

Children's Services Annual Conversation

March 2023



LA Overview

LA challenges overview of issues and challenges as a LA

Housing and impact on families
Cost of living and increasing poverty
Partnership challenges
Asylum Hotels
Sufficiency, unregulated provision and registration
Workforce challenges

ILACS Inspection – March 2022 – Rated ‘Good’

Family Hubs

Safety Valve

WSOA

One Children’s Services Vision

Child Friendly Torbay

Our Children

Safely reducing cared for numbers 329 as at December 2022 – (26 USAC)

Literacy remains a key focus for cared for children – New literacy policy in place

Reduced use of residential and more children placed with Torbay Foster Carers

1022 children and family supported through Early Help

Sustained timeliness of responses of risk to children

Implementation of three localized Family Hubs as part of our wider early help model

Greater involvement of children and young people in service delivery

Exploitation Team continue to mature and develop

Next steps include:

- Continuation of our improvement journey to achieve outstanding services to Children and Young People
- Evaluation of restorative recording pilot
- Embed ways of working and SEND pledge
- Review of the exploitation team delivery and development of a contextual safeguarding

Our Practice



Implementation of the Family Hubs Delivery Plan



Focus on improving our offer for Cared For and Care Experienced Young People and embed our Corporate Parenting Strand Leads and our Corporate Parenting Action Plan including recommendations from National Advisor visit



Continue to enhance the transition experience for Children, Young People and Parent Carers



Focus on achieving permanence for children with particular focus on reunification pathways and edge of care provision



Continue to improve our partnership opportunities for unaccompanied Asylum seeking Children

Our Practice

Celebrate our accreditation as a restorative organization and continue to embed restorative practice through our ways of working

Continue to seek and reflect the voice of Foster Carers through participation and collaborative audit and embed our new Fostering Friendly Policy

Continue to enhance opportunities to practice as a 'one children's service' with greater collaboration with Education, Social Care and Partners.

Next steps: Review of the supervision policy and update of workforce development plan, review of the fostering recruitment strategy, implementation of new reunification model and edge of care pathway.

Our progress

Achieve 'Good' ILACS
inspection March 2022

Family Hubs Trailblazer –
December 2022

First Children's Services to
achieve Restorative
Organisation Status
February 2023

Nominated and shortlisted
for Children and Young
People Now Awards for
our Learning Academy and
workforce transformation
and highly commended for
MJ Awards for workforce
development.

Our Workforce

Succession planning and plans to establish greater senior management *stability*

Embedding a culture of co-production and participation: including Open Door Sessions and Listening Circles with the DCS, ASYE awards, staff celebration events, inclusion of frontline staff at the LGA Awards and inclusion of frontline staff in sufficiency workstreams.

Vacancy rate stands at 7.40% across social workers posts as of February 2023

Continue to embed and enhance the restorative practice model

Development of neglect and graded care, domestic abuse and Parent Assess specialisms.

Supervision and Management remains a core priority – Supervision workstream in place to feed into the workforce development plan.

Developing and nurturing the future workforce: Our Learning Academy continues to offer a three-year program for newly qualified social workers as well as advanced and skills-based courses for our wider workforce, including non-qualified staff.

Bespoke cross-service buddying and mentoring opportunities established to ensure that peer support is provided consistently to the workforce.

Next Steps include embedding a relational council approach, which combines both restorative and trauma informed practice & implement 4x4 model.

Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

What do we know from data or other information about the profile of these issues in Torbay?

All forms of exploitation presents – strong links to West Midlands

Maturing use of data – Exploitation Tracker, data provided on daily basis with 42 breakdown options

Older young people being criminally exploited have strong links to poly substance use and supply (peer on peer)

Younger children being criminally exploited becoming increasingly involved in vehicle crim (less substance use)

Youngest child with exploitation toolkit – 9
Dominant age group – 15-16
Increasing identification at ages 10-12

Sexual exploitation identified in respect of individual children – no current identification of organized child sexual exploitation

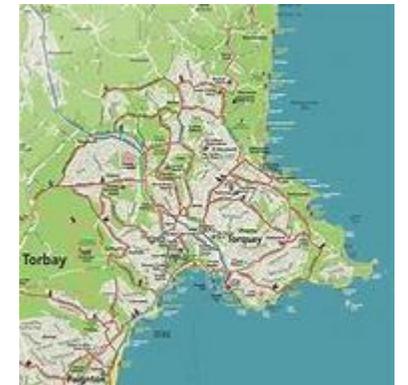
Sexual exploitation within peer groups is a concern

Equal numbers of vulnerable boys and girls, with boys more vulnerable to CCW and girls to CSE

NRM referrals: 17 with positive grounds, 1 with conclusive grounds and 1 declined (UASC)

Links with education:

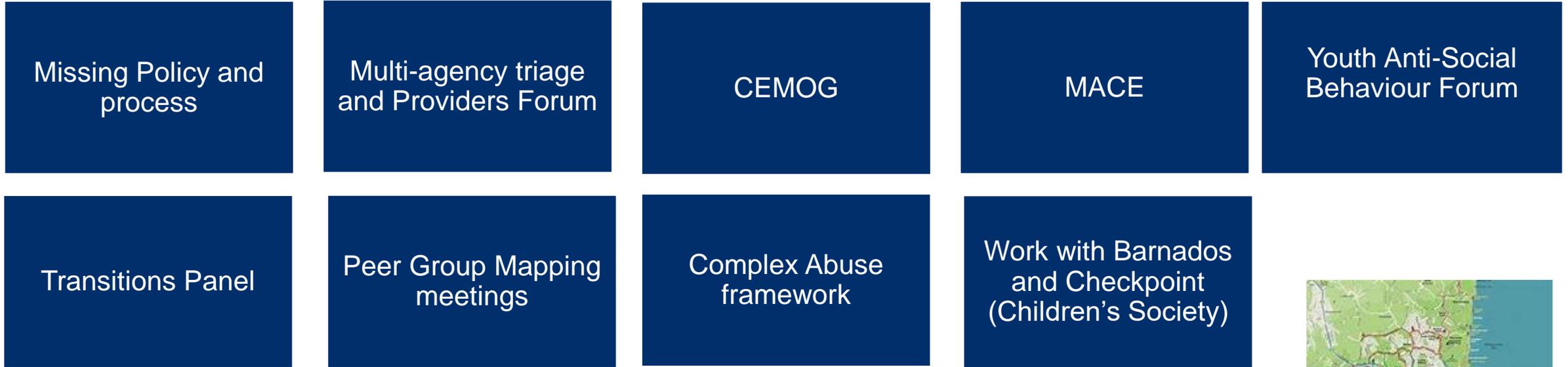
- 22% of those children subject to exploitation toolkits also have an EHCP. Area for development identified to extend analysis to those at SEN K through preventative work.
- Top twenty analysis: 7 (35%) had experienced suspension; 2 (10%) recently excluded; 19 (95%) experiencing poor attendance; 9 (45%) have EHCPs; 5 (25%) receiving support at SEN K.



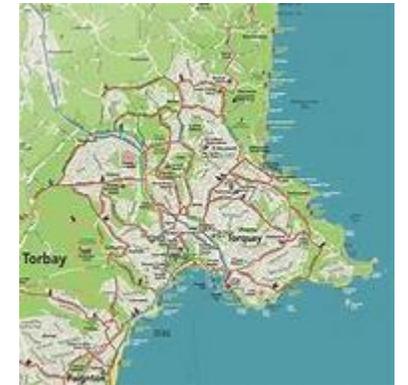
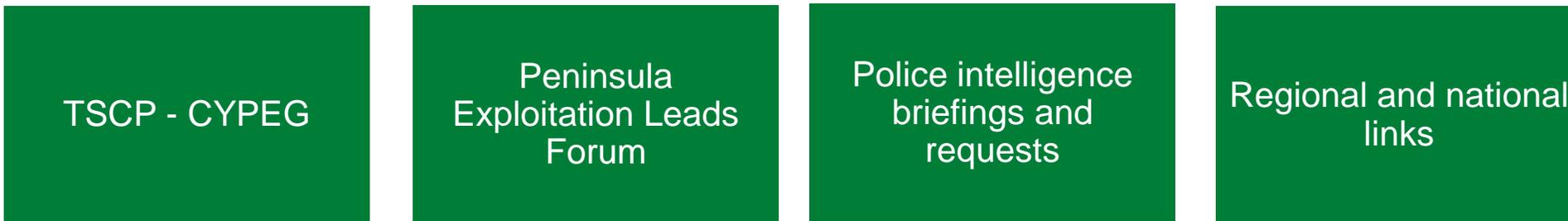
Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

How does Torbay engage and share intelligence with key partners?

Operational forums



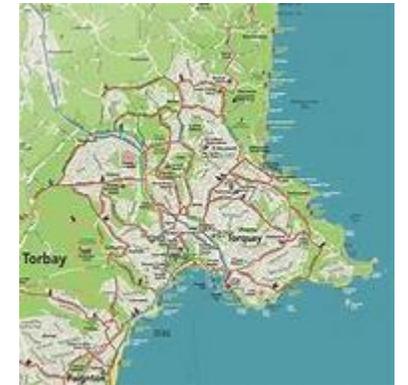
Strategic forums



Exploitation: county lines, and radicalisation and extremism

What is the impact?

- High quality multi-agency partnerships based on high support/high challenge where needed to safeguard children.
- Strategic relationships and 'contacts' filter down to operational relationships to assist discussing and planning responses for individual children at practitioner level.
- Any process or practice queries are escalated, discussed and options for resolution identified
- Good information sharing in key meetings about individual children and families resulting in decisions also being contextually informed.
- Increased confidence of staff across all agencies to identify and have the appropriate routes to discuss and refer concerns regarding all types of child exploitation.
- Swift identification of individual children, peer groups, or adults of concern which leads to timely and appropriate information sharing to develop support and disruption plans.
- Engagement with parents and carers to promote safety/understanding of exploitation and safety planning with the family.
- Information movement between different operational panels (ASB, MACE, CEMOG and Transition) filtering down to operational staff.



Other forms of exploitation

Moped theft and wider vehicle crime:

- High social media and public interest.
 - High impact on community.
 - High risk of serious harm or fatality.
- Operation Hawkbox and complex abuse framework initiated.
- Current evidence base identifies ASB and organized crime between small group of young people and some young adults identified of concern.
 - MACE being used for intelligence gathering.

Drug supply with indicators of organized crime/drug networks:

- Peer group mapping in place.
- Use of child protection processes initiated, incorporating consideration of safeguarding of siblings associated.
- Use of MACE in respect of addresses and adults of concern.

County lines between Torbay and West Midlands:

- Use of MACE to track new adults moving into area where risk identified.
- Mapping of adults of concern and close joint work with domestic abuse services.
- Ongoing information-sharing between police and Children's.

Other priorities



Independent Scrutineer undertaking report aligned to the JTAI as preparation, which will feed into a MACA focused on child criminal exploitation in February 2023.



Training provided commissioned to deliver training on child criminal and sexual exploitation, responding to missing and the NRM process, with separate modules for each. This is in addition to the TSCP training on offer in respect of the local profile and processes. Training for our fostering families has also been reviewed in February 2023.



Audit framework and cycle includes responses to exploitation and missing children through core audits, as well as dip sampling every three months.



The exploitation toolkit will imminently be embedded on LCS and PREVENT questions have been incorporated into this (as of January 2023). The conversion from Word to LCS will allow for 30 categories of data to be reported on.



Engagement with police activity including Operation Medusa (intensification of work tackling county lines) from 27th February 2023 to March 2023.

What next?



Continue to use performance surgeries to monitor and track performance in relation to toolkits and Return Home Interviews.



Continue to enhance how exploitation and missing risk is considered and responded to within the transition period for young people.



TSCP Task and Finish group established to progress a Torbay contextual safeguarding model.



Undertake the Missing Children's self-assessment tool, and embed outcome of this and Independent Scrutineer report into ongoing strategic action plan.



Continue to enhance the working relationship between Children's Services and Community Safety Partnership.