

Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan: The Pathway to Excellence for Children and Young People 2022-2025

TORBAY COUNCIL
VERSION 4 OCTOBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

This version of our Improvement Plan consciously retitled as 'Torbay's Children's Continuous Improvement Plan' marks a significant change in our approach. Previous versions of the plan have essentially and correctly focussed upon the requirements laid upon us by Ofsted and DFE to significantly improve the quality of children's social care, with specific emphasis upon child protection and those children who need to be cared for in order to safeguard them. We have made significant and consistently good progress in addressing our existing improvement objectives and the time is now right to move forward and tackle those issues that will enable us to achieve our ambition of creating a 'Child Friendly Torbay'. This does not mean that we are focussing our efforts on matters other than child protection and safeguarding. Rather, we are maintaining our acute focus on these two crucial areas, but the additional capacity afforded us by securing sustainable progress in other areas means that this Board can begin the process of transformation to a partnership wide drive to achieve a highly effective service for children that draws upon the full range of skills and expertise from partners.

This Children's Continuous Improvement Plan comprises improvement priorities that are essential for the success of our transformation. It is complimented by the Councils Transformation Programme and our Sufficiency Strategy which quite properly focusses its attention on the resources required for a successful children's service modelled in line with the detail of our vision for a child friendly Torbay. It contains our ambitious agenda for further improvement with priorities focused upon the needs of older young people in the process of transitioning to adult services, those at risk of youth homelessness and those vulnerable to exploitation and, potentially, offending behaviour. In addition, we are concerned to support young people with their health and, importantly we are seeking through this plan to stimulate the development of a revitalised and retargeted child and adolescent mental health service.

The previous improvement plan very usefully set out its improvement priorities under 4 thematic pillars. We have chosen to follow a similar structure but to reflect the partnership dimension of this continuous improvement plan we have introduced a 5th thematic pillar 'Robust Partnership Practice' (see below). We have also extended the leadership, management and governance pillar to reflect the move towards a more joined up cross partnership approach to delivering children's services.

- Partnership, Leadership and Management
- A robust model of social work practice
- Robust partnership practice
- A sufficient and skilled workforce
- Quality assurance and audit.

THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

Children, young people and their families rightly expect high quality services, particularly in times of need. Our ambition for children and their families to benefit from good or better services in which they have 'a voice' and become fully involved remains strong and central to all that we do. We continue to understand the task ahead, and we are determined to build on what Ofsted has judged to be good progress across the services for children. The significant success we have achieved in building a largely permanent workforce led by a determined and motivated management team will help us as we move forward. As we do, we will involve our managers, our workforce and our partners to shape what we do, and we will capture the views of our service users to help us understand how best we can help.

OUR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND THE ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE

The tables below detail the action that we are taking in order to continue to progress to excellence on our improvement journey. The document will continue to be periodically updated to show progress. It is a 'live' document which continues to be updated as required and as progress is made.

The Director of Children's Services is the overall owner of this continuous improvement plan and responsible for ensuring that its implementation is progressed and that updates continue to be provided on a monthly basis.

We are confident that if we achieve the aims and objectives set out in this plan, we will become an outstanding Local Authority Children's Service and our children and young people will benefit from consistently excellent services delivered by a highly skilled and motivated workforce in conjunction with our partners. The specific criteria used by Ofsted to assess outstanding services are reproduced below. As the Ofsted Inspectors reported in their 2022 Inspection, we are not complacent, and we are ambitious to continue to improve. This plan reflects those improvement priorities and incorporates the four recommendations made by Ofsted.

OFSTED CRITERIA FOR OUTSTANDING

Inspectors will determine the **overall effectiveness graded judgement** by taking account of the grading of the other judgements that have been agreed and by looking at:

- the extent of good practice across the service
- the extent and impact of any areas for improvement

- whether areas for improvement have been identified and the extent to which leaders and managers have a 'grip' on the issue

'The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection' is likely to be judged outstanding if the response to children and families is consistently good or better and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children, young people and their families.

'The experiences and progress of children in care (cared for) and care leavers (care experienced)' is likely to be judged outstanding if the response to children in care and care leavers is consistently good or better and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children in care and care leavers.

'The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families' is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a 'good' judgement, there is evidence that leaders (both professional and political) and managers are confident, ambitious and influential in changing the lives of local children, young people and families, including children in care and those who have left or who are leaving care. They inspire others to change the lives of these children and young people and their families. They innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest-quality services, including early help services, for all children and young people. They know their strengths and weaknesses well and both respond to and are resilient to new challenges. Professional relationships between the local authority and partner organisations are mature and well developed. Accountabilities are embedded and result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement of the quality of help, care and protection that is provided.

Theme 1 – Partnership, Leadership Management and Governance

Objective 1.1:

- Partnership leadership, management and governance in Torbay are strong and sharply focused on continuing to improve and sustain outcomes for children and young people.

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
1.1.1	<p>Effective leaders and managers will determine the priorities of their organisations to deliver services for children in support of the principles of “Child Friendly Torbay”.</p> <p>Leaders and Managers will ensure that the workforce has a common understanding of the priorities for children and their intended impacts.</p> <p>Understanding the</p>	<p>Leaders and managers will demonstrate authority, vision and management skill to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and the workforce is sufficiently trained and motivated to deliver its objectives to time and within the legal framework.</p> <p>Robust Service Plans specifying individual and collective responsibilities to be in place articulating vision,</p>	CEO, DCS, Directors of partner organisations	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from consistently high quality and sustainable services, including multi-disciplinary services that are responsive to informed understanding of need	All work will be compliant with statute and local policies and procedures, when measured by audit, dip sampling, management oversight and child level performance data.	<p>Partnership boards and children’s social care services demonstrate a shared understanding of the priorities for children and young people and have the capacity to deliver services to a consistently good or better standard.</p> <p>Systematic scrutiny through the work of the Children’s Continuous Improvement Board, partnership boards and</p>

	interdependencies and application of legal frameworks are established and are demonstrated through implementation.	<p>priorities, and standards.</p> <p>Senior leaders are effective in ensuring that the workforce fully understands their priorities and how they combine in an interagency context. Leaders and managers are able to offer appropriate support and challenge when required.</p> <p>Implement our workforce strategy, to support retention and recruitment of frontline practitioners.</p>					<p>Council political oversight through Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny will evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership in delivering high quality services to children.</p> <p>Following submission of an application to be considered as part of UNICEF's 'Child Friendly Communities', it is positive that Torbay have been accepted as part of the programme and are presently in conversation with UNICEF to agree the MOU with a starting date of November/December 2023.</p>
1.1.2	Elected members will be conversant with the priorities and the challenges of the	Knowledgeable Elected Members will contribute relevant knowledge and experience from their	Council Leader, Lead Cabinet Member for Children's	Members and partnership boards to	The elected members will hold the services for	Children will benefit from members and partnership	During 2022, the CCSIP was reviewed at Children's Overview and Scrutiny and as part of

	<p>improvement priorities and will be active in offering political challenge on behalf of their communities.</p>	<p>work on partnership boards such as Overview and Scrutiny, Corporate Parenting Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>The Lead Member and other relevantly involved Councillors will continue to have access to the monthly data and performance reports, including highlight and budget reports that will specify and identify progress and risks to progress and enable them to discharge their statutory duties effectively.</p> <p>Partnership leads and Members will make programmed visits to services to enable them to understand progress and best practice. Visits will include</p>	<p>Services supported by the CEO.</p>	<p>be briefed on the priorities of the children's continuous improvement plan by July 2022 and relevant updates will be given when required.</p>	<p>which they are responsible to account for the provision it makes to children and their families.</p> <p>Partnership Boards will use their own arrangements for overseeing and scrutinising the work related to improvement priorities for which they are accountable.</p> <p>Members will be able to offer assurance to their communities about the progress that is being made</p>	<p>boards being able to properly scrutinise the volume and quality of services provided within their remit.</p>	<p>the Children's Service Quartet. Since the change of administration following the local elections in 2023, there has been a change in political administration however the new administration has clearly articulated that they see Children's as a priority and are committed to continuing the good work that the service has delivered to date.</p> <p>The new Lead Member for Children's has ensured that there was a Children's focus item on the recently established Cabinet and Directors Meeting. The service has also delivered to the wider Members as part of their induction information and training relating to corporate parenting, the delivery of</p>
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		opportunities to extend their existing relationships with key partners and to strengthen further their contributions to services for children made through current arrangements such as the corporate parenting board.					education services and safeguarding. We also maintain a number of Boards where there is representation from across the political landscape.
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Theme 2 – A robust model of social work practice

Objective 2.1

- Effective supervision and management oversight will continue to support best practice and encourage and direct improvement in circumstances where progress has failed to gain traction or has stalled.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
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2.1.1	<p>Supervision to be timely and will be recorded in accordance with policy requirements specifying actions when necessary.</p> <p>Supervision to be restorative and demonstrate reflection and challenge to social work practice and ensure it supports 'good' or 'better' services to children.</p> <p>The requirement for periodic management oversight is explicit and achieved.</p>	<p>Supervision records will show for example case direction, reflection, advice, decisions, endorsements of agreed actions and progress.</p> <p>Supervision specifically identifies good practice and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Supervision is regular, planned and at intervals reflective of the experience and capability of the worker.</p> <p>Management oversight is recorded on each child's file at prescribed intervals, or more frequently when necessary, and demonstrates management 'grip' and understanding of the</p>	Heads of Service, Service Managers, Team Managers, and Assistant Team Managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from skilled workers who have been afforded opportunity to refresh and reflect upon their approach to their work, where necessary by developing new skills.</p> <p>Children will also benefit from managers being fully conversant with their needs and when necessary, interjecting to ensure that the case is 'on track'.</p>	<p>Ensure active and robust social work intervention. Reduce drift and delay.</p> <p>Better, more structured approach to work.</p> <p>Clear management support and direction to ensure that actions required to safeguard and support children are in place and actively monitored.</p>	<p>During the last six months, there has been a focus on management oversight and supervision as part of the quality assurance requested by the CCIB.</p> <p>This was undertaken as part of the Chief Executive Deep Dives that were historically established under the previous improvement; these have continued following the Ofsted grading of 'good'. This evidenced a positive reflection from the workforce in respect of how they felt supervision supported them however also identified a potential flaw in the recording on the system which was impacting negatively on the monthly performance reporting. This has now been rectified and the outcome of the Chief Executive Deep Dive is</p>
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		<p>child's needs and how the plan will meet them.</p> <p>Supervision offers development and challenge opportunities and gives dedicated time for reflection.</p> <p>Supervision is recorded according to policy and where action on cases is required, a note is always made on the child's record and managers monitor for effectiveness.</p> <p>QA mechanisms and performance reports will ensure the robustness of supervision.</p>					<p>monitored through the Children's Focus Meeting.</p> <p>We also have been accredited as a Children's Restorative Organisation and we are also waiting for confirmation as to whether we have been accredited for our Restorative Training.</p>
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Objective 2.2:

- *Improve the quality of assessments and plans for children to ensure that purposeful work achieves objectives and prevents takes place to prevent drift. Children in Need, child protection reviews and core group meetings should specifically evaluate and record children progress, in addition to sharing and updating information.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.2.1	<p>All assessments demonstrate that historical factors and all relevant information, including ethnic and cultural issues, are considered and analysed. They will take into account the knowledge held by all relevant partners, and contributions from all relevant family members will always be included.</p> <p>The child's voice is evident, and the child's lived experience is understood.</p>	<p>Secure and sustain the quality of all assessments for children and young people which will incorporate their 'voice'.</p> <p>Demonstrate the quality of direct work to reflect that it is purposeful, meaningful, and suitable for inclusion into assessments and plans.</p> <p>Adopt a restorative approach to assessment to enable a good understanding of the diverse nature of families. The finalised assessment should be suitable to</p>	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers to oversee, social workers to deliver.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from an assessment and subsequent plan that is comprehensively based on an understanding of their cultural needs and how services will respond to the diverse natures of families.</p> <p>In keeping with the restorative model of practice, children will contribute through direct work with their workers. Records of this work will be</p>	<p>Children's journeys, their lived experience and childhood will be understood, captured and articulated as a result of the critical contributions from the child and the family, and the skill of the workers involved in bringing together the wealth of information that is gathered.</p> <p>Most assessments will be judged to be good by</p>	<p>The quality of assessment is considered in each full audit undertaken within the audit cycle, and regular dip sampling activity also considers this separately.</p> <p>The quality of assessment within the realm of children in need of help and protection has shown significant growth in terms of the numbers meeting good, with quarterly increases sustained from 2022-23 into the 2023 audit cycle.</p>

		<p>inform a robust care plan for the child.</p> <p>Assessment quality will be subject to periodic audit process.</p>			<p>identified on files and evidenced in assessments and plans.</p> <p>Children will experience and know that their voices have been heard.</p>	<p>QA and audit processes.</p> <p>The timescales for assessment completion will be set and achieved according to the child's needs.</p> <p>The quality of assessments will lead to improvement in care plans.</p>	<p>Audit activity tells us that the strengths identified within practice in respect of assessments over the last six months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Needs being well explored alongside the impact of lived experience. •Child and family expressed view being well captured. •Research used to identify need. •Up to date chronologies. •Clear identification of risk. •Protective factors considered and analysed.
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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers current and historical information. • Assessments being proportionate and balanced. <p>Areas for development include the need for robust triangulation of information, more considered analysis of historical information as an indicator of the present and the future, the use of tools in assessment and the need for robust and timely updates of assessments relating to cared for children.</p>
2.2.2	Management oversight of assessments is consistently good	Management oversight continues	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will experience work that is more	Children will benefit from social workers who have a	As detailed within 2.1.1, there have been a number of activities over recent months in

	<p>and ensures that guidance is given to ensure that children receive timely, skilled help and protection.</p>	<p>to be evident on all open files.</p> <p>Ensure management oversight comprises case direction, advice, decisions and endorsements of agreed actions.</p> <p>Introduce audit activity to quality assure the requirements associated with managerial oversight.</p>			<p>structured and focused.</p> <p>Slippages and variances from the plan will be identified early.</p> <p>New requirements to ensure the effectiveness of the plan are introduced in timely ways.</p>	<p>clear understanding of the purpose of their interventions and have opportunity to work in conjunction with the professionals in relation to the actions they are taking to achieve their outcome goals.</p> <p>Management oversight will ensure that work with the child is supported, appropriately challenged and when necessary, directed to</p>	<p>relation to management oversight and supervision, indicating a positive trajectory of improvement, evidencing that managers are systematically reviewing children's files and assessments which will support good outcomes and reduce drift and delay.</p> <p>This is regularly highlighted through audit overviews presented to the Children's Focus Meeting and through performance exception reports presented to the CCIB.</p>
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						ensure a good quality service that takes account of the child's voice and needs.	
2.2.3	<p>Child in need plans and child protection plans will be produced in a timely fashion, reflect assessed need, promote improvement in the child's lived experience and are consistently evaluated for progress and impact, including the contributions made by the child.</p> <p>Core group meetings include relevant professionals and are purposeful in</p>	<p>The requirements to achieve good or better assessments and plans continue to be effective and aligned to the established needs of the child. The child (subject to age and understanding) will have contributed to and understand their plans.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that all managers understand their accountabilities in relation to assessments and monitor for</p>	<p>Team Managers, managers from partner agencies, Social Workers, (HoS and Service Managers when necessary).</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children will recognize that they are able to contribute directly and influence assessments and plans.</p> <p>Children will receive consistently good services as a result of having high quality assessments and plans to which they have contributed which set out the</p>	<p>Formal consultation with children about their experiences of child in need and child protection planning and implementation.</p> <p>Dip sampling and when necessary, audit to check for compliance with requirements (including management oversight) and quality.</p> <p>Performance management reports will</p>	<p>We have a permanent team of IROs and CP Chairs; they now actively send a postcard, by way of introduction, which is sent out to all children of an appropriate age allocated to them at the start of the CP process. These postcards detail who the IRO/CP chair is along with their contact details and a photograph of themselves. The objective here is to ensure children have free and open access to their IRO/CP chairs in relation to planning,</p>

	<p>ensuring that plans are implemented and effective.</p> <p>Management oversight of child protection and children in need is effective and assures timely practice which affords the necessary levels of protection.</p>	<p>compliance and quality.</p> <p>Ensure that management oversight uses restorative principles to give timely and clear direction having evaluated the child's needs and circumstances, risks and progress with the current plan.</p> <p>CP chairs and managers (including managers from partner agencies) will monitor attendance at core group meetings and take action when necessary to ensure that plans are effective.</p> <p>Ensure that the capacity of the children's social care</p>			<p>requirements and timescales.</p> <p>Managers will make sure that all plans are implemented and take action when required.</p>	<p>detail compliance with timescales and establish that children have contributed.</p>	<p>participation and feeding back on reviews.</p> <p>The IRO Service has been enhanced by appointing a Service Manager who has taken the lead on improving children's participation. This includes closer working with the social work teams and also the advocacy service. The team has also been further enhanced by the addition of a CIN/IRO role, following concerns raised by the CCIB in relation to the quality and reduction in Child in Need visit compliance and review compliance, as well as the increase of children subject to CIN plans over a year. This</p>
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		service is deployed effectively to enable effective casework and management oversight.					<p>is evidencing positive outcomes.</p> <p>Audits across all areas of work are regularly carried out now with specific themes during each audit cycle. The findings of the audits are fed into learning forums such as the Practice Improvement Forum. A recent deep dive into children's files where the report for RCPC was out of the practice standard timescale has been undertaken.</p> <p>IRO service performance management meetings are now held on a monthly basis. The meetings revolve</p>
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							around targeting certain areas of the MPR and are fully minuted with actions going forward to review at the next performance meeting. The minutes are circulated to all the IROs and also the Divisional Director for regular oversight and feedback.
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Objective 2.3:

- Continue to ensure the effectiveness of Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairpersons. Their work is recorded appropriately, and actions are evaluated for impact, reviewed routinely and cases are escalated when necessary).

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.3.1	Child Protection Chairs will continue to have effective oversight of cases, challenge and	Child protection chairs will always be expected to be fully conversant with the details of the child's circumstances	Child Protection Chairs	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from the regular oversight and knowledge of	Children will be subject to child protection plans for as	Progress in this area of work has been hindered for many years due to the following issues: -

	<p>escalate where necessary. They monitor agreed actions to ensure implementation and evaluate impact on outcomes for children.</p>	<p>and their plan, always record concerns and the actions that are required. Actions are monitored according to required timescales.</p> <p>Child protection chairs will be expected to use the 'dispute resolution' process whenever they find poor practice or failure to implement the plan in full.</p> <p>Chairs and senior managers to actively review children who are subject to CP plans and ensure that the plan is effective and relevant to the circumstances of the child.</p> <p>Periodic dip samples are scheduled in the quality assurance timetable to ensure</p>		<p>Child Protection Chairs which will reduce the likelihood of them remaining in circumstances where they are likely to suffer significant harm.</p> <p>Where practice is of not good enough standard for children, improvements will be made using the dispute resolution process with the single goal of ensuring good or better outcomes for each child.</p>	<p>short a period as possible.</p> <p>Plans will demonstrably be fully implemented and achieve their outcomes in timescales suitable for the child.</p> <p>There will be a reduction in the numbers of children with second or further plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excessive staff sickness. 2. An over-reliance on agency staff. <p>The above two factors combined have created a situation whereby consistency for children with having one Child Protection chair following their plan through to step-down has been negated and, in some cases, 'start again' processes arising with a new CP chair taking a different view on the CO planning progress. This inevitably results in children remaining on plans longer than necessary.</p>
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		<p>compliance with the actions set out above.</p> <p>Monthly reports to be reviewed by the Head of Service for QA & safeguarding.</p>					<p>Both the above-mentioned matters have now been fully addressed with the sickness issues being managed via the appropriate HR processes and individual workers either being managed out of the service or managed under absence review processes. The reliance on agency staff has been addressed with assertive recruitment to the historical vacant posts and, as previously stated, there is now a permanent team in place.</p> <p>It can be evidenced within the monthly performance which is submitted to the CCIB the positive trajectory of data evidencing clearly the impact for children of having timely ICPCs/RCPCs and</p>
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							relevant Core Group meetings.
2.3.2	Plans will continue to have sufficient focus to enable the progress of children to be measured and drift and delay to be avoided.	<p>Specific requirements for visiting frequency, the focus of the work to be undertaken and the need to incorporate the voice of the child in each assessment and plan will be made explicit.</p> <p>Recommendations of plans will be timed and measurable with accountability defined.</p>	Child Protection Chairs and Operational Managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from prescribed and needs focused visits that will deliver their plan and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.	<p>Visiting frequencies will be within prescribed timescales.</p> <p>Records will demonstrably reflect the child's contributions and there will be clear evidence that their plans are implemented in full.</p>	<p>Practice standards (Ways of Working) have been revised, in line with the restorative model, and are clear about prescribed timescales as well as other expectations associated with every level of planning.</p> <p>Restorative planning workshops and Listening Circles form part of our feedback from the service are being implemented.</p> <p>A weekly meeting has been introduced between the HOS MASH, Front Door and Operational Services and HOS SARs, to monitor and oversee the</p>

							<p>progress of child protection plans, and to prevent drift and delay.</p> <p>The number of cared for children in the South West has increased in recent years, however Torbay has positively responded with an edge of care offer that has safely reduced the numbers of cared for children and continues on a downward trajectory, with significant year-on-year reductions since 2018-19.</p> <p>It has been acknowledged that the mandated changes to the NTS and the establishment of an asylum hotel in Torbay has impacted on our cared for numbers; this has been a focus in the CCIB and presentations in respect of this challenge has been an</p>
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							ongoing discussion as a partnership.
2.3.3	Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will continue to contribute to continually improving practice through their challenges and escalations.	<p>IROs to support and influence best practice. They are required to use the formal 'dispute resolution' process to challenge poor decision making or drift and delay in developing or implementing children's care plans.</p> <p>IRO's to consistently track actions and oversee progress between reviews to ensure care planning is timely, child and young people focused, and works towards achieving permanence for children.</p> <p>IRO's to alert the Divisional Director about any placements in 'inadequate' provision or where the provider is failing to</p>	IROs	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from focused intervention and robust care planning decisions to which they have contributed to support their long-term needs.</p> <p>Children will experience better quality services as a result of IROs challenging poor practice and supporting good standards.</p> <p>Decisions for children in relation to</p>	There will be an increase in alerts and more timely responses to these alerts	<p>An alert system is now in place whereby social workers receive a prompt at the 10-day stage that a report is due for a Cared For review. At the five-day point, the Heads of Services for Regulated and the Safeguarding Services are included in the alerts so assertive senior management action can be taken.</p> <p>Individual IROs have been tasked with forming links with teams across all of social care in order to deliver learning from reviews and how this should be taken forward to improve care planning.</p> <p>Post Covid, more IRO visits are being undertaken to children's</p>

		meet the agreed needs of the child.			permanency planning will be timely.		placements and any concerns reported back to the Heads of Service and the Divisional Director. 'Becoming Cared for Meeting' meetings are held for all children within seven days of becoming cared for to ensure all children have the right plans in places at the right time to inform their initial care plan.
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Objective 2.4

- The management and practice in relation to private fostering arrangements continues to identify children and provide a good or better service within the framework of legislation.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.4.1	Partners, including language schools, should be cognisant of law and policy governing private	Provide training for all front-line staff on the legal framework about	HoS	July 2022.	Children who are privately fostered are safeguarded.	Privately fostered children will be identified and	Although a focus on private fostering and the duty to promote was positively responded to, this has not been as

	<p>fostering arrangements.</p> <p>Children receive timely visits, and the assessments are concluded which evidence the impact upon the child in living in a private fostering arrangement.</p>	<p>what constitutes a private fostered child.</p> <p>Review all privately fostered children who are known to children's social care and take immediate action to safeguard them when necessary.</p> <p>Review and revise the process of decision making in relation to privately fostered children and ensure that it is robust.</p>			<p>All privately fostered children will benefit from the implementation of the private fostering procedure.</p>	<p>appropriately safeguarded.</p> <p>Children will benefit from compliance with law and regulations.</p>	<p>widely publicised in the last six months and is an immediate action for the service.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that, during the summer months, the language schools undertook a number of activities promoting Torbay as an area for foreign student to travel to, however on examining the length of stays, these visits would not have fallen under the private fostering framework. The present data evidences a small number of privately fostered children and there is improvement in the statutory compliance relating to these children.</p>
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							It is important to note that, for one particular language school, there were potential safeguarding concerns, the LADO was actively involved in enduring children were not left in circumstances that were deemed to be unsafe. The Need-to-Know process was initiated, in order to notify relevant senior leaders.
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Objective 2.5:

- *Ensure that all looked after children need the care of the Local Authority and if so, they are helped to achieve security and permanence, as appropriate to their needs, through long term foster care, special guardianship or reunification within their timescales.*
- *Ensure that children looked after with a plan for permanence, understand their life story and the reasons why they cannot live with their birth families prior to preparation for a move.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
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<p>2.5.1</p>	<p>For children who need to be cared for, decisions should be timely and only exercised once all other options, such as placement with wider family members have been exhausted.</p> <p>Whenever possible emergency placements are avoided.</p>	<p>Continue to identify children at the edge of care at the earliest opportunity following referral or through the children in need and child protection processes.</p> <p>Edge of care services (including the use of family group conferences) to be integrated and made available in planned and timely ways to all children vulnerable to breakdown in their living arrangements.</p> <p>Ensure that edge of care workers are clear in recognizing when children are insufficiently safe to remain at home.</p> <p>Ensure that children's plans are updated, and initial health</p>	<p>Divisional Director & HoS</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children will feel safe, and their voice and that of their families will be heard in decision making forums.</p> <p>Children will experience concerted efforts to enable them to continue living safely with their families wherever possible.</p> <p>Children will be helped to understand that admission to care will only occur when necessary. Whenever possible it will be carried out in a planned way</p>	<p>Children will only be admitted to care when all other options have been considered.</p> <p>Placements will be available to children at the point of admission and unnecessary moves or prolonged stays in police stations will be avoided.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting from the edge of care panel on activity will evidence quality of decision making,</p>	<p>All audit activity considers the use of FGC and edge of care, at appropriate points in a child's plan. Recent benchmarking in respect of Court activity suggests that FGC is not embedded in the pre-proceedings process; this has led to a change in practice with FGC coordinators attending the initial PLO process and genograms being included in the initial PLO letter.</p> <p>Our audit activity evidences that for those children who need care, this is the right decision for them. Our adoption scorecard performance highlights the positive work being undertaken to achieve permanence for</p>
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		<p>assessments are completed on time and management oversight prevents drift and delay.</p>			<p>for the shortest possible time.</p> <p>Children will benefit from increased placement stability as a consequence of good matching.</p>	<p>children at the earliest point.</p> <p>As part of an escalation of concern in relation to the use of police powers of protection, the Independent Scrutineer oversees audit activity relating to this and reports back his findings.</p> <p>It is unfortunate that due to the sufficiency challenges both locally and nationally, particularly when independent providers and agencies, that immediate is given which means that, for a small number of children, unregulated and unregistered is the only viable alternative. This is not a position we would</p>
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							<p>want to be in, and we continue to provide Ofsted on a weekly basis the information relating to the children in unregistered settings as well as this being a standard item for the Quartet, in order to assure Members and the Chief Executive that these children are being adequately safeguarded to the best of our ability.</p> <p>Building Futures Together practice standards have been revised, with pathways of support including edge of care, reunification and placement stability; the team also plays a critical role in the youth homelessness response, in terms of re-visiting reunification at various</p>
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							<p>points during the child's journey.</p> <p>No decision for a child to become cared for is made without appropriate oversight from HOS and DD; this includes review of all alternative options, and additional support.</p> <p>Becoming Cared For meeting now introduced with agreed Terms of Reference; this ensures appropriate oversight at DD level of statutory requirements at the point of becoming cared for, as well as other aspects of the child's care plan.</p>
2.5.2	Children returning home from care receive sufficient support to enable	Continue to build on knowledge gained from 'what works' and 'what doesn't work'	Divisional Director and HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will not return home unless it is demonstrably in	All children who return home will have a reunification	There are currently 24 children placed at home with their parents. This was an area of concern

	<p>them to live successfully in their communities with few returning to the care of the local authority.</p>	<p>evaluations so that evidence based best practice can be assured.</p> <p>Continue to use evidence-based practice learning to inform the sufficiency strategy and training and development opportunities for relevant members of the workforce. .</p> <p>Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to continue to ensure that the statutory requirement to review all children's care plans prior to reunification is implemented in every case.</p> <p>Reinforce to all front-line practitioners and team managers the requirement that any children returning home</p>			<p>their best interests, and they will be protected and safeguarded.</p> <p>Children will be supported to remain at home avoiding further episodes of care.</p> <p>IRO to have a better oversight of those children who are returning home and raise challenge using the escalation process if the support plan is not appropriate or implemented.</p>	<p>plan that is implemented in full and supports them to live within their families.</p> <p>The percentage of children re-entering care will reduce.</p>	<p>raised by the DCS in the Children's Focus Meeting in September 2023, and a request for a specific paper to be submitted to the Children's Focus Meeting was made, and this is due to be considered in the November 2023 meeting. In the event this raises partnership issues, a discussion will occur with the independent chair of the CCIB to consider whether the Board require further oversight.</p> <p>All children subject to Schedule 3 regulations are tracked and monitored through Permanence Panel on a monthly basis. This Panel ensures that appropriate support is in place to ensure the plan of reunification is safe and effective, and that</p>
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		from care must have a revised contemporary assessment and support plan.					<p>timely decisions are made in terms of presentation to Legal Gateway Panel with a view to entering into proceedings and seeking to discharge the Care Order.</p> <p>The Court QA Manager maintains a Tracker of all Schedule 3 assessments to ensure timeliness, management oversight at HOS level and compliance, and appropriate review of these assessments at appropriate stages within a child's planning. As good practice, Schedule 3 assessments are also undertaken in circumstances whereby a child is placed at home under s38(6).</p>
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2.5.3	When it is anticipated that children require long term care, matching with carers should occur at the first opportunity so that they benefit from the stability and emotional security that this will offer them.	Take action to ensure that where long term fostering is the child's final plan, arrangements to secure the plan will be prioritised and any avoidable delays will be tackled immediately.	Divisional Director and HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children and young people will benefit from early decisions to secure matched long-term plans, and they have been involved in the decision-making process.	More children will benefit from matched long-term placements with foster carers, and they will understand the reasons that led to the decision. Increased security and stability will reduce placement disruption.	Of the 300 cared for children as of 31st October 2023, 68 are matched long term to their foster carers and 18 to their Connected Carers. This equates to 28% of the cohort. 25 (8%) children are placed in short term Connected Carer arrangements, pending the outcome of proceedings. 102 children (34%) are placed in short-term fostering placements. Long term matching is considered and reviewed through the Permanence Panel, with all children who have been in the same placement for eleven months being
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							<p>referred for long term match consideration.</p> <p>Once a match is ratified by the ADM, children receive a long-term match certificate and a personalised letter.</p>
2.5.4	<p>Fostering families will benefit from annual reviews and will be supported in their task by training and development opportunities.</p>	<p>National Minimum Standards will be complied with in full and annual reviews will identify the learning needs of fostering families that will be built into a personalised development plan</p>	<p>HoS Specialist Services.</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be assured that foster carers' capabilities and capacities are understood and, where necessary, development needs are addressed.</p>	<p>Improved range of skilled and developed foster care provision as a result of carers' capabilities being fully understood.</p>	<p>This has been a particular focus of the service, which has resulted in consistently strong performance in relation not only to the compliance in terms of Annual Reviews but also in terms of DBS Checks, Medicals and TSD minimum training. As of October 2023, 93% of carers had benefitted from an up-to-date annual review.</p>

							Our fostering families are supported politically by the attendance of the Children's Lead Member at the Fostering Forum, who raises any concerns with the DCS that may arise from the Forum.
2.5.5	<p>Children continue to benefit from effective and timely life story and direct work that is undertaken by skilled workers.</p> <p>Life story work for children needs to start at the earliest opportunity so that children understand why they cannot live with their birth family.</p>	<p>Permanence planning will always include timely requirements for life story and direct work that offers children the opportunity to be fully involved and contribute to their understanding of their life journeys.</p>	<p>Team Managers and Social Workers – HoS and Service Managers when necessary.</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children will have a comprehensive understanding (commensurate with age) about the reasons for them living away from their birth families and why they need to live in permanent arrangements. They will have experienced opportunities to contribute to relevant discussions throughout the process.</p>	<p>Better bonding with their permanent carers.</p> <p>Fewer placement disruptions.</p> <p>Children will develop better attachment capabilities and greater confidence.</p>	<p>Torbay continues to recognise the impact of high-quality life story work for children and young people. We have developed JIGSAW: Torbay's Life Story Work Strategy, which outlines the overarching concept, that every Torbay child has the right to learn about their history and ask questions about their care experiences. The Strategy outlines the distinction between life story books and life story work, principles for practitioners to consider when undertaking this</p>

							<p>work and tools to use when doing so.</p> <p>Audit activity continues to evidence and highlight the quality of direct work with children and young people.</p> <p>As of October 2023, 65% of children adopted in the last twelve months had a completed life story book; the same percentage of children had a completed later life letter. This is tracked and overseen by the monthly performance report. This is an area for development; however, we have seen improvement in this performance from a legacy position during the pandemic, whereby</p>
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							the external commissioned service undertaking this work on Torbay's behalf ceased to function.
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Theme 3 – Effective Partnership Practice

Objective 3.1:

- *Early Help services provide timely and appropriate help to children and their families which prevents escalation (or re-referral) to statutory services.*
- *Life chances for children will be supported by early intervention, with a particular focus upon their holistic health needs.*
- *Ensure that responses to children who go missing continue to be coordinated and effective in locating them and offering prioritised post episode support so that their needs can be fully understood. Interventions with children, disruption activity with persons of concern and at particular 'Hot-Spots' are properly targeted.*
- *To continue to build upon the increasingly effective arrangements in relation to MARAC and MAPPA.*
- *Ensure that all 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless are assessed by social workers and that they are aware of the options open to them, including the option to become looked after.*
- *Ensure all care experienced young people in temporary accommodation achieve accommodation security.*
- *All cared for and care experienced young people benefit from appropriate educational support, particularly literacy support to enable them to participate and benefit from learning.*

- *Ensure that all young people who will transition to adult services will benefit from appropriate personal support through the process.*
- *To develop and deliver a revised Youth Strategy which reflects the identified needs of young people.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
3.1.1	The Council and its partners as a whole have an agreed understanding, vision and joined up approach to Early Help which supports the improvement priorities and prevents avoidable escalation to statutory services. Wherever possible services will be accessible to families through the network of	To complete the implementation in full of the Early Help Strategy and ensure that the Family Hub Project Board and Family Hubs are properly focussed on developing a Child Friendly Torbay.	Family Hubs Project Board and partners	Immediate and ongoing.	Children and families will benefit from a rigorous multi-disciplinary approach to Early Help which will enable them to access appropriate and local services in a timely way and at a level which meets their needs.	To monitor and evaluate data relating to uptake of Early Help, successful completion of early help interventions, rates of escalations to statutory services and rates of step down to Early Help.	Implementation of the Family Hubs has enabled an enhanced link between early help and prevention, and the 0-19 services under public health, providing a seamless early intervention and prevention offer which ensures children and their families have the right support at the earliest opportunity.

	community-based Family Hubs.					The impact of Family and Community Hubs will assure significant knowledge of local services that can be drawn upon by families.	This model was validated by Ofsted during the Start for Life thematic review, who observed seamless service delivery. The implementation of the Family Hub has coincided with a reduction in the number of children being supported at Child in Need level, particularly over the last three months. This is due to the impact of services, which focus on connection, relationships and access, at the universal level.
3.1.2	In conjunction with health and public health partners, identify the resources available and gaps in provision and take steps to jointly commission those services required to meet the emotional	Use existing and new community resources to work with children and their families to promote and secure their emotional well-being.	Head of Service, Early Help, Early help Hubs, Health and Public Health professionals in conjunction with families and children	December 2022	Children and young people with emotional health challenges and low-level mental health concerns will benefit from early support	Early identification and effective support will impact upon escalation rates and will enable timely referral and access to	The emotional and mental health needs of cared for children and care experienced young people continues to be a significant focus for Torbay. The care planning meeting structure promotes a child and young person led

	<p>well-being needs of children throughout their childhood and, where relevant, up to 25 years of age.</p>				<p>from within their communities.</p>	<p>specialist services when necessary.</p>	<p>exploration of what additional services might be required for children and young people, to meet their therapeutic, emotional or mental wellbeing needs.</p> <p>An Emotional Wellbeing sub-group has been established as part of Torbay's Written Statement of Action response, led by the ICB.</p> <p>The s75 arrangement, including the service specification for the Therapeutic Wellbeing Service, is currently under review.</p> <p>A request has been made by the Children's Overview</p>
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							and Scrutiny Board for an exceptional and additional spotlight Board on children's emotional and mental health; this will be attended by both Children's and partners in December 2023.
3.1.3	Adopt a preventive and supportive approach to improve children and young people's speech, language and communication.	Effectively use resources to identify early children who will benefit from early intervention to offer the best start and improve life chances for children and young people.	Hannah Pugliese (tbc), Shaun Evans, SALT and Early Years services.	September 2022 to coincide with the new school year.	Children and young people and their families will benefit from the confidence that improvements in speech, language and communication bring.	Children will be better equipped and more confident to participate in social and learning environments.	Work is being undertaken as part of the TSCP neglect group and the Exeter TMRF to examine the links between poverty and neglect with speech and language being one of the key elements within this work – particular lines of enquiry are the links between high levels of child tooth decay in the area and early speech and language problems. A programme of preventative work is being devised with a view to delivering educational and best start to life programmes via the family hub network.

							Other work being explored is an enhanced early years educational offer to create 'home learning environments' HLEs. In essence HLEs will be best start for life programmes linking parents to nurseries at the child's conception stage and supporting parents/children with their education to firstly get them nursery ready and secondly get them school ready. Again, these early identification and early intervention programmes will form key elements delivered from the family hubs and provide an extension to the 'Torbay Promise' that is now fully launch.
3.1.4	Ensure improvements in mental health and care services for	Improve access and the quality of services provided by CAMHS, crisis services and	Hannah Pugliese	Immediate and ongoing	Children and young people will benefit from more	Children and young people's mental health will be	As outlined in 3.1.2, a significant schedule of work is ongoing to ensure that the emotional and mental health of children

	children and young people.	eating disorders/disordered eating services.			timely and improved specialist services when they experience significant mental ill health.	improved through having better and more timely access to the specialist services that they need.	and young people remains a priority, and that a range of appropriate services are in place to meet need.
3.1.5	Ensure an integrated response across health, education and care services to meet the neurodiverse needs of children and young people.	<p>Strengthen the quality of integrated services to identify and meet need at the point of presentation.</p> <p>Strengthen the focus of emotional and behavioural support to prevent escalation and crisis, and support transition to young adulthood.</p> <p>Work to maintain children within their families and communities when it is safe to do so and support and facilitate their recovery.</p>	Hannah Pugliese, Shaun Evans and Rachael Williams.	Integrated approaches to be developed and implemented by December 2022	Neurodiversity among children and young people will be identified early, and better supported in timely ways within their families and communities to prevent escalation.	Children and young people will benefit from early identification of their neurodiverse needs and will experience more effective, integrated services provided by skilled and knowledgeable health, education and social care professionals.	<p>Through the graduated response Written Statement of Action sub-groups the current pathways and provision are being mapped for children who present with need relating to their neurodiversity. This will help to create an articulated pathway of care, specific information for SENCOs and children and families and an analysis of gaps in the system.</p> <p>Alongside this we are increasing the number of key workers who will support children and</p>

						Episodes of crisis will reduce in number.	young people at an earlier stage of need and will not require a diagnostic process to have completed in order to access this provision. We are also working to integrate the pathways for referral and diagnosis across community paediatrics, CAMHS and therapies.
3.1.6	<p>Ensure that responses to children who go missing are effective with well-coordinated multi-disciplinary plans and actions to reduce risk.</p> <p>Return home interviews to be completed within statutory timescales in order that children's voice can be heard at the earliest opportunity and</p>	<p>Ensure that policies and procedures are implemented in full and within timescales.</p> <p>Maintain the system to track and monitor those children who are vulnerable to repeated missing episodes and ensure a comprehensive process involving partners is in place to oversee actions that are taken</p>	Divisional Director & HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will receive a return home interview within 72 hours of being found.</p> <p>For those children vulnerable to prolific missing episodes, multi-disciplinary disruption plans to be</p>	<p>A reduction in the numbers of repeat missing episodes.</p> <p>The reasons for the missing episode will be understood, multi-disciplinary actions will be planned and implemented</p>	<p>Torbay has an exploitation toolkit which is embedded and used by professionals across the Torbay Children's Safeguarding partnership when there are concerns for any type of exploitation.</p> <p>Torbay has three distinct operational/practice forums for multi-agency discussion about any child where there are contextual safeguarding concerns. These are embedded and</p>

	<p>effective responses can be made.</p>	<p>to afford the necessary safeguards.</p> <p>Maintain and when necessary, revise the contemporary multi-disciplinary tracking systems to protect vulnerable children by building intelligence about them, their potential perpetrators and geographical locations of interest, 'hot-spots'.</p>			<p>developed and implemented.</p> <p>Children will experience agencies working together effectively and consistently to understand the patterns and trends associated with their missing episodes. They will support prevention and disruptions activity that will reduce their vulnerabilities.</p>	<p>to support the child.</p>	<p>were well regarded by our Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>We have internal and commissioned services to responding to children where contextual harm is a concern and are in the process of considering how these services can be working together to deliver evidence based, focused interventions for children and their families regarding contextual safeguarding.</p> <p>There is identified development work to be completed with our Child Protection Conference Chairs/IROs, and we are in the process of identifying Practice Leads for training and supporting others to embrace the theories and principles of Contextual Safeguarding.</p> <p>The TSCP have identified that there needs to be a</p>
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							<p>task and finish group considering a model of contextual safeguarding; this will commence from the end of 2023 and throughout 2024, with feedback through to the TSCP Executive Group and Children’s Overview and scrutiny and the CCIB if required.</p> <p>The TSCP undertook a Multi-Agency Case Audit (MACA) in relation to child criminal exploitation in October 2023.</p>
3.1.7	Partners should ensure that children vulnerable to sexual exploitation are identified and in accordance with policy referred for appropriate support, assessment with consideration being given to the possibility	<p>Continue to support the role and function of the CSE coordinator in alignment with statutory functions.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that members of MACSE are sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to</p>	Divisional Director & HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children who are vulnerable to being targeted or who are already involved in CSE will have a multi-disciplinary care plan that identifies how these	The effective use of intelligence and professional knowledge and skill will continue to identify vulnerable children and persons who pose a risk,	As above.

	<p>of association with gang related activity.</p> <p>MACSE meetings to be effective in reducing risk to the most vulnerable children by planning effective interventions.</p>	<p>contribute fully to plans for children.</p> <p>Periodic quality assurance activity to evaluate the effectiveness of work with children vulnerable to go missing and exploitation.</p>			<p>vulnerabilities will be addressed and reduced.</p> <p>Children will benefit from better protection as social workers and partners will understand the vulnerabilities relating to CSE and the associated risks to children.</p>	<p>and 'hot-spots'.</p>	
3.1.8	<p>To re-establish the importance of MARAC arrangements in the management of children living in households in which</p>	<p>All staff attending MARAC meetings will be fully cognisant of the contemporary and historical circumstances of the child so that the</p>	<p>Operational Managers and Social Workers</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children will benefit from a process that will properly explore the impact of</p>	<p>Children will be better protected from the impact of domestic abuse and</p>	<p>A Chief Executive Deep Dive activity took place in November 2021; the recommendations from this deep dive are tracked through the Deep Dive</p>

	domestic abuse is present.	meeting can properly understand the risks to which he/she is exposed.			domestic abuse on their family and assess how it is affecting their daily lives and prospects for their futures.	victims will be helped and supported to make the necessary changes in their lives.	<p>Tracker, with oversight from the Children's Quartet.</p> <p>MARAC meetings are attended by the appropriate officer on all occasion, to ensure that risk can be fully understood and appropriately responded to within each meeting.</p> <p>A MARAC PowerBI Dashboard is now included in the suite of Children's dashboards. This provides an overview in relation to number of referrals, referral type, referral outcome and threshold, and also breaks data down in terms of referring agency. This is impactful in terms of the wider understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on Torbay's children and their families.</p>
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3.1.9	To advocate on behalf of care experienced children and young people for the Council's Housing Strategy and delivery plan to be revised to make explicit reference to actions being taken to respond to young people's needs for accommodation security.	<p>To provide data and information to inform revision to the Housing Strategy and delivery plan and enable specific reference to be made to the housing needs of care experienced young people.</p> <p>Ensure that young people moving towards independence have timely access to a housing advisor for advice, guidance and support.</p>	DCS, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board and Housing.	October 2022	<p>Torbay's Housing Strategy and delivery plan will reflect its statutory role, responsibility and function in relation to Corporate Parenting.</p> <p>Young People will benefit from the advice, guidance and support of a professional with specialist knowledge.</p>	Increased prospects for care experienced young people to achieve secure tenancies matched to their needs and a consequential reduction in homelessness and reliance upon temporary and unsuitable accommodation.	<p>Torbay's Housing Strategy has now been revised, and this reflects the corporate parenting responsibility to care experienced young people. Accommodation for care experienced young people is a regular item on the Corporate Parenting Board, and has its own Strand Lead and meeting structure, to oversee activity and action relating to this priority.</p> <p>The block contract for support accommodation remains in place, providing 48 units with no current vacancies within the core Lot 2 options.</p> <p>The most significant challenge remains access for care experienced</p>
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							<p>young people to move on accommodation, generic housing stock as opposed to specialist accommodation. All care experienced young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, from the ages of 18-25, are also tracked through the Youth Homelessness Prevention Panel; currently, 20 care experienced young people are being tracked this way, a reduction from an average of above 40 throughout 2021-22.</p> <p>Joint work between Children's and Housing has continued on the SHAP bid in partnership with the YMCA to provide an additional 34 units for young people. The final bid is due to be submitted</p>
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							on the 11 th of November 2023.
3.1.10	All young people who become homeless are assessed and are made fully aware of their right to be cared for by the Local Authority	All 16/17-year-olds who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless will be fully assessed and supported in accordance with the youth homelessness policy and this will involve cross partnership colleagues. Young people will be advised about their rights (including those relating to admissions to care) and their progress will be monitored and evaluated. Council wide, strategic alternatives to homelessness need to be considered for young people aged 16-25.	HoS, Team Managers, Social Workers and partnership colleagues including youth homelessness workers.	Immediate and ongoing.	All homeless 16/17-year-olds will be aware of their statutory right to be accommodated. Young people at risk of becoming homeless will reduce. Homeless young people will have a personalised plan which will be monitored to ensure that they are properly safeguarded.	Young people will be aware of their rights and will continue to be offered suitable living arrangements, and safeguarding services should they become homeless, or care.	An advocacy service is now in place and the joint CSC/Housing protocol has been updated to reflect a position that bed and breakfast accommodation for 16/17-year-olds is not an option along with clear processes and procedures to assess as well as support young people to make the right decision about the legal status of their accommodation provision, i.e., under children's legislation and housing legislation. Torbay has recommissioned housing related support with block contracts for young people aged 16-24 and care experienced young people with 48 bed spaces. For those organisations that are supporting 16–17-year-olds, Torbay are

							supporting the Ofsted registration process where applicable.
3.1.11	Ensure that all care experienced young people who are living in temporary housing arrangements are supported to achieve accommodation security at the earliest opportunity.	<p>In conjunction with the housing service, young people should benefit from frequent visits and advice about the options available to them to achieve accommodation security.</p> <p>To develop a business plan to secure dedicated housing for care experienced young people consistent with statutory responsibility and case law.</p>	<p>Head of Service, Regulated Services, Personal Advisors and Housing Advisors</p> <p>Directors of Children's Services, Place and Adults</p>	Immediate and ongoing	Young people will benefit afforded by the security of living arrangements which they can call home.	<p>Young people's psychological health and their ability to live successfully as a young adult will improve as a consequence of securing accommodation.</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation and Youth Homelessness is on the corporate risk register for scrutiny, commitment and oversight.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board has strand leads to champion areas of priority, with a dedicated lead for Housing.</p> <p>A revised Housing Strategy has been completed and has been through its governance process.</p> <p>The DFE are funding 1.5fte specialist PAs to work intensively with care experience young people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>A virtual team has been set up to meet quarterly to discuss the most complex</p>

							<p>care experienced young people whose needs often impact on their ability to maintain housing which in turn results in multiple homelessness episodes throughout their early 20s.</p> <p>Work continues with BetterGov to develop and improve data join up and reporting across Housing and Children's Services.</p>
3.1.12	<p>Ensure that all cared for children and care experienced young people are supported in education and where necessary particular focus is directed toward literacy skills, particularly reading which should be explicit in all PEPs and Pathway Plans.</p>	<p>In preparation for completing PEPs and Pathway Plans all cared for and care experienced children and young people should have an up-to-date evaluation of their literacy with specialist additional help offered when necessary.</p>	<p>Head of Virtual School and education and skills representatives, social workers and Personal Advisors</p>	<p>Immediate and on-going</p>	<p>All cared for children and care experienced young people will benefit from the provision of the support necessary to secure their reading skills so that they may learn confidently and successfully.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be better equipped to learn and benefit from their education and, later, be ready to take their place in the workforce.</p>	<p>A Chief Executive Deep Dive activity in relation to the PEP process was undertaken in August 2023. The review found a high level of compliance with PEPs, with 82% of cared for children at that time having a PEP.</p> <p>Areas of improvement included a review of the PEP template, alignment of Capita and LCS to ensure appropriate two-way communication with the Virtual School in</p>

							support of statutory responsibility and ensure the appropriate range of representatives are invited to and engaged in the PEP process.
3.1.13	To ensure that all young people who will transition to adult services benefit from early plans which are co-produced in conjunction with their social care workers and with the involvement of a link worker to adult services.	Review and if necessary, revise the Transition Policy to ensure that co-produced plans are required to be completed early (by the young person's 16 th birthday) and informed by the specialist input of an adult's services professional who will remain the link person throughout the young person's transitions period.	Head of Service, regulated services, Sarah Pengelly, Adults Services	December 2022	Young people will be helped to prepare for the transition from children's services and benefit from the seamless transfer of service responsibility.	Young people will benefit psychologically from a seamless transfer between services and through the support and knowledge of an adult services professional, will be aware of the resources that are available currently and in the future.	All children and young people from the ages of fourteen to seventeen who are cared for, open to the Children with Disabilities, subject to child protection planning, subject to an NRM referral, subject to a red exploitation assessment or who are at risk of youth homelessness can be referred to the Transitions (with all cared for and young people supported within the Children with Disabilities Team automatically heard within this Panel); a referral form has been created which enables social workers to refer young people for Panel oversight. The Transition Panel oversees transition

							<p>planning in respect of the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current placements and support packages. - Transition planning and joint work with adult services. - Issues in relation to liberty protection safeguards and restrictive measures if identified. - Joint work between the allocated social worker and Personal Advisor where appropriate. - Preparation for independence work. <p>The Panel also serves as a means of consistent managerial oversight in respect of the allocation of Personal Advisors at fifteen years and nine months. This is to allow for a Personal Advisor to be</p>
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							<p>co-allocated, and for relationship-building and information gathering to take place at a much earlier point than it has historically, to aid the transition of the young person from cared for to care experienced.</p> <p>The Panel also allows for tracking of parent/carer need during transition.</p> <p>The Joint Protocol between Children's and adults has been updated, to allow for consultation with young people as part of this revision. A young people's guide to transition has also been created, to support young people's understanding of this process and their rights within it.</p>
3.1.14	In the context of a 'Child Friendly Torbay', review and refresh understanding of youth need taking into account	<p>Action:</p> <p>1. Identify a task and finish group of strategic and operational managers and</p>	Divisional Director, Partnership and Family Hubs	March 2024	1. Children and young people will have timely access to a range of targeted	Children and young people will be safer and better informed to make life	The youth provision which was previously commissioned to an external agency has now been brought back in-house and a dedicated

	<p>anticipated new statutory responsibilities using gap analysis when required, and scope what services are required to be commissioned to meet that need.</p>	<p>commissioners to co-ordinate the review and to undertake the gap analysis.</p> <p>2.To develop a strategy reflecting local understanding and intelligence but factoring in national and international learning.</p> <p>3.Propose a delivery plan setting out options and priority recommendations including costings wherever possible.</p>			<p>services, relevant to their needs.</p> <p>2.Children will benefit from universal and specialist services to be delivered in suitable geographical locations as close to their communities as possible.</p>	<p>choices as a result of having needs-relevant services available to them.</p>	<p>manager has started to consider the delivery model required in Torbay for our young people. This sits within the Partnership and Family Hubs directorate, and is aligned to the Vulnerable Pupils, in order that we can target engagement in respect of those young people at risk of suspension, exclusion, exploitation or who are school anxious/avoidant.</p> <p>We will be in a position by March 2024 to have a strategic delivery plan which will set out our model in Torbay.</p>
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Theme 4 – A Sufficient and Skilled Workforce

Objective 4.1:

- *Ensure that the workforce strategy is effective in securing a skilled and permanent workforce and focusses upon workforce training and development, recruitment and retention.*

- *Senior managers and leaders must take action to create an environment in which their staff have the capacity and support to carry out effective work with children in need of help and protection.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
4.1.1	<p>An effective workforce strategy ensures a qualified and skilled permanent workforce that reduces reliance on agency staff.</p> <p>Training and development opportunities and succession planning combine to support retention and promote Torbay as an employment destination of choice.</p>	<p>To maintain a focus on aligning training and development with the needs of children.</p> <p>Continue to use agency staff only when essential for the smooth running of the service.</p> <p>As part of the workforce strategy, a systematic approach to recruitment should be adopted and all leaders and managers should be focussed upon positive retention activity.</p>	DCS in conjunction with Head of Service Learning Academy and operational managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will have fewer changes of social worker.</p> <p>Children will experience social workers who are knowledgeable and skilled.</p> <p>Children will benefit from a proactive approach to recruitment and retention that will reduce staff turnover.</p>	<p>Greater staff stability.</p> <p>Improvements to the quality of service provided to children.</p> <p>Stable long-term relationships with social workers.</p> <p>Torbay becomes a destination of choice for skilled</p>	<p>Succession planning for Senior Leadership is complete. The Divisional Director group and all bar one Head of Service are now permanent. The Service Managers roles are all permanently filled.</p> <p>The Divisional Directors, front line Heads of Service and Service Managers receive bespoke coaching and development programme.</p> <p>The Team Manager development programme commenced September 2022.</p> <p>Leadership and Development workshops</p>

		The succession plan introduced to support career progression and retention should be at least maintained and when possible extended.			Children will benefit from professionals furthering their careers progression in Torbay.	managers and practitioners.	<p>have been delivered to all Advanced Social Workers and Team Managers from winter 2022.</p> <p>Impact on recruitment data 01/10/2023:</p> <p>Vacancy Rate Social Care 12%</p> <p>Agency Rate 6.0%</p> <p>Turnover Rate:</p> <p>Sept 20 26%</p> <p>Sept 21 16%</p> <p>Sept 22 15.8%</p> <p>October 23 14.6%</p> <p>Current forecast cost reduction on agency spends in 2022/23 £2.2 million from previous years at £4.4 million.</p>
4.1.2	The training and development strategy continues to reflect the needs of the service and	The workforce training and development plan remains focussed upon a mixture of core and	Head of Service Learning Academy.	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will continue to experience good or better	Children will benefit from work that is	Learning from quality assurance tracker continues. Ofsted March 2022 commented that we

	<p>workforce and is based on an analysis of developmental needs and the requirements of the children.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to develop joint training initiatives with other agencies and professional groups to enable effective multi-disciplinary practice in shared initiatives.</p>	<p>bespoke opportunities to maximise the skills of the workforce and equip them to meet the changing needs of children. These opportunities should include joint training with partners.</p> <p>The social care workforce will be offered training and development opportunities commensurate with service priorities developed to meet the needs of children.</p> <p>Opportunities should be offered to learn from national research and understanding of national recognised best practice.</p>			<p>services delivered by a stable, skilled and motivated workforce which will be multi-disciplinary when necessary.</p> <p>The impact of training and development is understood.</p>	<p>better planned and delivered.</p> <p>Their social workers will develop a greater range of skills and techniques that can be used according to need and in combination with partners when required</p>	<p>had a robust process in place to ensure training is relevant to the needs of the service and children.</p> <p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning needs identified from quality assurance. 2. Training delivered. 3. Re-audit undertaken to monitor impact on services to children. 4. Actions identified from re-audit undertaken. 5. Process starts again. <p>Training delivered jointly with partner agencies – Learning Academy has strong links with Torbay</p>
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							Safeguarding Children's Partnership and SEND local offer. Examples: Graded Care Profile 2, Restorative Practice, Best Practice Forums, Autism Awareness. Evaluations will be undertaken of the above training to measure direct impact on children.
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Theme 5 – Quality Assurance and Audit

Objective 5.1:

- *Ensure that performance and quality assurance activity supports best practice and learning is used to further develop the workforce and to improve practice and management across the service and where possible across the partnership.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
5.1.1	The outcome focused quality assurance framework will continue to provide a programme of robust, child centred case file audits (including multi-disciplinary audits)	An annual programme of outcome focused audit activity, including deep dive and thematic audits and dip sampling will be targeted systematically to	HoS Learning Academy.	Annual audit programme updated by 1 st April each year.	Children will benefit from having a systematic effectiveness, impact and compliance	Improved compliance with requirements, a greater focus on outcomes and improved	Audit Universe broad scope of topics and themes. Three monthly rolling audit cycle: Month 1 Mash and SATs, Month 2 Operational and Child

	<p>that will evaluate the impact of work to support performance management. It will also capture learning from complaints and compliments.</p> <p>Follow up systems will be in place to ensure that actions required following audit and complaint and compliment analysis are completed.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Chair of the Continuous Improvement Board will continue to assure the effectiveness of the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan through a programme of 'Deep Dive' evaluations of service impact.</p>	<p>measure the effectiveness and impact of the improvement programme and the benefits to, and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>To maintain a programme of deep dive audit activity undertaken by CEO and the Chair of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board to ensure the impact of improvement priorities in practice.</p> <p>Marinating a pool of trained auditors and moderators to include senior managers who are effective in evaluating the quality of work undertaken and its impacts.</p>			<p>check on services that are provided to them.</p> <p>Children will benefit from the additional quality assurance provided by the CEO and Chair of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board that will establish the impact of improvement priorities.</p> <p>Children will benefit from the knowledge that audit and dip sample recommendations will be followed up to ensure that the</p>	<p>quality assessment, planning and intervention which reflects the needs and views of children.</p> <p>Improved performance data across the range of measures.</p>	<p>Exploitation 2 Care for and Care Experienced.</p> <p>Head of Service QA meets with relevant Heads of Service to identify areas of focus for each month. This is triangulated with the performance data.</p> <p>Actions from audits tracked on LCS via the Team Manager which is dip sampled for compliance. Dip Sample actions are tracked by Lead Auditor. Complaints and complaints fed in by governance which are included in the quarterly audit reports.</p>
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		<p>Maintain the process of tracking audit outcomes and recommendations to ensure that individual experiences of services are improved for children and young people and learning from audits is captured and supports policy and practice development.</p>			<p>required action has been taken.</p>		<p>The three-monthly cycle enables impact on children’s lived experience to be monitored by service area.</p> <p>From October 2022, children and young people and Parents/carers feedback will be gathered by auditors from October 2022 which will evidence direct impact on the child and family.</p> <p>Multi-agency audits: Lead auditor supports MASH dip sampling. HOS QA links in with Torbay Safeguarding Partnership QA sub-group. Auditing will commence October</p>
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							<p>2022 across the SEND Area and Early Help.</p> <p>Deep Dives – Deep Dive actions are tracked and updated monthly via Children’s Social Care Senior Leadership Team and monitored via Quartet. Deep Dive visits completed for this year. Will plan dip samples to measure impact on outcomes for children.</p>
5.1.2	Continue to ensure a consistent approach to the use of performance data which captures qualitative and quantitative material so that it supports evaluation of outcomes for children.	Opportunities to be taken to assure the quality and range of performance management and data reporting that is available through LiquidLogic.	DCS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from the ability of managers and staff to be able to monitor their work. This will enable individual, team	Child level data enables a focus on individual children to drive performance improvement,	<p>A consistent and robust process remains in place in relation to performance.</p> <p>The monthly performance report is</p>

	<p>Performance surgeries are used to monitor progress with improvement objectives.</p>	<p>Performance surgeries to continue on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The data will be at child level.</p>			<p>and service performance to be identified and action taken to respond to pressures and concerns.</p>	<p>Team and service performance will maintain continuous improvement.</p>	<p>completed within ten working days of the 1st of the month; this is then quality assured by both the HOS Business Intelligence and then the Divisional Director of Safeguarding, who extracts initial headline themes in terms of data analysis. Once endorsed by the DCS, this is shared with all Children's leaders to use within the performance surgery structure.</p> <p>Performance surgeries take place on a monthly basis by service; minutes from these meetings are then shared with the HOS Business Intelligence and the HOS QA for collation and analysis</p>
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							<p>of emerging trends and patterns.</p> <p>A data exception report is compiled by the Divisional Director of Safeguarding and the DD Schools and SEND; this is a core agenda item on the Children's Continuous Improvement Board, the Children's Focus Meeting and the Quartet. The exception report highlights partnership issues, to ensure line of sight for the Independent Scrutineer.</p> <p>The service now has access to a wide range of PowerBI data dashboards, which allows for live and up to</p>
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							date data analysis within each service.
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