

Friday, 17 January 2025

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
SUB-BOARD**

A meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**
will be held on

Monday, 27 January 2025

commencing at **3.00 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left
corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Board

Councillor Fellows (Chairman)

Councillor Law
Councillor Nicolaou

Councillor Tolchard
Councillor Twelves (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members of the Board

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Jo Hunter, Church of England Diocese - Deputy Representative

Vacancy - Secondary Parent Governor Representative

Vacancy - Roman Catholic Diocese Representative

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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Governance Support, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-BOARD AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.

2. **Minutes**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board held on 18 November 2024.

(Pages 5 - 12)

3. **Declarations of Interest**

a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)

4. **Urgent Items**

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

5. **Councillor Call to Action - St Margarets and Spires Hearing Unit Closures**

(Pages 13 - 14)

To consider the submitted Councillor Call for Action on the above from Councillor George Darling and determine if Members wish to request officers to prepare a full report on the matter for submission to a future meeting of the Sub-Board.

(Note: Councillor George Darling has been invited to explain his rationale for the request.)

- 6. Update on UNICEF work to be a Child Friendly Torbay** (Pages 15 - 26)
To review the progress on the work with UNICEF to be a Child Friendly Torbay.
- 7. Adopt South West Annual Report 2023/2024** (To Follow)
Adopt South West Annual Report 2023/2024 – include an update on the impact of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly joining the Regional Adoption Agency.
- 8. Youth Justice** (Pages 27 - 38)
To receive an update on the Youth Justice Team, including and mental health and Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) provision.

(Note: Jon Ralph – Service Manager Youth Justice has been invited for this item.)
- 9. Exploitation and Children Missing** (Pages 39 - 50)
To receive an update on Exploitation and children missing, to include comparative data to demonstrate the improvements and impact to young people who are vulnerable to exploitation.

(Note: the Exploitation Team Manager has been invited for this item.)
- 10. Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to care for and care experienced children/young people**
To receive an update on the progress of implementing the Pledge and the youth engagement, Children in Care Council's (CICCs), My Voice and The Circle.

(Note: a representative from the Children in Care Council has been invited for this item.)
- 11. Virtual School Annual Report 2023/2024** (Pages 51 - 78)
To receive the annual report from the Virtual School which includes an update on attainment of our cared for and care experienced young people along with extended duties as well as the voice of the child is included and an update on the pathways for the extended duties for the Virtual School.

(Note: the Head of Vulnerable Pupils has been invited for this item.)
- 12. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker** (Pages 79 - 84)
To receive an update on the implementation of the actions of the Sub-Board and consider any further actions required (as set out in the submitted action tracker).

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**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.

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

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Councillor Call to Action – St Margarets and Spires Hearing Unit Closures

Members of the Children and Young Person's Overview and Scrutiny Board.

As per the Councillor Call to Action provision, I would ask you kindly to consider the Hearing Impairment Units – Revised Decision at your earliest meeting, with a view to a full report.

Since this decision was taken, some parents, teachers, and health professionals have expressed severe concerns about the consultation process, information used to justify this decision, and the impact that it is believed this decision will have on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision for hearing impaired children over the coming years.

Legal and Statutory Compliance

Questions have also been raised by the National Deaf Children's Society, as to whether this decision complies with legal and statutory requirements:

- Equality Act 2010
- Children's and Families Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice – Department for Education 2014
- Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools – Department for Education 2024
- Making Significant Changes to an Academy – Department for Education 2014

In light of concerns raised with me I am requesting the Children and Young People's Sub-Board to undertake a review of the processes and consultation which informed original decision and the revised decision that was reached as published on 4 December 2024 see [Decision - Hearing Impairment Units - Revised Decision](#)

I hope a full report can be undertaken and reviewed at the earliest possibility.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Submitted by Councillor George Darling

Recommendation for consideration:

That in accordance with Standing Order D13.1 the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board consider if they wish to request officers to prepare a full report on the matter for submission to a future meeting of the Sub-Board.

Note: there is no provision for the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board to overturn or change the officer decision that has been taken and is being implemented, but they can request officers to prepare a report to review the process and make recommendations to the Director of Children's Services or the Cabinet.

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Meeting: [Overview and Scrutiny](#) **Date:** [18th November 2024](#)

Wards affected: [All](#)

Report Title: [Child Friendly Torbay](#)

When does the decision need to be implemented? [N/A as update](#)

Cabinet Member Contact Details: [Cllr Nick Bye, Lead Cabinet Member Childrens Services](#)
nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: [Nancy Meehan, Director Childrens Services](#)
Nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report has been prepared to provide Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the 'Child Friendly Torbay Programme'

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

2.1 Torbay's Child Friendly Programme is part of a UNICEF initiative which aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. The programme is part of Child Friendly Cities – a global UNICEF initiative launched in 1996 that reaches more than 30 million children in close to 50 countries.

2.2 As part of this programme UNICEF will support the council, our partners, and children and young people, as we work together on an ambitious three-to-five-year journey towards international recognition as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community.

2.3 A child rights-based approach sits at the heart of the CFC programme and is a practical tool that can be used by anyone making decisions that directly or indirectly impact children – from where to build a playground to deciding on budgets or a child's care.

- 2.4 In order to participate in the programme Torbay Council were required to submit an expression of interest (EIO) which was reviewed by UNICEF. They confirmed our acceptance onto the programme towards the end of 2023.
- 2.5 This report has been prepared to provide an update on the programme to date.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board note the update and the progress made to date
2. That Members of the Overview and Scrutiny board consider actions as to how they can support the Child Friendly Programme and achieve our 'recognition' status.

Appendices

Appendix 1: UNICEF Child Friendly Prospectus.

Background Documents

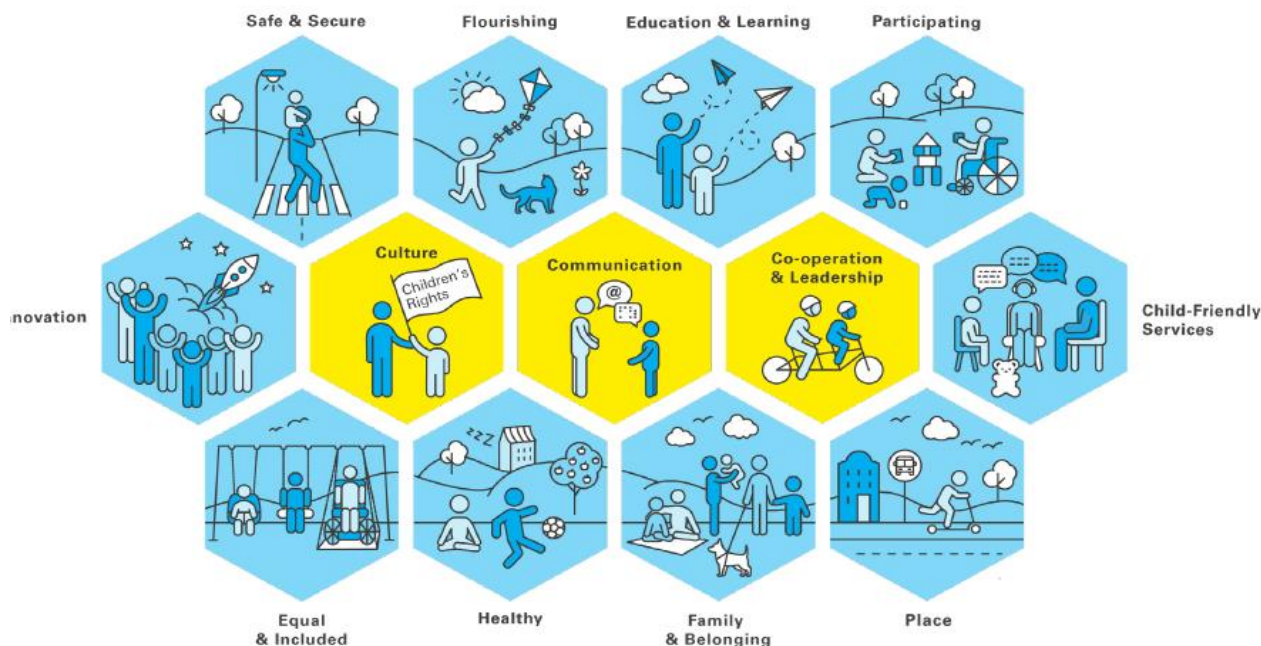
N/A

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Torbay's Child Friendly Programme is part of a UNICEF initiative which aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. The programme is part of Child Friendly Cities – a global UNICEF initiative launched in 1996 that reaches more than 30 million children in close to 50 countries.
- 1.2 As part of this programme UNICEF will provide training based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and will support the council, our partners, and children and young people, as we work together on an ambitious three-to-five-year journey towards international recognition as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community.
- 1.3 A child rights-based approach sits at the heart of the CFC programme and is a practical tool that can be used by anyone making decisions that directly or indirectly impact children – from where to build a playground to deciding on budgets or a child's care.
- 1.4 In order to participate in the programme Torbay Council were required to submit an expression of interest (EIO) which was reviewed by UNICEF. They confirmed our acceptance onto the programme towards the end of 2023 and a MOU has been signed.
- 1.5 Once accepted onto the programme, councils move through a four-stage process 'Discovery, Development, Delivery and Recognition' – detailed as follows:

The first is the **Discovery Phase**, during which UNICEF UK begins to deliver expert training in children's rights to local politicians, council staff, partners such as the police, health services, commissioned services, voluntary organisations, and children and young people. The council also comes together with the local community, including children and young people, at a 'Discovery Day' to see where things are going well for children and where things need to change – this is still to be planned in Torbay.

Based on this training and analysis, the city or community chooses six priority areas – or 'badges' (please see diagram below) – and, with support from UNICEF UK, drafts a realistic Action Plan during the **Development Phase**, setting out how they will work towards achieving progress in their badges over the following two to four years.



Councils must show sustainable progress in all six of their badges during the **Delivery Phase** to gain **Recognition** as a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City or Community. Recognition lasts for three years.

For more information please see the UNICEF prospectus which can be found at appendix one.

1.6 Since Torbay Council has been accepted onto the programme the following key activities have taken place:

- Programme Briefing took place involving Council Officers, Members, VCS, partner and agencies (January 2024)
- Comms on programme officially launched (both internal and external) and UNICEF comms issued introducing Torbay Council as part of the programme
- Project Initiation Document prepared and signed off by the Chief Executive (and chair / SRO of the Child Friendly Torbay Project Board).
- Child Friendly Project Board meetings established – attended by Council Officers, Members, VCS and partner agencies.
- Training session on ‘rights based approach’ took place on the 18th June – colleagues from across the Council invited to attend as well as young people and key partner agencies i.e. health, police, VCS, etc
- ‘Workforce’ and ‘Children and Young People’s’ surveys launched as part of the ‘baselining exercise’ – this will assist us in understanding the current picture of children’s rights in Torbay – closing date was 3rd November
- Circulation of ‘remote participation packs’ via our participation team, and the youth justice service over the summer months – these will also shortly be distributed via our VCS colleagues (‘Imagine This’) - as part of this exercise children and young people are asked to vote and comment on the ‘badges’ that they felt were most important to them.
- Monthly coordinator and quarterly management meetings taking place with UNICEF colleagues and key project documents being prepared (i.e. outline project plans

etc)

- To support the programme moving forwards a Project Manager (FTC 12 months) has recently been appointed – they will commence in post as from January 2025.

1.7 The key activities expected over the coming months are as follows:

- Results from surveys (Workforce and Children’s surveys as well as participation activities) to be analysed – this is due to take place by the end of November and once done will inform how our Discovery Day will be planned
- To ensure that children’s voices form part of any future planning consideration to be given to a ‘youth governance structure’ going forward and how this will work together with the CFT Project Board
- Communications plan to be developed and further development of the Project Plan to take place
- Planning / arrangements for ‘Discovery Day’ to be considered (as per the above this will be in line with the analysis of the surveys undertaken as this analysis will be used to inform the Discovery Day) – it is likely that this event will be planned for early 2025.
- Torbay Council ‘Badges’ to be chosen (as per the above)

2. Options under consideration

2.1 N/A as no other options required.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 N/A

4. Legal Implications

4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 As stated above a number of key communication and consultation activities have already taken place (please see sections 1.6 and 1.7 as above)

5.2 A detailed communications plan is being developed and consideration to a ‘youth governance structure’ for the programme is also being undertaken.

6. Procurement Implications

6.1 N/A

7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 N/A

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>The Child Friendly Programme has been created to support cities and communities to enable children to have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives. The programme aims to support us in embedding children's rights across Torbay and therefore by Torbay Council participating in this programme it is intended that this will have a positive impact on Children and Young people living in Torbay.</p>		
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>No differential impact / as above</p>		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by</p>	<p>No differential impact / as above</p>		

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No differential impact / as above		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No differential impact / as above		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No differential impact / as above		
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority	No differential impact / as above		

	ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.			
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No differential impact / as above		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No differential impact / as above		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No differential impact / as above		
Veterans	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously serviced in the UK armed forces.	No differential impact / as above		
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child		No differential impact / as above		

poverty and deprivation)				
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No differential impact / as above		
Human Rights impacts		No differential impact / as above		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.			

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None.

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

Date: 18th Jan 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: TYJS Improvement Plan 2024-5 Update January 2025

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Nick.Bye@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services

nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the progress of the Torbay Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan 2024-25

2. Reason for Proposal and its Benefits

- 2.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 39) introduced the statutory requirement for local authorities to establish Youth Justice Service in their area, requiring the involvement of the local authority, Police, Health, and Probation – the statutory partners.
- 2.2 Local Authorities are required under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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, including how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.
- 2.3 The Torbay Youth Justice Plan was developed through multi agency consultation, including feedback from children, parents and victims and was approved by Cabinet and Torbay's Strategic Youth Justice Board. It was submitted to national Youth Justice Board (YJB) before the deadline of the 30th of June 2024.
- 2.4 The Improvement Plan Update before the committee shows progress against the stated priorities of the TYJS Improvement Plan 2024-25.

2.5 The Youth Justice Plan contributes to the 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 contributes to the delivery of these aspects for children as part of the 'Thriving Community' element of the Corporate Plan

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1. That members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board note the contents of the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: TYJS Improvement Plan 2024-25 Jan 2025 Update

Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Improvement Plan 2024-25 has 14 priority areas for improvement activity, 5 of which are showing as 'Green' meaning they have been completed or are on target to be completed within the originally estimated timescale or a revised one agreed by the YJS Strategic Board.

(The numbers below refer to the Torbay YJS Improvement Plan attached document)

7) The Prevention / Turnaround Service is on track to achieve all targets by March 2025 and is achieve a no reoffending rate 80%. There has been significant concern that the service would be closed as no new funding was indicated after the funding was due to cease in March 2025. An Invest to Save bid and work by all partners have led to Torbay Council committing reserves to maintain the service for 2025-26 if no new central government funding is announced. This has allowed the service to retain the 3 Prevention service staff employed and start accepting referrals again.

10) The Service has now developed a significant presence on the Torbay Council website after discussion were not successful with the Family Hubs website. This new presence is currently at a basic level providing information for children, parents, victims and professionals about the service and this area of work which will provide a backup to information we disseminate on face to face. It is planned that we will develop further capability and more generated videos and activities in the future.

11) In October 2023 the service completed a multi partner audit against the Youth Justice Board (YJB) National Standards of children who were sentenced at court. Overall, we rated ourselves as at the upper end of 'Good' and have developed and now completed an action plan to address the areas identified for improvement. This has been signed off by the YJS Board as completed. We are currently reviewing our service against the new HMIP standards that were announced in November 2024, and we estimate that the service will be inspected in 2025.

12) This Multi-Agency Case Audit (MACA) Action Plan was introduced during the 2023 following a MACA of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) that was carried out by the Torbay Safeguarding Children's Partnership (TCSP). There were five areas for improvement identified for the Youth Justice Service, all five areas identified in the audit have now been completed.

13) After Action Review (AAR) this review was requested by the service following a nearly 3-year delay in the investigation and resolution of allegations serious sexual offences by a Torbay child and the impact of this on his education, employment, and health and wellbeing. The review was carried out by the TCSP and a final report was published in July 2024 which made a number of recommendations for Police, Children's Services, schools and the Youth Justice Service. A task and finish group was established to further the actions, it met 5 times

and has reported that it has completed its work in December 2024, this is waiting final sign off by the TSCP at a meeting in late January 2025.

1.2 There are 8 areas that are 'Amber' indicating that they are in progress but delayed these are in the areas of: -

1) Child First Approach –There has been several areas of development activity in this area and as part of the YJB best practice promotion for reducing crime and re offending: - a) The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) have agreed a Child First Policing priority and have established an implementation group to drive through improvements across the whole Police force area. b) subsequently S Devon Policing has received additional funding to recruit and Child Centred Policing Team including a new Sgt and PCs which will allow for greater oversight of all youth matters and speed up investigation processes. c) YJS Staff have attended three half day training events and have developed an in-house action plan to improve practice. The Strategic Board are considering capacity to complete partnership agencies audit tool at the Jan 2025 Board meeting. The implementation of new systems for gathering feedback from children, parents and victims after being initially delayed due long term staff sickness has not yet yielded as much feedback as we had hoped for.

3) Leadership and Governance – Following oversight by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) the service was rated 'Quadrant 3' (Requires Improvement) due to a number of unresolved Improvement Plan area – lack of suitable face to face delivery accommodation, First Time Entrants, Out of Court Disposal review process, and reoffending rates. Local Authority Chief Executive announced a Partnership Deep Dive to review the service which made a number of recommendations specifically re the oversight and leadership of the all the strategic partners. These recommendations were accepted at the November Strategic YJS Board and an action plan to address recommendations made has been started, many of which are reported already in this update. These include partners taking leadership for certain areas of the Improvement Plan, financing being approved for the Prevention Service and the Face to Face delivery base for the service.

4) The further development of the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) and the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) through access to psychologist support has been mitigated by Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (FCAMHS) providing clinical supervision and case formulation insights for high-risk cases. This support by FCAMHS is not long term and does not fully meet the best practice guidance for the ECM approach recommended by the Youth Justice Board (YJB). The service has now recruited to the CAMHS worker role for the first time in nearly 3 years, which enables swift access for all children open to the YJS for both mental health screening, support, and referral on if required. Since starting in post the CAMHS worker has received 35 referrals for children open to the YJS, 28 were screened and accessed and 19 went on to receive an intervention (14 boys and 5 girls). There were 287 contacts with children recorded by the worker since they started.

5) Reduce the number of children who become First Time Entrants (FTEs) in Torbay after the rise during the second half of 2023 the service has put in place a number of measures to divert children from entering the formal youth justice system. a) Supported the development of a force wide policy with how Out of Court Resolutions are dealt with which will decrease the numbers becoming a FTE. b) Carry out quarterly reviews of all FTE's to see if the service has missed any opportunities to divert any cases. c) Been successful in accessing funding for the continuation of the Prevention service in Torbay for 2025-26 d) FTE rates are now the lowest since May 2023 when Torbay's rate started to rise, and the trend continues to be down, but they remain above last published figures for Torbay's family group.

6) Torbay's reoffending rates track children for one year after they finish an order with the Youth Justice Service to see how many offend and how many times, because of the small number of children rates are very volatile as they are compared against total population and one child committing 6 offences disproportionately has affected these rates. Data is presented to each board on performance and currently we are better than our family group.

8) The Committee will be aware of the concerns re school attendance, suspension and exclusion in the Bay and this is also true for children open to the YJS. It is well established that children open to youth justice services nationally are less likely to be in education or training and more likely to have additional learning needs. Torbay Youth Justice Service is working with education partners, providers and the Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils Unit to ensure children have suitable placements and are supported to attend regularly. Attendance at the PRUs by children open to YJS is better than other groups but is still high.

9) Swifter Youth Justice: - A number of developments have taken place in this area which will impact on delays on children being dealt with quicker and at the appropriate level within the criminal justice system. a) The impending implementation of the new force wide Out of Court Resolution (OOCR) for children that Torbay YJS has played a significant role in developing alongside the lead Police Inspector Simon Hardwick. b) The adoption by the OPCC for a Child First Policing priority after lobbying by the Four Youth Justice services in the police force area. c) The very recent announcement of additional resources for S Devon Police to create a child centred policing team that all level 1 offences by children will be overseen by a dedicated sergeant and police constables which will improve the quality and speed of youth investigation and decision making processes.

14) The Partnership Deep Dive 2024 was led by Anne Marie-Bond following the downgrading of service performance by the YJB led to this Deep Dive which made a number of recommendations (see item 3 above). These were accepted by the YJS Strategic Board in November and an action plan has been developed and the Board will review this further at its January meeting.

1.3 The 1 area flagged as 'Red' is due to the lack of progress and significant delay.

2) Securing safe, secure and accessible locations to deliver face to face work with children. The lack of suitable, safe and confidential space to carry out sensitive work with children and their parents and victims is not only potentially impacting the quality of the work the service delivers, as well as the efficiency of the service and may impact the HMIP Inspection rating if we were inspected again as this is an outstanding recommendation from the 2020 inspection. The service has looked at 10 different buildings in the last 3 years, but initial scoping identified a number of issues in terms of both health and safety matters and cost that made these buildings unsuitable. However, in recent months Unit 1 below Torr Hill House has been identified as a suitable building despite some concerns about its location with the Castle Circus area of high levels of ASB. Initial outline plans have been developed, and a rough estimate has been completed for work required to make the building suitable for the service use. Funding has been agreed in December 2024 through Torbay Council and detailed project plans and designs are now being developed.

1.4 The Improvement Plan is regularly updated and reviewed at the bimonthly YJS Strategic Board meetings which all statutory partners attend and agree progress and mitigations outlined in the Improvement plan.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 N/A

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 N/A

4. Legal Implications

4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 N/A

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 N/A

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	Positive Impact for children who have or are likely to offend		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability	Positive impact for children with SEND as they receive intensive support package		
Women or men	77% of children in contact with YJS are male. Young males are more likely to criminalised for their behaviour & therefore referred to the service.		
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 issues and deprivation)			No differential impact
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 Impacts

11.1 The positive impact of the service is that children are diverted from crime and those with SEND and the impact of trauma are supported to develop positive life choices.

Torbay YJS Improvement Plan 2024-25

January 2025 Update

RAG Key	Green = On Track / Completed	Amber = In progress	Red = Delayed / unresolved issues	Grey = Not Due/ not started
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	Area for Improvement / Outcome desired	Action	Timescale	MB Lead	Update	RAG
Page 36	1. Child First approach to all we do	a) Hear and respond to the voice of the child and carers not only in the delivery of their intervention but in the development of the service. b) Review our systems and methodology for ensuring feedback is used to improve services. c) Complete the YJB Child First Audit tool with all partners as part of this work.	March 25 Nov 24 Feb 25	NM	d) 3 Child First training has been delivered & an action plan for changes has been developed with staff team. e) The new feedback surveys are now becoming established & producing results for staff and the Board. Nov 24. f) Following request by victims a victim focus group has been established as feedback and consultation group for victims of youth crime. In place. g) YJS Participation worker will lead on involving children with design of new face to face delivery location. March 25 h) OPCC have agreed a 'Child First Policing' as one of their priorities for the year ahead, this will impact on a number of the improvement areas identified in this plan. i) Police in S Devon (Torbay+) have confirmed additional resources have been allocated for Child Centred Policing team (Sgt+ PCs)	
	Outstanding HMIP & Deep Dive Recommendation Secure access to suitable child friendly, safe, accessible premises for delivery of face-to-face work	Locate, agree terms and adaptations for suitable delivery locations for face-to-face work in the Bay.	July 24	NB	a) Estimated costs have been agreed for the refurbishment of Unit 1. £159,000.00. Project plans are now in development b) Initial design and layout has been created and project management group has been established with Property Services. c) NM has had confirmation from MC CFO re confirmation of financial underwriting of the capital works. Dec 2024	
	3. Leadership and Governance	a) The board to increase its scrutiny of the areas of concern or under performance. b) The Board to challenge partner agencies to ensure actions and representation of their agency support the work of the YJS.	Sept 24 ongoing	Chair	a) ToR have been reviewed for both boards and have been signed off in Sept 24, however in light of CEO Deep Dive recommendation these may need to be reviewed. b) Revised performance and qualitative reports brought to the board. Every Qtr. c) Case file audits summaries will be brought to the board on a quarterly basis. Every Qtr. d) A Partnership Deep Dive took place in July 2024 to review Leadership and performance, and action plan will be developed one this has been published. Nov 24 e) NM has been elected as new chair of the board f) Board members have taken lead roles for areas of the Improvement plan. Nov 24	

Appendix 1
Agenda Item 8

					g) All Board members have received induction programme including discussion re YJB Leadership and governance standards. In place. h) This will be a focus on the next board meeting in Jan 25	
4.	Deliver an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach in Torbay Youth Justice Service.	Scope and agree the options for accessing psychology input to meet ECM best practice guidelines.	April 25	GF	Awaiting response from CFHD re review of the contract re MH services to the YJS.	
5.	Reduce the number of children who become First Time Entrants (FTEs) in Torbay.	a) Ensure the Prevention service is stopping children offending by monitor in the performance report. b) Board and HoS to liaise with the Police representatives to seek a speedy signing off of the proposed changes to the OOCR processes. c) Increases the Police awareness of the work of the YJS	March 25 Jan 25 July 25	HC	a) Prevention review took place at September Board with decision about future funding or closing of the service. b) An 'Invest to save Bid' is being developed with all partners to look at cost savings created by prevention work. Nov 24 c) Quarterly reviews of all FTE cases to check that all options / best practice have been explored. Summary will be brought to each board until we have achieved target to be below statistical neighbours. Qtrly d) FTE rates have been below in the in-month target since Nov 2023 and the annual rate is dropping. If this improvement is maintained Torbay will be below statistical neighbours by Sept 2024. Ongoing e) LCJB / OPCC / Police have agreed a new priority area for focus for the next year of 'Child First Youth Justice' which will include a focus on reducing FTE's, implementation of new OOCR processes & greater oversight & strategic leadership of youth justice matters. July 25 f) Changes and revised processes will be used to promote the work of the YJS with police and best practice in terms of reducing youth offending. March 25	
6.	Re offending rates	a) The Board to actively monitor reoffending rates & work within their agencies to support children and their service areas to reduce reoffending.	Each board	LA	a) Reoffending data to be brought to each board. b) We are investigating local data to supplement national data which is 2 years behind. March 25 c) Current national performance is better than national rates, however local data suggests that this will get worse when the current cohort enter the national target in 1-2 years' time.	
7.	Review the success of the Targeted Prevention Service for children coming to the attention of the youth justice systems.	a) Ensure Turnaround funding & performance criteria requirements are met. b) Look for alternative funding to continue Prevention service or decommission.	March 25 Jan 25 Sept 24	VM?	a) Turnaround Programme is on track to achieve financial & outcome targets. b) Invest to Save was developed with all partners to seek further funding. Prevention has been flagged as a priority with the LCJB under Child First Youth Justice priority. Nov 25 c) Subsequently Torbay council has allocated money from reserves to continue the Prevention service for 2025-26 in lieu of any additional funding from central gov.	

		c) Prevention Review Action Plan to be completed.			d) YJS stopped taking prevention referrals in December 2024 but now funding has been confirmed this will be open again. if workers leave before that date.	
8.	Ensuring children in contact with the Youth Justice Service are in appropriate education, training, or employment.	a) Work with partners to reduce the number of children suspended & excluded from school and improve their attendance. Review in Performance report	Every 2 months	GP / DH	a) DH presented a report to Sept Board re what the LA is doing to reduce high rates of exclusion, which has included employing new staff, increasing challenge to schools re exclusions & developing a new model for early intervention across SEND, vulnerable pupils and Virtual school. Sept 24. b) YJS education worker has developed good links with school and colleges to support attendance and challenge suspension and exclusions. Ongoing.	
9.	Swifter Justice - reduce delays across whole youth justice system	a) Create a system to track all youth cases from arrest to disposal. (Niche -CliQ?) b) Devise an approach to influence all organisations awareness and reduce delays.	Dec 24 July 25	HC	a) YJS's across D&C have requested data set from Police on a daily, weekly monthly basis. First meeting has been held with Police PA team re agreeing the data set + data is a key strand under the new LCJB Youth Justice priority. Dec 24. b) Issues has been raised at AAR C103 & CEO Deep Dive 2024 and at LCJB. Sept 24 c) OoCR developments includes a request to prioritise Youth in investigation & referrals. Feb 25 d) Children in Custody group has also raised profile re data & tracking of youth matters. e) E) Announcement of funding for Child Centred Policing team will speed up process and tackle quality issues re children entering the youth justice system.	
97	Improve the visibility and understanding of Youth Justice Service work – telling the good stories of children & the work of the YJS	Liaise with Torbay Council communications dept to develop better communications to inform the public & community about TYJS (website, leaflets, news articles?)	Oct 2024	JR	Website presence is now live, although there are some improvements still to be made after feedback from staff and children mainly to make it a bit brighter and add pictures. Torbay Youth Justice Service - Torbay Council	
11	Review the Quality of Youth Justice provision in Torbay.	Complete the YJB National Standards Action Plan devised following the 2023 audit.	July 24		All actions on the Action Plan have been completed. Operational Board have agreed that this Action Plan has been completed.	
12	Improve systems and processes to reduce Child Criminal Exploitation.	Implement Multi Agency Case Audit (MACA) re Criminal Exploitation Action Plan	Sept 24		1 item outstanding to be reported at Sept 24 Board re Children open to YJS & attendance at Education and is now included within item 8. Of this action plan. (DH Report)	
13	After Action Review (AAR) re Swift Youth Justice C103	Implement the recommendations for the YJS of the AAR	Jan 2025		YJS HoS has chaired the Task and Finish Group set up to complete the recommendations which were agreed in July 2024. The T&F has met 4 times and has agreed that all recommendations have been completed JR will report this back to the TSCP CSPR Panel on the 27 th Jan 2025. If this agreed this action will be closed.	

14	CEO Deep Dive 2023 and 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement the final actions of the 2023 Action plan. b) Respond to the recommendations of the 2024 Deep Dive when it is published. 	<p>Sept 24</p> <p>Nov 24</p>	<p>NM</p> <p>NM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 1 Action remain outstanding from 2023 which is for better comparisons with national data from the YJB, which is not fully available due to YJB data quality issues b) Deep Dive 2024 Report was the focus of the November Strategic Board from which and action plan has been produced. c) January 2025 Board meeting will make final changes and ratify any further actions to meet recommendations. 	
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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board

January 2025

Child Exploitation Team Manager
– Children's Services

Child Exploitation Update

Achievements in 2024

- ▶ Child Exploitation Toolkit practice guidance – August 2024 – improving accessibility and quality of completion by all professionals
- ▶ Child Exploitation and Missing Children performance surgeries in place – monthly – ensuring SLT oversight and challenge to practitioner/each other where required
- ▶ Cross-border working continues with good practice being shared – peer group mapping and intelligence sharing with Devon
- ▶ Increase of exploitation toolkits from primary schools
- ▶ MACA (from Spring 2023) Action Plan completed
- ▶ Recognition of good practice from National Working Group (NWG)
- ▶ Continuation of Triage, CEMOG and MACE Panels
- ▶ Renewed Local Child Exploitation Training to support Project M Commissioned training
- ▶ Transition planning enhanced, better practice for those reaching 18 identified as Modern Slaves

Heading into 2025....

- ▶ Review and renew Implementation of Philomena Protocol (for missing children) jointly with Devon and Cornwall Police and Devon Children's Services
- ▶ Contextual Safeguarding Working Party – locations/adults of concern and peer group contextual processes being proposed
- ▶ Renewal of Barnardo's EXCEED service for children vulnerable to Sexual Exploitation
- ▶ Continued funding for prevention pathway via YJS (offending behaviour and criminal exploitation)
- ▶ Implementing national learning regarding Child Financial Exploitation/Extortion (CFE) – understanding, data capture and response
- ▶ TSCP Safeguarding Conference – focused on Online Safety
- ▶ Predictability of children and adults re: new behaviours or networks – achieved through intelligence sharing
- ▶ Building relationships with new partner colleagues

Brief overview of local profile

12th January 2025

138 children (177 in July 2024)

35 children with HIGH/BEING EXPLOITED toolkits (47 in July 2024)

103 children with MEDIUM vulnerability toolkits (130 in July 2024)

Page 42 Child Criminal Exploitation – 110 children (141 in July 2024)

Child Sexual Exploitation – 69 (89 in July 2024)

Both CSE and CCE – 38 (53 in July 2024)

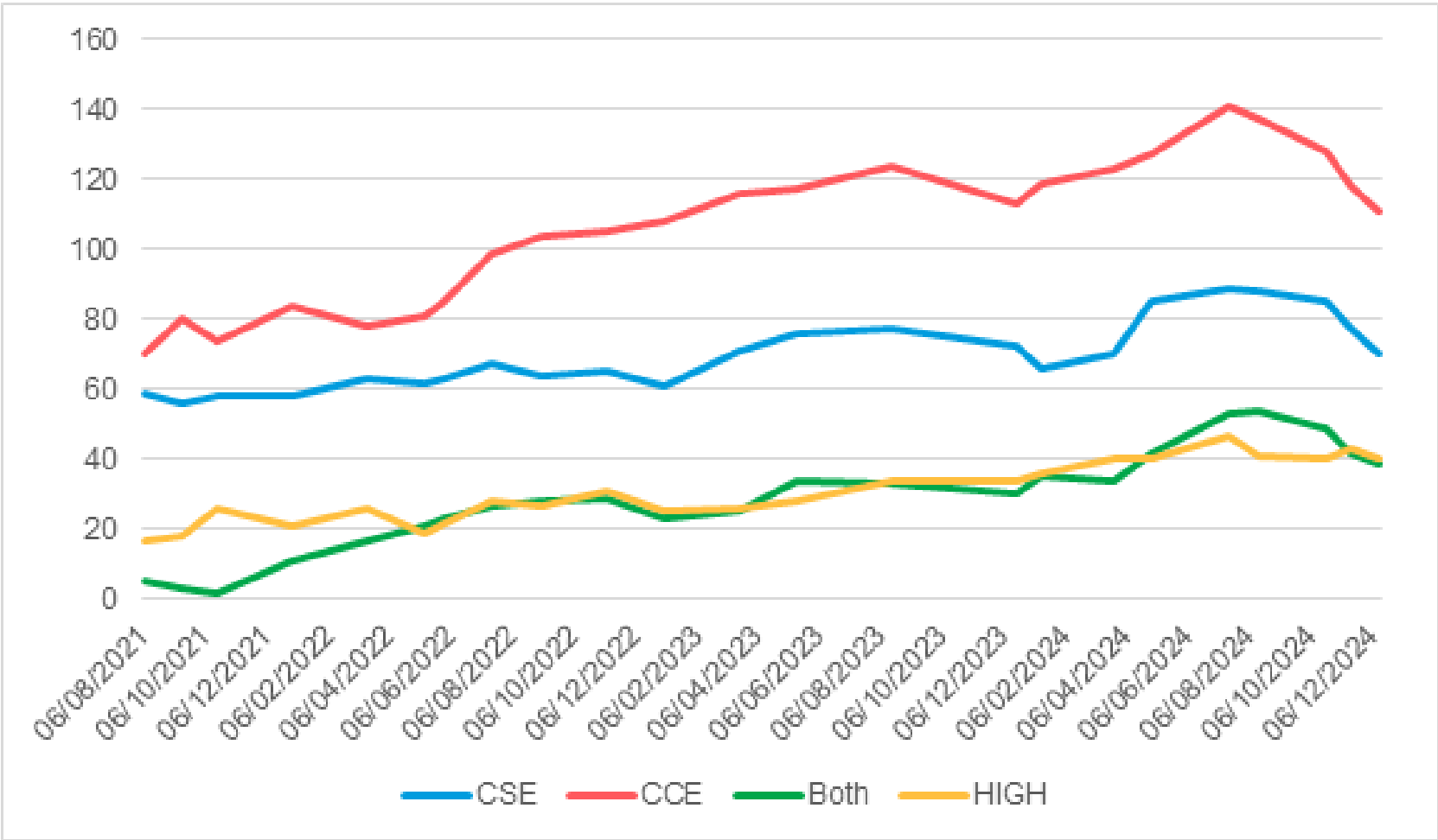
Males 77 (94 in July 2024)

Female 59 (82 in July 2024)

Other Gender Identification 2 (1 in July 2024)

Identification of Child Exploitation

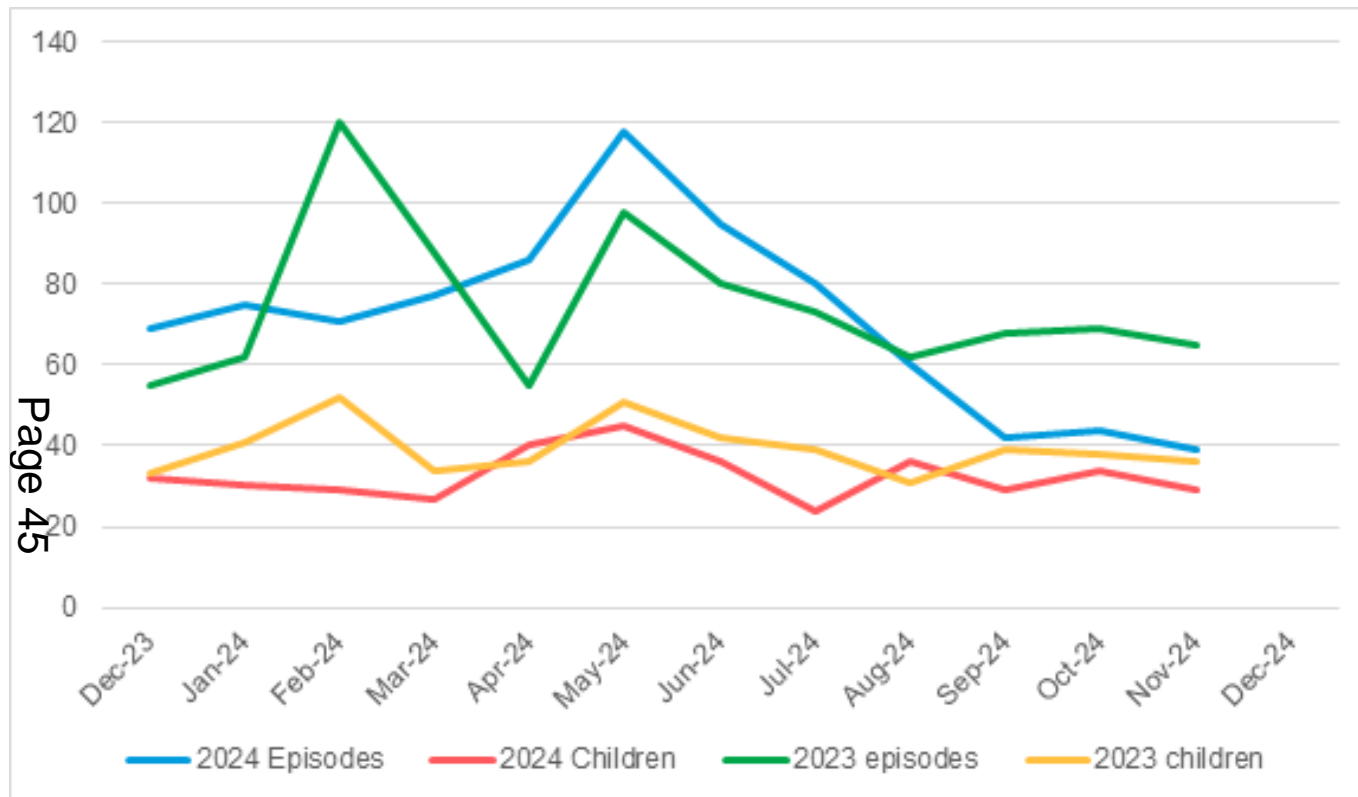
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Why a reduction in identification and performance? (theories and feedback)

- ▶ Prioritising statutory tasks and timescales in stretched capacity services - exploitation may be identified by practitioners, but toolkit not completed
- ▶ Complexity of need/vulnerability re: exploitation can impact upon confidence, competence and hope for change
- ▶ Withdrawal of engagement and/or consent from child and/or family
- ▶ Length of toolkit form?
- ▶ Exploitation Team capacity for consultation, advice and support
- ▶ System gaps - MASH/EH referral received via portal are not notified to Exploitation Team
- ▶ Turn around of staff across the Partnership and training/induction needs
- ▶ Social normalisation - of CSE and CCE
- ▶ Adulthood - viewing children as older and more capable/implicit than they may be

Missing Children 2023/2024



December 2024 - 28 missing episodes, 21 missing children - 5 Other Local Authority Cared For

More individual episodes for children not previously known - repeat missing children are not being reported

Why a reduction in children being reported missing? (theories and feedback)

**We know that children are out overnight as they are being reported by public, being arrested, or intelligence received*

We refer to this as 'hidden missing'.

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- ▶ Parental feedback = invasive process for police visit, RHC and also followed up by MASH/Social Worker (some may actively avoid to hide issues in the family home)
- ▶ Repeat missing episodes - families report physical and emotional exhaustion, discriminatory/unhelpful responses, impact on younger siblings or elderly members of the family
- ▶ Arrests may be followed by need for parent to be AA, attend Court, liaise with professionals - taking over the night and daytime
- ▶ Length of phone call to 101
- ▶ Family members are aware of/co-erced or threatened by the perpetrator/s of exploitation

Challenges

- ▶ Implementing national learning at pace with current pressure on partnership resources – organisation responses to organised crime/tackling organised networks and children who require high levels of safeguarding and resource for protection
- ▶ Identification and swift response to victims/trauma to reduce vulnerability – maintaining victim support for as long as needed
- ▶ Consent and disengagement
- ▶ Disruption of adult perpetrators (including Probation reset) and speed/reach of recruitment by individuals and networks
- ▶ Identification and swift responses to cuckooing and trafficking – confidence and resources (relationships between adults of concern and vulnerable families)
- ▶ Addressing domestic abuse, substance misuse and vulnerability of parents
- ▶ Ever expanding forms of exploitation of children – now including sextortion/AI/crypto-currency

Next steps - Children's Services

- Toolkit performance (being up to date within 3 months) – continue to tackle
- Review local training, take on feedback and consider next steps
- Consider and plan how Return Home Conversations will be moved back 'in house'
- Enhance data collection further (CFE, PREVENT, increase characteristic capture of vulnerable children and peer groups) – aim to lead nationally with data capture and understanding
- Submission of UASC exploitation toolkits, understanding profile of vulnerability and response to safeguarding upon transfer
- Ensure exploitation/missing processes are added into induction for new staff and/or newly qualified staff

Next steps - Torbay Safeguarding Partnership

- Develop relationships with new partner representatives and develop strong relationships
- Review and Update Exploitation strategic plan - has commenced
- Re-commissioning and re-organisation Child Sexual Exploitation support, Return Home Conversations and Substance Misuse
- Contextual Safeguarding framework - proposed framework by end February 2025 followed by launch and training across the TSCP
- Consider improvements to children with SEND and disabilities re: identification and response to child exploitation and missing episodes
- Continue cross border working and practice sharing with Peninsula authorities
- Extend relationships with safeguarding partnerships nationally and internationally
- Continue supportive links with National Working Group, national and local expert organisations
- Prepare for Ofsted inspection

Thank you for your time

- ▶ Any questions/comments??



Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report for Academic Year: 2023 – 24

Virtual School Staff and Governors Only with Case Studies

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Report:

This report is intended to give an overview of the last year’s activity in the Virtual School and the Extended Duties team. The aim is to generate enquiry and discussion to improve the services, direct the next year’s work and secure better outcomes for the children within the expanded remit.

To assist in this, it is appropriate to share the cohorts who are now supported:

- a) Cared for Children and Young People. (Looked After in DfE terminology)
- b) Care Experienced Children and Young People. (Previously Looked After)
- c) CYP with a Social Worker. (or who had one in the last six years)
- d) CYP with formal Kinship Care arrangements.
- e) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

Most of the data in the report refers to cared for and care experienced children rather than across the areas of disadvantage in the extended duties. This is for 2 reasons:

1. The team can secure information regarding these children as Torbay Council have a parental responsibility. Other, larger, cohorts' data will only become available as DfE releases whole year information.
2. The reporting systems for the Extended Duties Cohorts are less mature on a national and local level, making reporting inaccurate.

Chair of Governor's Foreword:

I am delighted, as Chair of the VSGB, to write this introduction to the 14th annual report of the VSGB. The purpose of the VSGB is to take the lead in ensuring that schools fulfil their responsibilities to Cared For Children and Young People and maximise their attainment and achievement and narrow the gap between our Cared For Children and their peers.

This report captures the legacy of the previous Headteacher, Jane Inett, and the subsequent leadership of Dan Hamer and Tracey Powell and shares the strategic aim to reflect on our work and build on the solid foundations laid over the last fourteen years.

This is particularly so in the attachment and trauma informed practice but also in that relentless focus on championing the educational outcomes of our Cared For Children and Young People.

I hope you get from the Annual Report how determined we are to ensure our Cared For Children get the very best experience from their early years providers, schools and post 16 providers to ensure the best outcomes they can achieve. The members of the VSGB are very clear that schools need to ensure that our most vulnerable learners are given every opportunity to succeed. This isn't about equality of opportunity but equality of outcome.

The Virtual School works in a very inclusive way. It also looks at the empirical evidence from research about where pupils learn and achieve best. It has a determination to have our children in the very best schools and to keep them in those schools no matter what.

The Virtual School in Torbay provides a tremendous amount of support to our schools both in and out of area and as a result receives a tremendous amount of



support from the schools and very positive regard. We can never underestimate the power of relationships and partnership working. This is fundamental to the work, and ultimately, the success and effectiveness of the Virtual School's work.

I trust that the Annual Report will demonstrate our commitment and passion to our children.

Stuart Heron
Chair - TVSGB

Headteacher's Foreword:

This is the 14th Annual Report and the first since the retirement of Jane Inett. Jane led the school with an exemplary strength of purpose, and I aspire to match her drive and determination in securing the best for our children and young people.

Most of the data in the report refers to cared for and care experienced children rather than across the areas of disadvantage in the extended duties. This is for 2 reasons:

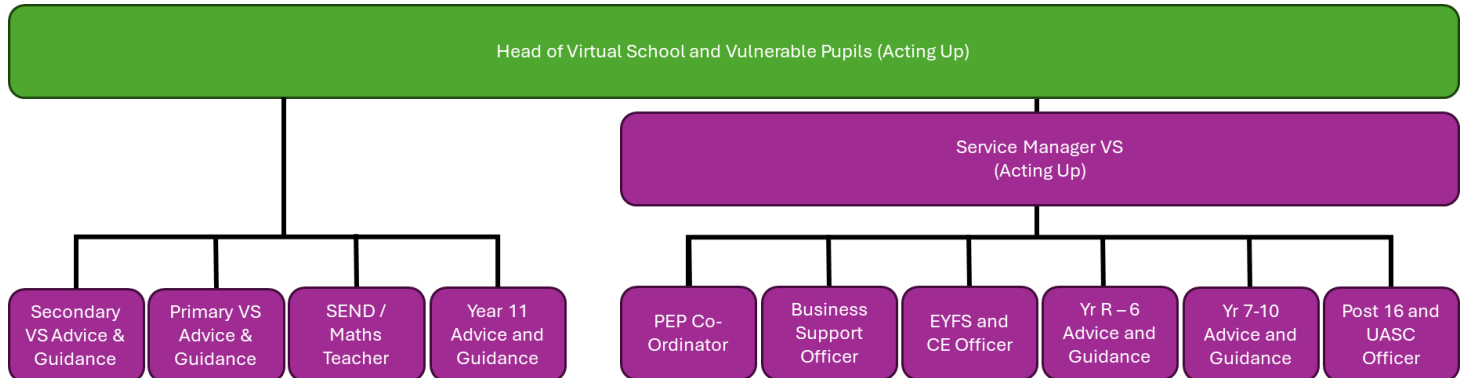
- The team can secure information regarding these children as Torbay Council have a parental responsibility. Other, larger, cohorts' data will only become available as DfE releases whole year information.
- The reporting systems for the Extended Duties Cohorts are less mature on a national and local level, making reporting inaccurate.

The year has been very busy, with staff and children moving in and out of the school. Numbers of cared for children continue to decrease over time. This is welcome for obvious reasons yet the team and settings need to be aware of the impact this has on resources.

There is also the new extension to the Extended Duties with the inclusion of Kinship Care arrangements coming on scope and including the expectation of direct advice to families on request. This has the potential to be a significant extension as individual advice is explicitly not in the extended duty expectations for other cohorts.

2. Virtual School Structure

Organisational Chart:



Staffing Overview:

Jane Inett retired from the role of Virtual School Headteacher at the end of 2023. She created this team and led area wide improvements for the benefit of all our children. I wish to place on record my thanks for the exceptional service she has developed.

The school staff have continued to work hard. It has been a pleasure to work with them, observing their industry and determination to improve the experiences, attainment and achievement of both, the children and young people in our care and their peers in the schools they attend.

To ensure this work is effective and that we have continuity after Jane’s retirement, we have appointed **Tracey Powell** as Service Manager. Leading on operational work and across our relational and inclusive practice and expectations.

Becky Somers is on maternity leave, and we were delighted when she welcomed her son into the world in the Spring. Her probable return date is in March 2025.

Valerie Bailey has joined as maternity cover for Becky and has made a fabulous start, building exceptional, trusting relationships with the children in her care and the colleagues that support them.

We have two colleagues who have left the service:

Lyndsey Pengelly has left the post of Secondary Phase Virtual School Extended Duties Officer. She has been appointed to lead on extended duties for Plymouth and we wish her every success in this arena.

Katie Cavanna has left the post of Primary Phase Virtual School Extended Duties Officer. She has been appointed to the post of Family Time Service Manager for Deon County Council. We wish Katie well in her new endeavour.

3. Key Strengths and Achievements

Academic Performance:

Key Stage 2 Results (CC Cohort)

Reading	Exceeded	Expected	WT	Below	Disapplied
Number	0	7 (63%)	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	4
Writing	Exceeded	Expected	WT	Unrecorded	Disapplied
Number	1 (9%)	3 (27%)	5 (45%)	2 (18%)	4
Maths	Exceeded	Expected	WT	Below	Disapplied
Number	0	7 (63%)	3 (27%)	1 (9%)	4
SPAG	Exceeded	Expected	WT	Below	Disapplied
Number	2 (18%)	3 (27%)	5 (45%)	1 (9%)	4

The disapplied children all attend specialist provisions and were disapplied on grounds of their special educational needs. One child is cared for in Wales so does not have access to English national testing.

Writing continues to be an area of concern, as it is nationally, and the children have a gap in grammar, punctuation and spelling that correlates to this.

Using national 2022/23 data (the latest available), there is an approximately 10% gap with national norms in Maths and Reading. This will be reassessed when 2023/24 data is available.

Key Stage 4 Terminal Qualifications for the continuous care group.

	5A*-C or Grade 4+ including E&M	5A* - C	EBACC	Grade 4+ (C+ pre-2017) in E & M	Grade 4+ (C+ pre-2017) in English (Lit or Lang)	Grade 4+ (C+ pre-2017) in Maths
Torbay 2024	16.7% (5)	13.3% (4)	0	16.7% (5)	23.3% (7)	23.3% (7)
Torbay 2023	25% (6)	25% (6)	1 (4.2%)	25% (6)	33.2% (8)	25% (6)
Torbay 2022	13.1% (3)	18.1% (4)	0	13.6% (3)	31.8% (7)	18.1% (4)
Torbay 2021	24.2% (8)	27.2% (9)	3.03% (1)	27.2% (9)	42.4% (14)	30.3% (10)

Torbay 2020	25% (5)	30% (6)	5% (1)	20% (4)	40% (8)	25% (5)
Torbay 2019	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	7.1% (2)	14.3% (4)	32.1% (9)	21.4% (6)
Torbay 2018	33.3% (7)	33.3% (7)	0	38.1% (8)	42.8% (9)	38.1% (8)

90% of the children and young people gained a qualification with 3 not doing so. Nationally, figures from the Fischer Family Trust suggest an attainment gaps of 20% in good passes in English and Maths to other disadvantaged children that needs to be addressed as a priority.

12 children matched their expected number of GCSEs and a further 14 exceeded the estimated number of GCSEs as reported by their schools at the end of the Spring Term.

Extracurricular Activities:

Throughout the year the Virtual School has run, Get Musical, Get Bowling and Get Gritty to engage children and carers, improve opportunities to mix with peers and develop a range of skills.

Get Gritty has a particular focus on Key Stage 2/3 transition.

The BUSS Model: Torbay LEAPlets School Readiness Program for TVS 2024

Outline:

- TVS commissioned TouchBase CIC for 10 session project
- Staff Team: 1 TouchBase staff member with BUSS Level 1 Practitioner certificate, 1 VS staff member with Attachment Lead status, 1 independent practitioner with Attachment Lead status
- Took place in a gymnastic space for children who are cared for, or were previously cared for and foster carers or guardians (grandparents).
- Child Social Workers, foster carers, guardians, and Fostering Social Workers felt sessions would benefit the children.
- Foster carers and guardians completed BUSS initial screening measures.

BUSS is a relationally based model, understanding that children need consistent, attuned care to enable bodily growth and development as well as the development of a child's personality. The foundation of bodily and emotional regulation are necessary for children to be in the best position to benefit from formal education. The emphasis of BUSS is on supporting parents and carers to provide the kind of relationship in which bodily regulation can develop and give them the understanding of how they can support their child's development. These systems are amenable to growth throughout childhood.

Objectives:

- To assess the development of children's foundation sensorimotor systems
- To use activities to build each child's underdeveloped foundation sensorimotor systems

- To upskill foster parents and guardians to continue to use these activities at home.
- To build caregiver/ child relationships and improve caregiving skills and confidence in understanding their child and communicating effectively with them.

Attendance:**Individual Attendance:**

- Child A had 100% attendance
- Child B had 80% attendance
- Child C had 80% attendance
- Child D had 90% attendance
- Child E had 50% attendance
- Child F had 40% attendance.

Group Attendance:

- In week 1, 6/6 families attended = 100% group attendance.
- In week 2, 5/6 families attended 100%, so 83.3% group attendance
- In week 3, 100% group attendance
- In week 4, 5/6 families attended 100%, so 83.3 group attendance
- In week 5, 3/6 families attended, so 50% group attendance
- In week 6, 5/ 6 families attended, so 83.3% group attendance
- In week 7, 4/6 families attended, so 66.6% group attendance
- In week 8, 2/6 families attended, so 33.3% group attendance
- In week 9, 3/6 families attended, so 50% group attendance
- In week 10, 5/6 families attended, so 83.3% group attendance

Pre and Post Measures by BUSS Trained Staff:

Progress was measured by observing incremental changes as we tried to build capacity in different areas of the sensorimotor systems.

Areas we measured which relate to the vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile systems:

1. Able to lie in a straight line on their tummy for a few minutes
2. Able to commando crawl, powered by arms, with alternating arms
3. Able to crawl in a good position; with a stable core, good head position, hands under shoulder, arms straight, flat hands, fingers facing forward
4. Confident jumping with both feet off the ground and jumping off things and landing on both feet (rather than falling forward or landing on bottom)
5. Able to do things slowly without losing balance
6. Able to move quickly with their body working as an integrated unit – arms and legs working together in sequence, even when tired
7. Has a good body map – knows where their body is without having to use eyes

8. Able to modulate their movements, knowing how much pressure or force to use when doing things
9. When eating, has a strong chewing action and doesn't dribble
10. Moves their lips when talking or singing to form the words
11. Is able to settle to a task and stay there for a while
12. Is able to tune into the signals from their body, like feeling hungry, tired, hot or cold
13. Can manage a noisy environment
14. Can listen to and follow instructions
15. Can 'be in the moment' and enjoy things
16. Turns to parent when they need help or support and lets them help

Progress:

- 100% of children made progress in at least 4 areas
- 67% of children made progress in 10-12 areas
- 83% children made progress in at least 7 areas

Individual results:

CHILD	Progress in areas	% of progress	Attendance
A	10/16	62.5%	100%
B	10/16	62.5%	80%
C	12/16	75%	80%
D	10/16	62.5%	90%
E	7/16	44%	50%
F	4/16	25%	40%

Carer/ parent/ guardian comments from 3 evaluations:

What was enjoyed:

- Nice to meet others in the same situation.
- Children looked forward to coming and enjoy themselves. They have improved.
- [I have enjoyed] watching the children grow in confidence

Has program been positive impact on your child's development:

- Out of the 3 evaluations, 2 adults said the program had been positive for their child's development, and 1 answered no.

Carer/ parent/ guardian comments on improvements:



- Possibly changed the circuit
- Possibly changed the equipment about to keep up the interest
- Maybe more weeks as CHILD masked a lot of the time as he started to get used to the coming his behaviour started to show but then his course ended.

Conclusions:

The attendance data suggests that attendance was good, despite some families finding it hard to attend consistently. We invited 8 families to take part. 6 families attended the project. Despite either agreeing to attend or being asked to by social care, 2 never arrived. Out of the 6 families who attended, 2 struggled to attend every week. 4 families attended regularly. Weekly contact was made to remind adults of the group. The reasons for absence were other foster children having appointments, meeting clashes, sickness, waiting in for workmen, changing care status and moving from a granny to a foster carers, and also an SGO being granted, so social care no longer having PR.

By the end of the program, 67% of the children who took part had over 80% attendance (4/6 children). For 7 weeks, group attendance was 66.6-100%, so overall the majority of the children attended the majority of the time.

All children made some progress across their sensorimotor systems: 100% of children made progress in at least 4 areas. 67% of children made progress in 10-12 areas. Children who attended the group more regularly, made more progress in more areas. Some brief feedback has been sent to the carers and grandparents in the autumn term 2025 about their child to encourage continued practice of the activities.

If we run the project again, ensuring that caring adults know that progress can be correlated with attendance will be crucial next time.

Louise Kilshaw

Strategic Attachment Lead Teacher

BUSS Level 1 Practitioner

4. Contextual Data

Demographics:

Torbay Cared for Children

Year	Out of Area	Torbay	Total
0	3	5	8

1	4	8	12
2	5	5	10
3	5	11	16
4	6	3	9
5	4	7	11
6	9	7	16
7	8	10	18
8	5	7	12
9	6	13	19
10	7	15	22
11	11	19	30
12		32	32
13	8	19	27
Total	81	161	242

Other LA Cared for Children

LA	Year Group					
	2	3	7	8	9	13
Hertfordshire		1			1	
Luton						1
North Somerset					1	
Somerset	1	1	1	2		
Tower Hamlets	1					
Total	2	2	1	2	2	1

Attendance and Inclusion:

There were no exclusions of Torbay’s Cared for Children in the last academic year. That said, 47 children were suspended across the academic year from 32 settings. Thirty-five of these children are within the continuous care cohort. This is a marked increase year on year but is sadly in line with the national, regional and local patterns.

Peak periods for suspension are, the beginning of the school year and towards then end of each term.

The most common reasons for suspension are persistent disruption across all phases of education followed by assault on an adult in Primary phase and verbal abuse of and adult in secondary phase. This is consistent with local patterns and often reflects the trauma derived responses our children have towards feeling unsafe or anxious.

School attendance continues to improve at Primary phase but has slipped at secondary.

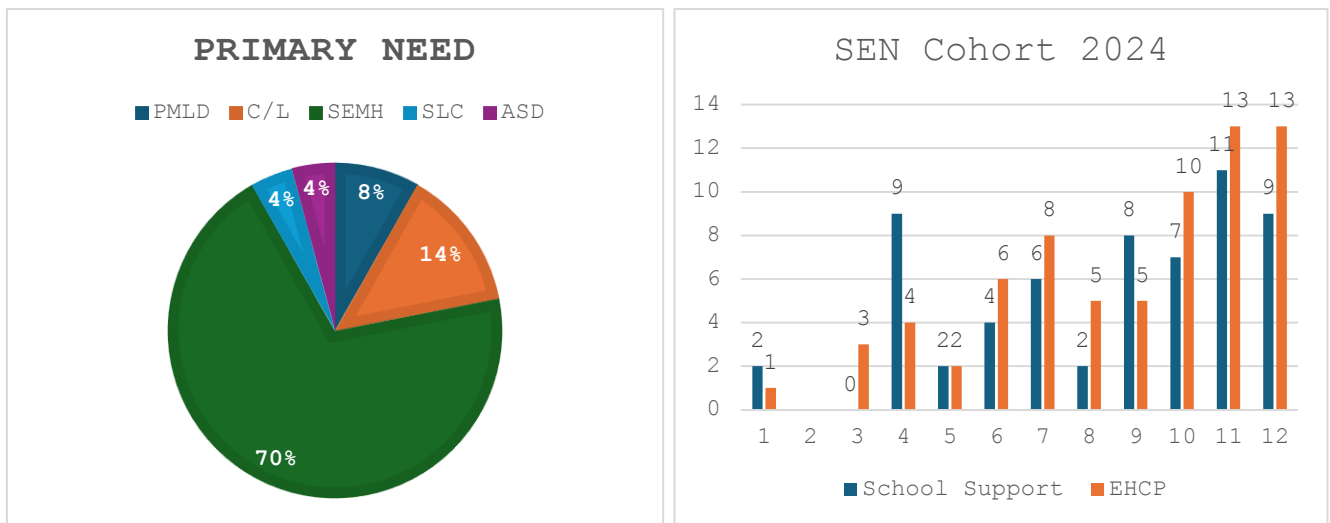
C4C	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Attendance 2024	96.2%	85.42%	89.3%
Attendance 2023	96%	87.5%	92%
Attendance 2022	94%	87%	90.54%
Attendance 2021	93%	82%	85%
Attendance 2020	95.3%	94%	94.8%

Although unsatisfactory, the data compares well to disadvantaged children in Torbay as indicated by free school meals. For these children the attendance level was:

FSM	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Attendance 2024	91.0%	80.3%	84.2%

5. Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Cohort:



The SEN cohort is sizeable with the most prevalent primary area of need being Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Most of our children with EHCPs are taught in mainstream settings.

Twelve children are waiting for placement in out of area LAs, none within Torbay. This is a significant challenge as we have limited levers to use to hasten other LA processes. In area, I meet with SEN colleagues each fortnight to resolve any barriers to provision and plan for foreseeable moves.

To allow targeted work by the VS SEN qualified teacher, children with 'stable' EHCP placements are now overseen by the member of staff leading on the relevant age group.

Support Provided:

Outcomes:

6. Pupil Premium and Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

Description	Total Spend	Over / (Under)
VIRTUAL SCHOOL	£	£
Staffing	£357,338.00	-£5,762.00
Staff Support	£1,184.00	-£14,916.00
Central Services	£4,917.00	£4,917.00

PUPIL PREMIUM CARED FOR CHILDREN

Staffing	£85,129.00	-£1,671.00
Staff Support	£22,955.00	£22,955.00
Central Services	£17,214.00	£32,389.00
Direct Spend on Support	£574,781.00	-£53,673.00

With carry forward and T/F to/from Reserves

£0.00

Quality Assurance:

Louisa Jones – QA report on ePEPs

7. Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Identified Challenges:

1. Close the gap at Key Stage 2.
2. Focus on English and Maths at Key Stage 4.
3. Ensuring PP+ spend leads to better outcomes for individuals and groups.
4. Reducing the ‘step’ between Virtual School and other services as children move into and out of being cared for.
5. Recruiting to the Extended Duties posts to re-establish this work.
6. Establish a permanent leadership, governance and staffing structure.
7. Ensuring the wider team delivers elements of the extended duties.
8. Developing consistent reporting of Extended Duties outcomes.

Action Plans:

Action Group	Action	Intervention	Target Date
Academic Progress	The focus on reading must continue with an expectation of, and support for, carers reading regularly with their children.	Training for carers around reading at home. Support for social care staff in maintaining this expectation	

	Virtual school staff will be conducting more direct work with Yr11 children around English and Maths.	Identify the cohort with greatest potential impact and allocate to staff.	
	PEP targets will be more closely focussed on academic outcomes in Reading, Writing, English and Maths.	Monitoring – staff already aware of the focus.	
Trauma Informed and Relational Practice	Support to schools around relational practice	Ongoing through TouchBase, Modelling, Paul Dix, Shekinah and Mayfield Outreach	
Tracking	Better data systems to understand and identify the cohort	Power BI Dashboard data warehouse complete. User interface in development.	
	Develop better tracking of Care Experienced NEET/EET engagement	Liaison with the CE team to better track. New NEET contract to have greater ambition of OOA tracking.	
VSED	Widen the range of staff engaged in delivering the VSED	Remodel the service to have a VSED lead and 4 staff with VSED elements in their role.	
	Develop the offer for Kinship Carers and children with these arrangements.	Ongoing. First stage will be web based. Seeking better management access to SGO records.	

8. Conclusion

Summary:

In summary, the Virtual School is well placed to continue its improvement journey and the challenges of Virtual School Extended Duties.

Key Stage 4 results were pleasing but we still have work to do to understand why many of the care experienced children and young people in Torbay are NEET.

Reading remains a focus.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge the support and challenge offered by the team as I have settled into this post. Their unfailing patience has been of great assistance and ensured that I have developed my understanding rapidly.



The steady presence of Tracey Powell as Service Manager has been pivotal in assuring continuity and consistency.

None of the work we do would be possible without the professionalism and dedication shown by the designated teachers. Day to day they intervene quickly and effectively for our children. They are a valuable resource for their schools and the community whose contribution cannot be overstated.

Finally, our colleagues in social care provide the placements and support that allow the children to access education. I would like to formally recognise this and express the team's thanks.

Annex A – Case Studies

Case Study – Child A and Child B in Early Years

The Challenge or Barrier we faced.

Child A and Child B are twins they are 4 and 3 respectively, they live with their grandmother under an SGO. They were taken under the care of the local authority due to significant domestic abuse and violence between his parents as well as poor parental mental health and drug dependency.

They still have contact with Mum and Dad and this is supervised by Nan to happen outside the family home.

Recently they lost their grandfather whilst in the process of moving house this had a profound effect on both of the children as such they have experienced a lot of dysregulation and Grandmother has struggled to cope with loss of her husband and providing care for both children.

I was involved in this case when I was contacted by the nursery, Nursery are a small setting based in a village hall and they wanted to suspend both boys from attending the setting citing the level of behaviour and dysregulation of both boys being too much of a strain on the small staff and the other children attending the setting.

Nursery were reporting they were facing some challenges with both Children attending nursery full time, reporting their behaviour was often dysregulated and they were physical lashing out at other children. This behaviour was becoming so difficult for the nursery to manage they were considering asking the children to leave the nursery.

Our Journey so Far..

Our journey started with a Team around the Family meeting to explore with both nursery and home what was happening for the children and how we could arrange to support the setting and Nan in delivering the best care for Child A and Child B.

With the introduction of TAF meetings, we were able to work alongside the SGO team, The SGO team worked with grandmother supporting her with home visits and arranging through the of the ASGSF they were able to organise some therapy for both Child A and B to work with the family around grief.

Taking a relation approach working alongside the family and nursery I was able to unpick some of the barriers around communication that were blocking communication between home and school once this had been addressed the flow of conversation was much better and allowed for Grandmother to feel more supported by nursery.

Using attachment theory I offered to provide some 1 -1 training with the nursery manager, This was accepted and I went in and provide some training around grief and the use of transitional objects that the nursery were keen to use with Child A and B.

In the TAF meeting we agreed to change the hours so Child A and B both attend the setting on different days. This was for a twofold reason: 1. It allowed the setting to better manager and build relationships with Child A and B separately which meant they were better placed to meet the needs of the children and 2. It allowed Child A and B to rebuild their relationship with their grandmother helping them feel held by her.

The Difference we have made Together.

The outcomes for Child A and B were they were emotionally better prepared to access the nursery allowing them to form bonds with peers and staff and improving their PSED to help them access the setting.

Academically the Children are doing better as they are better settled and supported during their days in the nursery.

The staff appear to be better equipped to support both children aswell as more confident in supporting them

What we will do next.

Next steps:

- Continuing the Team around the family meetings to support the information shared between home and school and allowing professionals to identify and support when needed.
- Working towards transition for both children in terms of attending reception and how that will look like for them.
- Monitoring the package of support the educational provision have in place for the children, Offering training and direct work if required.

What Opportunities have we found to use this learning across a wider group of children, staff or settings?

The importance of linking in services like Children & Family in grief to support families who have experienced grief.

Working together as a Team around the family allowing all services to offer the best support and guidance for both School and Home to ensure the children are receiving the best support and care that they can.

Case Study – Primary Phase – Child C

What was the issue?

Relational traumas and losses experienced:

- This is the second period of care
- YP has been exposed to addiction, Domestic Violence and neglect.
- MOC – died shortly after T came into care.
- FOC – has never had contact.
- Lives with a foster carer and her daughter.
- 10 social worker changes – 3 since coming into care this time.
- 3 placements since coming into care.
- 3 school places since coming into care.
- C was born with methadone withdrawal.
- There are elements of emotional harm and neglect whilst in their mother and grandmother's care.
- YP came into care in 2023, aged 6 years.

Our journey so far....



C was put into MGM's care, along with their younger brother. Shortly after a care order being granted, C's mother died.

Although C was on roll with a Paignton school, the Virtual School became aware that they had not attended for two months and were not enrolled at a school where they were living with their grandmother.

A school was identified and the Virtual School supported the social worker to make an application. I arranged a meeting with MGM to discuss how best to support C's transition back into school. It was clear that MGM did not think that C should be in school at that time. During our conversations she shared details of her poor mental health. I shared concerns with C's social worker about the suitability of the placement. I expressed that I did not think that MGM had the capacity to provide adequate care for T and their brother.

A school was identified and an application made – C's mother died a couple of days later.

I organised a Planning For Success meeting to discuss a 3 week plan for a gradual transition back into education, whilst supporting C with their bereavement.

I provided C's social worker with bereavement information and the details of organisations that could support C and the family.

I maintained contact with the school throughout, but C did not attend.

As school reported that C was not attending and MGM could not be reached, I alerted C's social worker.

MGM did contact me to say that the funeral had been postponed which was why C had not attended school. I raised my concerns with C's social worker.

Within days things deteriorated rapidly and C and their brother were removed from MGM. The move was traumatic.

C was placed with carers in Torbay, who made it known from the first evening that they did not want C to stay.

C's social worker applied for a place at their previous school. I was aware of how fragile the placement was and that C was in a high level of emotional trauma after losing their mum and then GM, so I negotiated with the Designated Teacher to get C back into school without waiting for admissions. We felt that being in a known, safe environment, back with teachers and friends would benefit them and give the carers respite.

School arranged a big welcome for C and they had a very positive day. Sadly, the carers gave immediate notice and informed school they were refusing to have C back at the end of the school day. School could not reach the social worker, so contacted me. I was able to reach the social worker near the end of the school day and she confirmed that she would be collecting C and taking them to a new placement. Consequently, three social workers who were unknown to C collected

from school and drove them to Cornwall and a new placement. C's brother remained in Torbay and they did not get to say goodbye before C was removed.

Social worker requested that the Virtual School find a school. I advised that there was only a couple of weeks of term left. C was completely traumatised, so I requested urgent therapeutic intervention. I asked that a stable placement be confirmed for C before we sourced a school because to have another school move that lasted days would be so detrimental to him.

I remained in regular contact with C's new carer and sent books, activities and a letter to them.

As no bereavement support had been arranged for C, I discussed with the carer finding local support from Penhaligon's Friends, which she put in place.

A new social worker confirmed that C would be staying in Cornwall on a more permanent basis, so I discussed preferred schools with the carer and the social worker was provided with details of a school to apply to.

At the start of the new academic year a school place had not been found for C, so they could not start with peers.

I spoke with the Headteacher who suggested that C join a different school in the trust that was smaller, calmer and more nurturing. I contacted them and they agreed to offer C a place.

I arranged Planning For Success and education meetings, it became apparent that C's presentation had escalated to the point that carer's and school were struggling to meet their needs.

During regular conversations, the carer expressed concerns about the way school were managing C's dysregulation. I spoke to the Designated Teacher and asked that the CPOMs records be shared with me. Reading through the incidents, it was apparent that C's dysregulation was being handled as behaviour infractions, which was escalating the presentations.

I arranged for a meeting to discuss how using an attachment/trauma informed approach would be more supportive and reduce dysregulation. I also arranged for staff to attend the Virtual School Attachment Training.

During the meetings for C, I pushed for bereavement therapy for C. This has now been agreed by social care and C has started to access a provision for one day a week.

Due to bereavement in the carer's family and an escalation in physical presentations, the current placement is fragile, so we are holding regular meetings to support school and C's carer.

What have we done?

- Identify C's absence from Education, advise on suitable schools and support with securing school places.

- Provide a point of communication as C's biological family have a negative relationship with social care.
- Source and provide details of organisations that support bereavement.
- Flagged concerns about the level of care and capacity of grandmother who was experiencing poor mental health due to grief.
- Advised on a trauma/attachment informed approach to dealing with the dysregulation in school.
- Provided opportunity for staff training.
- To support staff and carers to understand how meeting a YP's need is not the same as rewarding bad behaviour.
- Put in place therapeutic interventions for C
- Identifying there is trauma due to neglect, multiple rejections, and substance abuse there is a need for YP to be emotionally supported by working with trusted adults in a trauma/attachment informed way.
- Work closely with the designated teacher, carer and social workers to create a team around the child, to monitor and support progress.
- To secure agreement over bereavement interventions.
- Provide a consistent person that carer and schools can speak to when social workers change, to support C.

What difference has this made?

- C is starting to make sense of his emotions, the losses he's experienced and the connections he has made.
- The staff working with YP have another point of view to consider regarding presentation.
- Carers are more understanding of how behaviour is communication.
- Carer and school have access to a consistent person in the LA.
- YP has been given an opportunity to explore safe connections with trusted adults.
- C is receiving therapeutic intervention to manage their grief.
- An RSA is being processed.

Areas for further action

- Continued collaboration between home, school, social worker, and Virtual School to ensure slow progress continues.
- Recommendations from EHCP to be actioned.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Virtual School to provide further attachment training to the school.
- Deepen new adult relationships, to help YP experience safe, trustworthy adult relationships.
- For class teacher to attempt to obtain some academic data for YP

Immediate next steps

- Hold regular meetings to support the stability of the placement.
- To help identify interventions to enable to access education and minimise dysregulation.
- To monitor bereavement therapy intervention.

Other work:

Through the work the interventions use:

PROTECT:

- helping the child to feel safe enough to share feelings, thoughts and develop their own capacity for help-seeking with other trusted adults.
- Help the child to feel understood,
- Use of PACE.

RELATE:

- Through PACE enable the child to feel secure to access their learning.

REGULATE:

- Affect attunement and develop empathy.
- Change dysregulation with reasoning and communication.

REFLECT:

- Help the child make sense of what is happening and why it is happening.
- Address negative self-referencing 'I am bad so people will leave me'.

Case Study – Child D in Year 11 in 2023 2024

The Challenge or Barrier we faced.

Spires College contacted the Virtual School due to D struggling to attend school in year 10 and 11 post pandemic as she preferred home learning, and felt like school was a challenging environment to be part of. In my view, she was struggling with feelings of anxiety. D was cared for and lived with her foster carers. She generally had a good relationship with one, but argued a lot with the other at times. There were times when their relationship was better.

D has been in care since March 2013 and has been under a Full Care Order since Aug 2014. She is cared for because her parents were unable to prioritise her needs over their own difficulties. She was exposed to arguments in the family home and her mother suffered with poor mental health at times which meant that she neglected D's needs and did not offer sufficient supervision. D and her half brother, came into care when mum was having an operation and she said she could not care for them, and dad said he was unable to either. Then they did not return home due to the social care assessments of the parenting, and

circumstances in the home. The children made some disclosures, but did deny them. There were sex offenders around the family, but social care was unsure if they had contact with the children.

D thinks she is in care because mum was ill and couldn't take care of her and her siblings properly, but she does struggle with this. One is D's other older half brother, who was not taken into care, but was looked after by family members and who now lives at home with their parents. The other has been a high achiever academically and had a relatively settled education and went on to FE and HE I believe. The eldest had quite a troubled education and life. D feels as if she is more similar to him as he has mental health issues. She feels she has anxiety like him.

D's mum suffers from MS and at times needs a wheelchair to support her mobility. She has been as highly anxious as well and self-reported that there is a history of ADHD traits in her maternal family. D's stepdad has been on a long-term relationship with D's mum (since before the care proceeding). He is the cadet officer at the Army cadet where D currently attends. Although both parents have a good relationship with D, they are unable to persuade her to engage with counselling and have a more positive view towards school. D wanted to move out of foster care to live with her family on and off throughout year 10 and 11 which was a contributing factor to her emotional based school avoidance. Her returning home was explored and investigated by social care and she began to have extended stays in the holidays, but D changed her mind during this time.

Our Journey so Far..

What action have you taken?

What colleagues and partners have worked with you and/or the child?

What approaches have you used?

We worked with Spires to create a part time timetable initially which was not our first choice due to missed schooling, but D felt such pressure to attend and was struggling with insomnia. We wanted to support her to feel less pressure, so we agreed shorter days with a later start time to make the mornings less pressured with less arguments impacting her frame of mind. We worked with school to engage education support services, firstly YMCA then Evolve, and I worked with her 1-1 in a relationship building intervention. I liaised with the SENCO/DT regularly to help her support teaching staff with information about D. The SENCO/DT also worked with a consultant Educational Psychology advising the school on SEND, and we completed an EP referral together. I supported D with home visits and emotional health work as well as relationship building, and we worked with school to help D access SEND when she couldn't manage lessons.

The Difference we have made Together.

Outcomes – both academic and in the child's wider life in school

What changes have you seen in the child and the adults that work with them?

D's attendance did improve gradually and we saw that she went from being EBSA to being in school more, and we worked on then getting her to attend lessons. Her progress was sporadic due to complicating factors including increased time with her birth mum and step dad, her foster father's poor health and hospital visits and her carers fearing his health was deteriorating, school changing their EBSA provision from SEND to a discrete EBSA room and D not liking this, the TA running this building a relationship with D and then leaving, the pressure of GCSEs, and a new relationship with a vulnerable young person with mental health issues.

What we will do next.

Next steps:

- In direct work with the child
- In supporting the setting to better meet need.
- To prepare for foreseeable challenges such as transition

We supported D through PEPs for the changes after year 11.

What Opportunities have we found to use this learning across a wider group of children, staff or settings?

- This might be training, better systems for working together, signposting or any way in which we can improve provision.
- Partnership working to review timetables and build bespoke timetables which are reviewed regularly. Regular liaison with school.
- Feeding this into training at DT Forums.

It Takes a Village to raise a Child – An SEN Case Study

Cared for Children and Young People have a Team of Professionals working with them and when something works well, it is due to the efforts of everyone involved.

It is amazing to see our Young people succeed – they just need that extra bit of help.

Case Study

Young Person

College Peers

Carers



Social Worker

South Devon College – SEN, Tutors, Mentors and Designated Teacher

Virtual School

The young person had previously attended an independent special school and then transferred to a mainstream college course. Initially the young person struggled with anxiety on entering the mainstream classroom due to the numbers in the class. A rise from 6 in a class to over 20. His peers in the classroom were very supportive and encouraged him to attend but it was too big an ask at this stage.

The Designated Teacher at college arranged an early PEP as he wished to raise concerns that the young person would fall behind if he could not access the teaching element of the course. The SW and carers were supportive of the college and kept good communication lines open. This allowed the carers to know what assignments were due and when so they could support at home.

Due to the high levels of anxiety the Virtual School funded a 1:1 mentor for the young person. This not only allowed him to attend classes but also provided evidence for SEN that he required a higher level of support. This was addressed through the Annual Review of his EHCP so that the support could be kept in place.

The 1:1 quickly built good relationships with the young person, as had the DT and the young person felt supported and had people to discuss any concerns or worries.

Due to the support provided by the wider team, the young person successfully managed to gain accreditation in his course and passed his English GCSE.

The young person is confident to continue at college for a second year, and has applied and been accepted for this academic year.

Case Study – Strengths, Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs)

The Challenge or Barrier we faced.

Head of Service advised that completion of the SDQs were very limited and recognised that improvement needed to be made.

Our Journey so Far..

What action have you taken?

Met to discuss the issues around the completion of SDQs and where the responsibilities lie.

In line with promoting the education of cared for and previously cared for children:

- *emphasising to schools the SDQs (See Mental Health) importance in helping identify looked after-children's emotional and mental health needs, enabling them to receive better educational support. This includes encouraging schools to complete their element of the SDQ and follow up on the needs identified*
- *63. It is important to have a means of regularly measuring the emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by looked-after and previously looked-after children. For looked-after children, currently, this is often done through the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ is a clinically validated brief behavioural screening questionnaire for use with 4-17 year-olds or 2-4 year-olds. The SDQ can help social workers and other professionals form a view about a looked-after child's emotional wellbeing. It exists in three versions: for parents or carers, teachers and a self-evaluation for children aged 11-17.*
- *64. The SDQ can help social workers and other professionals form a view about the emotional wellbeing of a looked-after child. Looked-after children may benefit from the triangulation of the scores from the carer's SDQ with those of their teacher and, if s/he is aged 11 to 17, the self-evaluation to better inform the child's health assessment and PEP. To help enable this, where an SDQ for a child gives cause for concern or is "border line", VSHs should work with schools to encourage them to complete their element of the SDQ*

What approaches have you used?

Discussion with ePEP and ePEP Coordinator how we include the SDQ within the body of the PEP

Decision around how this would be rolled out and who would take responsibility of sending out the SDQs – ePEP Coordinator would sent out, when a young person came into care so that there could be a benchmark in preparation for the Initial Health Assessment.

Once this had been completed we arranged for training at our next Designated Teacher Forum and sent the recording of the training to those who were unable to attend

Emailed the Designated Teachers to look how best we could ensure all cared for children had one SDQ completed during the year. If a need identified during the academic year, or there was a concern around a decline in behaviour/wellbeing further SDQ could be completed.



Encourage SDQs to be completed prior to therapeutic interventions commencing and on completing of the intervention.

Work with Health re scoring and to whom these need to be sent

Work alongside Business Support re: uploading to LiquidLogic

The Difference we have made Together.

There was a little resistance from some primary schools, in the early stages, however, with support and guidance this has been overcome and schools in general are completing the SDQs, collecting these from the carers, social workers and young people, if appropriate aged 11-17 years

Completion rate is now higher; from schools around 85%

Teams across the services working together to improve outcomes for young people through more tailored support.

What we will do next.

Next steps:

- In direct work with the child – for young people to be able to complete the SDQs 11 – 17 with support from school staff / carer / social worker
- Recognising, identifying and implementing the right support earlier
- To prepare for foreseeable challenges such as transition
- Further work with Business Support / Head of Service re uploading to the right area on LiquidLogic so that the timeliness and completion data is accurate

What Opportunities have we found to use this learning across a wider group of children, staff or settings?

The SDQs can inform support that may be needed earlier

ePEP Coordinator has increased their knowledge on scoring of SDQs and better able to inform Designated Teachers; provide increase support

Working with Health on how we can improve the triangulation of the SDQs as well as identify gaps within the services and the therapeutic offer for to support young people at the earliest point.

We have been able to enhance the therapeutic offer for children cared for in Torbay using PP+. This includes :-

- training staff in the virtual school to deliver Drawing and Talking therapies;
- training staff in the virtual school to deliver Theraplay to both schools and for carers / adopters:
- training staff in the virtual school to deliver TISUK MH support through advice and guidance to school, social workers and carer
- funding provision through PP+ who addresses needs identified through triangulation of the SDQs, which are completed by carers, teachers and young people.
- The Virtual School providing attachment and trauma training, either commissioned from external providers or delivered in house by staff from the virtual school.

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

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
29/7/24	5	was there any data on absence during exam seasons for children with SEND (a written update on the data to see if there was a link with the exam aged students and absence was requested).	Complete - The Council does not have specific attendance for exams. Only general attendance which was detailed within the Report to the Sub-Board. The additional level of complexity is that students are marked as on study leave for that period, therefore we would not know if they were 'absent' by the coding. There also is no legal process for year 11's absence as by time a legal process happened the student would have left School so there is not an incentive for Schools to keep a close eye on attendance outside of marking students as on study leave or a student missing their exam.
29/7/24	5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that future reports include the number of children coming off a part time timetable; and 2. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to explore with partners, including the voluntary and community sector, what support parents might need to enable discussions with professionals about attendance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete note added to Work Programme 2. Complete - Following the recent consultation in respect of an education complex need locality model. This will form part of the wider locality model to achieve better outcomes for children and improve attendance. We also have increased our Attendance Officers who meet with schools regularly to consider attendance as part of new expectations. We also have an education neglect pathway (including attendance) which includes early help pathways which are supported by our voluntary and community sector.

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
29/7/24	8	3. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to consider exploring options to fund a free bus pass for Young Carers for school holidays.	Complete - This was being reviewed by the Team Manager in the transport section who has subsequently left without an outcome to the action. We will continue to review in line with the activity of Young Carers and consider alternative transport options that can better meet need and improve life skills and support our children into independence.
23/9/24	15	3. that an informal meeting be arranged with our Cared for Young People and the Sub-Board on the development of the revised Pledge.	<p>Complete - Officers have been reviewing with Children in Care Council members to seek their views on the Pledge – working with a young cohort of 11 and 12 year olds, then another group of 21 to 22 year olds. Some online and some face to face. A young person from the Children in Care Council has been invited to attend Sub-Board on 27 January to give feedback on the Pledge on behalf of young people.</p> <p>Teresa Buckley met with Rebecca Rushton, Alex Diviney and Sarah Evens Participation Officers/Leads to discuss the best way of getting young people engaged in the meetings of the Sub-Board. It was suggested that this may be different people depending on the topic e.g. representatives from the Children in Care Council, SEND Youth Forum or Young Person's Panel. Teresa to liaise with the Participation Officers on the topics coming up and which ones would be most appropriate for young people to come along and engage and participate in meetings. The Sub-Board must make it</p>

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
			<p>clear what will happen as a result of the young person's feedback.</p> <p>The above three Panels are developing their priority areas and this will be shared with the Members of the Sub-Board so that they can take this into account when developing their work programme for 2025/2026.</p> <p>Members to identify why they want to meet with the young people and what they intend to do as a result of the meeting e.g. is it to get a better understanding of their lived experience to help them understand when considering matters that may impact on them. Participation Officers will then work with the young people to see how they would like to meet with Members of the Sub-Board.</p>
18/11/24	22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete 2. Complete 3. Complete

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		to School Transport into mainstream and special schools.	
18/11/24	23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that the Sub-Board note 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete 2. Complete added to Work Programme
18/11/24	24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete 2. Complete
18/11/24	25	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.	Compete
18/11/24	26	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete - Lead officer in Public Health progressing with Community Partnerships 2. Complete - Being scoped by officers in Public Health and Children Services 3. Complete

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		3. that the Director of Public Health be requested to introduce colleagues to the Skateboard Working Group to raise awareness of the Move Torbay initiative.	
18/11/24	27	<p>1. that the Sub-Board notes and endorse the contents of the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report;</p> <p>2. that the full Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) action plan is brought back to a future meeting of the Sub-Board; and</p> <p>3. that the Chairwoman of the Torbay Children's Safeguarding Partnership be requested to use less acronyms in future documents.</p>	<p>1. Complete</p> <p>2. Complete added to the Work Programme</p> <p>3. Complete</p>
18/11/24	28	<p>1. that the contents of the submitted report be noted; and</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>1. Complete</p> <p>2. Complete to be picked up as part of the development of the 2025/2026 Work Programme</p>
18/11/24	29	The Clerk was requested to follow up on outstanding responses from the NHS and Police.	<p>Chased 7 January 2025.</p> <p>New Chief Executive in post for Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, they are reviewing the request and will come back with an update soon.</p>

