks scheme, the Children's Celebration event and our fostering communications. **Ongoing.**
- Audits focused on the bridging to adoption process and the voice of foster carers were undertaken, with the learning feeding into service improvement. **Achieved.**
- Considering and implementing the new reforms of Stable Homes, Built on Love. The principle of kinship care has featured heavily in developing enhanced training for our connected carers with our foster carers. We are also committed to the Mockingbird approach of foster care which will develop supportive networks and a stronger sense of community for our children and young people in Torbay and also for their foster carers and connected carers. **Ongoing.**
- Family Hubs have been launched and are now part of each of the three towns which make up Torbay. This means that there is community support that is accessible in each area, including universal support for fostering and kinship families. The support offered by the Special Guardianship team through the Hubs will continue to be promoted as a priority in Torbay. **Ongoing.**

Torbay Mockingbird Constellation

Torbay Council has partnered with the Fostering Network to deliver the Mockingbird Family Model. This is an innovative extended family model that aims to improve the stability of fostering placements for our cared for children/young people and strengthen the overall relationships between carers, children/young people, fostering services and birth families. Our goal is especially to ensure that sibling attachments and relationships are supported to thrive.

Mockingbird is an alternative way of providing foster care. It involves 6-10 foster carers becoming part of a group with other foster carers who are part of a wider constellation of satellite foster homes. The satellite homes in turn are supported by a central hub home, which provides advice and support to all the satellite homes.

The hub home and the satellite homes are supported by the fostering service which provides a worker to take on a liaison role across the whole Constellation.

The hub home provides children and their carers with support including sleepovers where appropriate and shared social activities on a 1 x monthly basis for all members of the constellation.

Torbay also plans to use the Mockingbird model as part of our foster care recruitment promotion for the future. We currently have a project lead who is working closely with the Fostering Network, with our immediate colleagues from within Torbay's fostering service and with several other key colleagues who are actively involved in ensuring we are driving our ambition of the successful implementation of Mockingbird within Torbay.

The aim of the Mockingbird family model is to improve placement stability for children who are looked after, prioritise sibling connection, promote active child protection, support permanence and improve the support provided to foster carers, so that foster carers feel more supported, valued and less isolated.

The model fits with Torbay's approach of putting families at the centre of finding solutions and solving problems using restorative approaches. From a number of evaluations carried out, including by the UK Government, the positive impacts of the Mockingbird project, includes: Reduced placement breakdown, Improved placement stability, Improved sibling contact, Improved experience of peer support, Improved experience of birth family contact, Improved levels of carer recruitment / retention, Improved process / experience of respite care, Improved skills, confidence and role satisfaction for foster carers, Building a network of strong / authentic relationships able to replicate support of extended family.

Our first Mockingbird constellation in Torbay was launched on the 20th of February 2025. The constellation entailed of a Hub Foster Family, and 10 satellite foster families, 8 of these are full time foster carers and two are only approved as respite foster carers. There are 11 children part of the constellation and two children cared by the Hub carers permanently. The constellation and hub carers meet regularly and communicate well with the liaison Social Worker. The constellation captures mainly foster carers in Brixham area which makes it easier in terms of the proximity and the support required for children and carers. Our ambition is to develop Mockingbird to include Paignton and Torbay so that we have one constellation in each area of Torbay. We are working closely with the Fostering Network in meeting the fidelity model required and provide the support required to foster carers and children.

4. The Role of the Fostering Service

The Fostering Service continues to develop and improve practice to meet the needs of cared for children in Torbay in line with the requirements of National Minimum Standards 2011 and Fostering Regulations. Torbay Fostering Service aim a range of fostering placements which meet the needs of our cared for children: Whilst there are universal standards within our fostering offering of care there are individual specialisms/focuses that carers can offer to our children:

Emergency Fostering Placements

- These are carers who can offer a fostering family home at short notice, and for short period of time at point of need in an emergency.

Short-Term Fostering Placements

- These are carers who are able to offer a fostering family home on a short-term basis; this could be for anything up to two years, for children who are cared for subject to proceedings and who need a safe and secure home whilst decisions are made about their care. These carers may then be involved in bridging to adoption, support to reunification, transition to other family care arrangements, transition to a longer term fostering placement or bridging to independence.

Long Term/Permanent Placements

- These are carers who can offer a fostering family home to children whose plan is one of long-term fostering, and when final decisions have been made that a child cannot return home to the care of their parent/s or previous caregiver. These long-term placements offer security and stability for children for their minority and often into their adulthood. These carers make a long-term commitment to a child, and are often

matched as a long-term permanent placement for the child following a year in placement, through the Permanence Panel supported by an up to date assessment and recommendation of the child's allocated social worker.

Respite Placements /Stay Overs

- These are carers who are able to offer a fostering family home to children, who are often in a long-term matched placement, as part of their plan of stability and permanence within that placement, to provide appropriate support to long term carers. At times, these placements may be use as a short-term measure, and as part of the bridging process to alternative placements for a child at point of need.

Parent and Child Placements

- Torbay currently offer limited parent and child placements however we have identified several carers who have an interest in offering this type of placement and are actively looking to support progression of this interest by supporting focused training opportunities and a development programme to move this forward and expand are service offer and expertise within our fostering families. Currently we are meeting this need of our service through specialist placement agencies that offer this level of expertise. These are carers with specific training who can offer placement to parent/s and child/ren. These may be young parents, under the age of sixteen, or parents of any age, who require intensive support, guidance, and modelling to developing their parenting capacity in a safe environment.

Placements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

- These are carers who are able to offer a fostering family home to unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people, to enable them to adjust fully to being in a new country, and provide a nurturing safe base from which these young people can begin to recover from their experiences and forge a life for themselves in their new surroundings and communities.

Sibling placements

- These are carers who are able to offer a fostering family home to sibling groups, not only in respect of providing accommodation, which is suitably sized for the sibling group, but carers who are suitably skilled to manage the presenting needs of each child within a sibling group of two or more children.

Resilience placements

- Resilience foster carers are carers who can offer a fostering family home to support young people aged 10-18 years who currently live in residential care and/or who may have particularly complex needs, or young people who may be in the youth justice system. For those who have the knowledge, skills and experience to care for a child with these needs, it's a unique fostering opportunity where carers provide long term, family-based placements, with the intention of fostering one young person and supporting them into adult life. We are developing our capacity in this area of care through our fostering recruitment strategy to assess suitably skilled potential carers through this route, in addition to exploring opportunity of training and development from our existing cohort of carers to expand on their current offer.

Staying Put Placements

- These are carers who can offer a home to those care experienced young people aged eighteen and above who they have previously fostered.

All our foster carers are supervised and supported by Social Workers within the fostering service, and this also includes our Connected Carers who are afforded opportunities to engage in training and support alongside other foster carers to ensure their support. The overall aim of the Fostering Service is to provide a range of high quality, safe and aspirational foster care placements that meet the array of needs of Torbay cared for children.

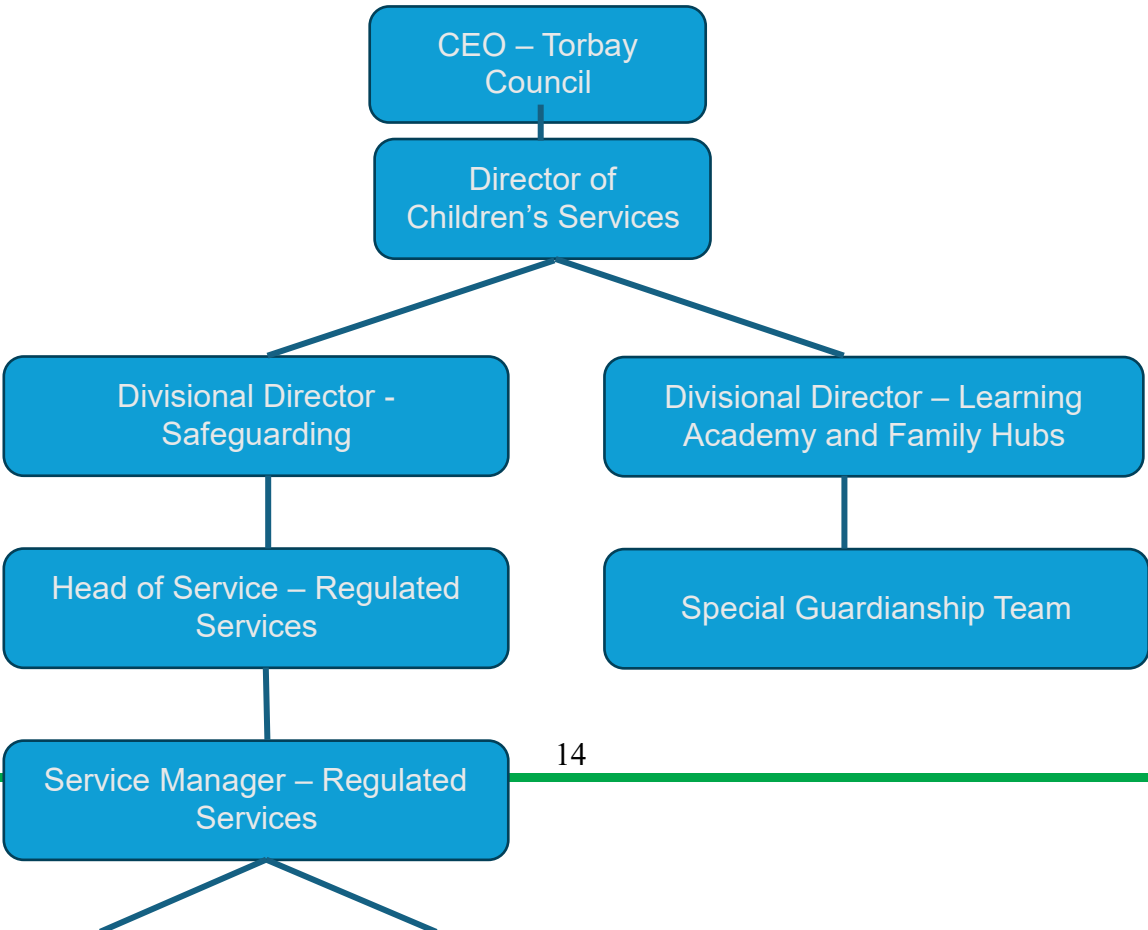
Torbay Fostering Service's objectives for service provision are:

- We want cared for children to live in an environment which is warm, stable and consistent to meet their needs.
- We want cared for children to have access to fostering homes which provide a safe, secure and nurturing base from which they grow into confident and happy young people who have aspirations for their future.
- We want cared for children to feel supported to achieve the best possible outcomes, not only in the short term but in the medium to long term too.
- We want cared for children to feel fully involved in their planning.
- We want cared for children to feel like they have a voice in the development of services designed to support them.
- We want social workers to understand the value of the fostering role and how their actions and practice can support the delivery of high-quality fostering services.
- We want to provide Social Workers with the relevant training and development opportunities to help them to under this.
- We want to provide fostering families with high quality and individualised training and development opportunities.
- We want to provide support of our fostering families which is personalised and inclusive of appropriate support for out of hours response.
- We want to continue to recruit fostering families who have a wide range of skills and experience, who can offer homes to a wider range of cared for children, including sibling groups, older children or those children who may have additional needs.

- We want to continue to recruit fostering families from a diverse background who can offer a range of homes for cared for children, thereby enhancing the quality of the matching process.
- We want to be a service which demonstrates its core values of equality and the value of diversity through its operational actions as well as its strategic review of practice, policy, training and development.
- We want to be a service which is compliant with the statutory, regulatory and legislative framework under which we work within daily.
- We want to be a service which recognises learning opportunities and ensures that service delivery is robustly monitored, reviewed and developed.
- We want to develop a team approach, which centres on the child and their needs, and which ensures that all involved in supporting a child are focused on the achievement of best practice.

5. Organisational Structure

Torbay Fostering Service is based at Children’s Services, Tor Hill House in Torquay, and sits under Regulated Services. The Fostering Service consists of two teams: Fostering Assessment and Fostering Support. The governance structure is as follows, with the service sitting within the Safeguarding directorate:



Team Manager –
Fostering Assessment

Team Manager –
Fostering Support

Day to day management and development of services is overseen by the two Team Managers, who are both Social Work qualified managers with a combined 50 years experience in Social Work with children and families. Both Team Managers oversee a team of staff, inclusive of fostering assessment Social Workers, fostering Supervising Social Workers, Community Care Workers, Business Support Officers and a Recruitment and Events Co-Ordinator to support the delivery of service. Operational delivery is overseen by the Head of Service for Regulated Services, supported by the Divisional Director of Safeguarding.

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. They also deliver the pre-approval 'Skills to Foster' training programme offered to adult applicants and a specially created workshop for their children to attend to support the development of skills through the assessment process.

The Recruitment and Events Co-Ordinator role is an officer who works closely with the Fostering Assessment Team Manager, Communications team and other professionals to understand our local demographic and support them to view the potential skills people may have for fostering, thereby contributing to the development of a wider range of fostering families and skillsets.

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. The panel is independent and has a chair alongside members to enable the function of the panel. The panel is supported by a Panel Advisor who provides expert advice to the panel on arising matters.

Torbay Children's Services also has its own Learning Academy and works with a number of Universities to offer social work placements for students as well as offering a robust and supportive programme for Newly Qualified Social Workers employed by Torbay, some of whom may work within the Fostering Service and contribute to the service offer to our families.

All the Managers and Supervising or Assessing Social Workers hold social work qualifications and are registered with the Social Work England.

All staff working at Torbay have access to a wide range of continued professional development and training opportunities which are coordinated and promoted by our Learning Academy.

The Social Work staff establishment on 31st March 2025 comprised of:

- Two permanent Team Managers
- Two permanent Assistant Team Managers

- Four full time Social Workers (Fostering Support)
- Four part time Social Workers (Fostering support)
- One Mockingbird Liaison Social Worker
- One Community Care Worker providing services across the fostering service

- Four assessing Social Workers full-time (Fostering Assessment)
- Two part time Social Workers (Fostering Assessment)
- One Recruitment, Retention and Events Co-Ordinator

- One Fostering Panel Chair
- Fostering Panel members – 12 members

Fostering Panel Advisor (this role is undertaken by the two Team Managers).

6. Fostering Recruitment Performance

During 2024/2025 the fostering service received a total of 67 initial enquiries, (two more than the previous year), and as a result of these enquiries 9 mainstream fostering households were approved. This is an increase of 120% approved fostering households compared to last year.

Years	Number of enquiries	Approvals	Conversion
2014- 2015	118	29	24%
2015- 2016	65	10	15%
2016- 2017	42	3	7%
2017 - 2018	86	10	12%
2018 - 2019	45	4	9%
2019 - 2020	51	2	4%
2020 - 2021	111	20	18%
2021 – 2022	99	9	9%
2022 – 2023	111	8	7%
2023 - 2024	65	4	6%
2024 - 2025	67	9	13.4%

The conversion of enquiries to approval during 2024/25 has increased by 1.4%, from 6% in 2023/2024 to 7.4%.

There were two fostering households unable to attend fostering Panel as planned in 2024-25 due to a significant delay with the applicant's GP Surgery undertaking medicals. This was supported by the Integrated Care Board so that this could eventually be resolved.

As a baseline expectation, the Fostering Service aim to increase the net number of fostering households by a minimum of ten per year. As of the 31st March 2025, Torbay supported 78 mainstream fostering families and approved nine families in the 2024-25 financial year. There was a total of 11 families that left fostering due to personal circumstances including retirement. Therefore, the current mainstream net total number of fostering families increased by two in Torbay in 2024-25, meaning a continued deficit in new foster carers against our local sufficiency target.

There are a number of factors which have impacted upon this performance. Factors such as the cost of living and individual financial considerations continue to be cited by both prospective and current fostering families as influencing factors when making the decision to begin to or continue to foster. Nationally, sufficiency and recruitment continue to be a challenge and a number of government led initiatives, aligned to the ambition of Stable Homes Built on Love, that have been implemented to address this. Despite continued attendance at events and fostering drop-in sessions, as well as us now being part of The Fostering South West Hub, only 67 initial enquiries were received in 2024-25. Typically, only one in ten initial enquiries will convert into approvals, and therefore the lower generation of enquiries has had a direct impact on the number of fostering families who have been recruited in this financial year.

Ten applicants progressed from the point of Initial Enquiry to the stage whereby they were due to be allocated a Social Worker, or had been allocated a Social Worker and the assessment had begun, however they subsequently withdrew or were withdrawn. This is a slightly lower number than the previous year of eleven, with the breakdown as below:

Withdrawn in full Assessment	6
Withdrawn before allocation	4
Reasons:	
Management Decision	4
Due to family circumstances	5
Due to health concerns	0
No contact	1
Went to IFA	0

Went to Adopt South West	0
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There was a total of 50 prospective applicants who withdrew having made an initial enquiry. The majority of this number comprises of applicants who did not contact us again or who did not respond to our attempts to contact them. There were also a number of prospective applicants where fostering was no suitable, or did not progress due to ill health, a change in jobs, moving and one who planned to look at adoption. There were four prospective applicants who withdrew after a positive Initial Visit. Two couples decided to remain with their IFA, and the remaining applicants were unavailable. There were 8 Initial Visits on hold as of 31st March 2025 of applicants that appeared appropriate to progress to progress to an Initial Visits, but who were not quite ready to go to this next stage.

There was a total of 5 Initial Visits which had a negative outcome, with the majority of these not having enough relevant experience or transferable skills to foster. When this is the case, we support with opportunities to gain experience with children, including opportunities within Torbay's Enabling Service and at South Devon College. We also offer opportunities to link in with current Torbay foster carer mentors, who can share experiences with them and give them first hand testimony. We also signpost to free on-line courses to gain valuable insight into the lives of children who have experienced trauma. Other factors included lack of physical space that could not be resolved, and single carers who upon further investigation did not have the capacity to care for another child alongside their own.

The fostering service is also responsible for the assessment and supported of Connected Kinship Carers and prospective Special Guardians. The proportion ceasing to be cared for due to a Special Guardianship Order being granted in 2024-25 was significantly above the national figure, at 28 Special Guardianship Orders granted at 25%, compared to 11% nationally. The majority of SGOs made in 2024/25 made were to connected persons. Overall, this demonstrates a positive picture for cared for children in terms of permanency within a forever family during childhood.

In the year 2024/25, the fostering assessment team undertook a total of 68 Connected Carer and Special Guardianship assessments to explore the viability of permanence through Kinship Care. This is a slight decrease by 5 from the previous year which saw 73 such assessments completed. As of the 31st March 2025, 7 Cared for Children were living with Connected Carers under Regulation 24 arrangements on a temporary basis pending the outcome of approval at fostering panel and with permanence plans for a Special Guardianship arrangement.

Numbers of Foster Carers (as at 31st March 2025):

As of 31st March 2025, the total number of approved fostering and Staying Put households was 78 which is comprised as follows:

Total Beds	135
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Current Placements	97 (inclusive of 9 Staying Put)
Vacancies	2
Respite Beds	20
Voids	16

In March 2025, the total number of approved fostering households was 78. This is a decrease of seven mainstream carers overall from the 85 as of the 31st March 2024.

Throughout 2024/2025 financial year there have been 1 case go through the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) process.

From 1st of April 2024 to 31st of March 2025, 10 mainstream fostering families resigned, and one was deregistered for the reasons as outlined below:

Mainstream Foster Carers

- 3 families retired.
- 2 resigned due to health issues.
- 3 families have decided that they do not want to continue with fostering.
- 1 family relocated to a different country.
- 1 family was deregistered due to concerns.

Connected Carers

- 24 Form C Carers were awarded SGOs.
- 2 SGOs were granted to foster carers.
- 1 SGO was granted to a child living in a Section 38(6) arrangement.

7. Recruitment and Marketing Strategy and Campaign

Fostering recruitment remains a key strategic focus within Regulated Services. Whilst continuing to recognize the immense skill and expertise contained within our current fostering family cohort, there is an ongoing need to expand the placement sufficiency and variety we are able to offer our cared for children. Whilst the number of cared for children continues to decrease overall, the needs of cared for children do not and there is specifically a need to develop our in-house ability to provide placement options for: older children; children with additional needs; children with complex needs; young people bridging out of residential provisions; Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; sibling groups.

Torbay's aim is to increase our fostering family cohort by a net increase of ten new fostering families per year, to ensure that we have sufficient, local in-house provision to meet the needs of all of our children; the Strategy incorporates a profile of our cared for children, and their evolving needs (for example the increased need for fostering families who can support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children). When considering an increase nationally in foster carer resignation, the drive and focus on increasing our in-house provision must continue. The Fostering Network have undertaken research which indicates that for every ten initial enquiries, only one will convert to an approval. On this basis, and in line with Torbay's target, we will need to generate 100 enquiries at minimum per year.

In the year 2024/25, an analysis of the recruitment and marketing activity evidenced that the majority of interest is created via a staff presence at activity and information sessions, which are advertised via the website and social media platforms. Having a face-to-face discussion is then prompting people to make online enquiries. Information sharing sessions are also a critical means of establishing an initial contact with prospective foster carers, and building relationships with them from the outset of their fostering journey. Insight analysis demonstrates that those a high proportion of prospective foster carers who make initial enquiries are those who have come into contact with the fostering service, either through first or second-hand experience of being a foster child or knowing someone who has fostered. As such, there is great power within social media campaigns for example in providing insights into being a foster carer, for those who already foster for Torbay.

Torbay's website was updated over the summer and the Fostering Service's rebranding went live in September which has had a real positive response from our foster carers. New pull ups for our events were also purchased.

As from April 2024, there was the introduction of a new regional fostering recruitment support hub for the South West. The regional hub is called Fostering South West and covers all Local Authorities. The new hub will work to improve the customer journey for prospective foster carers from initial enquiry through to applications. The aim is to help increase the conversion rate between initial enquiry and application.

The regional support hub is a centrally run front door across our regional local authority cluster and acts as the first point of contact for prospective carers making an enquiry. Once processed through the hub each Local Authority will pick up the enquiries and ensure the prospective foster carers have the information and support, they need. Fostering South West will continue to provide increased levels of support and share resources for the

benefit of children and fostering families. The new approach provides an efficient approach particularly in the early stages of prospective foster carers finding out information. The regional hub builds on and enhance the good work already being created by individual Local Authorities. The hub supports prospective applicants through their assessment process with their Local Authority and offers opportunities for additional learning, support and guidance to help in preparing them in their transition to become a foster carer with the purpose of increasing the number of applicants being approved to become foster carers.

The Fostering Recruitment Strategy outlines the following three year plan moving forward:

Month/Year	Targeted Marketing Activity	Frequency	Policy or procedure changes
April 2022 – March 2025	Offering our Foster Carers Refer a Friend incentive.	Ongoing	April 2022 – advised Foster Carers of the new incentive. Refer an Applicant Scheme now launched which will provide a £250 one-off payment to any existing foster carer who refers a fostering applicant, at the point the applicant is approved and accepts their first placement. This has already generated three high quality initial enquiries.
April 2024	Fostering South West goes live.	Ongoing	Links to Fostering South West to be included on all Torbay marketing material.
By July 2024	Update of the Fostering section on the Torbay Council Website and linked to the Family Hubs website. The update will be including up to date events, incentives, and restorative language.	Reviewed every three months	Fostering Service Manager, Fostering Retention, Recruitment & Events Coordinator to work with Torbay Council Web Team to update the current website and Family Hubs website.
June 2023 – September 2023	Consult with fostering families on the enhancement of the Family Hubs website, to ensure this is a one stop shop for fostering	Reviewed every three months	Fostering Service Manager, Fostering Retention, Recruitment & Events Coordinator to work with

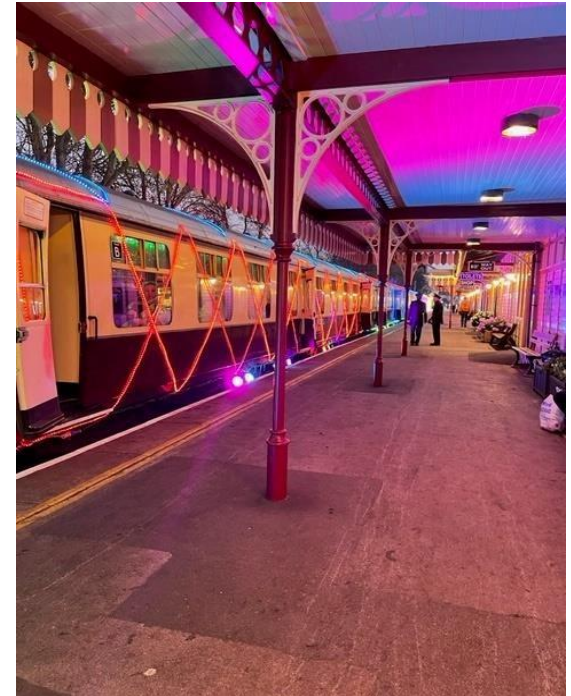
	families in Torbay in terms of signposting, advice and guidance.		Family Hubs lead to update the website.
March 2022 – ongoing	Weekly social media posts to promote Fostering with Torbay Council.	Weekly	A procedure for requesting for regular social media posts to be added needs to be created and implemented.
March 2023- Sept 2024	Developing the resilience of our fostering panel and panel advisors by a recruitment campaign to support development of panel membership and targeted training for Panel advisor role – lead by Fostering Service Manager.	One off	
Aug 2022 – ongoing	Running of Fostering Information Sessions on a monthly basis. This will be via Teams on an ad hoc basis if required.	Monthly	A new PowerPoint to be created and used during Information Sessions and the same information can be sent to all applicants awaiting an initial visit.
May 2023, 2024 and 2025	Children's Services and Fostering Celebration Event. This is to be run on or around Foster Carer Fortnight.	Annually	
March 2023, 2024 and 2025	Foster Carer Workshop with Children's Services Management, Chief Executive, councillors, and Foster Carers	Annually	
March 2023 onwards	Skills for Fostering training for new applicants	Monthly	New training has been created and a new procedure has also been created and shared with the fostering assessment team and managers.
	Birth children Skills for Fostering training to be undertaken during assessment.	As and when	

April 2023 onwards	Fostering Forums to be held at minimum quarterly and face to face.	Every three months	
February and March 2025	Social media advertising		
March 2025	Implementation of Mockingbird first constellation.	Work ongoing.	Key policies and protocols are in progress.

8. Events

The Torbay Fostering Service have, as part of ongoing recruitment activity and the developed Corporate Parenting Offer, been able to attend and participate in the following 58 events in the year 2024-25

- Armed Forces Day
- Torquay United Event
- Lions Club Community Day
- Paignton/Torquay/Brixham town centres
- Paignton/ Torquay/Brixham/Newton Abbot/Churston Libraries
- Residents Engagement event, Brixham
- Devon County Show
- Torbay Air Show
- Caribbean Family Fun Day
- Galmpton Gooseberry Pie Fayre
- Hookhills Cherry Pie Fayre
- Teignmouth Regatta
- Babbacombe Fayre
- Care Leavers Wellbeing Event
- Eat Festival
- Mayfield School
- Winter Fest
- Career Fayre – Torquay
- Torbay Pride
- South Devon College Careers event
- Totnes Christmas markets
- Torquay town hall – Fostering Friendly Event.
- Celebration event for staff and carers
- Online information sessions



In 2025/26, we have 28 planned events so far that we will be attending and providing a platform to promote our fostering service. These events will have representation from our fostering team and other staff members; in addition, current foster carers that have committed to support these events and share their experiences of being a foster carer with Torbay. The events increased in 2024-25 by 13 and therefore there has been a greater presence of the fostering campaign in and around Torbay in the last year.

9. Foster carer support

Performance

Torbay Fostering Service aim to provide the best possible care for children and maintain high standards in respect of children's care. In order to ensure that this is consistently achieved, Torbay have rigorous and comprehensive quality assurance frameworks in place, with audit activity across Children's Services taking place regularly.

The Fostering Service routinely provides reports in respect of the profile of the cared for children cohort and their placement types, information relating to vacancies and investigations, recruitment activity and performance, staffing considerations, training and development, service outcomes and aims and any other information relating to the performance of the service and the wellbeing of our fostering families and our cared for children.

Themes and patterns arising from Fostering Panels are tracked and monitored, with specific actions arising from any consistent areas for development. Compliance with policies and procedures is monitored by managers in supervision and audit and dip sample activity. All staff receive regular supervision, the frequency agreed according to their role, experience and need.

The performance of the service is also monitored within our regulatory framework, and by the Corporate Parenting Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Continuous Children's Improvement Board and the senior leadership team.

Areas of key quality assurance focus for the Torbay Fostering Service are:

- *The numbers of cared for children, in relation to their plan of permanence.
- *Placement stability, with a key focus on minimising disruption for cared for children and enhancing placement stability which involves monitoring the number of placement changes for cared for children.
- *Placement sufficiency and the recruitment of new fostering families.
- *Compliance, including foster carer training, DBS checks, timely Annual Reviews and fulfilment of basic training requirements.
- *Timely and quality foster carer supervision.

- *Purposeful and comprehensive placement planning meetings.
- *The use of placement support and stability meetings.
- *The timeliness and impact of unannounced visits.

The Fostering Service have consistently sustained good performance in the four Key Performance Indicators.

Fostering performance as of the 31st March 2025 stands at:

Foster carers with up-to-date training – 100%
 Foster carers with up-to-date DBS – 100%
 Foster carers with up-to-date medical – 97%
 Foster carers with up-to-date Annual Review – 82%

The percentage of foster carers post one year who have completed the minimum (TSD) has increased from 64% on 31st of March 2024 to 100% on 31st of March 2025. Torbay has moved the completion of the TDS from an external agency delivering this training to an inhouse online system during the last year and foster carers receive and induction and support on accessing this in house system. The medicals decreased from 98% to 97% - this is due to delays in appointments not being available within the necessary timescale. There is also a compliance issue regarding medicals for 2 foster carers that are in the process of being addressed. The foster carers Annual Reviews 82% percentage reflects the reviews completed and signed off minus the reports that are in process to be presented at Panel or in the process of being signed off.

Performance against these key indicators is a regular focus of the monthly performance surgeries chaired by the Head of Service, Regulated Services.

Currently, Torbay Fostering Service offer:

- A general foster carer support group which is held monthly face-to-face.
- Monthly support groups around each social worker's caseload
- Foster Carer Forums which are held quarterly.
- Evening support groups and connected carers support groups
- Single foster carers support group.
- Wellbeing walks for foster carers
- Support Group for male foster carers

Foster carers receive financial allowances which value and respect their skills, learning and commitment. Detailed financial information and guidance around expectations are made available to each foster carer. In addition to the financial support, our foster carers benefit from local discounts and offers from providers that have made a commitment to support Torbay's foster care families as part of the Corporate Parenting Offer. Paignton Zoo have made a pledge to provide all of our foster carers an annual family pass in addition to other local attractions providing discounted rates to access to foster carers.

Out of hours support

Torbay Fostering Service currently also have access to an out of hours team which offers direct support to fostering families whereby issues in relation to placement instability have been identified; this is operating through our Building Futures Team and provides a weekly response until 9pm weekdays and a service on weekends 10-6pm Saturdays. In addition, the EDS (Emergency Duty Service) provides advice and support 24 hours, 7 days a week. This is a generic service and will provide a duty response in the event of an emergency.

Support during Allegations

Torbay Fostering Service also commission specialist support, for example mediation or advocacy services, in situations whereby this is required for foster carers through the allegation process. Fostering Service commissions, the independent individual support for foster carers from The Fostering Network to support them through the investigation process.

Training

At Torbay, we believe that every moment of the fostering experience provides rich opportunity for learning and development; we are committed to supporting fostering families to grow and learn and develop their practice and recognise that this will be on an individualised basis, with at times a bespoke training need.

Fostering families begin their training journey during the assessment and approval process and build on this learning as they move on to complete the Training, Support and Development Standards. Fostering families receive a full induction, in order to enable them to understand the expectations of the fostering role, the key principles and values which underpin the fostering role and how they can best meet the needs of the cared for children they may be supporting and caring for.

Foster Carer training includes:

Record Keeping for Foster Carers

Safer Caring
 LADO Role and Allegations Against Foster Carers
 PACE Training
 Delegated Authority for Foster Carers
 Paediatric First Aid
 Introduction to attachment theory and practice
 Grief, Loss and Change
 Family Time Supervision
 Bridging to Adoption and Permanency
 Leaving Care and Transition
 Skills to foster (as part of the assessment)
 Restorative Practice Deep Dive for Foster Carers
 Restorative Language Training
 Blocked Care
 Safeguarding Level 1 and 2
 Introduction to Trans Awareness
 Introduction to Domestic Abuse and Violence

Torbay Foster Carers have been able to access relationship and sexual health training, pre-teens and teens brain (Let's Talk) and Autism Foetal Alcohol Spectrum led by NHS in 2024-25.

In certain circumstances, Torbay Fostering Service will explore alternative types of bespoke training for individual or groups of fostering families, where this is an identified need.

10. Special Guardianship Support

As of March 2019, all Special Guardianship assessments and Special Guardianship Support had been held within the Fostering Service. In December 2023, Special Guardianship Support moved to Family Hubs and since this time there has been a joined-up approach between Special Guardianship Support and Regulated Services.

The following staff make up the Special Guardianship Support team:

1 Team Manager – FTE 1 fixed term since January 2024; FTC extended to March 2026 (with oversight for Special Guardianship Support and Breathing Space Service)

3 Community Care Workers

- Full time – FTE 1 fixed term since May 2024; FTC extended to October 2025 (to be moved to base budget within current redesign)
- 4 days – FTE 0.8 permanent
- 4 days – FTE 0.82 permanent

All Special Guardianship Order assessments are undertaken by Social Workers within the Fostering Assessment Team; all support for children subject to these Orders and their families is coordinated through the Special Guardianship Support Team. Referral routes, roles and responsibilities in relation to Special Guardianship Support have been reviewed and will updated Kinship policy and Local Offer as outlined within 'Championing Kinship Care; the national kinship care strategy' (DofE, 2023) and 'Kinship Care: statutory guidance for local authorities' (DofE, 2024).

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. Additional reporting capabilities are also expected through Liquid Logic pending a review of the Special Guardianship pathways open for our Special Guardians. 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.

Process for establishing sufficient reviewing of SGO Support Plans on an annual basis is under review. 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.

Special Guardianship Support team have completed 76 Adoption and Special Guardianship Support applications between April 2024 – March 2025.

An internal Special Guardianship Support working group was initiated in January 2024 in order to consider the support needs of our SGO children and Special Guardians. The working group has considered the findings of a survey completed by 15 Special Guardians and begun work on improving areas of support that Special Guardians have told us matter to them. Some priorities for the working group have been on hold pending publication of new Kinship Care statutory guidance and associated anticipated Kinship local offer. The working group has concluded.

In addition to 1:1 SGO support offered by the team, the following work is being undertaken to enhance support offer to SGO families in Torbay:

Co-production work has been undertaken through a survey, consultation relating to local offer, seeking feedback, and through research project undertaken by Exeter and Plymouth Universities on SGO support networks – final report pending.

Peer support is now well established via monthly support group and a WhatsApp group chat.

Quarterly SGO event days are continuing with positive response and feedback from SG families who attend.

SG training pathway has been created on iLearn.

SGO support is included within access to services information on Family Hubs Website – this will be expanded upon once the Kinship Local Offer is published.

Updated guidance regarding SGO support plans has been issued. There is an increase in these being directed to SGO Support Team Manager for QA, however this systemic change has not yet been embedded. Learning from complaints tells us that further guidance and training is required for SGO support plans.

In conjunction with the Learning Academy and the charity, 'Kinship', Special Guardians 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 and also through Torbay's ongoing Family Hub implementation.

11. Key Priorities and Actions of the Service in 2025/26

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- Embed the Stable Homes Built on Love reforms including strengthening our offer to those children in a kinship arrangement.
- Strengthen the process of reunification with timely reviews and assessments to inform good quality planning.
- Relaunch the fostering website and associated branding with communications, and links to both Fostering South West and the Torbay Family Hubs website.
- Make the fostering brand recognised and effective and linked in with the Fostering Hub.
- Progress a community of foster carers for our children in Torbay within a Mockingbird community 'constellation' and continue to work with the Fostering Network.
- Embed the new process of the Fostering Hub and readiness for increased enquiries.
- A review of the Fostering Contract will be finalized, to support a relevant and up to date response to our inhouse fostering carers.
- Ongoing consultation with foster carers will take place over this year via thematic surveys looking at specific topic such as their participation within the professional groups working with the children, training and development, support systems within the inhouse fostering, developing back up carers and use of enablers and other support services.
- Continued development of our offer of Parent and Child placements, with a clear support and assessment plan.

- Whilst the number of cared for children reduces, there remains a vital need for greater variety in respect of the nature of in-house placements on offer to our cared for children, particular our older children, our sibling groups and our children who have additional or more complex needs. As such, recruitment must and does remain a key priority.
- Continue to implement the Former Foster Carer SGO Offer and secure Special Guardianship Orders in respect of identified children who could achieve enhanced permanence through this option.
- Increasing the numbers of cared for children engaged in the Cared for Council.

Report authored by:	Colin Schumacher (Head of Service), Rebekah Shephard and Gina Powell (Service Managers)
Date:	
Date of Review:	1 st April 2026

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

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
27/1/25	38	4. that in light of the importance of the role the Director of Corporate Services be requested to include responsibility as Corporate Parents in all staff job descriptions and as part of their annual appraisal to demonstrate what staff are doing to support our cared for and care experience young people.	4. Email sent to Matthew Fairclough-Kay 11.2.25 to consider the request, chased 19.3.25. – HR are carrying out a full review to determine the best way to embed this across the Council looking at best practice from other local authorities. An update will be shared once the review has been finalised (update due September 2025). Update: officers will add the line into the job description template by the end of October and also include appropriate wording in the Appraisal process from April 2026 as they cannot change the form mid-year.
29/9/25	21	a. In the child protection plan data, one category was blank. What does this represent? (A written response would be provided to clarify the blank category.) 1. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to undertake a dip sampling of attendance at Core Group meetings to confirm that the correct people are attending to ensure that they are meeting the children's needs and provide a written update to the Sub-Board; and 2. that the Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note and endorse the contents of the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual	a. – complete – there was one conference where the child protection category was not recorded which was why it was showing as blank. 1 – Teresa emailed Nancy Meehan 7.10.25 2 - complete

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		Report 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.	
29/9/25	22	a. How many missing children were also at risk of exploitation? (A written response would be provided.) 1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the submitted report on exploitation and children missing and endorse the proposed next steps; and 2. that the future report includes a case study to show the difference that has been made to children and their families and provides an update on the move of the Exploitation Team within the communities.	a. – Teresa emailed Katie Buckley 7.10.25 1 – complete 2 – note added to the Work Programme - complete
29/9/25	23	a. Of the 501 children in EHE, 183 were secondary age. How many of the 160 attending college were Torbay children? (A written response would be provided.) 1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the submitted report on exclusions and absence; and	a. – complete - 25 in Year 10 and 43 in Year 11 1 – complete 2 – note added to the Work Programme - complete

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		2. that the next exclusions and absence report includes: • breakdown by gender and age of primary school children in EHE; • identification of children who have not started school in EHE; • number of pupils on free school meals who are excluded or suspended; • number of suspensions due to uniform issues; • support available during exclusions/suspensions and whether children are actually at home; • detailed information on Year 11 pupils and actions to reduce school changes; and • whether EHE children are known to the Exploitation Team.	

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