



Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan 2026 – 2029

TORBAY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

This plan comprises 3 ambitions that encapsulate the improvements that we wish to make for children and young people in Torbay. 'Owned' by the Council Chief Executive, the responsibility for implementing and delivering the plan rests with its members drawn from across the partnership. Significantly, the plan incorporates the children's strategic plan following a unanimous decision of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB) in September 2024. The ambitions will remain in place over the 3-year cycle of the plan but in recognition of the dynamic and frequently changing need of children and young people actions will be prioritised, time limited and amended when required but at least on an annual basis at a formal dedicated review meeting of the CCIB. Progress against each of the ambitions and actions will be publicly reported in a CCIB annual report that will be presented to Torbay Councils Cabinet meeting in the early summer of each year (date to be fixed once the Cabinet meeting schedule is agreed). As part of our commitment to assuring the involvement of children and young people a child friendly version of this plan and the annual report to Cabinet will be simultaneously produced.

FOREWORD FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

As partners representing Torbay Council, our elected Members, schools, health services, the police, and the voluntary and community sector, we are united in our commitment to children and young people across Torbay. The Children's Continuous Improvement Plan is a testament to our shared vision and collaborative spirit.

We celebrate the achievement of Torbay Children's Services being again rated 'Good' by Ofsted (January 2026), and we pledge to build on this success by working together to deliver even better outcomes for children and families. Our partnership is rooted in trust, openness, and a relentless focus on what matters most: the lived experiences and aspirations of our children and young people.

Through this plan, we will:

- Ensure every child and young person has the opportunity to thrive
- Foster a culture of innovation, accountability, and continuous learning
- Champion children's rights and participation in all decisions ensuring that their voices are heard, understood and acted upon
- Work together to create safe, healthy, and inclusive communities

We thank all our partners for their ongoing commitment and invite children, young people, and families to join the CCIB partnership on this journey where your voices will be highly valued and will help shape the work that we do. Together, we will make Torbay a place where every child feels valued, supported, and empowered to achieve their best.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan—a beacon of ambition, partnership, and hope for every child and young person in Torbay. At a time when Torbay Children's Services has once again been rated 'Good' by Ofsted, we stand proud of our collective achievements yet remain restless in our pursuit of excellence. This renewed recognition is not just a badge of honour—it is a springboard for even greater aspiration, innovation, and impact.

Our Plan is the driving force behind a bold vision. It is an essential guiding framework for the CCIB as well as a public statement of intent available to the citizens of Torbay. It embodies our drive to make Torbay a place where every child is safe, their rights are championed, their voices are heard, and their potential is limitless. Guided by the Torbay Council Community and Corporate Plan, the Children and Young People's Plan, and underpinned by our Child Friendly Action Plan, we are committed to ensuring that children and young people are not just beneficiaries of our services, but active partners in shaping them.

Our Mission

To champion the rights, safety, success and voice of every child and young person in Torbay by delivering consistently high-quality services, working in strong partnership, and driving continuous improvement so that every child can thrive and achieve.

What This Means in Practice

We are committed to listening to children and young people, acting early to support families, and working collaboratively across education, health, policing, and the voluntary sector. Guided by children's rights, inclusion, and co-production, we will build on what works, challenge ourselves to do better, and remain ambitious for the futures of all children. We will do this by adopting a place-based approach, working with local partners and communities across Torbay to ensure that support is joined up and right for local families. Continuous improvement is at the heart of our work—ensuring services are responsive, effective, and shaped by lived experience so every child grows up safe, healthy, confident, and empowered. As a Children's Continuous Improvement Board, we will use our collective knowledge, skills and resources to support, encourage and appropriately challenge those responsible for developing and delivering services without fear or favour.

THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

Children, young people and their families rightly expect high quality services, particularly in times of need. Our ambition remains unaltered for children and their families to benefit from good or better services in which they have ‘a voice’ and become fully involved remains strong and central to all that we do. We continue to understand the task ahead, and we are determined to build on what Ofsted has again judged to be good progress across the services for children. The significant success we have achieved has logically led to the Continuous Improvement Board increasingly focussing upon the partnership arrangements which are critical for success. The Continuous Improvement Plan does not reflect the extent of work being undertaken to drive up the quality of services to a level that children and young people have a right to expect. Some of this work will quite properly take place within individual and joint services, monitored by their own formal arrangements, as a reflection of their ‘business as usual’ approach. For example, it is recognised and accepted that we are still focussed on SEND improvement, schools are properly concerned with improving attainment and Torbay like many other areas of the country are concerned to ensure that elective home education (EHE) should be used judiciously and properly supported. The Board has mechanisms through its oversight of performance data and analysis to ensure that any areas of concern that warrant its attention can be escalated and incorporated into the plan.

OUR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND THE ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE

The tables below detail the action that we are taking in order to continue to progress to excellence on our improvement journey. The document will continue to be periodically updated to show progress. It is a ‘live’ document which continues to be updated as required and as progress is made.

The Childrens Continuous Improvement Board is the owner of this improvement plan and responsible for ensuring that its implementation is progressed and that updates continue to be provided on a prescribed basis.

We are confident that if we achieve the aims and objectives set out in this plan, we will become an outstanding Local Authority Children’s Service, and our children and young people will benefit from consistently excellent services delivered by a highly skilled and motivated workforce in conjunction with our partners. The specific criteria used by Ofsted to assess outstanding services are published in the inspection framework guidance.

OUR APPROACH:

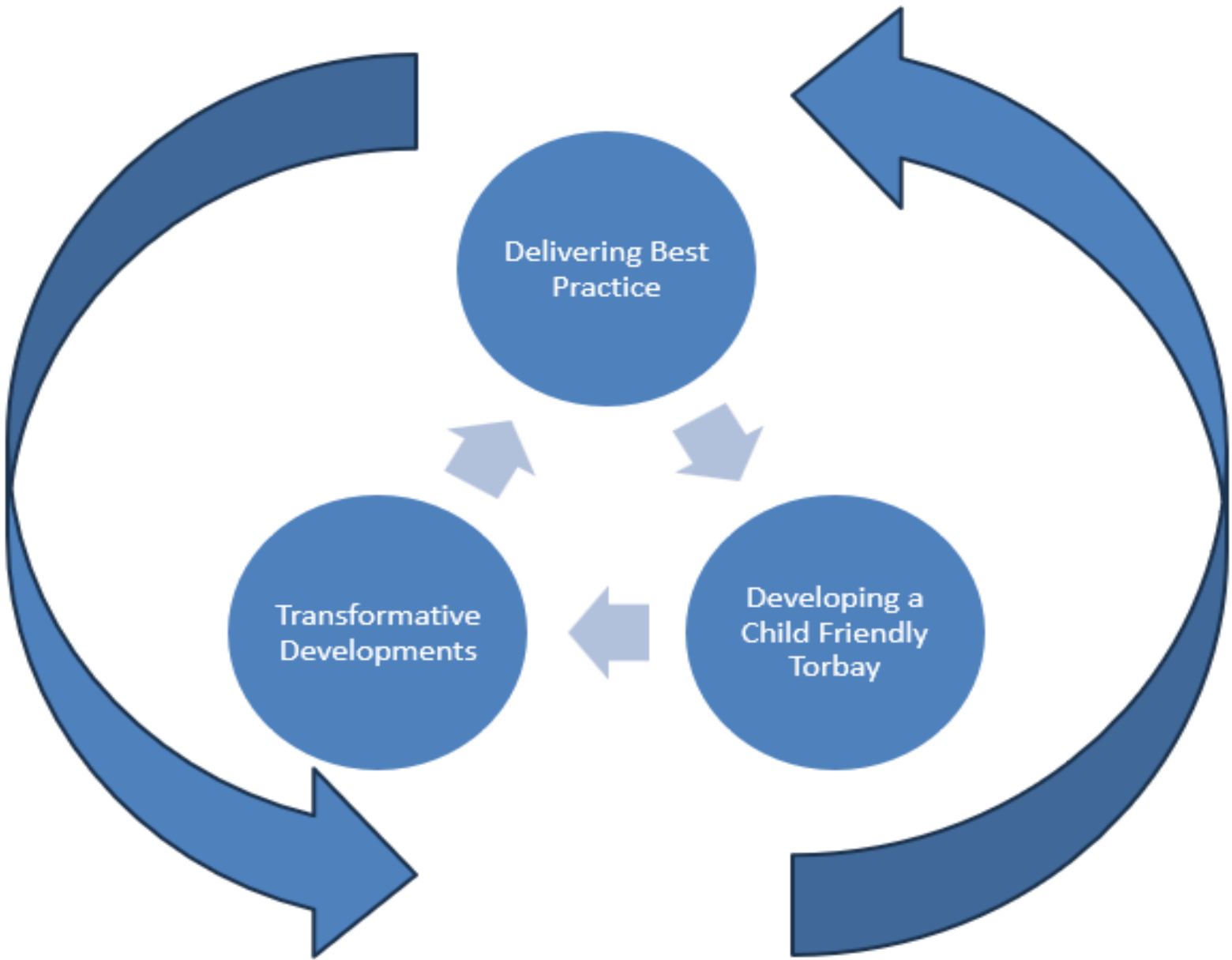
The following diagram is a representation of the critical interrelationship between partnership, leadership, management and governance. It illustrates that in pursuing enquiries in relation to each of the ambitions, partnership, leadership, management and governance will be an active and significant consideration. The tables which follow set out our objectives and our intended achievements against each ambition. Scrutiny of each ambition will form the basis of the CCIB work programme and will comprise agreed elements of the priorities of each children’s facing board.

The CCIB will conduct three Deep Dive exercises per year focussing upon each ambition in an agreed sequence. Deep Dive teams will comprise the Chief Executive, the CCIB Chair and two identified CCIB Partners who will scrutinise the progress of the actions under each ambition having met with the action leads to establish whether the objectives relating to each ambition has been met or is on track to do so. This information will be reported to the CCIB with recommendations if necessary.

In addition, the CCIB will benefit from the provision of exception reports that will detail in concise form the current state of each action in the improvement plan. This report will set out whether progress is judged by the action lead to be on track. Where it is delayed, or where barriers to progress are being encountered the action lead will be required to present brief detail and any mitigations they have put into place. The CCIB will judge whether they will need to offer support or advice on further actions and these will be recorded and notified to the action lead and the relevant children's facing board chairperson. The board will also actively consider whether there needs to be any amendment to the wording of the plan. The CCIB will consider whether a further detailed exception report is required that will be presented to the next CCIB meeting, or in exception whether audit activity or a Chief Executive led targeted deep dive is undertaken that will be reported to the CCIB in due course.

New or revised statutory guidance, legislation and findings from national reviews will automatically be considered for inclusion in the work programme so that we can be assured that the partnership will always be sighted on contemporary issues. In setting the detail of the work programme, board members will be conscious to avoid duplication, instead focussing upon lines of enquiry that will directly impact upon improving services for children and young people.

Partnership, Leadership, Management and
Governance



Partnership, Leadership, Management and
Governance

Ambition 1 - Delivering Best Practice

Objective:

- *By assuring and challenging practice, support operational and strategic management to achieve the highest quality service standards that benefit children, young people and their families. The purpose of best practice is not only compliance or quality assurance, but better safety, stability, progress and lived experience for children and young people.*
- *We will achieve this by –*
 - Evaluating the impact of services upon children and young people and their families and understanding their lived experiences
 - Identifying features of service that are strong
 - Highlight variances from statute, policy, management and operational practice requirements
 - Identifying and reporting upon learning from evaluation and scrutiny and feeding back to child focussed partnership boards for them to consider whether actions are required

Partnership, leadership, management and governance will be an integral part of the consideration of every action.

<i>Year one actions (26/27)</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Evidence / link to assurance e.g., audit findings, KPI report, QA outcome, feedback summary, MPR data</i>	<i>Impact / Success Measures – What ‘done well’ looks like having captured, understood and responded to the child’s voice</i>

Youth Service: To revise the 2022 Youth Services Needs Assessment so that the service is best placed to work with partners to meet the complex needs of children and young people in Torbay including young carers.	Youth Service / Childrens Services / Education / VCS	End Q4 2026/27 (revised needs assessment completed and agreed)	Revised Youth Services Needs Assessment published Evidence of partner and young people / young carer consultation and sign-off; Resulting priority plan agreed and monitored; Feedback from young people including young carers on priorities identified.	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: • Understanding current needs and demands • Ensuring that priorities reflect lived experience and opportunities for all young people including young carers • Improving alignment of youth provision with highest-need cohorts/locations • Evidence improved access/engagement over the year.
Strengthen MASH and information-sharing: • Agree shared standards for partner information quality/timeliness; introduce periodic multi-agency 'exceptions'	Police / Childrens Services / Health	End Q2 2026/27 (standards agreed); first exceptions review cycle by end Q3 2026/27	Agreed information standards document; Exceptions review log and actions; Sample audit of cases affected by late information;	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: • Securing the receipt of timely, high-quality partner information for MASH decision making;

reviews for delayed MASH episodes. Audit a sample of cases where decisions changed after the receipt of late information.			Partner compliance reporting. (MPR measures: 2.20, 2.1.2, 2.2.5, 4.3.2c)	- Reducing episodes of delay; - Reducing the volume of decisions changed due to late information; - Audit findings showing improved information sharing.
Reduce repeat referrals through better multi-agency plans: - Identify prevalent themes for repeat referrals - Introduce joint planning quality checklist - Expand family network approaches to include fathers and significant adults and school/health contributions to Child in Need plans - Test step-down quality from statutory to early help.	Childrens Services / Early Help / Education / Health	Themes and checklist agreed by end Q2 2026/27; testing/implementation Q3–Q4 2026/27	Repeat-referral theme analysis Plan quality checklist adoption Multi-agency Child in Need plan sampling Step-down audit (statutory to early help) with findings and actions. (MPR measures: 2.6, 1.2/1.6, 3.1–3.4, 13.07, 13.05)	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: - Improving the quality of multi-agency plans (SMART, shared actions) and making them child friendly - Reducing repeat referrals - Securing consistent step-down processes and practice from statutory services to early help with fewer re-escalations

				Improving contribution to Child in Need plans from schools/health.
<i>Timely assessments and purposeful outcomes:</i> - Triage delays - focus on assessments >45 days - Strengthen partner attendance at key meetings - Audit/dip sample 'no further action' and 'not in need' patterns by source/age to ensure right decisions and adequate signposting.	Childrens Services / Police / Health / Education	Process changes agreed by end Q1 2026/27; sustained improvement evidenced by end Q3 2026/27	Timeliness tracking for assessments >45 days Audit/dip-sample findings on 'No further action' (NFA) decisions by source/age Partner attendance records for key meetings. <i>(MPR measures: 2.11, 2.7, 2.13, 13.04)</i>	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: - Reducing the proportion/volume of assessments taking >45 days, sustained over at least two quarters - Improving timeliness at key decision points (triage/threshold/closure), evidenced through KPI tracking and dip-sampling - Improving the quality of analysis/rationale in decisions demonstrating good levels of professional curiosity - Achieving more consistent and evidenced

				'No Further Action' ('NFA') decision-making • Improving partner attendance and contribution at key meetings, with actions completed • Fewer avoidable re-contacts/repeat referrals following 'NFA' decisions
<i>Using a partnership approach, focus on outcomes for vulnerable learners (including SEND pupils and Cared for Children) to ensure they achieve in line with their statistical counterparts by:</i> - CiC monitoring and intervention oversight as detailed in the ILACs inspection. - EHCP SEND pupils focus on outcomes as detailed in the SEND Local Area Inspection.	Virtual School and Partners SEND Local Area Partnership	August 2027 August 2027	Outcomes data, audit findings Outcomes data, audit findings	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: • Securing full support for the education strategy, locality working and universal RISE initiatives. • Improving cared for children outcomes in key core subjects across age ranges. • Improving outcomes for SEN K and EHCP pupils

				in key data sets across Torbay.
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Ambition 2 – Developing a Child Friendly Torbay

Objective:

- *Working with a common purpose across the children's focussed partnerships to secure a child friendly community in which Torbay children and young people are valued, listened to and able to thrive so that they develop healthily, safely and achieve their potential. A child friendly Torbay is one where children and young people are not only heard, but experience tangible improvements in inclusion, opportunity, safety, belonging and life chances.*
- *We will achieve this by –*
 - Ensuring that the child friendly action plan is incorporated into the priorities of each of the child facing partnerships
 - Systematically consulting with young people to understand that delivery of the plans requirements continues to be relevant to the needs of the young people and demonstrably improves their lived experiences
 - Periodically collate the views of young people with other forms of evaluated evidence and feedback to child facing partnerships to consider any changes to their priorities or implementation plans

Partnership, leadership, management and governance will be an integral part of the consideration of every action.

<i>Year one actions (26/27)</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Evidence / link to assurance e.g., audit findings, KPI report, QA outcome, feedback summary</i>	<i>Impact / Success Measures – What 'done well' looks like having captured, understood and responded to the child's voice</i>
<i>Housing and Youth Homelessness:</i>	Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) / Housing Need Team / Childrens	End Q2 2026/27 (protocol updated and republished);	Case tracking showing earlier identification/escalation of	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by:

Strengthen the Joint Housing Protocol to secure sufficient accommodation options for care experienced young people. Secure Corporate Parenting Board oversight of youth homelessness impacts and the effectiveness of the associated support offer	Services including the participation team	CPB reporting embedded by end Q3 2026/27	housing risks for care experienced young people Corporate Parenting Board oversight of youth homelessness impacts and the support offer Ensure Corporate Parenting Board has routine oversight of youth homelessness pressures and the support available. Strand leads to drive actions reporting regularly to the Corporate Parenting Board.	- Reducing youth homelessness and increasing the number of care experience young people benefiting from secure tenancies - Reducing crisis presentations and emergency placements for care experienced young people; earlier identification and escalation of housing risks; - Achieving clear governance oversight through Corporate Parenting Board with actions tracked and barriers resolved.
<i>Understanding the differentiated needs of children and young people across Torbay:</i>	Education / Childrens Services (including the Participation Team and Performance & Intelligence) / Public	End Q4 2026/27 (locality profiles completed); priorities refreshed by end Q1 2027/28	Published locality profiles (needs, demand, outcomes);	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by:

Use detailed analytical data, management information and the evidence provided by local partnership mechanisms (e.g. Cradle to Career) to understand the unique characteristics of each local area so that improvement planning can support cross system working to deliver shared priorities in meeting locality specific needs	Health / Police / VCS / Health		Analysis pack presented to CCIB/partnership boards Evidence that commissioning/service plans reflect locality findings Feedback from partners on usefulness.	• Targeting improvement activity aligned to local need • Clearer prevention priorities by area • Securing the ability to track whether outcomes are improving for priority cohorts/communities.
Education inclusion and SEND: • Target school clusters with higher referral/exclusion/ 'Elected Home Education' (EHE) signals to ensure that children and young people are not disadvantaged by understanding the impact of preventative approaches and systems conditions that affect outcomes across the schools community • Strengthen graduated response and early help	Education / Early Help / Health / Childrens Services (including the Participation Team)	Priority school clusters identified by end Q1 2026/27 Graduated response improvements in place by end Q3 2026/27 EHCP timeliness/provision actions by end Q4 2026/27	EHE register, exclusion/suspension data EHCP monitoring (MPR 2.5.1 and 2.6)	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: • Improving attendance and reducing persistent absence in priority clusters • Reducing suspensions/exclusions and EHE rates • Improving EHCP timeliness and evidence that provision

around attendance/behaviour • Align 'Education, Health and Care Plan' (EHCP) timeliness and provision commissioning with safeguarding needs. • Strengthen joint planning for transition to adulthood for those young people with SEND				meets safeguarding needs • Reducing referral rates linked to inclusion improvements • Increasing the effectiveness of the joint planning arrangements for transition to adulthood for young people with SEND.
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Ambition 3 – Transformative Developments

Objective:

- *Identifying and responding to system changes in ways which maximise partnership benefit for children, young people and their families. Transformation and system change must lead to better support and better outcomes for children, while protecting them from the disruption and unintended consequences of reform.*
- *We will achieve this by –*
 - Immediately identifying new statute, guidance or national reviews and assess the content and recommendations for their impact for all services making recommendations to the Council, partner agencies and children's facing partnership boards.
 - Evaluating the impact of transformation plans to establish the impact upon children, young people and their families by means of the appropriate range of quality assurance methods. Findings to be collated and reported upon to the Transformation Board, highlighting progress and barriers to implementation and delivery.
 - Ensuring that the experiences of children and young people are gathered and used to inform the details of any implementation and delivery plans

Partnership, leadership, management and governance will be an integral part of the consideration of every action.

<i>Year one actions (26/27)</i>	<i>Who Responsible</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Evidence / link to assurance e.g., audit findings, KPI report, QA outcome, feedback summary</i>	<i>Impact / Success Measures – What 'done well' looks like having captured, understood and</i>

				<i>responded to the child's voice</i>
<i>Identify and understand the impacts for children and young people of the currently known system challenges such as Local Government Reorganisation, ICB Reform and the policing White Paper</i>	All partner agencies	Ongoing	Evaluating impact through performance management, quality assurance and national intelligence Understanding the potential implications of proposed system changes and planning to respond to these in good time	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: - Ensuring that new expectations are successfully implemented to the benefit of children and young people with risks being identified and mitigated - Ensuring partnership awareness with interdependencies identified and factored into planning processes.
<i>Improve the timeliness and effectiveness of partnership work with families experiencing long-term cumulative neglect.</i>	Childrens Services / TSCP / Health / Education / Police (Neglect leads)	Escalation triggers agreed by end Q2 2026/27 Drift review process live Q3 2026/27 (then embedded ongoing)	Neglect audit programme results Percentage of cases with updated chronology and evidence of analysis	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: Reducing the numbers of children

Strengthen partnership arrangements to address long-term cumulative neglect by agreeing a shared and curious multi-agency approach to identifying, escalating and reviewing neglect, aligned to the TSCP neglect priority, and using performance/QA intelligence to hold the system to account for timely, effective and sustained change for children.			Step-up timeliness monitoring TSCP published learning/actions and evidence of dissemination via workforce briefings/training	affected by long term neglect - Improving neglect outcomes evidenced by audit - Earlier recognition/escalation of chronic neglect - Reducing drift/time in harmful situations - Improving the effectiveness of multi-agency plans for long-term neglect
<i>Exploitative harm and missing children and young people:</i> Create a shared cohort list (missing + exploitation + Youth Justice + transitional safeguarding overlap)	Police / Childrens Services / Youth Justice / Education / Health / Adult Social Care	Cohort list and governance agreed by end Q1 2026/27 RHI improvements by end Q2 2026/27 Consistent 3-month review cycle embedded by end Q4 2026/27	Missing & exploitation cohort dashboard/report (including overlap with Youth Justice) is extended to include transitional safeguarding and evidence of regular multi-agency review Return Home Interview (RHI) KPI report (offer rate,	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: - Reducing repeat missing episodes for priority cohort - Increasing the % of RHIs completed within timescale

• Strengthen 'Return Home Interview' (RHI) offer and timeliness • Ensure disruption planning and school-based prevention • Review consistently high-risk exploitation assessments within 3 months			completion rate, timeliness) and quality sampling findings QA/audit of exploitation risk assessments, including compliance with 3-month review expectations Disruption planning assurance (audit of plans/actions; police disruption outcomes; tasking/group minutes) School-based prevention delivery evidence (coverage log, feedback summary from schools/young people, engagement data where available) Partnership governance evidence (minutes/actions from missing/exploitation operational group / steering group; escalation/exception reporting to CCIB) <i>(MPR measures: 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.12c, 8.10f, 8.1b)</i>	• Consistent multi-agency disruption planning • Improving the timeliness and quality of exploitation risk assessments and reviews.
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<i>Health equity for children in care:</i> • Joint plan to improve dental, physical and mental health access • Address barriers for children placed at distance • Improve data capture and escalation for overdue assessments.	Health / Childrens Services	Plan agreed by end Q3 2026/27; improvements evidenced by end Q1 2027/28	Dental access and health assessment timeliness reporting Access data for mental health/wellbeing services Data quality dashboard for overdue assessments (including out-of-area); escalation logs and outcomes. (MPR measures: 5.10b, 5.11, 5.12)	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: • Improved access to dental, physical health and mental health services for children in care (including those out of area) • Reducing overdue health assessments (including out-of-area) • Improving escalation and resolution of access barriers • Improving health equity indicators over the year.
<i>Youth justice prevention and outcomes:</i> • Strengthen prevention by prioritising joint work with	Youth Justice / Education / Childrens Services / Police / Youth Service / Early Help / Health	Priority cohort and pathway agreed by end Q2 2026/27	Overlap cohort reporting (EH/CiN/CP/CfC + YJ) NEET at end of youth justice order	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by:

those open to Early Help/Children in Need/Child Protection/Cared for Children - Strengthen 'Education, Training & Employment' (ETE) pathways and reduce 'Not in Education Employment and Training' (NEET) at end of youth justice order - Early identification of first-time entrant risk in schools and police contacts.		ETE/NEET improvement actions by end Q3 2026/27 Impact evidenced by end Q4 2026/27	Improved ETE engagement First-time entrant monitoring by school/police contact indicators. (MPR measures: 12.3, 12.1, 12.5)	- Reducing first-time entrants - Improving ETE engagement and reducing the numbers of NEET at end of order - Stronger joint targeting of children with overlapping risks - Improving outcomes sustained post-order.
<i>As a multi-agency partnership improve the number of young people in education, employment and training across Torbay.</i> The partnership to implement a multi-agency action plan and provide support, intervention and opportunities to reduce the	Childrens Services / Education (including the RISE cradle to career partnership) / Public Health / Economic Development Team /	NEET data demonstrates increased focus and success on prevention and reengagement of young people who are already NEET with a view to supporting them in education, employment and training.	NEET data reduces for all cohorts and ages by August 2027.	Improve the lived experience of children and young people by: Demonstrable NEET data that shows that young people are increasingly engaged and benefiting from education, employment and training and Torbay's

numbers of NEET across Torbay.		Success measure to be achieved by August 2027 but milestones to be developed to measure progress.		data exceeds that of local and national comparators.
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