

Internships – Report of the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

Report to Cabinet on 9 July 2024

Background

1. The Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board met on 22 April 2024 to consider a report which provided an update on the progress being made against the Torbay Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Joint Written Statement of Action. The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services requested his thanks to be placed on record to the Chairwoman of the Sub-Board for attending a meeting with Ofsted on his behalf to discuss the progress made. The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services acknowledged that there was a long way to go, and the Council and its partners needed to deliver all the things they promised to deliver but that we were more self-aware.
2. It was noted that there had been a change in regime with a new framework in place which the Area would be judged against in addition to the 8 areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection held in November 2021. This would focus on an audit of children and young persons who had an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and were registered for SEND support. There was still a lot of challenge nationally as well as locally in respect of SEND, this had been incorporated into the new SEND Strategy which covered the next five to ten years and had been coproduced with young people, parents, health, education and social care with five key priority areas identified. It was highlighted that SEND was everyone’s business. A draft self-assessment had been developed and would be presented to a regional engagement meeting in June with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission to learn with others how to make further improvements in SEND.
3. The Sub-Board asked a number of questions in relation to what progress had been made on waiting lists, particularly speech and language; what was being done to identify speech and language in early years; were the Family Hubs involved in helping families with SEND; what were the Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) figures currently and where were they when we were inspected.
4. In response to questions, it was noted that waiting lists were still long but that alternative options were being explored looking at community recovery and additional investments. The importance of identifying speech and language difficulties at an early age was a key priority and work had been undertaken

with early years providers to train them how to recognise and signpost parents to support for SEND. Work and training was also undertaken with primary and secondary schools and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) was being delivered through the Family Hubs and a dedicated social care officer based within the Team responsible for the Family Hubs so they link across all services. A link between people with speech and language difficulties entering into the Youth Justice system was also highlighted.

5. The NEET figures were 45 when we were inspected with a target to reduce to 15 by April and by July 0 and as of April 2024 there were 8 people with SEND who were NEET. It was noted that Torbay has a transient population which fluctuated over the academic year. The Council was looking at a better way to forecast need and pathways for young people including internships and the creation of an Internship Forum looking at as many businesses as possible to sign up. It was noted that more care experienced young people were NEET and the overall numbers were 257 which was still too high. This linked to the Child Friendly Community work to inspire young people to want to be in education or employment and the voice of the young person was being heard and gathered in this work. Members also noted the work carried out by Play Torbay around training and apprenticeships.
6. Members acknowledged the multi-agency and maturity of the Local Area work being undertaken to address the recommendations from the Inspection but that there was still further work to be done.
7. The background papers can be found at [Torbay Local Area SEND Joint Inspection Written Statement of Action.pdf](#)
8. The Sub-Board reflected and debated the information provided to them, both verbal and written and formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet which was approved unanimously.
9. **Recommendation**
 - 9.1 That the Cabinet be requested to work with Council Directors to identify more opportunities for internships within Torbay Council and SWISCo for our young people, including those with SEND.