

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

Date: 23rd July 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2025-26

When does the decision need to be implemented? 30 June 2025

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Torbay Local Authority is required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to approve an annual Youth Justice Plan that has been prepared in consultation with its partner agencies, staff, and service users.
- 1.2 The key outcomes for the Youth Justice Plan are to prevent children from offending, reduce re offending and prevent children entering custody.
- 1.3 The national Youth Justice Board (YJB) produces guidance on the production and contents of the [Youth Justice Plans](#) Torbay's plan has been produced in accordance with this guidance.
- 1.4 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee asked for some additional information as part of a Key line of Enquiry about what was being done to reduce antisocial behaviour (ASB) by children this has been included in this report.

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 local authority has a statutory duty to submit its Youth Justice Plan by 30th June 2025 to the YJB. The Draft Plan has been submitted signed by Nancy Meehan as Chair of the YJS Strategic Board, which is acceptable to the YJB, but it must still be ratified by Torbay Council Cabinet. Failure to do so may result in YJB funding being withheld or delayed resulting in a reduced or delayed service as specified within the plan.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee consider the Youth Justice Plan for 2025-26 and make a recommendation for any changes to the Torbay Cabinet to approve.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Final Draft Torbay Youth Justice Plan 2025-26 v2

Appendix 2: Summer Activities Poster

Supporting Information

4. Introduction

- 4.1 Torbay Local Authority is required by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to approve an annual Youth Justice Plan that has been prepared in consultation with its partner agencies, staff and service users.
- 4.2 Local authorities have a statutory duty to submit its Youth Justice Plan Youth Justice Board (YJB) by 30th June each year. Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnership's responsibilities in producing a plan. It states that it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how youth justice services in their area are to be provided and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out. The plan should equally address the functions assigned to a youth justice service and include how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.
- 4.3 The key outcomes for the Youth Justice Plan are to prevent children from offending, reduce re offending and prevent children entering custody.
- 4.4 The national Youth Justice Board (YJB) produces guidance on the production and contents of the Youth Justice Plans Torbay's plan has been produced in accordance with this guidance.

Key line of Enquiry: What is being done to reduce ASB in Torbay

- 4.5 I have taken this to mean ASB committed by children and I have liaised with Child Centred Policing team for South Devon, Torbay Community Safety Team and members of Torbay Youth Justice Service.
- 4.6 **Child Centred Policing Team** covering S Devon was launched in April 2025 following recognition that better coordination and quicker response was needed to youth crime and ASB in the area. This team is pulling together all child focused police resources into a single team who will deal with the investigation and resolution of all Level 1 crime (low level). The team is not yet fully staffed but is already showing some positive result in terms of speedier resolution of crimes and ASB, this is not only good for children who commit crime but also good for victims (many of whom are also children)
- 4.7 **Police Intervention Clinic** meets every week and goes through all police intelligence reports re children that are coming to the attention of the police. It is led by Community Safety Sergeants from the Child Centred Policing and in attendance are the Police Youth Intervention Officers (YIO's), a Team Manager and data analyst from the Youth Justice Service (YJS). Children are discussed and other records on YJS or Childrens Services for safeguarding concerns to make a decision about how to proceed. Options can include: -

referral to YIOs for intervention, referral to the YJS Prevention Service, contact with the social worker to raise concerns, proceed with a criminal investigation or take no further action.

- 4.8 **Torbay Youth Justice Service** works with children who have committed ASB however they are dealt with ie informal /prevention, diversionary, civil or criminal proceedings. ASB is a very small area of our work as the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets the mandate for Youth Justice Services which is primarily to stop children re offending or prevent them from offending in the first place. Since ASB is primarily a civil matter until it is escalated to a criminal matter by breach of a civil order, we have very few children open to us for ASB. Child First practice is clear that they best ways to stop children offending is through keeping them out of the formal youth justice systems as long as possible, treating them as children, work to build a pro social identity, collaborating with them on how best to support them and diverting them from the stigma of a criminal record and involvement with the justice system. Torbay seeks to uphold these principles in its work whilst safeguarding children, protecting the public and victims.
- 4.9 **YJS Prevention Service (including Turnaround)** takes referrals for children who are at risk of becoming involved in the formal youth justice system. They will probably have already been discussed at the Police Intervention Clinic and will be known to Childrens Services where we get most of the referrals from. The prevention service will complete an assessment of the child and their circumstances to devise an agreed intervention package which will provide a range of positive activities and support to the child to divert then from further offending or ASB.
- 4.10 **YJS (Summer) Activity Programme** was piloted in early 2025 by the YJS Prevention Service and provided weekly activity small group activities to children open to the YJS. The pilot was successful in engaging children in a range of activities that they could attend after their YJS intervention closed. We are seeking funding to restart this in the summer holidays when we know there can be a spike in ASB and offending and are conversations with Torbay Community Safety and the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme. A draft plan is attached which has been devised just using internal YJS funds, if we are successful in gaining other additional funding this could be enhanced.
- 4.11 **Torbay Council Community Safety** are investing £300,000 in 'Operation Town Centres' to make the bay a Safer and more welcoming by tackling ASB. The funding will be used to support the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), enhance CCTV operations and employ a new town centre manager who will have lead responsibility for delivering ASB related initiatives. YJS and Police have links with the ASB team and attend the **Youth ASB meeting**. This tends to be location based and resources can be targeted at the areas so the individuals by the most appropriate agency.
- 4.12 **Torbay Council Youth Hub** will bring together a range of services for children into one team in August 2025 this will include the Council Youth Service and the commissioning of

the voluntary sector youth services and clubs alongside the drug and alcohol service, the homeless prevention team, and young carers.

- 4.13 **Early Help Panel** – reviews cases of children and families who may need additional help which cannot be met by universal services. This may include ASB being committed by children YJS and Police can be asked to attend in these cases and may offer support and intervention as part of an Early Help plan.

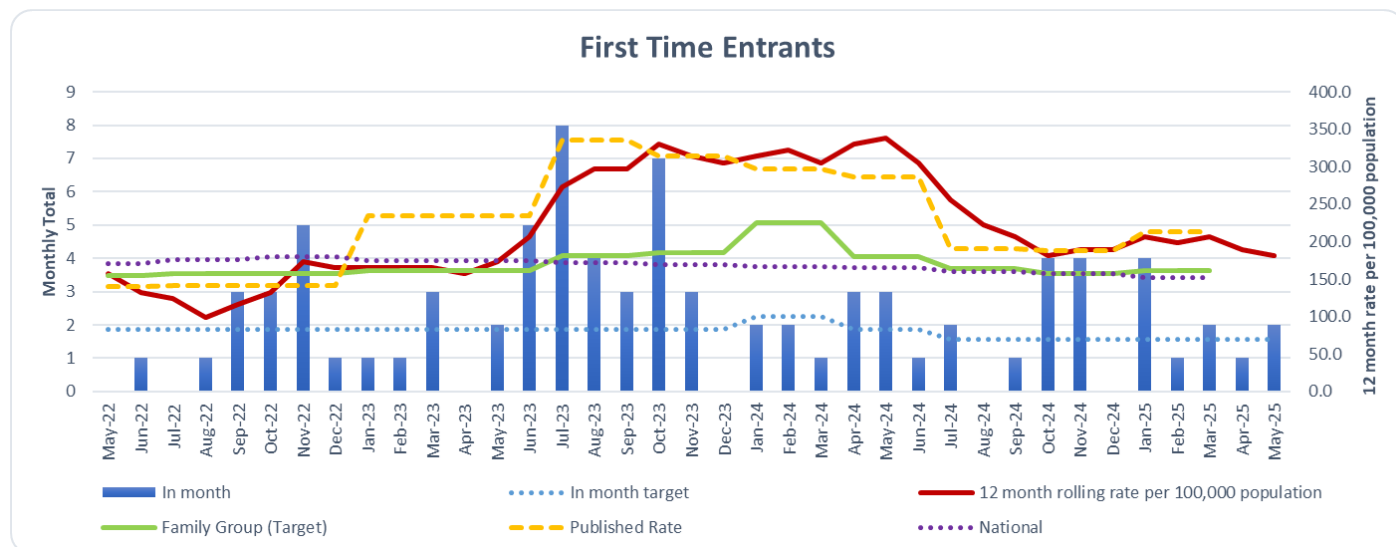
Other Updates requested

- 4.14 **Premises** – Unit 1 at Torr Hill house has been agreed for Torbay YJS use and the funding for the refurbishment has been agreed. Plans have been developed costed and approved by Planning and Building control. Work was started in April but work to clear out the building before refurbishment discovered matters that have delayed the start of the renovation. The most significant of these has been the discovery in 2 different areas of Asbestos which was not previously known both have delayed work for significantly to source and the availability of specialist contractors. Damp was also discovered in one of the side wall adjoining the building next door, this wall has now been ‘tanked’ and the internal rain gutter has been repaired. Most of the internal work has been cleared and actual refurbishment work should start in the next 2 weeks once a schedule of works has been agreed.
- 4.15 **First Time Entrants** - The data for this indicator comes from both the local case management system (red line below) and the YDS published by the YJB (yellow dotted line). The data is shown in rolling full years for the 12 months to March, July, September, and December of each year. First Time Entrants are children who receive a youth caution / youth conditional caution or court conviction for the first time within the period. The KPI is used to measure the effectiveness of the partnership in preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system for the first time and is expressed a rate per 100,000 10-17-year-old population to allow comparisons across areas of different sizes.

Historically, this has been an area of poor performance for Torbay YJS, with the rate consistently above the family group and national. However, progress was made throughout 2021 and 2022 when the rate of FTEs fell to its lowest in August 2022.

This downward trend from 2021 into 2022 did not continue into 2023/24, and Torbay’s rate rose significantly above the target (to be below the family group) at the end of the year. Reducing FTEs has been a strategic priority for the local partnership board. The rate has steadily decreased since the peak in May 2024, narrowing the gap with the family group and national averages. Several factors have contributed to this improvement: swifter decision-making, the introduction of an intervention clinic where decision-making is informed by real-time data and intelligence to target children at risk of entering the youth justice system into the most appropriate preventative intervention, and regular auditing of decision-making at the pre-court panel. This will be further aided by the introduction in July

2025 of the new Devon and Cornwall Police / YJS Joint Decision Protocol which sets out with greater clarity and consistency the options to divert children from criminal convictions.



2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 There are no other options being considered as there is a legal requirement to deliver this service and produce this plan.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 Torbay Youth Justice Service is a statutory partnership governed by Its Strategic Management Board. The statutory partners are required to agree the level of funding for the service and the amounts contributed by each statutory partner. The Draft Budget laid out within the plan has been set for 2025-26 subject to final agreement by some partner agencies. Torbay Council Children's Services as one of the statutory partners has agreed funding for 2025-26 of £497,084 as part of a total budget of £919,916. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is the next largest contributor granting £247,401, the remaining budget is made up of contributions for the other partners and other specific grants. Additionally, partners contribute £174,760 'in kind' through the secondment of workers to the service. See Appendix 2 of the Youth Justice Plan 2025-26 for more details.
- 3.2 Failure to agree the Youth Justice Plan may result in funding from the Youth Justice Board (YJB) being withdrawn or withheld, as well as contributions from other partner agencies which would result in a reduced service to children in Torbay.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 [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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 All partners have been engaged in the development of the youth justice plan through representation at an 'Away Day' for the Strategic Board for the service with specific meetings held to oversee the development of the plan.
- 5.2 Staff and volunteers were involved through team meetings and workshops to help develop the vision and priorities for the service, and the views of children, families and victims has been gathered through the ongoing feedback systems of the service and used to influence the priorities of the service.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 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.

7. Tackling Climate Change.

- 7.1 There will be no contribution to tackling climate change in this proposal.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 If a Youth Justice Plan is not approved by the local authority it would potentially be failing to provide its statutory duty under as specified under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (section 40). This may result in funding being withheld by the YJB and therefore in a reduction in service to children, or increased expenditure by to the local authority and / or the other funding partners. This would also affect the reputation of the local authority and may open it to legal action by the government.

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

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	The Youth Justice Plan sets out how youth justice services in Torbay are to be provided and funded, how it will operate, and what functions it will carry out. The plan details how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending. The key outcomes for the Youth Justice Plan are to prevent children from offending, reduce re offending and prevent children entering custody.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No Differential Impact
People with a disability	They YJS plan details that 36% of children known to the service have Special Educational Needs or an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).		

	The YJS plan sets out how education (including any special educational needs) has been identified as a major factor for the coming year to support children in not becoming involved in criminal activity and to improve their safety, future prosperity and wellbeing.		
Women or men			No Differential Impact
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No Differential Impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No Differential Impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No Differential Impact
People who are transgendered			No Differential Impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No Differential Impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No Differential Impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty)	The Youth Justice Plan has a direct positive impact on children aged 10-17 years old by reducing their offending behaviour and		

issues and deprivation)	<p>increasing their likelihood of a positive future.</p> <p>The Youth Justice Service works with some of the most vulnerable and deprived children and families within Torbay as is evidenced within chapter 15 of the YJS Plan – this shows that 72% of children known to the service are living in poverty (in receipt of free school meals which up from 63% last year). 39% live in areas that fall into the 10% most deprived in England. Over three quarters are already known to Children's Services.</p>		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No Differential Impact

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impact

11.1 None