



Minutes of the Torbay Child Poverty Commission

16 October 2013

-: Present :-

Councillor Neil Bent, Councillor Jenny Faulkner, Councillor Ken Pritchard and Councillor Julien Parrott, Michelle Kennedy (Chair), Torbay Council: Richard Williams, Director of Children's Services, Julie Sharland, Strategic Housing Manager, Sheena Leaf, Director TDA

(Also in attendance: Andrena Fuller, Rachael Williams, Gail Rogers and Sue Moses notes)

1. Child Poverty Commission meets the Community:

The Chair commenced the meeting by welcoming colleagues from the Youth Offending Team, Andrena Fuller, Early Years Provision, Rachael Williams and Torbay Locality Team, Gail Rogers. The Commission introduced themselves.

Youth Event Feedback

Gail Rogers, Torbay Locality Manager feedback on the recent event held on 5th October at Parkfield Youth Hub attended by young people from the ages of 13 – 17 years. The event was based on the element of the Participation Strategy – Voice of Young People. Over 40 young people attended the morning session and 30 attended for the whole day. Those attending represented groups/organisations from across the Bay and was represented by Children in Care, Young Carers, Young people with disabilities and the Youth Parliament.

Headlines from the event consisted of questioning commissioners/Officers individually in groups. Key questions were asked around preventing bullying, reducing Youth Unemployment, plans to improve Torbay and improving equal rights for people with disabilities. Response/ ideas included:-

- Torbay Grand Designs (young people's ideas if they had money to spend on services)
 - Cycling and bike hire/paths; bigger sports centre
 - Transition into adulthood – difficulty
 - High cost transport
 - More investment/more jobs
 - Bins and litter
 - Homelessness
 - More services for bullying and sex education at school
 - More and better shops

Better parks
More colour into the Bay

- Aspirations – young people had good strong aspirations
- Help to achieve – support, confidence, social help, money from jobs, people believing in me
- Stop you achieving – No money, lack of jobs, having to leave home to find jobs, family crisis, illness & health, school holding me back, bullying, stress, no-one to help and being told I can't

It was noted by the Commission that the poor quality of sex education in schools had been raised previously and any issues would be followed up through the Youth Offending Team.

The Commission recognised and noted the emerging themes from past evidence relating to and supporting the young people's feelings. They also considered, questioned and agreed their responsibility to respond back to the young people on their key issues.

The Chair thanked Gail for sharing the findings with the Commission.

Youth Offending Team

Andrena Fuller outlined the main issues for the Youth Offending Team facing children and families which were:-

- Family Breakdown
- Domestic Violence
- Homelessness
- Low aspirations
- Low school attendance
- Substance Misuse
- Rise in sexual offences

The Commission noted that 90-95% of parents are not in work as well as high incidences of depression and mental health issues which significantly impacts on the aspirations of the young people.

In relationship with income poverty: These issues affected families by stopping them engaging in family activities and no strong work ethic.

The Commission noted that speech and language difficulties were picked up early in both young people and parents through a screening process which is included in any intervention plans. Mentoring support to parents enable parents to access Parenting programmes successfully.

3 things that would make a difference and improve things: included ability to access training and skills learning, mentoring for young people, Community support and access to child and adult mental health services

What works: Good practice in tackling the issues with low income or workless families included:-

- Participating events where parents support parents
- Parents sitting on referral panels on court orders
- 3 ex-service users working for YOT
- Rapid English programmes for literacy enable quick success for young people building self confidence (provided through EOTAS support)

The Commission recognised the significance of mentoring programmes to support young people and the importance of collective mentoring through communities. It was agreed that this should be added as a recommendations in the Child Poverty Commission's report.

The Commission noted that the impact to families following the changes to Welfare Benefits was being closely monitored.

Early Years and Childcare Report

Rachael Williams introduced a paper which showed sufficient nursery provision across Torbay for early years education for 3 and 4 year old children and targeted 2 year old children. DfE revised statutory guidelines now allows all provision to receive funding based solely on the Ofsted Inspection grade. As result of this change, the Early Years team are conducting new sufficiency assessments to analyse the current supply against parental demand. .

Cost of Childcare

The Commission noted that childcare provider's have a range of charges. In 2007 the average hourly amount that parents paid for childcare was £3.78 (this will audited in January 2014). A chart illustrated the provider charges for nursery provision in Torbay.

Funding available to parents

The Commission noted that every child is entitled to 15 hours free childcare for 38 weeks of the year or 11 hours free childcare for 50 weeks of the year. Currently 2212 children access their entitlement. In order to receive 2 year old funding a child must be in a family receiving a benefit. Changes to funding criteria in September 2014 will equate to 320 eligible 2 year old children in Torbay. A total of 2,212 children have access to free entitlement.

Quality of Early Years and Childcare Provision

The Commission noted that the Torbay Early Years Service has once again been awarded to be best in the Country for the second year running.

The Commission recognised the importance of good early years provision and considered the evidence that tracking of 2 year olds has demonstrated that early years provision has been shown to give children from poorer backgrounds a better start in school, including enhancing the child's social, emotional and linguistic development. 93% of providers have been judged good in Torbay reinforcing that

children made more progress in settings with well qualified employees. It was noted that the lowest quality provision was based within areas of deprivation and remains the choice of parents.

An analysis of referrals for 2 year old funding indicated that poor housing, overcrowding, lack of work, poor maternal health, debt, alcohol and drug dependence were frequently prevalent in the referrals.

What has worked well?

The Commission noted that Parent Champions have been supporting parents in accessing their entitlements and promoting child care options. Two parents after taking up their childcare allowance have now returned to work.

A pro-active approach to develop and manage the provision of nursery places in Torbay from September 2014 has begun by identifying the spaces needed and searching for buildings for additional nursery provision. Possible venues were suggested at Foyer, Windmill Centre, Squirrels and Acorn Centre.

The Chair thanked Rachael for her contribution and evidence support tackling child poverty in Torbay

2. Child Poverty Commission Meeting

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Anna Kettley

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 3rd September 2013 were checked for accuracy and agreed to be a true recording of the meeting

5. Matters Arising

- 5 (iv) Overview and Scrutiny Youth Unemployment Report: RW circulated response to recommendations
- 7 (i) Draft interim Child Poverty Commission 'Torbay Gains' – no feedback/comments received
- (iii) Feedback on Neighbour Plans: Pat Stewart to be contacted (JS)

6. Work Plan

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

Councillor Julien Parrott introduced a paper which researched into the issue regarding the proliferation of FOBTs in Torbay.

The Commission considered the evidence and agreed to reference the report under the financial inclusion section relating to debt linking to the need for families to manage their budgets.

7. Interim Child Poverty Commission Report

Michelle Kennedy (Chair) updated the Commission on the financial amendments added to the draft Interim Child Poverty 'Torbay Gains' report. She will continue to build in additional evidence and updating the recommendations.

It was agreed that the draft final report will be circulated in advance of the meeting on 25th November by the 31st October 2013. The Commission will feedback comments to Michelle by 6th November 2013.

8. AOB

None

9. Meeting Dates

25th November 1330-1530 Boardroom Town Hall