

Update on Liquidlogic Children's System

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the implementation and development of Liquidlogic Children's System.

2. Background

- 2.1. Children's Services introduced a new Integrated Children's System (ICS), Liquidlogic, which replaced the outdated and inefficient PARIS system. Liquidlogic is a children social care data and reporting system.
- 2.2. This project was multi-faceted requiring the migration of PARIS data to Liquidlogic and the development of a Performance Management suite of reports that will be extracted from Liquidlogic using Microsoft Power BI (a suite of business intelligence [BI]).
- 2.3. The work required, relied on both internal resource as well as the engagement of external technical consultants to assist in the development of the Project. This was in order that we could continue to deliver "business as usual" requirements alongside implementing the new system. There was also a lack of in-house technical capability to undertake work associated with Power BI.
- 2.4. Liquidlogic went live in June 2021 and was implemented during Covid-19 pandemic, with many staff working from home.
- 2.5. Children's Services identified issues with the data processes and an inability to deliver consistently accurate data and performance reports. Poor quality and consistency of data reporting, and lack of confidence in the configuration of the system to support operational staff and a disconnect between the operational

expectations and the performance leads, led to a number of key activities to address the issues.

- 2.6. The lack of confidence in the system led to the operational services reproducing manual spreadsheets and manual inputting in response to the poor reporting. This was also in response to the disconnect, between the operational and those leading on the implementation, as the configuration of the new system did not support front line practice.

3. Summary of Key Actions

- 3.1. Weekly Performance Data meetings, led by Director of Children's Services, were introduced to address issues with data and identify actions to assist with resolutions.
- 3.2. Regular scrutiny of statutory performance data and introduction of 'work arounds' to obtain required reliable data.
- 3.3. A Local Government Association (LGA) Children's Services Data Peer Challenge was carried out in November 2021. The Peer Challenge identified some strengths of the implementation of the system however, identified significant issues currently being experienced by Children's Services. Recommendations from the Peer Review are being acted upon. These include:
 - a) Produce a focused action plan to address the immediate priorities of ensuring data quality and enhancing performance report formats, and a medium- and longer-term plan for the practice-led further development of the Liquid Logic system.
 - b) Deliver fit for purpose monthly performance reports with headline measures and narrative that support statutory reports and improvement plan monitoring data as a matter of priority.
 - c) Implementation and use of the Liquid Logic system must be practice led and accountability for the system/data should be with a qualified social worker.
 - d) Roles and responsibilities around the system should be defined and a team built around the system, made up of the right skills that will allow data to drive service improvement, outcomes and practice.

- e) Implement a strict change control process, with user forums and operational sign off.
- f) Use professional IT and in particular experienced social care support and suppliers to design and implement an improvement plan to address: build, design, data migration and ongoing data quality in Liquid Logic; the decommissioning of Paris and ending the use of unstructured data in a timely way. (This plan should include progress measures, key milestones, budget details and benefits realisation with a high-level summary plan to assess overall progress for senior leaders).
- g) Create a succession plan to ensure expertise is transferred in house from external consultants in a timely way.
- h) Engage at a strategic level with the supplier (Liquid Logic) to develop a better shared understanding of data quality issues, system capability and the Council's current deployment of the Liquid Logic system, ensuring continuing value for money from the relationship.
- i) Address the risks of single points of failure, and capacity and skills gaps by utilising the principles agreed in the Council's proposed Target Operating Model. Support services should be working alongside Children's Services practitioners, to develop better understanding and supporting their business.
- j) Take some time to learn the lessons from the implementation of Liquid Logic to ensure other large change programmes in Torbay are successful.

3.4. Further, the Peer review also recommended:

- a) Initiated reconfiguring Children's Data Teams. As a relatively small unitary council, Torbay needs to ensure it makes best use of the resources available to it. Currently there are teams of data and performance staff located within the different services across the directorate – social care, education, early years, SEND and youth justice. There is the opportunity to bring these together to produce greater resilience and sharing of expertise and experience. This redesign will link to the Target Operating Model of the future.
- b) Reduction of external technical consultants from 5 to 3.
- c) Commissioning BetterGov, Public Sector and Local Authority specialists with implementing technology and business solutions, to complete a discovery

piece of work (January to mid February 2022) to support reconfiguring pathways within Liquidlogic to support operational practice and address reporting issues.

- d) Establishment of a Children's Services IT System Board to monitor and evaluate, the continued development of Children's Services systems to support operational practice.

4. Milestones

- 4.1. Establishment of a Children's Services IT System Board – January 2022
- 4.2. BetterGov Discovery Report and Proposals finalised – January 2022
- 4.3. Completion of redesign of Children's Services Data Teams – February 2022

5. Key Issues

- 5.1. Business processes are not designed in-line with the specifications created by the business. The result is a cumbersome ICS with a disproportionate amount of time required to input into the system.
- 5.2. Inability to deliver consistently accurate data and performance reports for Children's Services.
- 5.3. Staff confidence in Liquidlogic is low. When moving from a system to a mature case management / workflow system staff can struggle with getting used to a new system. Additional training requirements will be identified to improve the transition.
- 5.4. Limited capacity, capability and structures are giving rise to 'single points of failure'. To be mitigated by utilising the principles agreed in Torbay's Target Operating Model.

6. Key Risks

- 6.1. The Council will not be able to deliver its obligations in relation to accurate Statutory Returns e.g. Child in Need Census.
- 6.2. The Council will not be able to produce accurate and reliable data that could lead to an immediate Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) re-inspection and see the Council be stated with a further Inadequate Inspection rating.
- 6.3. Localised and National benchmarking would not be able to be delivered.

6.4. The ability of the Council to secure grant funding for new initiatives will be severely limited due to a lack of reliable data.