

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

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2025

**Wards affected:** All

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

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

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its Benefits

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

2.5 The Youth Justice Plan contributes to the desired outcomes of the Community and Corporate Plan: -

*'We want Torbay and its residents to thrive'*

The Youth Justice Service works with vulnerable children whose offending behaviour if not addressed is likely to have lifelong impact on their ability to thrive.

*'where our children and older people will have high aspirations'*

The Youth Justice Service supports children to develop alternatives to their current behaviours and raise their expectations and aspirations.

*'Build safer communities'*

- *Work with partners to tackle crime, including exploitation, and its effects.*
- *Work with partners to reduce offending and reoffending and its impacts*
- *Work with partners to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence and its effects'*

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

### 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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

## Appendices

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

## Background Documents

N/A

# Supporting Information

## 1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. Options under consideration

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2.1 N/A

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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3.1 N/A

## 4. Legal Implications

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4.1 N/A

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

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5.1 N/A

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

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6.1 N/A

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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7.1 N/A

## 8. Associated Risks

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8.1 N/A

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

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	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Positive Impact for children who have or are likely to offend		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability	Positive impact for children with SEND as they receive intensive support package		
Women or men	77% of children in contact with YJS are male. Young males are more likely to criminalised for their behaviour & therefore referred to the service.		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact

Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No differential impact
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No differential impact

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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10.1 None

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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