

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

**3 May 2022**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Atiya-Alla, Barnby, Douglas-Dunbar and Mills (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Member

Tatiana Wilson, Church of England Diocesan Representative

(Also in attendance: Councillors Law and Loxton)

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### **44. Apologies**

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Liberal Democrat Group, the membership of the Board had been amended for this meeting to include Councillor Atiya-Alla instead of Councillor Mandy Darling. Apologies for absence were also received from Laura Colman (Co-opted Member), Mike Cook and Jo Morell (non-voting Co-opted Members).

### **45. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28 March 2022, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **46. Ofsted Annual Conversation Letter**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services, provided an update on the Ofsted Annual Conversation Letter. Members noted the 8 key issues raised in the report, particularly that governance and scrutiny arrangements had been strengthened.

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that the recent Ofsted Annual Conversation which took place on 28 February 2022 as part of the Inspecting Local Authorities Children's Services Framework (ILACS) was voluntary. However, it played an important role in supporting Ofsted's understanding of the Local Authorities self-evaluation of their services. A couple of challenges had been made to the training figures and child-minding facilities provided in Torbay.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Director of Children's Services responded to questions in relation to the following:

- What were the figures for the use of agency staff and staff turnover.
- Were home education and NEET separate or the same.
- How was the Council addressing staff retention and the fall in child minding places.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Board gives a vote of thanks to Children's Services for their retention of staff and the achievements made through the improvements to Children's Services.

#### **47. Elected Home Education Review January 2022**

Dan Hamer, Head of Service (Vulnerable Pupils) presented the Elected Home Education Review January 2022. He informed the Board that as of the morning of the meeting there were 312 home educated children in Torbay. This issue had received national attention during the pandemic with the vital roles played by schools having been highlighted.

The Director of Children's Services and Head of Service (Vulnerable Pupils) responded to questions in relation to the following:

- How did Torbay's figures on home educated children compare with other authorities around the country.
- What support was provided to the parents of home educated children.
- What means were provided for the child's voice to be heard.
- How were home educated children provided opportunities to socialise.
- How were safeguarding concerns raised.
- How confident were Children's Services that they had details of all home educated children.
- When would the backlog of reviews be cleared.
- What was the mechanism for the child to seek to go back into education.
- Was there any national research on how these children achieved in comparison with those in schools.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the following recommendations be supported and endorsed:
  1. Once the management system is in place that this is used to record children who are Elective Home Educated (EHE) and is functional to run reports that will enable strategic oversight of the cohort.
  2. Until this time for the spreadsheet to be maintained in a way that ensures that it is kept fully up to date and is an accurate record and reflection of all children in Torbay who are EHE.
  3. Data that informs the Local Authority about its cohort of EHE to be agreed by Divisional Director for Children's Safeguarding and Director of Children's Services.

4. To use the data to consider trends in home education as identified in 2019 guidance.
  5. Consideration to record “children being seen “as part of the EHE review process.
  6. For the data to indicate when education is deemed unsuitable that partner agencies are notified of concerns.
2. that children’s voices are captured (where possible) and regular meetings are held with parents and children;
  3. that the Board receives an update on the backlog of cases to monitor progress and work with other authorities; and
  4. that the Board receives notification and feedback on changes in national or local trends for children who are being home educated.

#### **48. Update on Five Child Friendly Task and Finish Groups**

Sarah Pengelly (Project Manager) presented a progress update on Five Child Friendly Task and Finish Groups. This included Early help, Corporate Parenting, Where I live, Ambassador programme, Exploitation and Future Planning. Members noted the plans for a “15 in 15” (15 services within 15 minutes’ walk) programme which would be enabled through visual mapping.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services explained that Child Friendly Torbay was aimed at children and young people and was about everyone being involved in safeguarding; it gave a platform to different groups to have discussions on these subjects.

The Director of Children’s Services informed members that Torbay had been identified as an authority to receive funding for the Family Hub model i.e. when families could be introduced to other services.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and the Project Manager responded to questions in relation to the following:

- How practical was the 15 in 15 programme.
- As the Torbay Community Development Trust was now not leading on this project would other organisations be better placed to provide different representation.
- Would the funding from GWR be used for the peer experience team.
- Who could a child or parent trust and how would child exploitation be prevented.
- Could the measures to punish adults when they were caught be publicised to prevent child exploitation.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Board receive a report on the following in 6 months’ time:

- Plan to link in with the Torbay Story.

- Develop a webpage on the council site and to work on/create literature for the initiative.
- Have an agreement in place with all strategy holders to a) see whether children and young people have been considered b) whether there are accessible versions for children and young people and c) whether they have been involved where possible/needed – links with SEND improvement journey also.

#### **49. Children's Improvement Plan Quarterly Update**

Steve Hart, Independent Chair, Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board presented the quarterly update on the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan. Mr Hart explained that the Board was looking back at the previous plan and meeting with partner agencies to broaden the scope of the Improvement Plan and to capture children's views and to promote Child Friendly Torbay.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Mr Hart responded to questions in relation to the following:

- Would an additional meeting of the Board be called when the Ofsted inspection report was published.
- How would the Board maintain the momentum of improvement and make recommendations for further improvements.
- How would the Board ensure that continuous improvement was Maintained.
- How was it possible for the Board to meet with so many agencies and achieve the best outcomes.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Board endorses the proposed changes and actions to the Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan as set out in the submitted report.

#### **50. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2022/23**

The Board noted the contents of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2022/23 and the proposed extra meeting to be scheduled to discuss the Ofsted inspection results.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Initial Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Work Programme for 2022/2023 set out in the submitted report be approved, subject to the inclusion of an item on Children's Services Self-Assessment (being considered by the Sub-Board prior to the Annual Conversation) on 21 November 2022, and kept under review by the Chairman of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board and the Democratic Services Team Leader;

2. that the Children's Improvement Plan Update be moved to the September meeting; and
3. that the Torbay Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Joint Inspection Written Statement of Action Update be moved to the July meeting.

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

The Board noted the submitted action tracker.

Chairman

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