

Tuesday, 04 March 2025

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

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

Monday, 10 March 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 Law (Chairwoman)

Councillor Fellows (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Nicolaou

Councillor Tolchard
Councillor Twelves

Co-opted Members of the Board

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Jo Hunter, Church of England Diocese

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 REVISED 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 27 January 2025.

(Pages 5 - 14)

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 Chairwoman decides are urgent.

5. **Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)**

To receive an update on the implementation of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan.

(Pages 15 - 36)

(Note: Penny Smith, Chief Nursing Officer has been invited to attend for this item.)

6. **Schools Capital Programme Review** (Pages 37 - 40)
To receive an update on the Schools Capital Programme, particularly the Westlands PFI, which was one of the first in the country, what worked and what did not work.

To include an update on how the £1.6m capital funding is being used for SEND and alternative provision.
7. **Update on Local Government Association Peer Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** (Pages 41 - 76)
To receive an update on the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and action plan and next steps.
8. **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker** (Pages 77 - 82)
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

27 January 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Fellows (Chairman)

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

Voting Co-opted Member

Jo Hunter, Church of England Diocesan

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Tanny Stobbart, Play Torbay

Miranda Pusey, Devon and Cornwall Police (virtually)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Harvey, Chris Lewis, Long (virtually), David Thomas and Virdee)

30. Opening

The meeting was opened with a minute’s silence to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. Today marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Soviet Allied forces.

31. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Cook (Non-voting Co-opted Member) and Hayley Costar (Non-voting Co-opted Member, who was represented by Miranda Pusey).

32. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 18 November 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

In accordance with Standing Order D13, Councillor George Darling outlined his reasons for submitting a Councillor Call for Action in respect of the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Unit Closures, which included concerns over the consultation and engagement process, evidence and data used to inform the decision and impact on sustainable staffing etc. Councillor Darling had also circulated to Members of the

Sub-Board two letters from St Margarets and a letter from Spires, which were not part of the discussions for the meeting but would need to be considered alongside any officer report.

The Sub-Board had to determine whether or not to request officers to prepare a full report on the matter. Members were advised that the decision was an officer decision and not a Cabinet decision and that the decision could not be changed as a result of a report being presented to the Sub-Board and would still be implemented from September 2025.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Director of Children's Services be requested to prepare a full report on the service changes at the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Units and submit it to a future meeting of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board, with key lines of enquiry to include:

1. please provide details of the consultation that took place in the formative stage prior to the decision being made by the Council;
2. what were the results of this consultation for Torbay children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) carried out by the Council and did it change the proposed decision taken forward?;
3. please provide details of any consultation which took place following this decision being made public and any action taken as a result;
4. what alternative options were proposed to Torbay parents for their child's Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision if they did not agree with the Council's proposed EHCP delivery from September? Where would the nearest Hearing Impairment Units be if they wished their child to attend a dedicated Hearing Impairment Unit?;
5. did the local authority consider the impact of this decision beyond children under their statutory care with an EHCP?;
6. how many children from Torbay are currently receiving some form of support from the hearing unit both with and without an EHCP, and how are these predicted to change over the coming 5 years?;
7. what assurance can be provided that future needs of all children in Torbay who need support with their hearing, including those with an EHCP and those without and an EHCP, will continue to be reviewed and met?;
8. was any external advice or support sought on the proposal, if so who from and how did this inform the process?;
9. why was the option to reduce the size of the units further or to close one and move the support to a single unit not considered as alternative options?;

10. what lessons have been learned from this process?; and
11. contextual information about the framework for SEND how it is structured and funded, what will change as a result of the decision and how can the voice of the child can be included; and

That, in light of the letters received from St Margarets and Spires, the Democratic Services Officer be requested to arrange a briefing with Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board to discuss the issues of concern and finalise the key lines of enquiry to inform the officer's report.

34. Update on UNICEF work to be a Child Friendly Torbay

The Cabinet Member for Children, Councillor Bye and the Head of Business Support, Lisa Chittenden outlined the submitted report which provided an update on the UNICEF work to be a Child Friendly Torbay and responded to questions.

The Sub-Board asked questions in relation to what was the consultation response; did consultation go out to schools and youth groups; an additional Project Manager had been appointed for twelve months when the project was three to five years, what was the reason for this; would there be training for Councillors as well as staff; when was the Discovery Day due to take place; and how were the voluntary sector involved in this work.

In response to questions around consultation, Members were advised that work had taken place with Participation Officers through various existing events and activities and there were over 100 children and young people involved. The online workforce survey achieved 80 to 90 responses and the online survey for children and young people was around 20 to 25. It was intended that the Discovery Day would be the main consultation and engagement activity to reach as many people as possible. The consultation had been shared with schools but had taken place during the summer. Schools would be invited to attend the Discovery Day (a written response would be provided on who from schools would be invited e.g. staff and children).

It was noted that the additional Project Manager had been funded in year from within the existing Children's Services budget and that the post had been included in the base budget for 2025/2026 which was still going through the authorisation process.

Members were informed that there was specific training that UNICEF offer to Councillors and all Councillors were encouraged to attend this session.

The Sub-Board was advised that a voluntary sector representative sits on the Project Board and was involved in the planning of the Discovery Day and will also sit on the Project Team. It was acknowledged that more needed to be done to widen the reach to the voluntary sector.

Members requested the next update on UNICEF Child Friendly Torbay include a timeline for the project.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the update and the progress made to date on the UNICEF work to be a Child Friendly Torbay; and
2. that all Councillors be encouraged to attend the training and the Discovery Day and encourage as many people as possible to attend the Discovery Day to support the UNICEF Child Friendly Programme and help the Council to achieve our 'recognition' status.

35. Adopt South West Annual Report 2023/2024

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye and the Divisional Director for Children's Safeguarding, Becky Thompson outlined the submitted Adopt South West Annual report for 2023/2024. The report highlighted the progress made during 2023/2024 as well as the ongoing issues in recruiting and attracting adopters and what was being done to address that.

The Sub-Board asked questions in relation to the 3113 co-ordinated exchanges between the birth and adoptive families throughout the year and if this was the same people or how many children this involved; and was the Think Again Scheme tracked.

In response to questions around contacts these were for 453 children across the region. Members were advised that inclusion of birth parents was embedded within the training for adoptive parents and adoptive families so that they understood the importance. Good progress had been made in this area.

Members were advised that the Think Again Scheme was tracked and work was done as part of the keeping in touch process and encouraging people to rethink who they may want to adopt once they had been approved. Focus was being done around older boys and children with additional needs with people who had existing approvals to look at the needs and skills to help the young people, which had contributed towards the 91.3% of children placed with adopters approved by Adopt South West.

Members welcomed the positive impact that Cornwall joining Adopt South West (Regional Adoption Agency) and the increase in the number of children being placed within the region compared to previous years.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the report as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and
2. that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the contents of the Adopt South West Annual Report 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

36. Youth Justice

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye and the Youth Justice Service Manager, Jon Ralph outlined the submitted report on the progress made in

implementing the Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan and responded to questions.

Members asked questions in relation to where the Child Centred Policing Team would be based and how many people would be in the Team; the report mentioned deep dives and audits were the green areas the same for both areas; how was the Team seeing the impact of the audits and how were they helping and would they improve performance; what feedback had been received from young people on the new Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) worker; and were young people willing to engage with the CAMHS worker.

Miranda Pusey, Devon and Cornwall Police advise that the new Child Centred Policing Team was currently in the design phase and would include an additional Sargeant and investigators who were specialists in youth crime, young engagement and missing persons. It would be a relatively large Team and would be fully supported by the Executive of the Force. They would be part of the Neighbourhood Teams and would likely be based in Torquay but cover the whole of Torbay.

Members were advised that the green areas for the deep dives and audits were different. Assurance was given that the Youth Justice Board had a strategic grip on performance but the building had still not been resolved, although the finances had now been agreed and the details were due to be finalised over the next few months. Funding for the prevention service has been resolved for 2025-26, and first time entrant rates were much better but not better than national averages. Reoffending rates were difficult as this looked at young people reoffending after a year of finishing with the service and was then monitored for a following two years, with a very small case load which then skewed the figures.

In response to questions around CAMHS, Members were advised that feedback from young people was very positive with nearly 90% saying it was good or excellent. The challenge was how long they work with the young person and it was felt it should be longer, however, this was impacted by resources particularly around prevention and closing cases. Engagement was a gradual process and the Team was supporting young people to overcome barriers to accessing help and understanding the impact.

The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted report and requested a copy of the After Action Review to be circulated to them once it was available.

37. Exploitation and Children Missing

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye and the Exploitation Team Manager, Katie Buckley outlined the submitted paper which provided an update on exploitation and children missing and responded to questions.

Members asked questions in relation to what involvement do people working with young people have on the Contextual Safeguarding Working Party; there had been a fall in exploitation, was there a narrative around the spike; were people tracked once they had been released from prison; does Torbay have a big problem with modern slavery; there had been a drop in referrals, was there a way of streamlining the

process; were exploiters becoming aware of process and adapting their approach; and when was Ofsted expected to inspect this area.

The Sub-Board was informed that a range of core statutory partners, including those working with young people, were involved in the Contextual Safeguarding Working Party and Sub-Groups working on various strands, with a Senior Officer from Probation Chairing the Working Party. This included looking at children and young people and targeting some care experienced young people who were at risk but were no longer at risk and looking at getting involved. They would look at what does good look like, to know when to offer support and when not to overwhelm young people.

In response to the spike in exploitation, 2024 saw a few peer groups coming in and escalating quickly with young people missing, substance misuse and other safeguarding concerns. All the young people were assessed at the same time which caused the spike. There was training that goes out to all providers and multi-agencies, which was well attended and sometimes this could also cause a spike as people become more aware of what to report.

Members were advised that people who were released from prison were tracked through the Probation Service and have protection orders against them. Probation colleagues were now part of the MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) Forum. Communication had improved beyond what a lot of other local authorities had been able to achieve as a result. Contextual safeguarding and online safety were key issues.

Members were informed that there were not high numbers of young people subject to modern slavery in Torbay but when referrals were made decisions were made quickly. Such referrals did not come with additional support and were the responsibility of the Safeguarding Teams, modern slavery support only kicked in when a person was 18 years old. It was important to ensure the right referrals were made for children.

It was noted that referrals completed online included drop down menus to the relevant toolkits so that they could all be completed at the same time as part of the referral. This was trying to be streamlined future as there was a need to ensure that the right toolkits were being updated for each young person.

Members were informed that through local information sharing the Council was getting better at tracking locally adults who were exploiting networks or groups of children. This was more difficult nationally as the national crime groups have resources to move to a different area at very short notice.

Members were advised that the Council was expecting a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection at the end of February/early March which would impact on when other inspections were carried out. The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILAC) last took place in March 2022 and could happen at any time and Torbay was also on the next cycle for the HM Inspectorate of Probation's inspection for the Youth Justice Service.

The Sub-Board welcomed the work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

Members noted the contents of the submitted report and that a Safeguarding Conference was being held on 28 January 2025, the Clerk circulated a link to the livestream to all Councillors and invited them to watch. It was suggested that all Councillors should be invited to future conferences.

38. Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to cared for and care experienced children/young people

Bethany Dallow, Care Experienced Young Person provided feedback on behalf of herself and other care experienced young people, who had provided feedback through the Children in Care Council on the Cared for Pledge as set out in the revised presentation. 86% had not heard of the Pledge and 14% did not know what it was. 44% of Council staff had heard about the Pledge. This highlighted the need for more communications, more training and better engagement to raise awareness and embed any revised Pledge. The main priorities of the Pledge were:

- Honesty – it was felt that young people get lied to a lot, people tell them things will change and promise to do things but do not follow through. We should not promise to do things unless we can 100% follow through. Young people should be told the truth and information where appropriate given their age. If young people were to trust the Pledge they need to be sure that they were listened to and being prioritised. It was not fair to be told one thing and something else happens.
- Safety – this was created through a nurtured space where young people were more likely to open up and engage. Done in a space that was welcoming and comforting. There was a risk that without trust and safety young people would not want to open up with social workers or other responsible adults when something goes wrong.
- Support on young people's terms – do not organise meetings without consulting the young person. Cared for and care experience young people have no control over themselves, they feel that someone else owns them, a stranger who was available 9 am to 5 pm. They need to feel that they have control over themselves as children and adults. Support givers need to recognise that there were times when a young person does not want to receive support. It should be person centred care and not one size fits all. Lots of young people have a history that they would not want known about them before they meet a social worker. They want to tell their story themselves and want to be asked about it themselves.

The following was identified by young people on how to raise awareness of the Pledge:

- they would rather be informed about the Pledge from a trusted person – social worker, teacher, parent, carer; and
- they would rather be told about it through school by teachers and the Pledge should be posted on community boards or be given out as flyers as schools.

Participation Officers, Sarah Evans and Alex Diviney attended the meeting and helped respond to questions.

Members discussed the feedback from the 7 members of the Council in Care Council. It was noted that they represented older children with the youngest being 11 years old. They highlighted a real need for mutual respect.

It was noted that the original Pledge had been written by cared for and care experienced young people with the intention of it being given out to children when they came into care, but that the needs of young people changes very quickly. It was intended to show the Council what the young people wanted from us, as we want to know how we can be the best for them. It was acknowledged that there was a need whenever staff come into the Council that their role as a corporate parent is included in their induction as every officer in the Council is a corporate parent. An example was given of a report from North Tyneside where every person in the Council and some agencies had their responsibility as a corporate parent added to their job description.

Members were disappointed that the Pledge was not more widely known and recognised the need for a review and refresh of the Pledge to make it work for the young people. Wider communication and roll out would be needed to embed the revised Pledge and enable the Council to monitor its impact.

It was also acknowledged that there was a need to make the Pledge meaningful to people and not just a piece of paper, it would mean something different to every child and young person. The key part going forward as part of the implementation was how we make the Pledge and social contract (consider rewording from promise, following feedback) turn into reality for the children and young people.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that Beth Dallow be thanked for attending the meeting and sharing her views and the views of other care experienced young people on the review of Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to cared for and care experienced children/young people and that Beth be welcome to attend future meetings;
2. that Councillor Twelves as Strand Lead for Participation meet with Beth Dallow and other young people to help understand their views and champion this through the Corporate Parenting Board;
3. that the revised Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to cared for and care experienced children/young people be presented to a future meeting of the Board so that Members can be assured that it has been updated to reflect the views of young people and how it will be communicated and rolled out; and
4. that in light of the importance of the role the Director of Corporate Services be requested to include responsibility as Corporate Parents in all staff job descriptions and as part of their annual appraisal to demonstrate what staff are doing to support our cared for and care experience young people.

39. Virtual School Annual Report 2023/2024

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Bye and the Head of the Virtual School, Dan Hamer outlined the Virtual School Annual report for 2023/2024 and responded to questions.

Members discussed how had the Virtual School managed around social worker and kinship care to meet the data requirements for the new extended duties. Members were informed that the Vulnerable Pupils Team was already doing a lot of work looking at children missing out on education and those at risk of suspension or exclusion. The Team was recruiting new staff following two vacancies. They were working with schools to try change and modify the behaviour of adults in schools that had led to suspension and exclusion. There was a trauma informed project working with South Devon College working in a wider context with young people who have a social worker, some of whom would be impacted by changes in social care or change in parental consent.

It was noted that the Government had acknowledge that the new extended duties would imply new burdens, but that it was not expected that the Government would put any penalties on parents who do not tell the local authority that their children were not on a school register.

It was noted that the Annual Report would be presented to all Councillors at the Council meeting on 6 February 2025 in their role as corporate parents.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board endorses the Virtual School Annual report for 2023/2024.

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

The Democratic Services Team Leader, Teresa Buckley advised that she had met with Rebecca Rushton, Alex Diviney and Sarah Evans 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. It was suggested that Teresa Buckley should 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. In light of this it was recommended to amend the Membership of the Sub-Board two remove the two young people and enable a more flexible approach to participation.

Members discussed different options for engaging with young people through the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board and were encouraged to attend an event on 7 February 2025 with young people.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that Council be recommended that the Membership of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board be amended to remove the Care Experienced young person and Young Person Panel Non-Voting Co-opted Member representatives from the Board but request that the Democratic Services Team Leader to work with the Participation Officers to invite representatives from the Children in Care Council, SEND Youth Forum or Young Person's Panel to participate in meetings where there are specific areas of interest to them so as to hear the voice of the children and young people at the meetings;
2. that Councillor Nicolaou send an invite to Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board for the event with young people on 7 February 2025; and
3. that Members of the Sub-Board identify other groups that would want to be involved and come along to meetings of the Sub-Board and report back to a future meeting.

Chairwoman



**Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP)
Joint Targeted Area Inspection of Torbay November 2023
Written statement of proposed action - plan**

Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP)	Joint Targeted Area Inspection of Torbay- November 2023 Written statement of proposed action
Version 19 – 19/04/24	Authors: NHS Devon as principal authority Michele Thornberry - Head of Safeguarding John Trevains – Director of Nursing & Quality
Plan lifespan: 6 months – October 2024	Senior Responsible Owner: Penny Smith – Chief Nursing Officer

TSCP Quality Assurance Updates Date	Update Authors
October 2024	Rachel Setter Divisional Director Learning and Partnerships Torbay Children’s Services Michele Thornberry Head of Safeguarding NHS Devon Phillipa Hiles Named Nurse Safeguarding Children Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust Cheryl Vidall Associate Clinical Director Child & Family Health Devon Natalie Herring Deputy Chief Nurse Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust Becky Thompson Divisional Director of Safeguarding Torbay Children’s Services Louisa Jones Head of Quality Assurance Torbay Children’s Services Neil Cotton TSCP Business Manager

Statement of Intent:

As statutory partners for Safeguarding, Torbay Council, NHS Devon and Devon and Cornwall Police, alongside Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT) as the main agency of focus will prioritise the actions in this plan and ensure delivery so that children and young people are kept safe and can thrive. The partnership is committed to providing a workforce that are trained in the recognition and appropriate response to safeguarding risks, putting the child at the centre of care, developing action plans, and jointly making decisions regarding their wellbeing.

Plan purpose and background:

The purpose of this plan is to describe the work of statutory partners of Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) and their stakeholder organisations to respond to the findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Torbay that took place in November 2023. The full letter detailing the findings of this inspection is attached to this plan in **Appendix 1**. NHS Devon as the agency identified by JTAI to respond has led on formulating this plan.

This inspection took place from 13 November 2023 to 17 November 2023. It was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The purpose of these inspections is to assess the quality of arrangements and services for children in need of help and protection in local authority areas in England. Inspection can focus on a specific area of a system or seek to evaluate services across the whole location.

Though the inspection identified several strengths and good practice across services. It also identified several areas of concern, predominantly within health services (Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust (TSDFT) that require urgent attention. This plan presents a high-level action plan on how work is being conducted to address issues identified in the inspection, report progress to partner agencies and provide assurance that improvements have been achieved and embedded into practice. **Progress on this plan will be reported at TSCP Board level, with parallel reporting to individual agencies Boards where indicated i.e. NHS Devon/TSDFT to deliver and evidence high quality oversight and assurance from senior leadership.**

Strategic context of plan and interdependences:

This plan should be read in conjunction with Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan and TSCP initiatives to improve and protect the quality of children's lives in Torbay. This plan is supported by detailed dynamic action plans at organisation level (available on request) that support the objectives of this plan.

These arrangements are subject to regular review, support and senior leader oversight from NHS Devon as the Principle Authority working in partnership with the relevant organisations. Working together 2023 states that 'Nothing is more important than children's welfare. Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable, and loving home. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support. This requires individuals, agencies, and organisations to be clear about their own and each other's roles and responsibilities, and how they work together'.

Reporting and assurance:

Progress delivering this plan will be reported through existing governance routes with accountability to Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership, in line with the letter from Inspectors. Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Board and NHS Devon Quality and Patient Experience Committee, and Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust Safeguarding Committee, will also receive assurance reports and escalation regarding single agency and partnership actions. This approach will ensure that risk of single agency delay is mitigated and that each of the statutory partners have oversight through organisational governance. As lead safeguarding partners, Torbay Council, NHS Devon and Devon and Cornwall Police will prioritise the actions in this plan and ensure delivery so that children and young people are kept safe and thrive. Regular updates will be provided for assurance to JTAI inspectors via Ofsted. A diagram of the governance structure is provided in this document.

Actions undertaken since the inspection:

Within the plan there are updates on the work undertaken so far to address the priority actions. This includes but is not exclusively the work undertaken by Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust. Future update reports will include additional evidence of progress. Since the inspection in November 2023 and on receipt of the formal letter in January 2024 priority actions to address the JTAI identified issues have been taken as follows:

- Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership – Leading system oversight and holding agencies to account to deliver improvement.
- NHS Devon – facilitating and coordinating the development of the action plan and will actively coordinate delivery activity.
- Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust – initiating and completing early formative work to address critical issues identified include an audit of all children attending the emergency department to gain assurance that concerns are being identified and responded to; a review and update of the supervision strategy, and delivery of a workshop on professional curiosity at the TSCP multiagency conference.

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
2	The variable quality of scrutiny and supervision by health staff leading to safeguarding risks in children not being consistently identified and responded to appropriately. A particular area of concern is the management of unexplained injuries to children.	TSDFT NHS Devon	Children at risk or experiencing harm will be identified and responded to appropriately. Strong evidence of consistent good quality safeguarding supervision and scrutiny will be available at system level.	TSDFT and NHS Devon are committed to ensuring that all staff receive high quality safeguarding supervision, recognising the specific needs of emergency care and other speciality areas identified in the inspection. 2.1 TSDFT will review and develop supervision processes to ensure that advice and actions taken are captured within the child's records. 2.2 TSDFT will develop a dashboard reporting mechanism regarding supervision activity for Board and system assurance. 2.3 TSDFT will ensure that those undertaking safeguarding supervision have up to date skills. 2.4 Senior leaders will receive assurance that all children attending the emergency department with injuries are appropriately risk assessed and referred as necessary.	2.1 Complete 2.2 Complete 2.3 Complete 2.4 Complete 2.5 30/06/24	NHS Devon assurance visit of TSDFT undertaken 12/04/24. 2.1 Formal supervision increased to monthly for all TSDFT Safeguarding Nurse Practitioners. Guidance on completion of referrals to Paediatric Liaison Service updated and communicated to relevant TSDFT staff. Review of Safeguarding Supervision Policy completed. 2.2 Performance metrics to be shared at next update. 2.3 All TSDFT Safeguarding Team members have attended external training procured by One Devon ICB and service development updates have been completed. 2.4 16/11/23 – 29/12/23 daily audit of all ED presentations for children completed. 0.16% missed MASH referrals. Decision made to audit 50 cases monthly. Missed opportunities followed up with the practitioner and line manager. Appropriate action taken by Named Nurse for all missed cases. Audit outcomes & recommendations submitted to Safeguarding Children Operational Group (SCOG) & Urgent and Emergency Care Quality Group (UECQG) for consideration. Monthly case dip sampling of 50 cases to continue and collation of themes identified through the audit to inform training and supervision needs and reported through SCOG and UECQG.

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
				2.5 TSDFT will develop an audit cycle to gain assurance of the impact and quality of supervision arrangements.		2.5 IT system change in progress - external provider required to make changes - practice updates in place for documentation of informal supervision
Area for Improvement						
3	The consistency with which professional curiosity and challenge are applied, particularly in situations in which children living with chronic domestic abuse or neglect are not making progress and situations in which children have unexplained injuries	Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP)	Children will be effectively supported and protected by a workforce who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and competences to recognise and respond to signs of abuse and neglect.	<p>3.1 TSCP Business Group will be assured that learning resources and training opportunities are developed and up take will enable all staff to apply professional curiosity and challenge when working with children and families, as well as each other to ensure that children experiencing abuse and neglect are identified and safeguarded.</p> <p>3.2 All staff attending MARAC (multiagency risk assessment conferences) will be fully cognisant of the contemporary and historical circumstances of the child so that the meeting can properly understand the risks to which he/she is exposed. TSCP Quality Assurance Group to undertake quality assurance work during 2024/25 to ensure embed into practice.</p> <p>3.3 TSCP Business Group to be assured that multiagency practice within the MASH environment demonstrate sufficient challenge and curiosity to safeguard children.</p>	<p>3.1 31/09/24</p> <p>3.2 29/03/25</p> <p>3.3 Complete</p>	<p>3.1 TSDFT will develop and deliver a training package to improve professional curiosity – as reported in Action 1 3.1 Session delivered at TSCP conference 15/03/24. Webinar of event to be created and shared.</p> <p>3.1 Health specific progress reports will be sought via working group. TSCP QA chair meeting with health to update on progress and consider how the training can be rolled out more widely.</p> <p>3.2 Marac Steering Group Chair is preparing a report for DASVEG in January on the completion of the actions from the MARAC review, and making recommendations for future actions.</p> <p>Chair of TSCP QA group to meet with MARAC Chair and the MSG Chair to discuss QA groups role in assuring actions completed.</p> <p>3.3 Torbay Children’s Service undertake multi agency dip sampling in the MASH weekly. Reports are provided to Children’s Service operational board quarterly. The quarterly reports are presented to the QA TSCP subgroup and the learning disseminated by</p>

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
				3.4 Training in the use of GCP2 (graded care profile 2) has been rolled out. Work to monitor use and impact of this tool will be delivered, audited, and reported via the TSCP Business Group.	3.4 31/12/24	<p>partners and to the business group via the subgroup update report. The reports are presented at MASH strategic board by request.</p> <p>3.4 Training has been delivered to approximately 130 members of staff across the partnership, assessments are starting to be completed but as the rates are quite low, the QA sub-group has not yet been able to evaluate impact. The low numbers of assessments have been escalated via the TSCP business group.</p>
4	Performance information across the partnership to inform needs analysis and measure the impact of strategic approaches to areas of concern	TSCP TSDFT D&C Police	Children are helped, protected and their welfare promoted through effective systems and approaches to areas of concern.	4.1 TSCP Executive to continue to develop the data set and use it to support Partnership activity and priorities. TSCP Quality Assurance Group to oversee the progression of the data set at each meeting.	4.1 31/10/24	<p>4.1 Data set added as standing agenda item of Quality Assurance subgroup.</p> <p>The TSCP Dashboard is complete except the following visuals:</p> <p>Children who have had 6 or more teeth extracted due to decay – pending. Neil Cotton is leading.</p> <p>SWASFT callouts relating to exploitation – pending with Louise Arrow (NHS) and Neil Cotton.</p> <p>Learning and Development – All information received, however further data has been requested.</p> <p>Police - No data from the police yet, Neil Cotton is leading on gathering the data. Now, SafeLives DV data in its place.</p>
					4.2 30/11/24	4.2 TSCP Data Working Group set up.

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
				<p>4.2 TSDFT will develop a Torbay data set that will enable oversight of safeguarding activity and impact.</p> <p>4.3 Police will develop a Torbay data set that will enable oversight of safeguarding activity and impact</p>	4.3 30/11/24	<p>4.3 (020724) TSCP data now being supplied with back dated data to Sep 2022 also being provided to prevent gaps in information.</p> <p>Forward look - Consultation with the 4 LA Business Managers from the partnership ongoing and new data set being requested by the partnership and this will be monthly. This will be BAU and P&A are engaged.</p>
5	The partnership's strategic approach to children with poor emotional and mental health.	NHS Devon Torbay Council CFHD	Through a partnership approach, the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children will be identified at the earliest point, with timely access to evidence informed, outcome focused support and/or intervention which will enable them to either recover, manage and/or be kept safe should their risk to self or	<p>There will be a single Torbay Emotional Health and Wellbeing (EHWB) Steering Group that will hold oversight and drive change which will be governed by both the SEND Executive Board and the TCSP which will;</p> <p>5.1 Develop a profile of the EHWB needs of children, young people and families that will be overlaid with current provision to inform the redesign of and commissioning of services.</p> <p>5.2 Ensure children who are in contact with Youth Justice Services or who are not in school have their EHWB needs identified and are able to access support or intervention as needed.</p>	<p>5.1 Complete</p> <p>5.2 Complete</p>	<p>Update 16/10/24</p> <p>5.1 MHST services have expended across Devon to provide early intervention for CYP in schools (or electively home educated/NEET) to address needs before they escalate to the mental health specialist service thresholds.</p> <p>5.2 CWP service provides community support to CYP who cannot be seen through the MHST service.</p>

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
			others be such that this is required.	<p>5.3 Develop a plan to embed THRIVE and its underlying principles throughout the Torbay system.</p> <p>5.4 Redesign and align procurement activity to the THRIVE framework to meet the needs of children and young people.</p>	<p>5.3 Complete</p> <p>5.4 Complete</p>	<p>5.3 CFHD triage for new referrals adopts the THRIVE model. The clinicians reviewing the referrals will prioritise needs and signpost the CYP/family to support and advice whilst waiting.</p> <p>5.4 Executives aligned to SEND and the TCSP have agreed that a MH summit will be held in January 2025 that will draw the information aligned to all these actions to inform commissioning intentions aligned to THRIVE needs-based groupings for 2025/26.</p>
6	The length of time children have to wait for support from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) when categorised by the service as low risk	NHS Devon Children and Families Health Devon (CFHD)	The needs of children will be effectively met whilst waiting for mental health interventions.	<p>6.1. CFHD and NHS Devon to review processes to ensure that all children are waiting well and safely, including access to a range of quality assured resources and support.</p> <p>6.2 CFHD will continue to work with NHS Devon to ensure that pathways and resources are optimally utilised to reduce the length of time children and young people are waiting.</p> <p>6.3 Torbay local system to develop and implement consistent processes and principles for any</p>	<p>6.1 31/05/24</p> <p>6.2 Ongoing</p> <p>6.3 Complete</p>	<p>Update 14/10/24</p> <p>6.1 CFHD is introducing a pilot model to respond to children and young people (CYP) on the waiting list.</p> <p>6.2 All senior staff resources are being diverted into the waiting list management to ensure children are allocated to the correct practitioner/specialist to meet the needs of the CYP in a timely manner. If referral rates remain the same, waiting lists should be cleared to under 18weeks by Summer 2025.</p> <p>Local resources list available and distributed to stakeholders</p> <p>Joined up working across Torbay and Devon partners continues.</p> <p>New CFHD website launched in 2024 directing families and professionals to available resources to wait safely.</p>

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
				<p>services targeted at supporting their emotional health and wellbeing to ensure that children wait well and safely.</p> <p>6.4 A procurement to meet the needs of children and young people aligned to the THRIVE framework of getting advice and getting help will be undertaken during 2024/25 so that service offers can 'go live' from April 2025.</p> <p>6.5 NHS Devon is working with the NHSE national Getting it Right First Time (GIRFT) programme to understand the outcomes of NHS Devon's children's mental health services. The outputs and recommendations from this programme will inform next steps.</p>	<p>6.4 01/04/25</p> <p>6.5 31/05/24</p>	<p>Local resources list available and distributed to stakeholders. Joined up working across Torbay and Devon partners continues. New CFHD website launched in 2024 directing families and professionals to available resources to wait safely.</p> <p>6.4. The procurement is underway for a EHWB offer aligned to Getting Advice and Getting Help. It is anticipated that the preferred provider will have a period of mobilisation so that the 'go live' date of the service offer will be from 1st July 2025. Compliance with pre-election guidance resulted in some time delay to the process from the originally planned 'go live' date of 1st April 2025.</p> <p>6.5. NHS Devon completed the data review and GIRFT visit in relation to CYP Community Mental Health Services. A summary of the recommendations was shared with system partners at the CYP EHWB Group in September. Several of the recommendations had been incorporated into data quality plans with CFHD and otherwise completed. It was agreed that the CYP EHWB Group would review progress in December and seek to align the ongoing recommendations with the Devon System MenSat review.</p>
7	Communication between partner agencies when new information is gathered about families where there are existing safeguarding concerns.	Torbay Council	Children with existing safeguarding concerns will be effectively safeguarded through timely and robust information sharing between	7.1 Children's social care have revised their care planning pathways to include a meeting at the point of re-referral, to ensure reflection on previous intervention to mitigate against repeated signposting to services which have had limited impact.	7.1 Complete	7.1 Care planning pathways were updated in December 2023 and endorsed in April 2024 Children's Operational Board.

	What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
			agencies when new information comes to light.	7.2 MASH partnership and social care dip sampling to continually focus on use of chronologies and managerial analysis of children's holistic lived experienced to inform decision-making.	7.2 Complete	7.2 Dip sampling is ongoing as part of established audit cycle and reported to TSCP Business Group. (020724) The CST have instigated a process with weekly reporting of any child that has had 3 PPNs in 3 months. This report is supplied to relevant DDM for that area and reviewed. In consultation with partners the risk grading can be reviewed, and appropriate response instigated. Dip sampling in the MASH Operational group also continues as BAU and feeds into MASH strategic Board.
8	The rigour of the partnership's quality assurance function.	TSCP Quality Assurance Group	Children will benefit from a systematic effectiveness, impact, and compliance check on the effectiveness of multiagency working to safeguard them	8.1 Independent Scrutineer to become a permanent member of the TSCP Quality Assurance Group to bring rigour and support to quality assurance processes. 8.2 TSCP to develop a robust quality assurance framework that aligns to Working Together 2023 arrangements.	8.1 Complete 8.2 30/11/24	8.1 Membership to Quality Assurance Group extended to Independent Scrutineer. Scoping of other areas frameworks undertaken. NC and RS developing framework to go to the business group for sign off. TSCP QA function have completed a QA forward plan.
9	The meaningful involvement of children, families and the wider Torbay community in the development and delivery of strategic priorities and services.	TSCP Torbay Council	Children in Torbay and their families/carers will be given every opportunity to influence and contribute to the development and delivery of strategic priorities and services.	9.1 Torbay Council Participation Team will contribute to the Business Group and feed in the voice of children and families. 9.2. TSCP Quality Assurance Group will use the knowledge of the Participation Team to inform its functions. 9.3 The TSCP Business Group to consider the input of children,	9.1 Complete 9.2 30/11/24 9.3 31/10/24	9.1 Membership to Business Group extended to Participation Team. 9.2 Participation service are attending TSCP Sub-Group 07/11 to discuss what information will be most useful for the group to inform future QA activity. Membership to Business Group now includes participation service, extended to sport, faith and

What needs to improve	Lead Agency	Desired outcomes for children	Action required	Completion date of action.	Update on action taken
			families and communities when developing services, priorities, and policy. 9.4 TSCP Business group membership will be expanded to include sport, faith and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) representatives who can represent a wider community and child voice.	9.4 Complete	voluntary, VCSE representatives. Business group to monitor and review impact on the development or priorities, services and policy. 9.4 Membership to Business Group extended to sport, faith and voluntary, VCSE representatives.

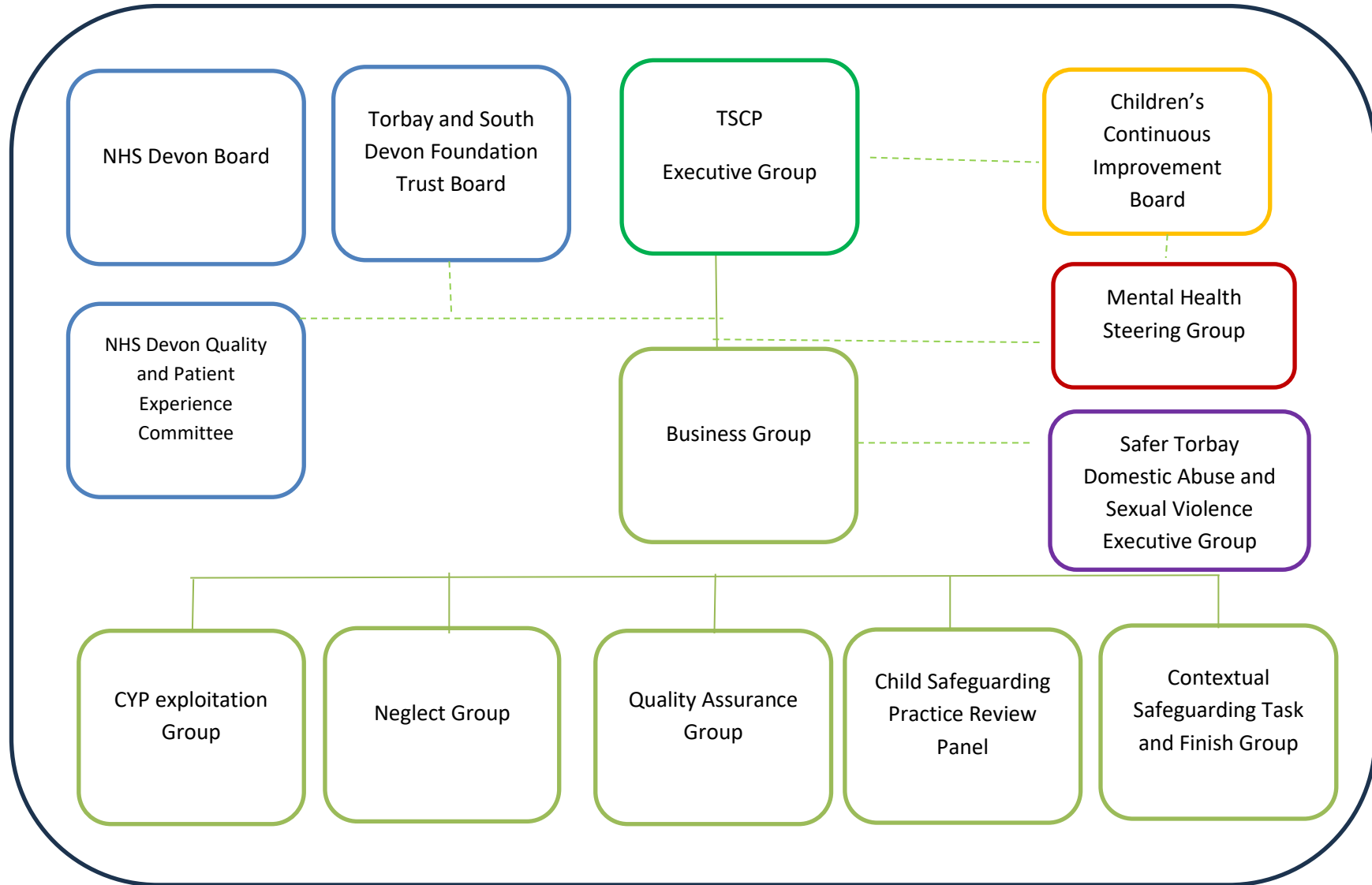
Action plan risks and mitigation matrix:

The purpose of the following risk and mitigations matrix is to ensure that the action plan is sustainable, and its required outcomes are achieved. Key risks are identified below with identified actions to reduce risk. Please note list is not exhaustive and subject to change. Also note that related programme risks are logged in the NHS Devon risk register.

Risks and mitigation matrix				
No.	Identified risk.	Potential outcome on work plan	Mitigation	Status/update- April 24 RAG rating
1.	Organisational capacity to develop and enact action plan.	Competing organisational pressures & disruption regarding capacity of workforce to progress actions within this plan	Working group in place to deliver plan facilitated by NHS Devon safeguarding lead	This is a high priority action plan for NHS Devon, meetings, and capacity to support is in place.
2.	Financial resources and restrictions - query additional local/ national funding	Additional resources will be required to deliver elements of this plans	Being scoped as part of working group	Achievement of plan appears to be with current arrangements at time of writing, but further assurance is required.
3.	Ability to achieve measurable change.	Failure to achieve required outcomes of plan. Performance metrics not available	Measurement metrics being developed as part of audit approach described in this plan	Improved metrics are in the process of being sourced as part of the work described in plan.

Appendix 1: Torbay Local Area Joint Targeted Area (JTAI) Inspection Report Letter – see separate document

Appendix 2 JTAI Governance Structures for reporting progress and multiagency oversight of delivery of this action plan



30 January 2024

Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services, Torbay Council
Bill Shields, Interim Chief Executive, One Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB)
Alison Hernandez, Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Police and Crime
Commissioner
Acting Chief Constable Jim Colwell, Devon and Cornwall Police
Keith Perkin, Independent Scrutineer, Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership
(TSCP)

Dear Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership

Joint targeted area inspection of Torbay

This letter summarises the findings of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk in Torbay.

This inspection took place from 13 November 2023 to 17 November 2023. It was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Headline findings

The Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) was reconstituted in 2020 following a short period of alignment with a neighbouring local authority. Since that time, a clearer focus on the children of Torbay has resulted in a more targeted and cohesive approach to both strategic oversight and the identification and delivery of services to children who may be in need or at risk of harm. The TSCP Executive Group functions effectively and benefits from healthy challenge from independent scrutiny. There have, however, been several changes of senior personnel across the partnership, which has hampered progress against some key strategic priorities, especially children's mental health. Reliable, disaggregated data for Torbay from an integrated care board (ICB) on behalf of health providers and a police force that cover much larger geographical areas is not available to the partnership. Allied with delays in establishing a children's mental health subgroup and insufficient quality assurance, both of which the partner agencies are fully aware of, it is difficult to chart the impact of the partnership on Torbay's children in some key strategic areas.

That said, operationally, partner agencies work well together. Information-sharing and attendance at meetings in the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), child protection strategy discussions and in child protection enquiries is consistently timely and effective. Thresholds for different levels of intervention are jointly understood

across partner agencies and, for the majority of children, risks and support needs are identified early, resulting in the right support at the right time.

Families have direct access to support under the umbrella of early help services, including from the well-regarded family hubs in each of Torbay's three main towns. These make a positive difference to their lives. The risk to missing children and the link to exploitation are well understood and the partnership has made significant progress in this complex area of practice. Practitioners are growing in confidence and expertise, but, in some key areas, such as using new information to understand the impact on children of long-term neglect and domestic abuse, could be more consistent in challenging each other when insufficient progress has been made. This lack of professional curiosity for a small number of children on the part of professionals from local agencies is a more acute and systemic problem within health services. This manifests as insufficient safeguarding oversight by both the Devon ICB and the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust. In particular, this relates to poor safeguarding decisions within the trust when the reasons given by parents or carers for bruises and injuries to children are accepted too readily, and without adequate reference to previous history or wider concerns. The safeguarding partnership has insufficient oversight of these failings.

Area for priority action

Urgent action is required by the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust to assure themselves of the quality and effectiveness of their own safeguarding practice. Too many children remain in situations of risk and harm. Priority action should be taken to address the following areas:

- The failure of senior leaders to have sufficient oversight and assurance of professional curiosity across practice to safeguard children.
- The variable quality of scrutiny and supervision by health staff leading to safeguarding risks in children not being consistently identified and responded to appropriately. A particular area of concern is the management of unexplained injuries to children.

What needs to improve?

- The consistency with which professional curiosity and challenge are applied, particularly in situations in which children living with chronic domestic abuse or neglect are not making progress and situations in which children have unexplained injuries.
- Performance information across the partnership to inform needs analysis and measure the impact of strategic approaches to areas of concern.

- The partnership's strategic approach to children with poor emotional and mental health.
- The length of time children have to wait for support from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) when categorised by the service as low risk.
- Communication between partner agencies when new information is gathered about families where there are existing safeguarding concerns.
- The rigour of the partnership's quality assurance function.
- The meaningful involvement of children, families and the wider Torbay community in the development and delivery of strategic priorities and services.

Strengths

- A strong partnership approach to providing early help is making a positive difference for many children.
- The development of family hubs and the access families have to immediate support.
- Consistently good multi-agency attendance and information-sharing in the MASH supports and protects children. Strategy meetings include the partners that are most important to understanding children's situations.
- The effectiveness of the pre-birth panel to safeguard children.
- The effectiveness of the partnership's response to missing and exploited children.
- The quality of public protection notices (PPNs) and their focus on children's wide-ranging needs.
- Flexibility within midwifery and 0 to 19 services to be responsive to the needs of children and their families.
- The high quality of partnership working when a child is in significant mental health crisis and requires a safeguarding response.
- The positive difference that support to schools from the Torbay Education Support Service (TESS) is making for children.

Main findings

In the MASH, hosted by children's social care, decision-making is timely, and thresholds that trigger appropriate responses are well understood and applied consistently. Relevant background information is gathered about families, including about fathers who are not living with their children, and from agencies outside of Torbay. The co-location of social workers, early help practitioners, health representatives and the TESS facilitates valuable discussion about initial planning. The more limited physical presence of police officers results in them responding to

requests for information rather than actively contributing to decision-making about patterns of concern, and so limits their effectiveness.

Children are visited with appropriate consent from parents or when this has been overridden because of safeguarding concerns. Social workers, police officers and teachers coordinate these visits well so that they are at a time and place where children feel most comfortable. In the interim, the voice of children is evident in the records, as are their wishes. Police notifications to the MASH (PPNs) are detailed and child-focused and capture the presentation and lived experience of children.

Referrals are largely of a high quality. Those made by schools and the information they share are increasingly well focused on the help that will make a difference for children, in part due to the guidance of TESS and by links built at partnership training events. Most contacts and referrals indicate a shared understanding of thresholds by staff across agencies and clearly focus on what information is most valuable. For example, PPNs are submitted once a child goes missing and when they have been found, and research is added to police systems once they have had a return home discussion. This adds richness and detail about the children who go missing and other children and adults who may be at risk or of concern, and about possible 'hot spots'.

The quality of communication, information and decision-making across health services varies significantly, and overall is not good enough. Some of this is attributable to IT systems and practitioners not being able to access information which may include vulnerabilities or relevant family history. However, there is early identification of risk by the midwifery team and effective sharing of this information with health partners and the MASH.

When children are at risk of immediate harm, decisions to proceed to child protection strategy meetings are timely and appropriate and differentiate the risks to individual children in the family clearly. This is also the case when immediate risk is considered outside of office hours by the emergency duty service. Key partner agencies relevant to the child and including schools, colleges, the local authority designated officer and the most relevant health practitioners contribute to decision-making that is recorded clearly. The use of a specialist panel to discuss risks to unborn children also works particularly well in identifying and responding to increased risk. On the few occasions when decisions are taken not to proceed to strategy discussions or not to request child protection medicals for injured children, the rationale for this is not always recorded. These decisions are rarely challenged by partners, even when they are not consistent with what is known about children's level of risk.

Child protection enquiries are mostly thorough. Stronger investigations and assessments are informed by the child's history and incorporate previous involvement by most agencies. Risks and strengths are identified and analysed well, and good management oversight ensures that assessments are concluded quickly

and safely. Support is triggered during these enquiries without delay, and workers show tenacity in making sure that they see the children as soon as possible. The wider partnership includes housing, border patrol and those with specialist knowledge about disability who routinely contribute valuable information. Considerate and sensitive work with most disabled children helps them to understand what professionals are worried about and helps them communicate in the way that they choose. For a few disabled children, key members of the wider family network are not always consulted. Child protection medicals to ensure children's safety are underused and decisions to proceed to strategy discussions rely too heavily on social workers when partner agencies have enough information of concern to initiate those steps.

On those limited number of occasions when practice is weaker, it is usually when more enduring or complex situations need an extra level of assertive and inquisitive practice from one or more of the partner agencies. This is most apparent when children have lived through cycles of domestic abuse or neglect and have parents who struggle with their own mental health. These children are known to agencies in Torbay and are getting support, predominantly from their school and from early help services. When new information is gathered through referrals into the MASH, it is not consistently pieced together with what is already known. Matching this information to threshold criteria in isolation, and a lack of collective reflection, can result in repeated signposting to the same services with little chance of a better outcome. For these same children, information from the paediatric liaison team to health visitors and school nurses is poor, and information from the police is not always fully explored to identify risks to children when family composition changes.

For a small number of children, there is insufficient consideration of safeguarding concerns by partner agencies, particularly when mobile and older children have bruises or injuries. Explanations from parents or carers are often either too readily believed or not sought at all. For these children, child protection medicals are not considered when there are clear benefits to doing so, and medical staff, including consultants, are not challenged by health colleagues or partner agencies. The policy for escalation is easy to follow but rarely applied or used to inform changes to these decisions, leaving children at risk of harm.

For most families receiving support from early help services, there is considerable progress. Schools and the local community have welcomed the family hubs. Families are increasingly able to access early help directly and immediately instead of waiting, including practical support regarding finance, child development and appointments to register births, enabling quick and easy access to wider family-focused services. Early help assessments identify a family's strengths and vulnerabilities well, and the range of support available to respond to these is steadily increasing. The early help panel provides a multi-agency response commensurate with need. Recent increases in

need have led to short delays in consideration by the panel for some families but there is no reduction in support to children in the interim.

Despite some technical glitches that slow down information-sharing in some children's cases, Operation Encompass works well, ensuring that schools and early years settings in Torbay have an increased awareness of the impact on children of living in homes where there is domestic abuse.

Most children benefit from help provided by skilled and committed frontline early help, social care and health practitioners, police officers and school staff working collaboratively to support them and their families and to prevent risk and harm escalating. Police staff understand vulnerability well and routinely complete risk assessments, which they use in their role to protect children. When children go missing, the missing persons safeguarding officer gathers intelligence at several points that helps to build a picture of whether risks of exploitation are increasing. Research by well-trained and supervised police staff in the force control room results in officers arriving at addresses where children are present with a comprehensive understanding of family dynamics and risk. The risk to missing children and the link to exploitation is well understood using multi-agency panels, and a thorough understanding of wider networks, places and spaces where children may be vulnerable. This is noteworthy progress from the very weak understanding prior to the re-establishment of a Torbay-specific safeguarding partnership in 2020, and demonstrates how a strategic approach to systems, processes, communication and training are driving positive change for children.

Although comprehending the extent and severity of children's mental health is a clear priority for TSCP, this is yet to translate into improvements in service delivery. As a result, children are not guaranteed the right support, at the right time, by the right people. For example, where NHS mental health support teams are operational in a school, there are positive outcomes for children, but not all schools have access to this. When a child is in significant mental health crisis and requires a multi-agency safeguarding response, there is good evidence of partnership working and linking in with CAMHS. CAMHS are considered part of the professional network in these cases and engage well with multi-agency colleagues. Outside of this, those children assessed as lower risk face substantial waiting lists and no routine re-evaluation of their mental health. Partner agencies have insufficient understanding of what CAMHS can deliver, and as a result often seek this as a panacea when other support may be more effective and quickly available. Insufficient mental health triage and guidance exacerbates this situation. Schools are increasingly supporting children directly with their mental health alongside charities, and for many children this works well. However, these demands are increasing in complexity, and they do not have the capacity or knowledge to help all children. Management oversight and supervision varies in quality and impact across the partnership. Where it is stronger, for example in the MASH, the social care assessment teams, early help, midwifery and CAMHS,

supervision is systematic, and managers understand thresholds and review progress with families regularly. Conversely, in the emergency department frontline practitioners do not have enough oversight from the safeguarding team or specialist supervision of a good enough quality.

The TSCP executive group has identified a significant weakness in the quality, accuracy, and reliability of the data they can call upon when considering the prevailing needs of Torbay's children. Both the ICB and Devon and Cornwall Police rely on data that relates to areas much larger than Torbay and includes between three and five different local authorities. This severely undermines their ability to identify local needs and track the impact of services. A functioning data dashboard is taking too long to progress and is an understandable priority for the partnership. In the meantime, reliable data from children's social care performance reports alongside local intelligence from schools and the police are used well, for example to react to increased school absences and increased antisocial behaviour. Practice tools such as exploitation toolkits and structured assessments to further understand neglect are being implemented and used by staff but can give little more than a baseline rather than measuring progress for families.

In the absence of sufficient Torbay-specific data, the Quality Assurance subgroup of TSCP is not active enough to give the right level of insight and assuredness about children's safety to the partnership. This is most noticeable given the significant delay in establishing a mental health strategic group and a clear action plan, but equally applies to standards of practice relating to physical abuse. The partnership recognises the need to review how this function is best used. Although limited in number, the multi-agency audits of work with individual children that the TSCP has completed do add rich information about the quality of practice but lack enough focus on the fundamentals of safeguarding. The partnership's insufficient oversight of unexplained injuries to children is an obvious example, but this also applies to initial decision-making when children have poor mental health but are not yet at the point of crisis.

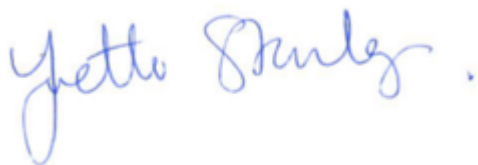
The partnership also recognises, following external review and internal reflection, that the meaningful involvement of children in reviewing and shaping strategy is underdeveloped. Equally, the development of a broader membership, including the local community and specialist health services, is a key priority. However, most staff say that they have a voice and can contribute to strategic priorities. Although the partnership collates aggregated data in relation to multi-agency training, it does not have a detailed breakdown of who attends from each agency or the impact on practice. All staff report positively about the quality and relevance of what is on offer when disciplines come together.

Next steps

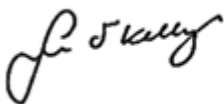
We have determined that One Devon Integrated Care Board is the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in this letter. This should be a multi-agency response involving the individuals and agencies that this report is addressed to. The response should set out the actions for the partnership and, when appropriate, individual agencies. The local safeguarding partners should oversee implementation of the action plan through their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The ICB should send the written statement of action to ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk by 9 May 2024. This statement will inform the lines of enquiry at any future joint or single-agency activity by the inspectorates.

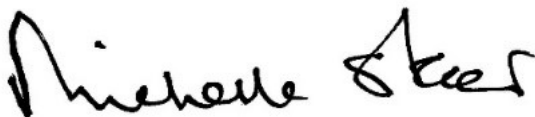
Yours sincerely



Yvette Stanley
National Director Regulation and Social Care, Ofsted



Dr Sean O'Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA
Chief Inspector of Health Care



Michelle Skeer OBE QPM
His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Overview & Scrutiny Report February 2025

This report provides an update on the Torbay Schools Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project and the Schools' Capital Programme.

TORBAY SCHOOLS PFI:

Torbay Council has a PFI contract in place for The Spires College (secondary) and Homelands Primary. The contract expires in October 2027 and Officers are working on the expiry plan for the next 2 and a half years. The main focus at this point in the project is the Expiry Condition. This focuses on ensuring that the assets are handed over to the schools in good condition and in accordance with the clauses set out in the contract. The DfE completed an initial survey in September 2023. This provided an baseline review of the estate and a benchmark for future surveys. The contract now requires the LA to undertake its own independent surveys that will be used to develop a rectification programme for the remainder of the contract. This set of surveys was due to be undertaken in October 2024 (3 years prior to expiry). However, there have been delays in securing the information needed from the PFI Provider and therefore finalising the scope for the surveys. As a result, the survey has been delayed and will now be completed during the February 2025 half-term.

Negotiations with the PFI Provider to rectify any issues identified from the survey will be critical to a successful handover. The current relationship between Torbay Officers and the PFI Provider is collaborative and effective but there is likely to be challenge during the process that will need to be carefully managed.

SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

PRIMARY

St Michael's Academy Free School Paignton

St Michael's Academy is a new "Free School" which is being managed, funded, and delivered by the DfE. The school opened in September 2021 in temporary accommodation with the expectation it would move into its new premises Spring 2022. Unfortunately, this project has experienced unforeseen delays due to the collapse of the main contractor, MIDAS and then a further collapse of the second completion contractor, ISG. Officers are meeting the DfE weekly to gather updates and ensure the project is being progressed. The DfE have recently entered into a PCSA with a new completion contractor, Keir. The permanent/new accommodation is expected to be completed in Spring 2026. Until then the school will remain in temporary accommodation. All current and prospective parents are being kept up to date with the situation. There are no resource implications or risks for the LA as its contribution was to provide the site for the school which is complete.

Windmill Primary School / Inglewood

The conditional approval from DfE for a second free school for Paignton has been withdrawn due to a fall in demand for primary school places across Torbay. A site for a new school is still secure through a S106 agreement for the Inglewood development. Officers are in discussion with the developer regarding the timescale for triggering the S106 transfer of the school land to the Council. At this point there is insufficient demand for the primary school but strategically it is important to secure a site for a school for the longer-term. If primary demand increases then the LA would need to re-submit the free school application or alternatively would need to fund the capital.

SPECIALIST PROVISION

Paignton Academy STEPs & SEN Provision

STEPs is an enhanced resource provision catering for secondary pupils with ASD. The provision is run by Paignton Academy, part of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) and is the only secondary provision of this type within the local area. STEPs is currently located approximately 1.5 miles from the main school site at QED Community Centre. Managing a provision based off site is having a detrimental impact on service delivery with logistic issues and

lack of facilities. The pupils attending the provision have fewer opportunities for integration and miss access to wider facilities such as sport centres, libraries, and social spaces.

The LA and the Trust agree that the only solution to address the ongoing service issues and ensure the provision remains open is to relocate it to the main Academy site. To facilitate the relocation of STEPs, the Academy requires sufficient fit for purpose accommodation to be re-provided on its Borough Road site. To support this relocation, the LA has allocated £750,000 of Higher Needs Provision Capital to this scheme. To ensure value for money and maximise the capital investment, this project has been aligned with the Trust’s strategic vision for the Academy. Rather than treat the relocation in isolation, the Trust has taken the opportunity to review and reconfigure its existing accommodation to better fit its service delivery needs and are contributing £500,000 towards the total cost.

This has resulted in a two-phase capital project.

- Phase 1 will be the refurbishment of existing library area into a suitable environment for an enhanced resource unit for the relocation of STEPs.
- Phase 2 will consist of the demolition of 2 condemned mobiles and the building of a new block with 2 purpose-built spaces to accommodate PAs existing onsite SEND provision. The academy’s library will then move into the space vacated by the onsite SEND unit.

The entire project is being managed by the Council in collaboration with the TRUST. The works are currently on site. Phase 1 was completed in September 2024 and Phase 2 will be completed by September 2025.

Higher Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA)

The Council has an unallocated balance of £3.6m HNPCA. The table below indicates the projects in the pipeline for this funding. These are in the early stages of development and will require further feasibility work to establish actual costs. There are further discussions pending regarding the allocation of the remaining balance.

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT PROPOSAL/DETAIL	Indicative Budget
YMCA	Refurbishment of YMCA Building - ON HOLD PENDING A DECISION BY COUNCIL ON LONGER TERM SERVICE NEEDS	£ 185,000
Locality Pilot	Funding applications invited from schools to increase SEND provision within schools. Linked to Locality Pilot.	£ 1,000,000
Combe Pafford	Sensory Room development	£ 50,000
Mayfield Chestnut	Expansion: Additional 8 places	£ 50,000
Mayfield Torquay	Expansion: Additional 25 places	TBC
Mayfield Post16	Relocation to MyPlace from Ocombe House	£ 500,000
Brunel	Expansion: Additional 8 places	£ 80,000
Brunel	Supported Internships	£ 100,000
Sub total		£ 1,965,000
Funding available		£ 3,600,000
Balance/contingency		£ 1,635,000

LA Repairs & Maintenance Programme

This is a rolling programme of essential repairs and maintenance projects at LA maintained schools. The LA currently has a carry forward of £342,278 from previous years and an allocation of £348,883 for 2024-25. Officers have reviewed recent condition surveys to identify priorities. These include projects which reduce school’s carbon emissions supporting the Council’s pledge to become carbon neutral. Works included in this programme are:

School	Description of Works	Agreed Budget
Cockington Primary	Cockington School Latent Defects	£595
Mayfield BXM Chestnut	Boiler replacement. It is no longer possible to source replacement parts. A temporary 'fix' in place whilst investigating Air Source Heat Pumps.	£30,000
	To bring electrical wiring up to current regulations & address EICR defects	£10,856
	Construct a new bitumen macadam footway crossing	£1,639
Mayfield PTN Ocombe House	Gas compliance works	£4,204
	Rationalisation of redundant pipework to reduce risk of legionella	£6,639
	Drainage	£1,246
	Intruder alarm upgrade. Existing system failing causing false alarms	£17,382
Mayfield, TQY	Ocombe House Electrical & Lighting	£6,402
	Works to address bowing masonry	£20,000
	To bring electrical wiring up to current regulations & address EICR defects	£16,799
	To replace the air handling unit in the hydrotherapy pool area with a heat recovery unit to address temperature & humidity issues	£131,811
	Contribution to Solar PV installation	£29,716
Sherwell Valley PS	To address external emergency lighting issues throughout the site & replace exit boxes for all blocks	£15,000
	To review fire doors throughout the site & address shortfalls	£14,540
	To refurbish Year 3 Girls & Boys and Year 4 Boy's toilets	£40,000
	Plastered/rendered block masonry to window reveal.	£6,078
	Fencing	£23,807
Watcombe PS	To install Manual Call points throughout school linked to fire system	£6,386
	To rationalise and improve electrical installations throughout	£11,740
	Emergency lighting works	£3,171
	Match funding to support school's installation of solar panels	£12,000
	Gas Leak in main boiler room - replacement pipework/repair	£4,600
	Latent defects - Watcombe Nursery Heat Pump Installation	£2,802
White Rock PS	To replace boiler in Block N with heat source pump	£70,000
	To install emergency lighting & address electrical issues	£6,688
White Rock Defects	Survey work over summer 2024	£105,000
Sherwell Valley PS SALIX BID	To design and undertake feasibility of new carbon neutral heating system for entire school site and submission of Salix bid	£10,000
TOTAL		£609,101

Any unallocated funding is held to address unforeseen breakdowns or works that may be needed during the year, particularly during the winter.

For further information on any of these projects, or the Children's Services Capital Programme, please contact:

Clare Talbot

Education Team – Pride & Place

clare.talbot@torbay.gov.uk

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SEND Commissioned Numbers Change Proposal

Report Title: Update on Local Government Association Peer Review of Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Agenda item:

Prepared By:	Head of SEND and Inclusion – Hannah Baker	Contributors:	
Partner Organisation:			
Date Prepared:	17th February 2025	Date of Meeting:	

1. Purpose

The Local Government Association Review took place in November 2024. This peer review was requested to support the Local Area in its aim to reset and review improvement in the following agreed key areas:

- Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.
- Statutory EHCP processes including identification, assessment and meeting needs of children and young people with special educational needs and /or disability.
- Sufficiency of provision to meet needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Lived Experience/Impact with a focus on children and young people with SEND and EHC plans to prepare them for adulthood and have their outcomes improved.
- How local area partners work together to coproduce with children and young people and their families to drive outcomes and improve the SEND system.
- Resilience of the Parent Carer Forum “Family Voice Torbay”

The team of peer challengers reviewed the following:

- Peers reviewed a range of detailed performance information and strategic documents to ensure we were familiar with the local area SEND partnership, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future.
- Reviewed 16 EHCPs and associated documents.
- The peer team gathered information and views from more than 42 meetings and visits to schools and a range of other provision across the local area.
- We spoke to parents/carers and young people and more than 100 council and health staff, council members and external stakeholders.
- This peer challenge has been in depth, and we have devoted a total of 240 hours whilst we were on site in Torbay.

Data Analysis -

The Peer Review Team analysed our own data and reflected this back to the Partnership to show the areas of key concern:

1. 42% rise in EHCPs between 2017-22 and a continued rise in requests to assess
2. Only 2 of 5 non-selective secondary schools are Ofsted Good or better with nearly 47% of Torbay resident secondary school students attending provision that is currently less than

good

3. Suspensions are rising rapidly with only Norfolk suspending a greater proportion at primary.
4. 75% of all exclusions are children with SEND (88% in primary schools)
5. Those excluded struggle to find mainstream places due to resistance from schools to accept pupils through Fair Access
6. Alternative Provision for children excluded is beyond capacity
7. EHE numbers have risen rapidly since 2019 and continue to rise at a rate of circa 8.3 per week
8. Of those EHE families who responded to a survey on reasons for EHE, 61% indicated a failure to meet SEND needs and to prevent mental health issue.
9. The number of EHE equates to a loss of £2.5mill to school budgets.
10. School absence including part-time timetables is high with absence due to illness being the highest of all local authorities in primary and the second highest in secondary
11. Children receiving education other than at school (EOTAS) include 39 on EHCPs, 28 of whom are of statutory school age
12. 682 children and young people are currently waiting for an initial assessment for their mental health needs.
13. We have been told of waiting times of two year for speech and language therapy and three years for neurodevelopmental assessments.

The Review culminated in a list of recommendations which were presented to the Partnership. Although we are still awaiting the official report from this review included here is the PowerPoint Presentation which shows their observations and recommendations.

See Appendix 1

Action Plan and Next Steps:

- The Partnership has formulated an Action Plan for the next steps for the Partnership.
- A copy of the action plan generated from the recommendations is attached here.
- For the actions which are specific to one agency the recommendations have been reviewed within the single agency, with some wider partnership recommendations being integrated into the new SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership Action Plan which has just been ratified to be developed under the new governance of this Board.

See Appendix 2

Torbay SEND Peer Challenge

Feedback from the peer challenge team

Peer Challenge 19th to 21st November 2024

21st November 2024

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The peer challenge team

- **Lead Peer-** Chris Munday Executive Director Children and Families
London Borough of Barnet
- **Education Peer -** Paul Wagstaff Director of Education Luton Borough
Council
- **Local Authority SEND Peer -** Mary Jarrett Head of Integrated SEND
London Borough of Haringey Council
- **Health Peer -** Gill Tyler Designated Clinical Officer for SEND Cheshire
and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.
- **Parent/Carer Peer -** Kirsten Peebles Independent Lived Experience
Consultant.
- **Peer Challenge Manager-** Cliff James LGA Associate
- **LGA Case Review Peers -** Tracey Newcomb and Helen Gulvin LGA
Associates



The purpose of peer challenge

- Provides councils and partners with an external view on the effectiveness of the strategic response and the quality of practice.
- Conducted in an open and honest manner that jointly identifies strengths & areas for consideration.
- Provides feedback based on a brief engagement with the Council and partners.



The process of peer challenge

- Peers reviewed a range of detailed performance information and strategic documents to ensure we were familiar with the local area SEND partnership, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future.
- Reviewed 16 EHCPs and associated documents.
- The peer team gathered information and views from more than 42 meetings and visits to schools and a range of other provision across the local area.
- We spoke to parents/carers and young people and more than 100 council and health staff, council members and external stakeholders.
- This peer challenge has been in depth, and we have devoted a total of 240 hours whilst we were on site in Torbay.

Scope and Key Lines of Enquiry of Torbay SEND Peer Challenge.

- Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.
- Statutory EHCP processes including identification, assessment and meeting needs of children and young people with special educational needs and /or disability.
- Sufficiency of provision to meet needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Lived Experience/Impact with a focus on children and young people with SEND and EHC plans to prepare them for adulthood and have their outcomes improved.

Scope and Key Lines of Enquiry of Torbay SEND Peer Challenge.

- How local area partners work together to coproduce with children and young people and their families to drive outcomes and improve the SEND system.
- Resilience of the Parent Carer Forum “ Family Voice Torbay”

Your data

- 42% rise in EHCPs between 2017-22 and continued rise in requests to assess
- Only 2 of 5 non-selective secondary schools are Ofsted Good or better with nearly 47% of Torbay resident secondary school students attending provision that is currently less than good
- Suspensions are rising rapidly with only Norfolk suspending a greater proportion at primary;
- 75% of all exclusions are children with SEND (88% in primary schools)
- Those excluded struggle to find mainstream places due to resistance from schools to accept pupils through Fair Access
- Alternative Provision for children excluded is beyond capacity
- EHE numbers have risen rapidly since 2019 and continue to rise at a rate of circa 8.3 per week

Your data

- Of those EHE families who responded to a survey on reasons for EHE, 61% indicated a failure to meet SEND needs and to prevent mental health issue;
- The number of EHE equates to a loss of £2.5mill to school budgets;
- School absence including part-time timetables is high with absence due to illness being the highest of all local authorities in primary and the second highest in secondary
- Children receiving education other than at school (EOTAS) include 39 on EHCPs, 28 of whom are of statutory school age
- 682 children and young people are currently waiting for an initial assessment for their mental health needs.
- We have been told of waiting times of two year for speech and language therapy and three years for neurodevelopmental assessments.

Overall messages and observations

- Torbay SEND Partnership needs greater aspirations and ambitions for its children with additional needs.
- The leadership and commitment from the DCS and some other council officers is acknowledged and identified across the partnership.
- There is enthusiasm and commitment across the local area to improve services and we identified areas of good practice .
- There are some good examples of co-production with young people but parents/carers is underdeveloped.
- Torbay Council recognises that the pace of change across the partnership since the 2021 Ofsted/CQC Inspection has been too slow.
- Although there has been lots of activity this has not had sufficient impact, or made the necessary improvements.

Overall messages and observations

- Health waiting lists and delays for assessment are and remain stubbornly high and plans to address this are weak. This has a profound impact on outcomes for children.
- There is low confidence and trust in the local area Special Educational Needs and Disability partnership.
- The service offer across the local area is underdeveloped for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families leading to an overreliance on statutory processes.
- School partners have expressed serious concerns about the proposed Locality Model and their involvement in its development.

What you have said to us

My caseworker is helpful and will always respond and point me in the right direction

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Health waiting lists are a real problem to access a diagnosis and treatment.

- Listen to what parents are saying and act.

It's traumatic coming into contact with services.

We are not included even though we see the child every day

My child needs an Education, Health and Care Plan to be able to access the right support.

Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.

Strengths

- DCS is highly respected and passionate about improving outcomes for children and young people.
- There has been a sea change in the range and quality of data available to support decision making.
- The approach to quality assurance is robust but not yet fully embedded.
- The focused activity on developing the quality of EHCPs is bearing fruit.
- Early years provision is innovative and highly valued by parents and carers.
- The child centred approach from Heads of Service (SEND and Vulnerable Children) in the council is recognised by partners.

Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.

Strengths

- SENCO Forums are effective and valued
- Early Years support for Autism and Communication and Advisory Teacher are well regarded.
- Early Years Inclusion Funding is accessible and well used.
- Special Schools' outreach is highly valued.
- The ICB has restructured to create a Women, Children and Young People Directorate to support change.

Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.

Areas for development

- These issues are long-standing, and stubborn to resolve.
- Engagement with school leaders to support strategic developments.
- Leadership of school improvement and holding schools to account for outcomes and provision for children with SEND and vulnerabilities is lacking.
- Education and SEND strategies require development to support a shared understanding of inclusion across the local area partnership.
- There is a weak implementation of the Graduated Approach with a lack of evidence of early interventions for school aged and older children.
- Lack of specialist advisory support for teaching and learning in schools for children with autism, speech and language, SEMH and complex needs.

Leadership and Governance

Areas for development

- Lack of educational psychology core offer to all schools.
- There is a learned expectation of having an Education, Health and Care Plan, rather than needs being met at an earlier level through ordinarily available provision.
- Inclusion and ordinarily available services are not embedded in all mainstream schools and needs further development.
- Parents and carers lack trust in how the local area partnership is meeting the needs of their children and young people.
- Implementation of the Peacock Governance Review recommendations is not embedded.

Leadership and Governance of SEND across the local area.

Areas for development

- There is a lack understanding why Elective Home Education has increased and some people interviewed believe it may be linked to schools not making reasonable adjustments.
- Addressing the significant growth of children and young people with SEMH needs.
- Limited visibility in schools of leadership and operational support from health partners for children with SEND.
- Joint commissioning arrangements are significantly underdeveloped.

Statutory EHCP processes including identification, assessment and meeting needs of children and young people with SEND.

Strengths

- Statutory functions have been enhanced and have improved the quality of EHC assessments and plans.
- SEND caseworkers are highly valued by parents/carers and SENCOs.
- EHCPs and Annual Reviews are being quality assured and audited .
- Education Psychology Service is well respected and valued.
- The local area has a Designated Clinical Officer and Designated Social Care Officer in place.

Statutory EHCP processes including identification, assessment and meeting needs of children and young people with SEND.

Areas for development

- Timeliness of EHC assessments and annual reviews needs to be improved to ensure children's needs are met through appropriate provision.
- Early intervention for children and young people at risk of statutory SEND processes needs enhancing across schools.
- Compliance with the Code of Practice and learning from caselaw e.g. Devon ruling and use of Section G is not understood and embedded.
- EHCNA and annual reviews are not fully informed because children are waiting too long for mental health, neurodevelopmental and speech and language assessments.

Sufficiency of provision to meet needs of children and young people with SEND.

Strengths

- Committed and passionate practitioners across all sectors who want to make a difference.
- The early years and 0 to 19 offer based in Family Hubs is effective and well regarded .
- Special schools and alternative provision is valued by many children, young people and their families.
- Social Care have access to capital budget to support foster carers to look after children with complex needs.
- There are some innovative and supportive voluntary sector providers that are making a real difference to the lived experience of parents and carers.

Sufficiency of provision to meet needs of children and young people with SEND.

Areas for development

- Your data shows the current range of specialist provision and spend is not meeting children's special educational needs in Torbay
- There is a high level of spend on spot purchasing independent alternative provision which would benefit from review.
- With the right advice and support, a much higher proportion of children and young people could have their needs met within mainstream education.
- Once a child is placed in specialist provision, they tend to remain in that provision with no reintegration into, or partnership with, mainstream provision.

Sufficiency of provision to meet needs of children and young people with SEND.

Areas for development

- Analysis of data is not used or shared strategically by senior leaders (Council, schools and Integrated Care Board) to determine best use of resources including early intervention.
- The full emotional health and wellbeing support offer is limited and not understood. Children are waiting too long to get help.
- The speech and language service commission is not meeting or preventing an escalation of need.
- The Local Offer is not easily accessible, and families struggle to identify local providers to help meet their needs.
- We have been told that short breaks provision is not sufficient to meet need. Parents struggle to use personal budgets due to lack of available providers.



Lived Experience/Impact with a focus on children and young people with SEND and EHC plans to prepare them for adulthood and have their outcomes improved.

Strengths

Page 64

- Mayfield School sixth form is greatly valued.
- South Devon College are outstanding for its SEND provision and have a variety of preparing for adulthood pathways.
- Social Care and EHCP Transitions Panel meets regularly and tracks young people.
- Innovative examples of post 19 provision e.g. Sound Communities.



Lived Experience/Impact with a focus on children and young people with SEND and EHC plans to prepare them for adulthood and have their outcomes improved.

Areas for Development

- Too many young people are NEET.
- Post 16 offer appears limited and needs further development especially for young people with SEMH.
- Too many young people directly apply themselves for EHCPs indicating a lack of appropriate provision and timely support to meet their needs.
- There are limited opportunities for supported internships. The SEND partnership is not providing opportunities for supported internships themselves.

How local area partners work together to co-produce with children and young people and their families to drive outcomes and improve the SEND system.

Strengths

- Youth Participation Worker in post.
- Youth forum involved in developing videos and recruiting staff.
- CAMHS safety plans are co-written with young people.
- Graduated Response documents were co-produced with families and schools.

How local area partners work together to co-produce with children and young people and their families to drive outcomes and improve the SEND system.

Areas for development

- Evidence of good quality co-production is hard to find, and we found no evidence of an agreed framework in which this takes place in practice.
- Little evidence that parents/carers are consciously considered.
- Parents are not systematically engaged when developing new processes, systems and services e.g. audit, decision making panels.



Resilience of the Parent Carer Forum- Family Voice Torbay

Areas for Development

- We have been unable to engage with the Parent Carer Forum at a strategic level to provide evidence for this KLOE.
- Parents outside of the Parent Carer Forum have told Peers that they wish to engage with the local SEND partnership to enhance their strategic voice, influence and improve services.



Recommendations

1. The local area partnership needs a fundamental reset to facilitate greater communication and engagement with families, school leaders and other critical stakeholders focused on improving outcomes for children.
2. There needs to be significantly enhanced strategic education leadership in the Council to deliver the recommended reset and drive improvement.
3. The Councils systems leadership role in education must be strengthened to improve outcomes and accountability.
4. Develop and implement a shared outcomes framework for children and young people which drives cultural change and purposeful activity across the partnership and demonstrates the **shared** vision; based on a **shared** understanding of data.

Recommendations

5. Sustainable investment to tackle waiting times for health services for children and young people in Torbay must be prioritised by the Integrated Care Board.
6. Joint Commissioning between the Council and Integrated Care Board has been the focus of multiple recommendations from respective inspectorates however little progress has been made. The partnership needs to get a grip on this and resolve within clear timescales.
7. The Council needs to assure itself that it is compliant with the Code of Practice and relevant caselaw around its statutory processes.
8. To reduce the future demands on the Designated Schools Grant the Council needs to ensure, with Schools Forum, sufficient resource is focused on sustainable early intervention and prevention e.g., investing in Advisory Teachers for autism, SEMH and inclusion.

Recommendations

9. The partnership needs to understand and tackle the high numbers of children who are out of school for a variety of reasons and the impact on their outcomes e.g. school absence/exclusions/suspensions/elective home education/educated other than at school and emotionally based school avoidance.

10. Torbay needs to invest time and energy and follow best practice to develop its approach to genuine co-production with a wider range of parents and parent groups e.g. adopting the '4 Cornerstones of Co-production' to build trust.

11. The proposals and practical implications for the Locality Model need to be urgently reviewed prior to decision making following feedback from school partners.

Next Steps

- Chance to reflect on our findings and recommendations.
- Use this presentation to share as helpful, and for feedback to contributors to this Peer Challenge.
- Draft report issues to Torbay SEND Partnership within 4 weeks.
- Final version agreed and issued.
- Barbara Peacock Local Government Association - Special Educational Needs and Disability Improvement Advisor available for further discussions and support

LGA Peer Review – SEND

Action Plan V1.0

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Completion Date	Progress Update	Impact
1.	The local partnership needs a fundamental reset to facilitate greater communication and engagement with families, school leaders and other critical stakeholders focused on improving outcomes for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Vision and Strategy to lead this recommendation – through SLAIP from March25 	SLAIP - HB	July25		
2.	There needs to be significant enhanced strategic education leadership in the Council to deliver the recommended reset and drive improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children’s Services review of roles within Education team and plan for enhanced capacity within schools support. This will provide the reset required to drive change. 	Nancy Meehan	May 2025		
3.	The Council’s system leadership role in education must be strengthened to improve outcomes and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Nancy Meehan	May 2025		
4.	Develop and implement a shared outcomes framework for children and young people which drives cultural change and purposeful activity across the partnership and demonstrates the shared vision; based on a shared understanding of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational Vision and Strategy to lead this recommendation – through Education Leadership Group and then to the SLAIP from March25 	ELG/ SLAIP – NM/HB	July25		
5.	Sustainable investment to tackle waiting times for health services for children and young people in Torbay must be prioritised by Devon Integrated Care Board and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICB are responsible for this action and are formulating further action plans which will sit in the new SEND governance (SLAIP) 	SLAIP - ICB	Unknown as yet		

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Appendix 2
Agenda Item 7

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Completion Date	Progress Update	Impact
	Devon and Torbay Integrated Care System					
6.	Joint commissioning between the Council and Integrated Care Board has been the focus of multiple recommendations from respective inspectorates however little progress has been made. The partnership needs to get a grip of this and resolve within clear timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be a joint focus area in the new SEND governance to be held accountable through the SLAIP 	SLAIP – Whole partnership	Unknown as yet		
7	The Council needs to assure itself that it is compliant with the Code of Practice and relevant caselaw around its statutory processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review has been undertaken with Audit team and dip sample completed. N.B Wish to challenge this as it was suggested from a 1/16 sample they completed. Dip sample findings have not suggested this is the case. 	HB	Completed		
8.	To reduce the future demands on the Designated School Grant the Council needs to ensure, with the Schools Forum, sufficient resource is focused on sustainable early intervention and prevention e.g. investing in Advisory Teachers for children with autism, social, emotional and mental health needs and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locality Model pilot will test and trial these methods. Model of advisory teachers needs to be reviewed as this wouldn't be currently possible with the budget deficits. 	HB	December 2025		
9.	The partnership needs to understand and tackle the high numbers of children who are out of school for a variety of reasons and the impact on their outcomes e.g. school absence/exclusion/suspension/elective home education/education other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be a joint focus area in the new SEND governance to be held accountable through the SLAIP. There have been numerous interventions to improve these areas. Further work needs to be part of the wider 	SLAIP - HB/DH	December 2025		

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Completion Date	Progress Update	Impact
	than at school and emotional based school avoidance	Education Leadership Group and Inclusion Strategy for the Area.				
10.	Torbay needs to invest time and energy and follow best practice to develop its approach to genuine co-production with a wide range of parents and parent groups e.g. adopting the '4 Cornerstones of Co-Production' to build trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay already has a Coproduction Charter but this did not seem to be recognised by the review. Further work to embed this charter now needs to be a focus. This will be a joint focus area in the new SEND governance to be held accountable through the SLAIP 	Partnership SLAIP	- From March 25		
11.	The proposals and practical implications for the proposed Locality Model needs to be urgently reviewed as part of the current consultation process and prior to decision making following feedback from school partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would wish to challenge this recommendation as this was a judgement made after talking to a small number of headteachers when the consultation process was part way through. There are now 32 / 35 primary schools signed up for the pilot which is being coproduced with participating schools and commences in June. 	Lead - HB	June – December Pilot		

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

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
18/11/24	29	The Clerk was requested to follow up on outstanding responses from the NHS and Police.	Chased 7 January 2025 and 14 February 2025. 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. – Complete response circulated 17.2.25
27/1/25	33	<p>That the Director of Children's Services be requested to prepare a full report on the service changes at the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Units and submit it to a future meeting of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board, with key lines of enquiry to include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. please provide details of the consultation that took place in the formative stage prior to the decision being made by the Council; 2. what were the results of this consultation for Torbay children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) carried out by the Council and did it change the proposed decision taken forward?; 3. please provide details of any consultation which took place following this decision being made public and any action taken as a result; 4. what alternative options were proposed to Torbay parents for their child's Special 	Key Lines of Enquiry and Process have been agreed waiting on confirmation of date of meeting.

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		<p>Educational Needs (SEN) provision if they did not agree with the Council's proposed EHCP delivery from September? Where would the nearest Hearing Impairment Units be if they wished their child to attend a dedicated Hearing Impairment Unit?;</p> <p>5. did the local authority consider the impact of this decision beyond children under their statutory care with an EHCP?;</p> <p>6. how many children from Torbay are currently receiving some form of support from the hearing unit both with and without an EHCP, and how are these predicted to change over the coming 5 years?;</p> <p>7. what assurance can be provided that future needs of all children in Torbay who need support with their hearing, including those with an EHCP and those without and an EHCP, will continue to be reviewed and met?;</p> <p>8. was any external advice or support sought on the proposal, if so who from and how did this inform the process?;</p> <p>9. why was the option to reduce the size of the units further or to close one and move the</p>	

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		<p>support to a single unit not considered as alternative options?;</p> <p>10. what lessons have been learned from this process?; and</p> <p>11. contextual information about the framework for SEND how it is structured and funded, what will change as a result of the decision and how can the voice of the child can be included; and</p> <p>That, in light of the letters received from St Margarets and Spires, the Democratic Services Officer be requested to arrange a briefing with Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board to discuss the issues of concern and finalise the key lines of enquiry to inform the officer's report.</p>	
	34	<p>The consultation had been shared with schools but had taken place during the summer. Schools would be invited to attend the Discovery Day (a written response would be provided on who from schools would be invited e.g. staff and children).</p> <p>1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the update and the progress made to date on the UNICEF work to be a Child Friendly Torbay; and</p>	<p>Allison Grant has provided a presentation to TAPS and TASH and have invited all schools to be more involved in the project.</p> <p>From this, 3 schools volunteered to be more involved (Mayfield School and College, Oldway Primary School and Shiphay Primary School) and engagement is developing with these schools. She will also be trying to involve more schools in the next few weeks. The children, parents and staff involved</p>

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		2. that all Councillors be encouraged to attend the training and the Discovery Day and encourage as many people as possible to attend the Discovery Day to support the UNICEF Child Friendly Programme and help the Council to achieve our 'recognition' status.	from these schools will be invited to the Discovery Day. The Discovery Day is on 25 April 2025 and Teresa to email all Councillors to encourage attendance – circulated on 25.2.25. Teresa is in the process of agreeing a date for UNICEF Child Friendly training for all Councillors.
	35	1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the report as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and 2. that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the contents of the Adopt South West Annual Report 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.	Complete – report presented to Cabinet 18 February 2025.
	36	The Sub-Board noted the contents of the submitted report and requested a copy of the After Action Review to be circulated to them once it was available.	Complete - This was an After Action review which is slightly different to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review, which takes place under a clear statutory framework. As After Action reviews are consent based, and are not written so as to be published, I am unable to share this with Members as we do not have informed consent and the information within the review may be identifiable.
	38	1. that Beth Dallow be thanked for attending the meeting and sharing her views and the views of other care experienced young people on the review of Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to cared for and care experienced	1. letter sent to Beth on 11.2.25 - complete 2. Cllr Twelves to update 3. Complete – added to the Work Programme

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		<p>children/young people and that Beth be welcome to attend future meetings;</p> <p>2. that Councillor Twelves as Strand Lead for Participation meet with Beth Dallow and other young people to help understand their views and champion this through the Corporate Parenting Board;</p> <p>3. that the revised Our Promise to You - The Torbay Pledge to cared for and care experienced children/young people be presented to a future meeting of the Board so that Members can be assured that it has been updated to reflect the views of young people and how it will be communicated and rolled out; and</p> <p>4. that in light of the importance of the role the Director of Corporate Services be requested to include responsibility as Corporate Parents in all staff job descriptions and as part of their annual appraisal to demonstrate what staff are doing to support our cared for and care experience young people.</p>	<p>4. Email sent to Matthew Fairclough-Kay 11.2.25 to consider the request.</p>
	39	<p>That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board endorses the Virtual School Annual report for 2023/2024.</p>	<p>Complete</p>

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	40	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="510 276 1299 786">1. that Council be recommended that the Membership of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board be amended to remove the Care Experienced young person and Young Person Panel Non-Voting Co-opted Member representatives from the Board but request that the Democratic Services Team Leader to work with the Participation Officers to invite representatives from the Children in Care Council, SEND Youth Forum or Young Person's Panel to participate in meetings where there are specific areas of interest to them so as to hear the voice of the children and young people at the meetings; <li data-bbox="510 826 1299 970">2. that Councillor Nicolaou send an invite to Members of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board for the event with young people on 7 February 2025; and <li data-bbox="510 1010 1299 1153">3. that Members of the Sub-Board identify other groups that would want to be involved and come along to meetings of the Sub-Board and report back to a future meeting. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1321 276 2069 451">1. Complete – this will be picked up in the report to Annual Council on 15 May 2025. Teresa Buckley has sent the current and emerging Work Programmes to the Participation Officers and is liaising with them on attendance by young people. <li data-bbox="1321 491 2069 531">2. Councillor Nicolaou to provide an update. <li data-bbox="1321 571 2069 611">3. Sub-Board to update.