

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

Supporting Information

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

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. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		

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.	There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		
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 numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	There is no differential impact.		
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the	There is no differential impact.		

	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.			
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	There is no differential impact.		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		

Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		There is no differential impact.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		There is no differential impact.		
Human Rights impacts		There is no differential impact.		
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.	There is no differential impact.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None