

## **Initial paper to consider how the Health and Well-Being Board and partners could support work to address the impact of economic injury resulting from Covid 19 upon young people**

At the meeting in June there was a request to consider how the Board and partners could support work to address the impact of economic injury upon young people in Torbay. This paper is an initial response, outlining some of the available information. Due to the time of year it has not been possible to talk to all partners so this a first draft. It is also a request for members to consider the paper and the recommendations and then to make comments and proposals for the best way forward.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. To consider the paper and the recommendations and then to make comments and proposals for the best way forward.**
- 2. To continue to collect and share data on the size and the scope of the challenge**
- 3. To develop initiatives that bring together voluntary sector organisations, charities, the public and private sectors to find ways to collectively tackle the issues facing the most vulnerable families and young people**
- 4. To receive report/s from the Torbay Post Covid NEET Prevention Board**

Since schools and colleges closed to all but a few students in March, hundreds of children in Torbay have had to stay at home until now. This will mean most children and young people will have missed the best part of six months of formal education, the biggest disruption since the Second World War. During this time, there will have been massive variation in the amount of education different children have received and the amount of learning they will have been able to undertake. We already know that time out of the classroom affects all young people, but those who are disadvantaged much more significantly. Previous research has suggested that up to two thirds of the gap between economically disadvantaged young people and their more affluent peers is accounted for by the six-week summer holidays. This is a period when no young people are undertaking formal education, but where gaps still emerge in their skills and abilities.

The essential public health measures that have been taken to stop the spread of Covid-19 have affected everyone in the country, and many families are struggling with additional financial and social pressures. But there are some young people, who before this crisis were already vulnerable or living in precarious situations, who are now facing particular hardship. They have been cut off from many of the sources of support that they might previously have had – schools, teachers, playgrounds, youth provision, health visitors, networks of family and friends, home visits from social workers – at the same time as their families have been under new stresses and strains from lockdown requirements.

Particularly vulnerable groups include:

**Families under increased pressure**

- Young people whose parents suffer from mental illness
- Young carers
- Children with SEND

**Young people at risk or suffering harm**

- Child protection
- Domestic Violence
- Criminal exploitation

**Children in Care**

- Children in unregulated settings

**Young people at risk of falling behind in education**

- Children living in poverty
- Children with poor internet access
- Young people with poor housing conditions

The groups highlighted above show just some of the many different ways in which children can be vulnerable. The Children's Commissioner's (England) has with her team developed a series of local area profiles of child vulnerability <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/chldrn/> which can provide a way for councils and voluntary organisations working with young people to understand which groups of children are likely to have been more at risk under lockdown, and how many children in their area fall into those groups.

This information also provides a framework for central government to target additional resources at the areas most in need. Local authorities should be factoring this information into their decision making when it comes to Covid-19 responses. It is important to remember that these data show baseline – pre-Coronavirus – levels of needs. These children were already vulnerable before COVID-19, and they are likely to be even more at risk now.

These profiles could be a valuable resource to help local agencies better understand which children are known to be at risk, and which children we need to find out more about. By mapping the levels of current need, we can work together with local partners and ensure that the needs of vulnerable families are prioritised now and in the future.

**Families in poverty**

New research by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Save the Children reveals that nearly two thirds of hard-pressed families on Universal Credit are now borrowing money to stay afloat during the Covid-19 emergency, the survey found that six in 10 families on Universal Credit and Child Tax Credits have been forced to borrow money since start of crisis – with many relying on payday loans or credit cards

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/nearly-two-thirds-families-universal-credit-forced-lockdown-debt-%E2%80%98nightmare%E2%80%99>

The Torbay helpline and the Torbay Food Alliance both started in March 2020 as a direct response to Covid-19. In the following five months the Helpline received around

12,000 calls, and dealt with more than 3,750 people, with a rapid response team turning out on more than 2,700 occasions. The Food Alliance saw 12 community organisations coming together to meet demand for food as a united front and identified food poverty as a key issue for families in Torbay. They have raised over £30,000 and provided over 140,000 meals to those in need.

### **Young people's learning**

Children recognise the importance of school and although there are always adjustments to be made, there appears to be an increase in the numbers of children worried about returning to school after Covid <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>

In a small local survey during the summer, 72% of the young people responding were worried and only 28% were looking forward to returning and getting on with their studies.

Many young people recognise the value of learning, "You can get jobs quicker as well, with more opportunities. With good grades then you can go further with them, rather than having basic grades and then having to go search for ages getting a job" - Annie, 14-15, Secondary school

But when Covid struck Year 11s were a group at particular risk of falling behind, without the structure they would usually have been given at this point in the year. Normally, year 11s would have had multiple contacts to go to for advice, open days, access to careers guidance, etc. as they moved into college. This would have been less of a problem for those going into school sixth form, or those with an idea of what they want to do, but those without a plan already in place others could slip through the gaps – especially young people in Alternative Provision (AP), who may risk falling out of education or training. In Torbay, the careful linking up of colleagues in the local authority and AP providers to help with support, advice and guidance throughout the summer term was noteworthy.

Covid-19 has increased many of the risks facing teenagers. Not just in terms of the epidemiological risk, but also in terms of the additional risks that the lockdown itself has created, such as an increased risk of poor mental health, exposure to domestic violence and addiction in the home, and exposure to exploitation. These risks have been exacerbated by the closures of schools, youth services, summer schemes, parks and leisure activities; reduction in mental health support and increased strain on families, The effects of this will have been particularly acute on the teenagers who were already vulnerable before Covid-19, especially those who were falling through the gaps and being missed by local services. Mental health and wellbeing is lowest for young women and younger youth (18 – 24). Young people whose education or work was either disrupted or stopped altogether are almost twice as likely to be affected by anxiety/ depression as those who continued to be employed or whose education was on track.

Published in July, a report from the Children’s Commissioner <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/teenagers-falling-through-the-gaps/> assesses the number of teenagers in England, and in each local area, who were *already* vulnerable and falling through gaps in the education and social care systems before Covid-19. The risks include persistent absence from school, exclusions, alternative provision, dropping out of the school system in Year 11, or going missing from care. These are important signals of children at higher risk of future educational failure and unemployment, as well as of falling into crime and criminal exploitation.

Clearly, the pandemic has changed everything. There are a number of interesting reports, surveys which provide evidence of the effect and impact of the crisis. Not all families were equal going into the crisis and they are certainly not equal coming out. All our lives are different as a result, but these were families that were struggling anyway and support for children as they go back to school that looks beyond just catching up academically, with additional focus on their wellbeing. There is a need for new, longer terms solutions to the ‘digital divide’; initiatives that bring together charities, the public and private sectors to find ways to collectively tackle the issues facing the most vulnerable families.

This collaborative approach builds on the work of the Torbay Imagine this... Partnership who, with the support and leadership of Torbay CDT have, despite the challenges imposed by coronavirus developed a series of collaborations. These significantly address the five key themes which young people identified as the most important going forward. Current membership involves 43 partners and the collaborations are successfully enabling continued engagement with children and families building on months of engagement and co-design. Covid 19 has highlighted major concerns around mental well-being and a variety of daily programmes are now in place reaching out to children and young people across the Bay. From the feedback and the responses, we are receiving these interventions are really making a difference.

One example is the collaboration of partners including 0-19, South West Family Values, Action for Children, Children’s Society, Play Torbay, Arts Lab, Funkhead, Doorstep Arts, Sound Communities, Youth Trust and Youth Genesis all of whom have joined forces to develop Let’s Create Packs and Play Packs for children, young people and families with packs specially tailored to meet the different needs of babies, toddlers and teenagers right across the whole 0 – 19 age range. With a central ordering system we have already 487 referrals. 76 of those 137 children/young people are SEND and/or disadvantaged due to postcode/area/housing need.

0-18months	18months - 3	0-3 (pre separation)	3-5	5-12	13-19
5	11	10	61	393	7

There is growing evidence that economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are particularly negative for young people. On the eve of the coronavirus outbreak, workers

aged below 25 were more likely than other workers to be employed in sectors that have been effectively shut down as part of the UK lockdown and they are more likely to have lost their jobs since then. This note shows that the economic repercussions of the pandemic threaten to severely disrupt the career progression of young workers, which suggests negative economic impacts on this age group may last well beyond the easing of the lockdown.

- Over the last decade, young people starting out in the labour market have increasingly been working in occupations that are relatively low-paid.
- Many of these low-paying occupations are in sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis: for example, hospitality and non-food retail.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has severely dented the career prospects of young people and threatens to have a prolonged negative economic impact on them as a result.
- The proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (the youth NEET rate) has remained stubbornly high over the past 15 years and now stands at 30% for young women and 13% for young men worldwide

It is clear, that this is an important time to especially consider how teenagers might be able to recover from the crisis and have a way of getting back into education, training or work. Careers South West has collected together online resources, tools and information that might be useful for young people and families

<https://cswgroup.co.uk/what-we-do/young-people-csw-group/useful-links/>

The Chancellor has rightly announced a positive package of measures to tackle the risk of long-term youth unemployment and innovative policies to protect jobs in hospitality and tourism. More information still to come from government and will be available from Careers South West; services include:

**APPRENTICESHIPS** see <https://cswgroup.co.uk/education/apprentices-to-get-jobs-boost/>

- New support service launched to help apprentices who have lost their jobs during the Covid-19 outbreak to find new opportunities.
- Apprentices to also get help to access financial, legal, health and wellbeing support as well as careers advice.
- Employers encouraged to take advantage of new cash incentives to take on apprentices and help more people to kick start a new career.

**KICKSTART** see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-jobs-documents/a-plan-for-jobs-2020#contents>

The government will introduce a new Kickstart Scheme in Great Britain, a £2 billion fund to create hundreds of thousands of high quality 6-month work placements aimed at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. Funding available for each job will cover 100% of the relevant

National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus the associated employer National Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.

**MENTORING CIRCLES** see <https://invest.ashfield-mansfield.com/launch-of-dwp-mentoring-circles-for-all-16-24-year-olds/>

This scheme started in 2018 but was only open to the BAME community but due to the success, the government has rolled it out Nationwide. The scheme has helped many companies to boost their Social Responsibility Campaigns in terms of giving back to disadvantaged groups.

**ADAPT2** <https://cswgroup.co.uk/what-we-do/adapt2/>

Our fast paced and rapidly changing world can be a challenging place for young people who have a vast array of pressures put on them. From education, choices, and the ever-present impact of social media, these all offer challenges that no other generation has faced. At CSW we work with young people affected by these challenges and regularly see the impact they have. Adapt2 was developed from our Intensive Family Support Service, seeing a need for a hands-on tool to support young people to find the strategies to cope and develop the resilience to succeed. The programme was particularly designed to provide early help to those on the CAMHS waiting list or outside the scope of CAMHS.

### **Torbay Post Covid NEET Prevention Board**

A recent IFS report identified Torbay as one of the two most 'at risk' local economies due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This impact is likely to be keenly felt amongst the 16 – 25 year old group as the employment market contracts. Equally, Torbay is starting from a challenging position in the number of young people claiming work related benefits before lockdown.

To address this, Torbay Council would like to work with partners to **identify, support** and **provide** for these young people. A keystone of this work will be the stepping up of a project board with sub boards to lead work on the three strands above.

The aim of the work will be to use multi-agency working to remove barriers to young people accessing training or employment and to then support them in maintaining their placement. We will also seek to both increase provision and signpost existing support and provision.

Torbay Council would like to host a meeting of the first project board at **1500 on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September**. The meeting will seek to:

1. Agree terms of reference and membership
2. From 1. Identify any other parties whose engagement would be useful to the project.
3. Agree the roles of any sub boards – the three currently proposed may be subject to change by the group.
4. Identify which board members should be engaged in which elements of the project.

5. Share data to inform the group as to the size and scope of the challenge.
6. Agree a schedule of target dates for meetings.

### **ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

Before the Covid-19 crisis began there were approximately 750,000 young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). The Resolution Foundation, the Institute for Employment Studies and the Learning and Work institute have predicted there will be at least 600,000 more unemployed young people, with a further 500,000 expected to become NEET over the next 18 months.

### **Inquiry: 'Making Youth Employment Policy Work'**

Following the £3.06bn government investment into new and existing youth employment initiatives in the summer the APPG wants to explore whether or not this investment and the services it intends to deliver will meet the needs of young people and help to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on youth employment.

This inquiry will explore the key youth employment programmes and investment to see what the early indicators of success are; it will aim to provide constructive feedback to the government to accelerate impact or suggest improvements that need to be made. It will also look if there are tensions in the system, particularly for young people with additional barriers and needs who might otherwise fall through the gaps.

Submissions are due by **5pm on 7th November 2020**

Tanny Stobart  
Play Torbay September 2020