

## Torbay's Youth Offer Update for the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Written on 15/10/2023

### **Current situation:**

The creation of The Youth Hub as part of Children's Services was undertaken in response to the need and intention to improve the coordination and communication of opportunities for young people. Under the Youth Hub sits and will sit the Youth Service, the Young Carers Service, HAF, the Youth Parliament, the YIF, the funded community-based youth clubs and elements of the Child Friendly Torbay work.

### **Youth Service:**

The Youth Service transferred back to the direct management of Children's Services on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. The service is made up of 3 full time staff and one member of staff working 5 hours per week. The Youth Service offered a 12-week targeted 1-1 offer for young people referred via Early Help, and four group sessions for young people who had undertaken the 1-1 support. We have opened up the referral route to now include the Vulnerable Pupils Team, have relaxed the targeted offer so it can be up to 12 weeks and very much guided by the young people and their needs, and have opened up the group sessions to any young people from Torbay. Information can be found here: [Youth Service - Torbay Council](#)

The Youth Service runs x4 groups a week. There is a weekly She N Us group (for young women), a table top roleplay group (x2 games per week – often neurodiverse YP), a weekly Friday session at Parkfield in partnership with Torquay United Community Sports Trust and Reach Outdoors (new young women's session starting this week on top of the current offer) and a Saturday social group.

These groups used to only be for young people that had accessed the targeted youth offer, but we have recently opened them up for any young people wanting to access groups. We have 73 young people who have signed up and provided consent for Parkfield. The group offer can be found here: [Torbay Youth Service Group Offers 2023 - Torbay Council](#)

Future plans - We have worked with Torquay United Community Sports Trust to employ two staff for our Friday sessions at Parkfield, one being a female coach so we can start a football session specifically for young women, followed by a young mens football session. This has been the result of young women wanting to play football without the pressure they feel from sharing the sports hall with the young men. The plan is to build on these sessions with the female coach and support the young women to watch Torquay United Women's Team, meet the players etc.

We are very aware as such as small team, that additional staff would benefit the Bay and our ability to have a wider reach. We have a Youth Attendance Officer post that will soon be going out to advert, and they will work under the Vulnerable Pupils Team and alongside the Youth Service specifically to have a direct focus on attendance.

### **YIF (Youth Investment Fund):**

The Acorn Centre have been working with the TDA to agree the capital development work which will begin in April 2024 following a tender and evaluation process to determine the lead contractor. The Acorn Centre have devised a plan of youth activities, and we are looking to better understand how these will be funded, advertised, and delivered. The funder is happy with the progress made to date.

### **Council funded community-based youth clubs:**

We have recently commissioned three providers to deliver five youth clubs, all of which will operate twice a week across Torbay. Two in Torquay, two in Paignton and one in Brixham. The providers (The Windmill Centre, Love Enterprise CIC and Plymouth Argyle Trust) are in the process of agreeing the details of how they will operate, but they will look to start in mid-November. Collectively they will look to submit joint bids to allow them to strengthen their current offer and will work together to support the young people they are working with.

**Young Carers Service:**

The Young Carers Service transferred back to the direct management of Children's Service on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. There is a statutory requirement of the local authority to ensure that any potential young carers identified need to receive an assessment and access to support. We currently have 4 part-time Project Workers and a manager but are looking to employ a fifth part-time Project Worker to support the development of our current group sessions and holiday activities. We have one monthly group meeting in Brixham and a fortnightly group meeting at Oldway Tea Rooms at present but hope to add a Torquay group to this offer in the near future. The staff team and Business Intelligence Team are currently undertaking a piece of work to better understand the needs of the young people currently registered as young carers. Further information can be found here: [Young Carers Service - Torbay Council](#)

**Other community-based youth clubs:**

There are several providers working with young people across the Bay. The majority work with a targeted cohort often defined by grant funding awarded or they offer a specific activity, but there are some open-access youth clubs in existence across the Bay and the plan is to work with them in the future to expand on the collective response to the need.

**HAF:**

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme is funded until March 2025, so our last guaranteed holiday club offer will be in December 2024. We are working with our current providers to encourage them to become Ofsted registered as this will allow families who are entitled to Government funded discounted childcare (up to 80%) to access the holiday clubs still. We have always seen a much smaller uptake of the holiday clubs offer for the older cohort, as is the national trend, but we hope that having the youth clubs up and running all year round will help to build the trusted relationships with the young people and drive up the engagement.

**Youth Voice and Participation:**

- We are looking to support the development of a Youth Parliament in Torbay. This process has started with the support of colleagues from Electoral Services, Communications and Education. An election will take place early next year.
- The Young Persons Panel supported by the Participation Team have been and will be actively involved in several participation activities to improve the delivery of Children's Services and related health provision in Torbay. They regularly meet in the Town Hall and always have a very full agenda for their meetings.
- The Children in Care Council (CICC) will be responsible for assisting in developing the service offered to Cared For and Care Experienced children and young people in Torbay and will be supported by the Participation Team.
- The Imagine This...Youth Council have been working with the Voluntary and Community Sector – they are going to be change the format of how this has been operating to include a younger cohort and an older cohort. One of the Imagine This...groups working with Local Motion partners is specifically focussing on the needs of 16-25 year olds.

**Working with Torbay Communities:**

We have regular diarised strategic meetings with Torbay Communities to update each other on current pieces of work, to discuss opportunities to work together and to share trends and issues being experienced. We plan to continue to work with the VCS on the Child Friendly Torbay work and are going to do a piece of work relating to good practice, to help drive up standards of service delivery and make it easier for providers when bidding for grant funding and working in partnership together.

**Joint funding bid applications:**

As mentioned above, we aim to work on funding opportunities in partnership with Imagine This...partners and with providers who might not be existing partners but still have the passion and drive to work with young people in Torbay.

**Community youth partnerships:**

We have been working with certain providers operating in specific communities across the Bay and are seeing the need for providers to be communicating with each other and sharing what is available in the area for children and young people. Sanctuary Housing recently brought providers together in Blatchcombe to undertake a mapping exercise – to look at the strengths and current gaps in the area.

We hope that more of these opportunities will happen across the Bay and the intention for the Youth Hub is to produce or for a provider (or the young people if they choose to) to produce a poster which can be displayed and shared on social media with a menu of what is available in each area of Torbay. We would like to develop a 'no logos, no egos' approach to working with young people and for a genuine collective approach to ensuring provision is available, which is of good quality and accessible.

**Communication plans:**

The Youth Hub is looking to have its own social media presence in partnership with the Participation Team which will look to communicate with young people over the age of 13 and with parents/carers regarding what is available in the local area, where to access support and online resources and how to get involved with participation opportunities. We have met with our Communications Team and are currently planning content, maintaining the management, standards etc.

**Where the Overview and Scrutiny Board could assist and play a role:**

Many of the projects or pieces of work mentioned are in their very early stages and whilst we believe that progress can and will be made, regular opportunities to share the progress and being held to account to keep the momentum would be much appreciated.

As we see an increase in demand for youth services, we are undertaking a scope to employ additional youth staff within the current establishment. Working with our Voluntary and Community Sector, we would welcome the opportunity to develop the philanthropy offer in Torbay.

I am more than happy to expand on any of the projects or plans mentioned. Please feel free to get in touch on [sarah.pengelly@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.pengelly@torbay.gov.uk) Thank you.