

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

18 November 2024

-: Present :-

Councillor Fellows (Chairman)

Councillors Law, Nicolaou, Tolchard and Twelves (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members

Pete Brown, Church of England Diocesan (virtually)

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor (virtually)

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Tanny Stobart, Play Torbay

Jen Rose, Devon and Cornwall Police

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye and Dave Thomas)

20. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Mike Cook (Non-voting Co-opted Member).

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 23 September 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. Home to School Transport

Members considered the submitted report which provided an update following a review of Home to School Transport. Rachel Setter, Divisional Director for Learning Partnership Hubs and Sue Whitmore, Head of Service for Safeguarding attended the meeting for this item and responded to questions.

The Sub-Board asked a number of questions in relation to the number of complaints and feedback received from parents due to the changes implemented; support provided to children post 16 who attend Exeter College; the amount of budget allocated to support children post 16 years of age; if the data provided could be separated into the type of school; and if home to school transport funding once awarded, was reviewed.

In response to the questions around the changes to Home to School Transport that have been implemented recently, Members were advised that no complaints had been received through the complaints process. Officers had been speaking with the parents of the children affected by the changes and reviewing the feedback received to ensure that resolutions had been made to meet the needs of the children.

Members were advised that a review would be carried out on the post 16 framework provided by Torbay Council to look to bring the Torbay Post 16 offer in line with other local Authorities and a further update would be provided at a future meeting. There was a bursary that children aged 16 could apply for to travel to their chosen education provider. However, if any children were deemed as unable to travel independently, Torbay Council has a duty to provide assistance.

Members noted that previously, Torbay Council did not carry out annual reviews into Home to School Transport awards but change in processes would result in an annual review being carried out in line with the Government framework.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the contents of the submitted report, and the progress made to date;
2. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board continue their oversight of the Home to School Transport improvement work; and
3. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to separate the information for Home to School Transport into mainstream and special schools.

(Note: prior to consideration of the item in Minute 22, Councillor Fellows declared a pecuniary interest and withdrew from the meeting, whereupon the Vice-Chairwoman, Councillor Twelves took the Chair for this item.)

23. Early Years Sufficiency Duty Report

Members received a paper which provided an overview on the sufficiency of early years childcare places in the Torbay area. Rachel Setter, Divisional Director for Learning Partnership Hubs attended the meeting for this item and responded to questions.

The Sub-Board asked questions around nurseries being requested to reopen baby rooms; what support was given to providers to ensure places were available for babies; if waiting lists were reviewed; response rates to the survey that was sent to parents; the data showed that over half of the nursery aged children from Brixham attend a nursery out of Brixham, was this due to capacity or parental choice; and if the data provided could show the locations of nurseries and number of children attending the nurseries.

Members were advised that requests had been made to nurseries to ask them to reopen baby rooms. Increased training had been provided to ensure that there were additional early years trained staff. Officers were working with nurseries to support their business models and look at accessing capital funds if applicable for businesses that could expand their offer. The waiting lists for nursery places were reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

Members were informed that there had been around 40% response rate to the survey and no complaints had been received through the complaints process. The data for the reasons for children attending nursery placements out of the area where they live was due to parental choice and parents seemed to choose nurseries which were closest to their place of work.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Sub-Board notes the content of the submitted report and actions within it; and
2. that the Sub-Board reviews the Early Years Sufficiency data every 6 months.

24. Sufficiency Strategy Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Members considered a report which provided an update in relation to Children's Sufficiency Strategy relating to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye, highlighted that the number of care experienced unaccompanied asylum-seeking children had increased adding significant pressure to the need for care experienced accommodation placements.

The Sub-Board asked questions in relation to if assistance was being provided to the YMCA to identify alternative accommodation; and if this issue should be raised at the Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

Members were advised that the YMCA had identified an alternative property for the accommodation scheme in Paignton. It was noted that this report would be presented to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Sub-Board note the information within the submitted report, including the actions being taken to ensure a sufficient response to the needs of Torbay's UASC; and
2. that the Sufficiency Strategy for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children report be taken to a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

25. Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme and Sustainability

Members considered the submitted report that reviewed the sustainability of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme once the funding ends at the end of

March 2025. Sarah Pengelly, Project Manager, Youth Hub attended the meeting for this item and responded to questions.

Members were advised that, should the amount of funding allocated to Torbay Council for this scheme be reduced, Officers were working on a programme of what could be provided to ensure that the allocated funding meets the need of children and young people to ensure access to food and activities during school holidays.

Members raised a question regarding the encouragement for providers to become Ofstead registered, if there was a separate registration and did it open up extra funding opportunities for families.

Members were informed that the procurement process through Children's Services was thorough and Officers work with providers throughout the process. If providers were successful at becoming Ofstead registered, this offered up more childcare options for families.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the contents of the submitted report and record their appreciation to all the Officers who assist to deliver HAF programme within Torbay.

26. 0 to 25 Provision

Members received an update from Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health and Mark Richards and Joanne Needham, Public Health Specialists on the 0 to 25 Provision which included obesity, face-to-face one-year old and two-two and half year-old checks, vaccine take up and oral health.

Members asked a number of questions regarding free school meals including why some children were not accepting free school meals; if there was an alternative for the children who chose to not have free school meals; how Members were able to receive more information on the Torbay Neighbourhood Growing Programme; what work was being carried out to understand the reasons why free school meals were not being taken up; why the data was not specifically related to Torbay for vaccinations and the vaccination take up; why the uptake for the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine in secondary schools had dropped; what work was being carried out with early years providers; and how quickly the process for developmental checks and section 23 notices takes and the pathway for follow ups.

Members were advised that the data provided for the free school meals uptake was not currently broken down into each school, however this was being reviewed. Officers would be working with local schools to try to establish the reasons for people not taking up free school meals and what actions the schools were planning to take. The Sub-Board was advised that local schools ensured that communications were sent to parents regarding the eligibility for free school meals for their children. Officers were currently not working with early years settings but

were working with local primary schools to educate and understand children's relationship with food.

Members noted that the Torbay Neighbourhood Growing Programme was currently in its initial phase in the Foxhole area. However, Officers would be happy to work with Community Partnerships within Torbay to identify other areas to start similar programmes.

Members were advised that the most recent data on vaccination uptake sits within the NHS and was restricted. The reasons for the nationwide fall in MMR vaccine uptake were complex and multi-factorial but Officers were aware that delayed catch-up after the COVID pandemic was a factor. It was noted that there was a new provider for the schools vaccination programme in Devon and there would be an increase in health promotion and collaboration work to ensure greater take up of immunisations across Torbay schools.

Members were informed that the section 23 process was fairly new, and the process formed the earliest pathway for those who fall under this category and were issued a section 23 notice. Section 23 meetings had been happening with members of the voluntary sector and nurses present.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Sub-Board request that the Director of Public Health works with local Community Partnerships to progress further growing programme schemes within Torbay;
2. that the Sub-Board request that the Director of Public Health works with local schools to review the uptake of free school meals and link with the effects on the HAF programme, ensuring access is made available to all children entitled to receive free school meals; and
3. that the Director of Public Health be requested to introduce colleagues to the Skateboard Working Group to raise awareness of the Torbay on the Move Torbay initiative.

27. Safeguarding Children Annual Report

Penny Smith, Chief Nursing Officer outlined the submitted Safeguarding Children Annual Report for 2023/2024 and responded to questions.

Members raised questions in relation to the establishment of a mental health sub-group; a lot of data included in the report was Devon wide and not just Torbay focused and there was data missing from the Police; and what date was the Mental Health summit due to take place.

Members were advised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) had the principle authority for the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). Colleagues from ICB and Torbay Council's Children Services were working on holding a Mental Health Summit in December 2024. A full action plan would be brought to a future meeting.

Members noted that work was being carried out by Officers on updating a comprehensive dashboard to be brought to future meetings that would incorporate data from Children's Services, the Police and Public Health.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Sub-Board notes and endorses the contents of the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;
2. that the full Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) action plan is brought back to a future meeting of the Sub-Board; and
3. that the Chairwoman of the Torbay Children's Safeguarding Partnership be requested to use less acronyms in future documents.

28. Children's Continuous Improvement Board Update

Members considered the submitted report which provided an update on the Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board. Members noted the drive to improve the Children's Services, the progress that had been made to date and that the Improvement Board had evolved to a Continuous Improvement Board. Rachel Setter, Divisional Director for Learning Partnership Hubs and Stephen Hart, Independent Chair of Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board, attended the meeting for this item and responded to questions.

Members were advised that there were now systems and measures in place including deep dive reviews to ensure consistency and highlight any drops in performance within the Children's Service directorate.

Members raised a question in relation to the cluster-based models (known as locality models) used to monitor exclusions and suspensions and were advised that a consultation process was taking place and once the process had finished, the consultation responses would be reviewed for a proposal to be taken to a Cabinet meeting in January 2025. There had been 26 consultation events held within Torbay to date with further events were scheduled to take place up to the closing date.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the contents of the submitted report be noted; and
2. that work is undertaken to align the Work Programme of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board to the assurance framework of the Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board.

29. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker

The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted action tracker.

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The Clerk updated the Sub-Board that a response had been received regarding the 0 to 19 Services Procurement action from the meeting held on 23 September 2024 which was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Clerk was requested to follow up on outstanding responses from the NHS and Police.

Chairman
