

Minutes of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

17 July 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Johns (Chairwoman)

Councillors Foster, Long and Fellows

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Amanda Moss (Chair of the Voluntary Sector Network)

Pat Harris (Healthwatch Torbay)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Chris Lewis and David Thomas)

7. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 12 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

8. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

The Divisional Director Community and Customer Services – Tara Harris and the Heading of Housing Needs – Lianne Hancock, provided the background and overview of the submitted Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan and responded to questions.

Members raised the following questions:

- what provision was available for members of the public to meet with Housing Needs Officers face to face when faced with possible homelessness;
- what action had been taken by Officers to build on the cross organisational dashboard;
- do the users of the storage lockers have access to the service at all times of the day;
- what support was available to help residents to remain in their allocated accommodation;
- would Torbay Council Housing Needs Officers be learning from the successful work completed by Harbour Housing in Cornwall;
- what impact would the upcoming changes to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill have on services provided to the young people in Torbay;
- what involvement do Housing Services Officers have with Landlords to prevent unlawful evictions; and

- what process was completed to count the numbers of rough sleepers within Torbay.

The following responses were provided by the Divisional Director Community and Customer Services, Head of Housing Needs and the Director of Adult Social Care and Community Services – Anna Coles:

- Face to face appointments have been held in both Torquay Job Centre and Tor Hill House, due to the damage at the Connections Office which is the normal location for face to face appointments. Officers have looked into expanding this service further to make more face-to-face appointments available, including Paignton and the discussions are ongoing.
- The Action Plan dashboard will include wider data sets, to enable a wider understanding of homelessness in Torbay, including wider society impacts, as some residents other organisations such as Citizens Advice for assistance.
- There was a set procedure for the use of the lockers for storage and how they can be accessed and how items will be stored etc. The exact location was not widely advertised. There have not been high numbers of requests for the service received to date, however it was expected to be used more in the Winter months. When people were rough sleeping, they were issued with a basic mobile phone with pay as you go credit, to enable them to contact their Support Officer for advice and to gain access to the storage lockers at set times, if required. The aim of the scheme, was to reduce items being left on the street, to provide a safe and dry place to store items.
- Torbay Council have a Tenancy Sustainment Team who work with residents prior to moving into their allocated accommodation and continue to provide assistance to ensure residents remain in their accommodation. This work was predominantly focused on those that have been rough sleeping. The service could be assisting with registering for utilities etc so that initial debt was not accrued by tenants, placing their accommodation at risk.
- Housing Services Officers were aware of the success of the Harbour Housing projects in Cornwall, and in particular a facility that includes a hostel with support provided to the residents. Officers would visit Harbour Housing to learn more about their projects and how this learning could be utilised in Torbay.
- Historically, if a Care Experienced young person was asked to leave temporary accommodation due to bad behaviour, this would end the homelessness duty from Torbay Council. However, with the upcoming changes arising from the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill for services provided to Care Experienced young people in Torbay, if they are asked to leave a property due to bad behaviour, the homelessness duty for Torbay Council would continue and alternative accommodation would be required to be found. Procedures are all ready in operation irrespective of the legislative changes to ensure that Care Experienced young people are not made intentionally homeless.
- Torbay Council Housing Services Officers have built good relationships with existing landlords in Torbay facilitated through grant funding that was provided from Central Government. Regular newsletters are produced which was issued to over 400 subscribers. Training was provided to landlords, and work had been undertaken on tone of voice communications. There was also a landlord link officer within the Housing Options team. Officers have completed

a lot of work in preparation of the significant changes proposed by the Renters Right Bill which was expected to be implemented in October 2025.

- Torbay could have approximately 20 people rough sleeping in any one night and numbers could fluctuate throughout the summer months due to transient activity. In 2024/2025, Torbay Council provided accommodation to 111 people who were previously rough sleepers. There is a Rough Sleeping Team who make contact with people sleeping on the streets of Torbay to provide assistance. Monthly data was collected and collated which was submitted to Central Government on a number of different metrics which inform local and national work.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the content of the submitted report on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan;
2. that Torbay Council Housing Options team provide a written update to the Members of the Adults Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board once the visit to Harbour Housing scheme in Cornwall has been completed to provide feedback on any innovation that could be considered for implementation across Torbay;
3. that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Members are kept up to date on Union Square and Victoria Square developments on the numbers of properties that will be policy compliant;
4. that progress on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan is reported quarterly to the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board; and
5. that the recommendation from 12 June 2025 meeting, requesting a report detailing the actions that have been taken in response to Adult Social Care Housing need from the Director Pride in Place, be amended to include an update on plans to increase the delivery of affordable housing across Torbay to support the increasing demand on homelessness services.

9. Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker

The Sub-Board noted the submitted action tracker.

Chairwoman

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