

Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

Proposal:	Healthwatch
Executive Lead:	Cllr Julien Parrott, Lead for Adults and Children
Director / Assistant Director:	Caroline Taylor, Director Adult Services

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Section 1: Background Information	
1.	<p>What is the proposal/issue?</p> <p>The proposal was to reduce the level of funding provided by the council to Healthwatch Torbay as originally proposed in the budget setting process for 2017/18 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £11,000 in 18/19 which includes £5,000 agreed in a previous variation to the contract. <p>Healthwatch additionally receives some ad-hoc income from other sources, some of which is derived from undertaking work on behalf of organisations such as the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). However, this funding is not part of the main contract with the council and is not guaranteed.</p> <p>The original proposal was to reduce funding in 2018/19 by an additional £6,000, taking the total reduction to £11,000. This proposal has been amended to limit the reduction to £5,000 following further consideration and consultation feedback.</p>
2.	<p>What is the current situation?</p> <p>Healthwatch England is a national consumer champion in health and care, with statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services. Though part of a national network, each local Healthwatch (as in Torbay) is an independent organisation dealing with local concerns about health and care services. Healthwatch Torbay supports local people in influencing and challenging how health and social care services are provided within their area. They also provide or signpost people to information to help them make choices about health and care services.</p>

	<p>The Health and Social Care Act 2012 stated that local authorities would have a local Healthwatch organisation in their area from April 2013, but have the flexibility to choose how they commission it to achieve best value for money for their communities. Torbay Council chose to set up Healthwatch Torbay as an independent (free-standing as opposed to hosted) organisation, able to employ its own staff and involve volunteers.</p> <p>The original contract started on the 1 April 2013, with an initial length of one year. However, the contract did include an option to extend and therefore the current contract runs up until 31 March 2019. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 states that local authorities fund their local Healthwatch. The council receives a Local Reform and Community Voices Grant and Healthwatch Torbay is part-funded from this money, with the council making an additional contribution. The current budget for 2017/18 is £125,000. Healthwatch additionally receives some income from other sources, some of which is derived from undertaking work on behalf of organisations such as the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). However, this funding is not part of the main contract with the council and is not guaranteed.</p> <p>Torbay Council are proposing to reduce the level of funding provided by the authority, whilst still providing financial assistance to Healthwatch Torbay to support them in delivering services to the community.</p> <p>Savings of £10,000 were made in 2017/18 and a further £11,000 (including £5,000 agreed in a previous variation to the contract) was originally proposed. However, following further consideration and consultation feedback, this proposal has been amended to limit the reduction to £5,000.</p> <p>No significant implementation costs are associated with this proposal, though potential costs to the wider community are reflected in section 2. of this Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>What options have been considered?</p> <p>The provision of a local Healthwatch is a statutory requirement for the council and therefore termination of this service is not an option. The function plays an important role in providing a voice to the local public and helping to hold to account commissioners and providers of health and care services in Torbay.</p> <p>As noted above the council has some discretion in terms of how it commissions this service. In parallel to this proposal, future options are being developed with regards to how we commission and procure information, advice and advocacy services and encourage providers to build on their partnerships with each other, to achieve a more integrated offer to the public.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan 2015-19?</p> <p>Ambitions: Prosperous and Healthy Torbay</p> <p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reducing resources to best effect • Integrated and joined up approach <p>Targeted actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and supporting vulnerable adults
<p>5.</p>	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>The proposal directly affects Healthwatch Torbay, together with potential users of their services.</p> <p>Consultation will take place with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthwatch Torbay; • Service Users (via Healthwatch); • South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG); and • The general population (via the corporate survey).
<p>6.</p>	<p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Consultation on this proposal took place as part of the general consultation in 2016/17 for 2017/18 proposals which included the proposal for 2018/19. Healthwatch were contacted regarding the proposal and were asked to provide feedback, giving them the opportunity to outline any change in circumstances from the previous year.</p>

Section 2: Expected Implications and Impact Assessment

(These sections will be updated and expanded following the consultation period.)

7.

What are the expected financial and legal implications?

The proposal will achieve a financial saving of £5,000.

There are limited direct cost implications to the council. However, there may be potential indirect financial and legal costs to the wider health and care system if the provider has to reduce their service e.g. an increase in the level of complaints or enquiries being dealt with by the council and other providers or missed opportunities to learn from service failure in the health and care system, to improve how we support the public.

8.

What are the expected risks?

As we are not proposing to discontinue funding to this statutory service the expected risks are partially minimised. However, the impact on the provider is likely to be that they may have to reduce their service. As Healthwatch currently do not have any other guaranteed funding sources the short to medium-term financial viability of the organisation might not be sustainable within the lifetime of the existing contract.

Potentially a reduced level of service might therefore risk:

- health and care service user's views not being heard;
- fewer opportunities to have a positive impact on the behaviour and knowledge of health and care professionals;
- the quality of service provision might not improve, due to lost opportunities to learn from service user's experiences (good and bad) of the health and care system;
- Healthwatch Torbay possibly not being able to perform (in part or whole) some of their statutory functions, to the point that the existing financial model might not be able to support delivery of the existing contract up until March 2019;
- this decision could create a level of political and media scrutiny, including the potential for interest from Public Health England; and
- if the proposal is not accepted, savings will need to be found elsewhere.

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9. **Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012**
Not Applicable.

10. **What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?**

Healthwatch Torbay's Annual Report 2015/16 highlights the activity the organisation undertook in that year and similar work has continued during this financial year. This included:

- gathering people's experiences and views through the 'rate & review' system;
- taking part in engagement activities;
- conducting consultations;
- providing advice and information;
- escalating concerns and complaints;
- visiting service providers e.g. care homes as part of the 'enter & view' role;
- undertaking bespoke projects to identify specific issues; and
- producing reports on various topics (based on the activity highlighted above).

As part of the budget consultation feedback from Healthwatch was received, as well as the proposal being included within the questionnaire available to the general public.

11.

What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?

Findings from the budget consultation process for the 2017/18 budget are outlined below:

To reduce the level of funding provided by the Council to Healthwatch. This proposal is expected to save £10,000 in 2017/18, and £11,000 in 2018/19. *Healthwatch Torbay supports local people in influencing and challenging how health and social care services are provided within their area. They also provide information to help people make choices about health and care services. The proposed budget for next year would be £125,000.*

Do you support this proposal?	Number	Percent
Yes	243	58.3%
No	144	34.5%
No answer	30	7.2%
Total	417	100.0%

In addition to the responses outlined in the table above, only one written representation was received from the Chairman of Healthwatch Torbay. In summary they responded that, “...we fully appreciate the financial challenges being faced by Torbay Council and realise that difficult choices need to be made. We are, however, concerned about the impact that these reductions will have on HWT and our local community and our ability to meet our statutory requirements in the coming year.”

12.

Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions

The original proposal was to reduce the level of funding provided to Healthwatch by £11,000, which included £5,000 agreed in their contract plus a further £6,000. The proposal has been amended following further consideration and consultation and the proposal is now to reduce the funding by £5,000 only.

Equality Impacts

13	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people	No differential impact.		
	People with caring Responsibilities		<p>Healthwatch Torbay are partly co-located with Torbay Carers' Service and share some resources. There is the potential that a reduction in Healthwatch funding might impact on the effectiveness of this relationship, which in turn might impact on the ability of the Carers' Service to support people with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>However as we are not proposing to discontinue funding to this statutory service and the expected risks are partially minimised (but see above).</p>	

<p>People with a disability</p>		<p>Healthwatch is the local consumer champion of users of health and care services. There is the potential that as some users of the existing service may have long-term conditions or disabilities, any reduction in funding might impact upon this client group.</p> <p>However as we are not proposing to discontinue funding to this statutory service and the expected risks are partially minimised (but see above).</p>	
<p>Women or men</p>	<p>No differential impact.</p>		
<p>People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i></p>	<p>No differential impact.</p>		
<p>Religion or belief (including lack of belief)</p>	<p>No differential impact.</p>		
<p>People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual</p>	<p>No differential impact.</p>		

People who are transgendered	No differential impact.		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	No differential impact.		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	No differential impact.		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	No differential impact.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)		<p>As Healthwatch Torbay is the local consumer champion for health and care services, any reduction in funding has the potential to reduce their effectiveness in this role.</p> <p>However as we are not proposing to discontinue funding to this statutory service and the expected risks are partially minimised (but see above).</p>	

<p>14</p>	<p>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)</p>	<p>The proposed funding reductions to CAB might have cumulative impacts on Healthwatch and vice versa, in terms of their ability to work together.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)</p>	<p>There is the potential that this proposal could impact upon health and social care commissioners (council and CCG and providers (public, voluntary and private). For example, Healthwatch Torbay might not be able to undertake as many public consultations and might not be able to perform some of their statutory functions.</p> <p>Proposed funding reductions across the health and care system may generate increased demand on Healthwatch Torbay, at a time when we are also proposing to reduce their funding.</p>

