TORBAY COUNCIL

Meeting: Childrens Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 23rd November 2026

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 6 month update

When does the decision need to be implemented?

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1.1 This report provides the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board with a six-month update on delivery of the Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2026-27, covering April to September 2026.

1.1.2 The update considers progress towards preventing children from offending, reducing reoffending and preventing children entering custody, alongside support for victims and families.

1.1.3 The national Youth Justice Board (YJB) produces guidance on the production and contents of the Youth Justice Plans. This update focuses on implementation of Torbay's 2026-27 Plan rather than seeking approval of a new plan.

1.1.4 The update draws on reports and action records for the YJS Strategic Board meetings of 21 May, 23 July and 24 September 2026, including the September Service Development Plan update. It also responds to the request for information on summer diversionary activities. Reporting periods are identified where evidence relates to an earlier cohort or the calendar year rather than April to September.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

2.1 The Youth Justice Plan contributes to desired outcomes of the Community and Corporate Plan: -

'We want Torbay and its residents to thrive' - the Youth Justice Service works with vulnerable children whose offending behaviour if not addressed is likely to have lifelong impact on their ability to thrive.

'where our children and older people will have high aspirations' - the Youth Justice Service supports children to develop alternatives to their current behaviours and raise their expectations and aspirations

'Build safer communities: -

- *Work with partners to tackle crime, including exploitation, and its effects.*
- *Work with partners to reduce offending and reoffending and its impacts*
- *Work with partners to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence and its effects'*

The Youth Justice Service directly contributes to the delivery of these three aspects of the 'Thriving Community' element of the Corporate Plan by its direct work with children to address the causes of their offending behaviour and the impacts for families and victims.

2.2 The 2026-27 Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. This report provides scrutiny of implementation, highlights delivery risks and identifies areas requiring continued partnership action. It does not request renewed approval of the annual Plan.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Board note the six-month update on delivery of the Youth Justice Plan 2026-27; scrutinise progress and the continuing risks relating to reoffending, custody, education, victim referrals and funding; and recommend any further assurance or partnership action required through the YJS Strategic Board.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 (approved Plan; existing reference)

Supporting Information

4. Introduction

4.1 The Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 provides the framework for the partnership's work to prevent offending and reoffending, support children and families, protect the public and respond to victims. This report reviews delivery during the first half of the financial year.

4.2 Strategic Board oversight during May, July and September included performance reporting, victim audit actions, budget pressures, reoffending, custody and the Service Development Plan. The May action record required partners to consider the Operation Hyphenate learning-review recommendations and the funding pressures facing the service. July actions included further work on post-intervention support, parenting provision and regional benchmarking.

4.3 Progress is evidenced by delivery of the summer Positive Activity programme and continued work on prevention and diversion. The September Service Development Plan also identifies further work on educational inclusion, persistent absence and coordinated support through locality arrangements.

4.4 Performance information requires caution. The July Board action record identifies the loss of national benchmarking data as a risk and requires exploration of regional comparisons. Missing Police Community Resolution information remained unresolved in the action record brought to the September Board. Local figures, published comparator data and retrospective cohort reviews therefore need to be distinguished.

Key line of enquiry: delivery of the Plan, prevention and reducing ASB

4.5 The service's contribution to reducing antisocial behaviour (ASB) sits within its wider prevention, diversion and safeguarding work. The September Board received an ASB data report to inform the information routinely available to the partnership.

4.6 **Child Centred Policing Team** – The partnership continues to develop Child First working between policing, Community Safety and the YJS. The September Service Development Plan records liaison between the relevant leads on further development of this approach. The Board's programme also includes updates on the Child First Oversight Group six-point plan. The priority remains timely, proportionate responses which safeguard children, protect victims and support appropriate diversion.

4.7 **Police Intervention Clinic** – The clinic brings together police intelligence and YJS information to identify children who may need intervention. Options include support from Police Youth Intervention Officers, referral to YJS prevention, liaison with the child's social worker, criminal investigation or no further action, according to the circumstances. This

supports early identification and coordinated responses rather than treating ASB in isolation.

4.8 **Victims and restorative work** – The May and July Board papers tracked action following the audit of victim work. By September, the action record confirmed that the Child Centred Policing Team was quality-assuring all 370 referral forms to improve completion of victim information and consent details. This is a process improvement; its effect on referral and engagement rates requires monitoring. Victim safety and access to support remain central to delivery of the Plan.

4.9 **YJS Prevention Service (including Turnaround)** – The service provides assessment and an agreed package of support and positive activities for children at risk of entering the formal youth justice system. Referrals and intervention planning draw on information from police and Children's Services. Prevention work in Torbay remains the most effective intervention type to reduce offending.

4.10 **YJS (Summer) Activity Programme** – The September Service Development Plan confirms that a successful Positive Activity programme was delivered during the 2026 summer holidays with additional funding from Community Safety. This replaces the earlier position that funding was still being sought. The programme supported the Plan's aim of increasing positive opportunities for children, this programme will now continue through all school holiday periods.

4.11 **Torbay Council Community Safety** – The September ASB report describes ASB as a Safer Torbay strategic priority, with governance arrangements in development. A partnership workshop on 14 September considered available data, local themes and governance. ASB is reported to the police, Council and housing providers, and the report recognises under-reporting. This work will inform which datasets should routinely support Board oversight; it is not yet a complete measure of ASB involving children.

4.12 **Education, training and employment** – The September Service Development Plan prioritises reducing suspensions and exclusions and ensuring suitable education, training or employment for children known to YJS. It calls for a specific response to persistent and severe absence and closer integration through locality hubs and emerging locality huddles. These are continuing delivery priorities, with responsibilities, timescales and review points to be made clear. Improvement in attendance and inclusion must be evidenced through subsequent reporting.

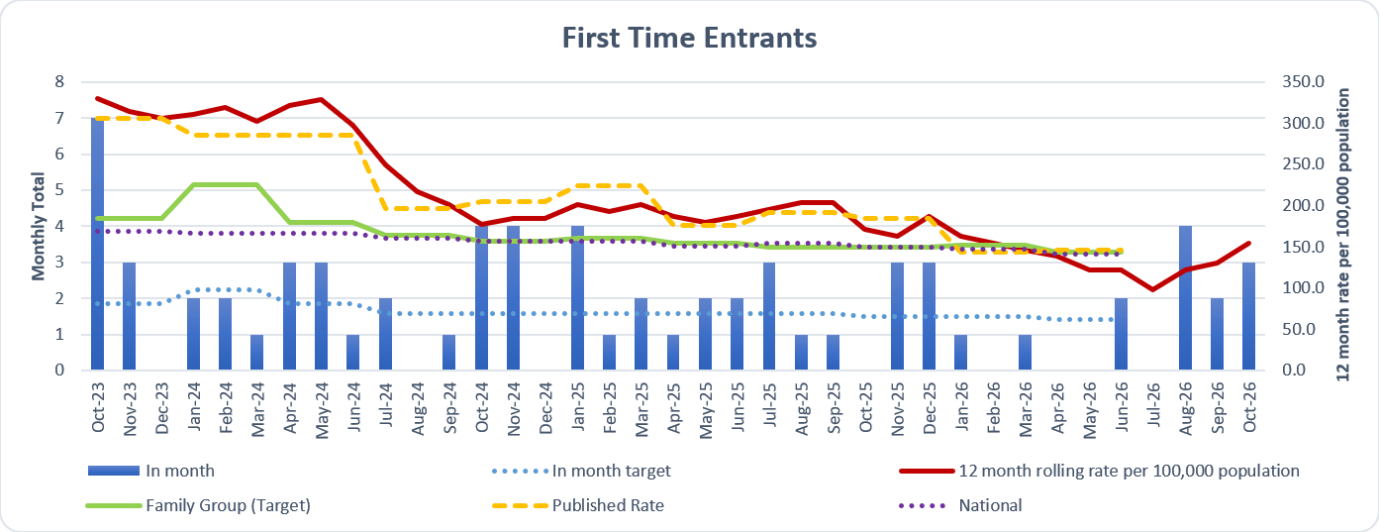
4.13 **Parenting and family support** – The July parenting report describes a full-time parenting worker and support for parents and carers of children open to the service, including involvement in assessment and reviews of statutory Court Orders. The September action update records that three Building Futures staff were due to undertake Who's in Charge training in November, with joint work planned afterwards to address the backlog of

requests. This was planned additional capacity, not provision already delivered by September.

Other delivery and performance updates

4.14 **Premises** – Un1t remains the service's Torquay base and was the venue specified for the September Strategic Board meeting. Children contributed to the building's name, artwork, logo, colours and furnishings, as described in the earlier report. The building was opened in May 2026 and has been well received by children, Parents and other agencies. The YJS has expanded its range of services from the building which now include a weekly health drop in run by school nurses, support with life skills nutrition and cooking for children and their parents.

4.15 **First Time Entrants** – Preventing children entering the formal justice system remains a key outcome. The approved 2026-27 Plan provides the baseline: by March 2026 the rolling rate had reduced to 144 per 100,000 children aged 10–17, representing 18 children, compared with 335 and 41 children at the May 2024 peak. The figures below show a slight rise in the last quarter this has been due to a number of traffic offences going to court over which we currently have no control.



Reoffending – The June review, listed on the July Board agenda, examined 23 children who offended between January and March 2025 and were followed to March 2026. Eight children committed 57 reoffences, concentrated among a small number of children. The review found limited evidence of reoffending during active intervention, with offences more commonly occurring shortly after initial intervention or after statutory orders ended. This identifies exit planning and sustained support as priorities; it does not establish a causal effect or a six-month reoffending rate.

Custody and exploitation – The July custody report recorded four custodial sentences during calendar year 2026 at the time of writing, with a further child on remand expected to be sentenced. The July Board minutes subsequently recorded five children receiving custodial

sentences and concern about a further five at significant risk. These figures reflect different reporting points and are not an April–September total. The Board identified exploitation networks, persistent offending, poor educational engagement and ineffective existing safeguarding plans as common themes. Increased custody was added to the Board's risk actions.

5. Options under consideration

5.1 This is an update for scrutiny, not a proposal to approve a new Plan or change the statutory service. The Board is asked to consider whether the progress and outstanding actions provide sufficient assurance and whether further partnership action or reporting is required.

6. Financial Opportunities and Implications

6.1 The existing report records a planned 2026-27 cash budget of £935,400, including £514,926 from Torbay Council Children's Services and £247,401 from the YJB, with other partner and grant contributions and £174,760 of in-kind support. The May Board action record required partners and funding agencies to consider budget pressures; the September action record continued to show the request to explore a waiver of premises rent.

6.2 Continued delivery requires a sustainable partnership funding position. This update does not seek additional funding or confirm that the pressures have been resolved.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 39) introduced a statutory requirement for local authorities to establish Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in their area, requiring the involvement of the local authority (the lead agency), Police, Health and Probation – the statutory partners.

7.2 The local authority is also required, under Section 40, after consultation with the partner agencies, to publish a Youth Justice Plan each year outlining the composition of and funding for their YJS. This includes the steps taken to encourage children not to commit criminal offences.

7.3 The legislation refers to Youth 'Offending' Teams (YOTs) and youth 'offenders' this language has been replaced by updated guidance from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) as part of their Child First approach to stop labelling children as offenders and now refers to local YOTs as Youth Justice Services (YJSs), although the primary legislation has not been changed. The Child First model is based on evidence and research that shows a positive, pro social approach focussing on the child's strengths and capabilities is the most likely to result in desistance from offending.

8. Engagement and Consultation

8.1 Delivery is overseen through the multi-agency Strategic Board. Reports, minutes and action records from May, July and September provide the basis for this review. Outstanding actions require follow-through by the relevant partners rather than being treated as completed because they have been discussed.

8.2 Children's involvement in the development of Un1t remains an example of participation described in the original report. The July parenting report also describes gathering parents' views through statutory assessment and review. The next update should show how feedback from children, families and victims has changed delivery, alongside evidence of outcomes.

9. Procurement Implications

9.1 There will be very limited spend outside of the Council. Over 90% percent of Youth Justice Service funding is spent on staff employed on behalf within the Youth Justice Service by Torbay Council (not including seconded posts). The main areas of funding outside this are to a wide variety of providers relating to the delivery of direct work with children eg rental of community facilities to see children and activities provided or delivered as part of an agreed intervention plan.

10. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

10.1 This six-month update does not propose a new activity with a separately assessed climate impact.

10.2 Children known to the service may take part in environmental activities as part of either a positive activity or as reparation.

11. Associated Risks

11.1 The principal delivery risks are increased use of custody, persistent reoffending within a small cohort, exploitation, barriers to educational engagement, gaps in victim referral information, funding pressures and limitations in comparator and police data. The July action record required increased custody and loss of national benchmarking to be added to the risk register. Mitigation requires coordinated safeguarding and education responses, improved exit planning, complete victim referrals, sustainable funding and validated reporting.

12. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

12.1 The Youth Justice Plan aims to improve outcomes for children aged 10–17, including children facing disadvantage and additional needs. Delivery should support access to appropriate education, prevention, safeguarding and victim services without unnecessary criminalisation.

13. Cumulative Council Impact

13.1 Delivery depends on coordinated contributions from Children's Services, education and SEND, Community Safety and the Council's funding and premises arrangements. This update identifies those interdependencies but does not propose a new Council commitment.

14. Cumulative Community Impact

14.1 Prevention, diversion, victim support and positive activities contribute to the Plan's intended safer-community outcomes. The summer programme has been delivered, but the available evidence does not establish a quantified six-month reduction in community ASB or offending attributable to it.