

Update on Progress in Redrafting Torbay's Children's Continuous Improvement Plan

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

Date of meeting: 03 May 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress in redrafting the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP), to set out details of the work that remains to be undertaken and to provide a target date for its completion.

2. Background

- 2.1. Councillors will recall that a report was presented to Cabinet on 24.8.2021 by the Chief Executive that set out proposals to strengthen the Councils governance arrangements for Childrens Services and to provide focus and drive for Childrens improvement beyond the Department for Education intervention. This was unanimously agreed. Councillors may be aware that at its meeting on 18 October 2021, members of the then Improvement Board voted unanimously to move towards initiating a Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB) in recognition of the progress that had been made in children's social care since the publication of the Ofsted inspection report in 2018 which judged Torbay's Children's Services to be inadequate overall. This was endorsed by the Deputy director, Improvements and Interventions DFE on 14.1.2022. This decision required the broadening of membership to include representatives of other partnership Boards which have a focus upon the needs of children either in total or in part. Members of the YOT and SEND boards, the Corporate Parenting and the Early Help boards and the Adults Improvement Board will join recent new members drawn from the child health professional community in forming the new

CCIB.

- 2.2. The broadening of CCIB membership was made in the knowledge that the children's service was in a place where it was ready and able to become a leading agency in the council's desire to create a *Child Friendly Torbay* which requires the diverse contributions of partner agencies in the council, the voluntary and community sector and private business and enterprise to meet the needs of children and young people.
- 2.3. In light of the progress that our quality assurance processes and other intelligence (including Ofsted monitoring visits) tell us has been made, the newly constituted Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board at its first meeting on the 10 January 2022 accepted a recommendation to commission a revised improvement plan, the first Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan, that will not only focus upon remaining social care priorities but also will build in priorities from other Partnership Boards to support and enable a broadly based improvement agenda for the children, young people and their families in Torbay.
- 2.4. Members will also be acutely aware that we have recently hosted an inspection team from Ofsted who have carried out the major ILACS inspection of children's services. Although the outcome is awaited (the report will be published on the 18 May 2022), we do not anticipate that the inspectors will have found evidence that will undermine our direction of travel. However, it would be precipitate to proceed to finalising the CCIB without incorporating any recommendations that Ofsted make and it is their publication timescale which is understandably determining our timescale for completion.

3. Summary of Key Actions and Milestones

- 3.1. The following list of actions captures the steps that have already been taken or will be undertaken in the forthcoming weeks until the deadline date of 18 May for the presentation of the full Children's Continuous Improvement Plan to its governing Board for approval and adoption:
 - Following consultation with the Director of Children's Services and Senior Leaders, agree those social care focused improvement priorities that will be incorporated into the CCIP. **Action completed**
 - Meet with chairpersons and key members of Partnership Boards to agree those key improvement priorities that will be incorporated into the CCIP.

All meetings with partners scheduled between 26 April and 4 May and agreed recommendations to be incorporated with immediate effect.

- Incorporate into the CCIP the recommendations of the Ofsted Inspection Report. **This action to be completed on the 18 May, immediately following the Ofsted report's publication at 0900 and immediately before the meeting of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board scheduled for 15.00 on the same day.**
- Develop a 'plan on a page' addressed to a professional and community audience that explains in easy to absorb terms the principles, key content and objectives of the CCIP. **This action is scheduled for completion at the first opportunity following the plan's completion and adoption by the Children's Continuous Improvement Board.**

4. Key Issues

- 4.1. This report has tracked the continuing development of the first Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan. It will bring together a range of social care and partnership priorities to the advantage of children, young people and their families and it is a key element in the council's ambition for Torbay to become a child friendly area. By welcome coincidence it also allows opportunity to incorporate the recommendations of the recent Ofsted inspection which reports in May.

5. Key Risks

- 5.1. The risks to the completion of this Continuous Improvement Plan that will provide the foundation for further improvement to services available to children and young people throughout its three year cycle are low. There are no anticipated risks in failing to agree shared improvement priorities with Partnership Boards and although we have no way of knowing the detail of the report to be produced by Ofsted, we are sufficiently confident in our own quality assurance, performance data and intelligence to believe it unlikely that its findings and recommendations will undermine the direction of travel we are following and continuing to promote. Should that unlikely event occur, we will advise the Committee accordingly and will take steps to reset the timetable for completion in the shortest possible timescale.