

## **Report of Chief Executive and Chair of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board - The Youth Offending Team (YOT)**

**Prepared by:** Stephen Hart, Independent Chair, Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board

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

**Date of meeting:** 25 July 2022

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This short report informs members of the Board of the findings and recommendations of the short review of progress in the YOT following their critical inspection and Peer Review. This report is the seventh of a series of similarly focused reviews.
- 1.2 The purpose of each review is to understand what improvement focused work has been undertaken, its impact on services for children and their families and to make recommendations for further action if that is required.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. The YOT has been subject to a peer review in response to concerns about the team's performance identified by senior leaders, followed relatively quickly by a formal inspection conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and published in March 2021. These two exercises confirmed the concerns of senior leaders and their recommendations combined to form an improvement plan overseen by the YOT Executive Board and the newly appointed responsible manager.
- 2.2. The CEO and Independent Chair's report captures and largely agrees the actions that have been taken by the YOT Board and has set out recommendations that are designed to complement the existing improvement plan being implemented by the team.

### **3. Summary of Key Findings, Actions and Milestones**

#### **3.1. The review report found that:**

- the new Chair of the YOT Board and the recently appointed YOT Manager have individually and collectively strengthened the leadership and strategic and operational management capability of the YOT
- the increased connection of the YOT to the wider children's service is a welcome development
- the move towards building a network of 'fit for purpose', local community work bases from which the YOT team will provide services is a positive departure from the previously centralised location that will strengthen the team's role in creating and delivering a 'child friendly Torbay'
- the development of a clear vision and a single plan to drive improvement is an overdue step forward
- YOT Board membership is now appropriate but there are some concerns about the ability of the CAMHS Service to fully participate because of significant capacity challenges
- the ongoing improvements in developing the preventative aspects of the service is a positive development in keeping with localised approaches where necessary in conjunction with wider children's service professionals
- the focus on establishing a functional quality assurance and performance management system will be very beneficial to the Team's broadly based improvement ambitions.

3.2. The developments described above combine to form a platform for continued progress. However, it is to be noted that the rate of progress is likely to increase as a result of improvements in the YOT Team culture brought about by progressive and inclusive management which has enabled a move away from the tensions which have held back the team's development. The improved connectivity with the wider Children's Service is affirmation of the cultural changes.

### **4. Key Issues**

4.1. This report has set out above the developments that are central to the YOT's ability to build a functional organizational structure and a sharply focused operational environment that will allow existing and new services to develop and

flourish. It is noted that a considerable amount of this work is still 'work in progress' that needs to be monitored and nurtured through to maturity to enable children and young people to benefit from their full impact.

## **5. Key Risks**

- 5.1. This report has expressed cautious confidence that the path towards improved YOT services has been laid well. However, whenever so much remains to be done, the risks remain high. Each of the bullet points in 3.1 will become risks unless they are sustained at an effective level and the five recommendations contained in the review report that require:
- continued effort to build relationships beyond the YOT
  - the achievement of localised services in or near to the communities of the children and young people they serve
  - a fully developed and effective YOT Board
  - a functional QA Framework
  - effective prevention services will also undermine progress unless they are achieved.
- 5.2 Steps have been taken to mitigate risk by ensuring that the CCIB will maintain oversight of progress through its Operations Board and on a regular basis by requiring the YOT Chairperson and Manager to submit a detailed, evidence based progress summary. The first of these reports is to be presented on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August.