

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

Date: 29 September 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Absence from Education 2024/2025

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1. Purpose of Report

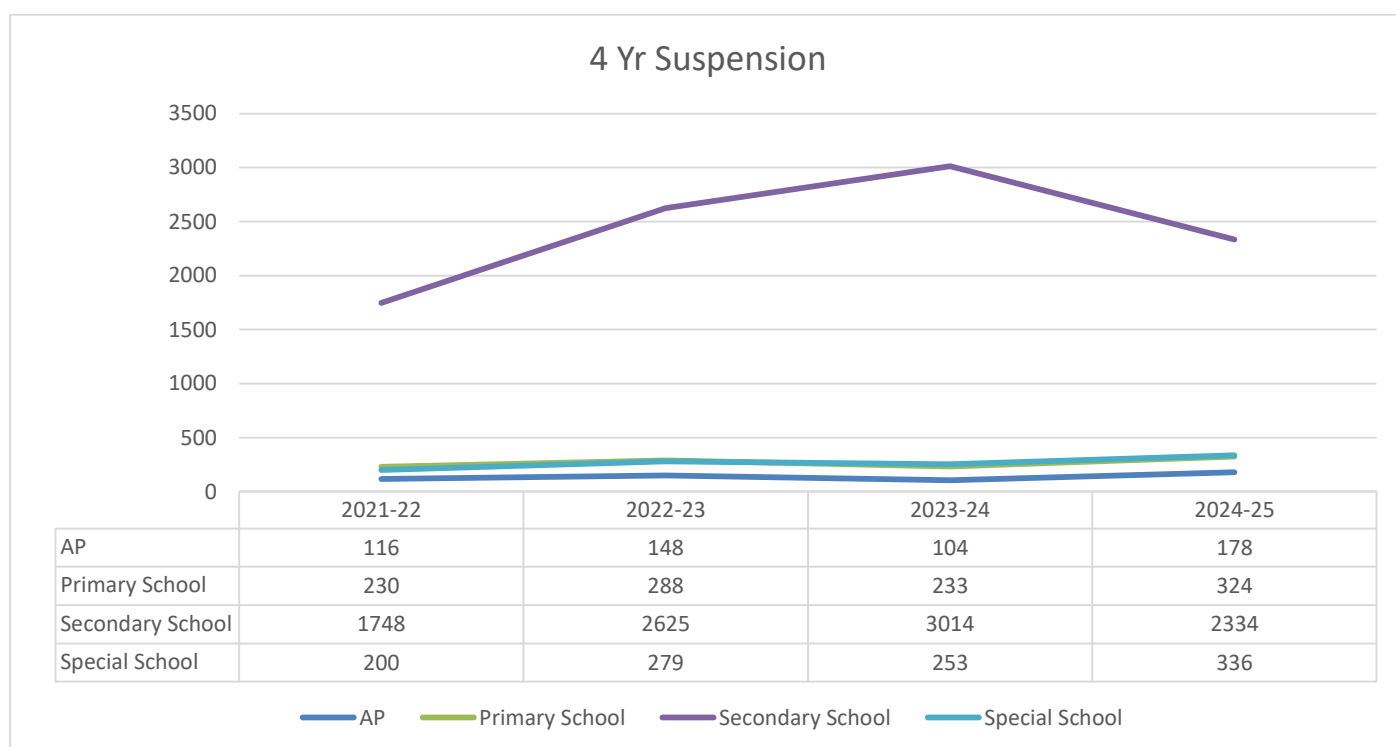
1. To receive the latest qualified exclusion data and the views of those children who have been excluded
2. To receive an update on the new Local Authority Attendance Duties and Home Education
3. To receive an update on children on a part time timetable (including the numbers coming off a part time timetable) or on roll but not attending, children educated other than at school (EOTAS) and children educated through alternative provision
4. What is the reason for young people being NEET?
5. How well do careers services work in Torbay to help advise young people of their options for employment, education and training?
6. How do we support our young people when they reach 16, 17, 18 etc. to help them understand and access appropriate education, employment or training?
7. How many of our young people are going into apprenticeships or supported internships?
8. How many apprenticeships and/or supported internships are available in Torbay through Torbay Council?
9. To receive an update on an analysis of the 500 home elected young people to understand the reasons why and if there are any children missing from the list of home educated or attending school and what action is being taken to identify and support these young people and their families
10. To receive an Update on the SEND Locality Model.

2. Exclusion and Suspension

2.1 The number of children excluded from school reduced considerably compared to 2023/24.

Phase	2023/24	2024/25	% of 2023/4
Alternative Provision	1	1	0%
Primary	21	14	66%
Secondary	40	19	47.5%
Special	3	1	33%
Total	65	35	-30

2.2 There is still more demand than capacity for places in schools after exclusion in the Primary Phase.



2.3 Suspension levels in all phases are still high but there is a significant (23%) drop in suspension at secondary phase.

2.4 Of concern is the 39% increase at primary phase after a reduction in the year before. This may be linked to an increased reluctance to exclude and sustained attempts to avoid this.

2.5 There is no statistically significant change in the number of days missed for each suspension as the figures mirror the reduction in instances.

3. Elective Home Education (EHE)

3.1 There are 501 children registered with the local authority as Electively Home Educated. The families represented in this group prefer the term Home Educated as they do not feel they have all elected to do so. This formal report uses the legal terminology.

3.2 In 2024-25 215 children and young people of statutory school age moved into Elective Home Education. 17 of these have an EHCP and 33 have SEND needs that could be met with in school SEN Support.

3.3 It is of concern that 68 of these CYP were in Year 11 and a total of 183 were of secondary age. Where a reason was given (it is still not a statutory requirement that parents inform the LA) the most common reasons were mental health or dissatisfaction with school.

3.4 Mental health concerns are six times more likely than a dissatisfaction with SEND. General dissatisfaction with school is five times more likely.

	Y12- Y13 NEET	Y12 NEET	Y13 NEET	Y12- Y13 NK	Y12 NK	Y13 NK	Y12-13 In Learning	Y12 In Learning	Y13 In Learning	Y12- Y13 NEET + NK	Y12 NEET + NK	Y13 NEET + NK
Torbay	3.80%	2.90%	4.70%	1.90%	1.70%	2.20%	90.90%	94.10%	87.70%	5.70%	4.60%	6.90%
S/N	4.70%	4.20%	5.30%	1.80%	1.10%	2.50%	89.50%	92.40%	86.50%	6.50%	5.30%	7.80%

4. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or Not Known (NK)

Torbay vs statistical neighbours as at August 2025

4.1 Torbay has a good performance for the whole cohort when compared to statistical neighbours. Our NEET figure is within 0.1% of the national and 0.9% better than statistical neighbours (S/N).

4.2 We also have a high number of young people in employment without training in the service and care sectors. Whilst this impacts on our participation figures these young people are engaged in our community and economy.

4.3 Since the closure of CSW Group in March 2025, Devon and Torbay have worked together to create a 16+ Learning Pathways Team from the staff transferred to Devon County Council.

4.4 The work of the previous organisation has been reviewed and a new expectation of contact and proactive work with young people developed. We will work with all the groups previously identified as at risk of NEET but have also added groups such as those not on a school roll and those too unwell to attend school.

4.5 To ensure consistency, the two LAs will share the names of children at risk of NEET with schools rather than the previous system of requesting names from schools. The core duty for careers information advice and guidance sits with the on-roll school. Torbay's schools have all followed the Gatsby Benchmarks to provide unbiased advice to children and young people.

4.6 At 16+ young people can access advice through the 16+ Learning pathways team if NEET or on request. They also receive advice from the on roll Further Education setting.

5. Part time and Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)

5.1 For the last academic year (1st Sept 2024 – 31st July 25) there were 185 Part-time Timetable (PTTT) requests received and “opened”. This is 185 PTTT's for 94 children as some were “repeat part-time timetables” with some ending and then resubmitted as extensions.

5.2 The Local Authority is looking into methods of measuring Part-time timetables more robustly for the new academic year as part of the Improvement plan for SEND as the current system relies on schools informing the LA when this happens. We hope governing bodies will support and take ownership of this oversight.

5.3 For SEND Education Other Than At School Programmes, historically, we've arranged education provision for these children on a spot-purchase basis, often influenced by provider availability rather than tailored to individual needs. This has led to significant variation in the packages offered. We wanted to ensure the packages of education were aspirational, met assessed need and we were able to evidence positive outcomes so we looked to change the way we award contracts.

As part of this change, last autumn we invited families accessing EOTAS provision to share their experiences and suggestions through a combination of in-person, virtual, and one-to-one discussions. Their feedback showed a strong desire for more inclusive and aspirational education packages. They also wanted provision that reduces isolation and better supports both educational outcomes and personal development.

These insights helped us to shape the service specification, ensuring the voice of children and their experiences were central to the process. The Cabinet approved the plans in December 2024. We have since carried out a full procurement process and awarded contracts to high-quality providers who we believe will deliver impactful, personalised education packages that support children to thrive. The transition to these new programmes has started from September 2025.

5.4 In the last academic year (24/5) 72 young people were EOTAS (with an EHCP). Due to the increases and enhancements of specialist provision almost half of these young people have been

able to move back into specialist settings or provision. For this academic year (25/6) 36 young people are registered as EOTAS currently.

5.5 There are no children registered as EOTAS with the Vulnerable Pupils Team (without an EHCP). There are 28 children being supported under section 19 with most of their education via alternative provision. A further 19 children being educated via an online learning platform as they are too unwell to attend a setting.

6. Supported Internships and Apprenticeships

6.1 With an NTDI Grant the Local Authority has been able to accelerate progress with Supported Internships over the last year.

This has resulted in a huge growth of Supported Internship opportunities for our young people:

- In 2024/5 There were a total of 3 SIs across Torbay.
- In Sep 2025 there are 22 planned SIs (1 South Devon College*, 11 Special Partnership Trust, 10 individual Supported Internships).

The Local Authority and the Special Partnership Trust have worked together to create a bespoke SI offer for Brunel young people. This is to enable this cohort of young people a highly supported route into the employment pathway.

*South Devon College SIs usually increase throughout the academic year as learners find the right pathways for them.

The Council are recruiting five Supported Interns across the Council to start this Autumn and a Graduate Management Trainee Apprentice planned start for November. The Recruitment team are also planning a care experienced work experience pilot week in October.

6.2 Last year the council recruited 4 apprentices to work across areas within the Council. The Council plan to take on 2 apprentices this year. The council is also currently funding 2 apprentices at our maintained school (Sherwell Valley).

7. Local Authority Attendance Duties

The Authority and partners have further developed the team to provide attendance support to schools and families. This includes:

1. Restructuring the team to provide one Lead Attendance Improvement Officer and two full time Attendance Improvement Officers
2. These colleagues have an Attendance Youth Worker in support for direct work.
3. The School Nursing Service has recruited a nurse with specific responsibility for supporting school attendance.
4. Working with the District Clinical Officer to identify ways in which we can work with GPs and their teams to advise and guide families who may be struggling with attendance on medical grounds.

Attendance is improving compared to other Local Authorities. This is due to the hard work of school staff alongside effective early help and impactful meetings held with each school each term by the AIOs.

7. Update on the Primary Locality Pilot for SLCN

7.1 The Pilot to date has 29 out of 31 schools engaged.

7.2 All schools completed an evaluation of their needs in SLCN in June and a multi-stakeholder group of parents and professionals came together in July to review these evaluations, create clusters of schools with the same needs and create an offer of support for the Autumn term.

7.3 This offer is published to schools and includes:

- A named Linked Speech Therapist to each school provided by the ICB.
- Champion schools who will share good practice with others.
- Training delivered by the LA Educational Psychology Team on Adaptive Teaching for SLCN.
- Further training and support for EaL, Developmental Language Disorder and other identified specific training needs.
- Social Care “Surgeries” for schools and parents in the three towns.

7.4 The Pilot runs through the Autumn term with monthly feedback on its benefits and drawbacks. We hope to have support from Plymouth University to help us evaluate the success of the programme in readiness to make recommendations for future ways of working in 2026.