

# Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant Uplift Proposal – 2025/26

## Key starting position statement

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Public Health is a statutory function of the Council funded through a ring-fenced grant (RFG) from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). There are clear criteria for what the funding should be spent on and this applies to the use of reserves which need to follow the grant conditions.

Local authorities provide services such as social care, leisure, housing, planning and refuse collection that can have a significant impact on the health of the local population. However, these core statutory functions are not eligible for funding through the RFG.

Prior to the RFG uplift of £599,000, the predicted 2025/26 position was roughly a balanced position.

This leaves an 'in-principle' RFG balance of **£600,000** now available to spend before the budget is balanced in 2025/26.

## Proposed prioritised budget

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The proposed budget spend is prioritised as follows:

1. Balancing the forecast base budget shortfalls.
2. Investments for public health benefit.

### Balancing the forecast base budget shortfalls

The Council commissions public health services from a number of providers including NHS organisations. The Council has recently completed tendering for sexual and reproductive health and public health nursing (0-19) services with NHS providers. In addition to contract inflation the Council is also liable for pay awards to NHS staff. This also applies to adult drug and alcohol services. The other public health service is our Healthy Lifestyles service that is not provided by an NHS provider.

These additional pressures were funded through the public health grant reserve, but this use of one-off funding is not sustainable and posed a risk as reserves are depleted over time.

The estimated shortfall over these four contracts totals **£295,000**.

### Investments for public health benefit

Descriptor	Budget	Comments
Increased investment in public health outcomes for:	£200,000	To provide the investment to ensure there is a coherent and consistent approach to progress the ageing well and children's mental health agendas.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health ageing</li> <li>- Healthy behaviours</li> <li>- Children and Young People</li> <li>Mental Health provision</li> </ul>		<p>Also to expand the capacity for the Healthy Behaviours offer to tackle overweight/obesity and ensure reach and sustainability of services are ensured.</p>
<p>School nursing capacity</p>	<p>£120,000</p>	<p>While Torbay benchmarks well for early years provision including health visitors in our Family Hubs there is a gap in supporting the health and wellbeing needs of school aged children. The expectation is that this investment enhances the offer for school aged children in Torbay including moving towards all schools have a named school nurse.</p>
<p>Public Health Innovation fund</p>	<p>£100,000</p>	<p>For pump-priming initiatives on a 'test and learn' basis in response to emerging issues associated with public health agendas, for example some test and learn approaches already funded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Active travel initiatives around schools/ Torbay on the Move initiatives</li> <li>- Training grants to support primary care</li> <li>- Body image resources for school children and staff</li> <li>- Health Check / BP machine purchasing to support workplaces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total</b></p>	<p><b>£420,000</b></p>	

The total for both spends is currently estimated at £715,000, exceeding the available spend from the RFG uplift. It is likely however that the contract costs will decrease as part of negotiations with providers.

If these reductions did not materialise, we would need to consider the options to balance the spend by reviewing the investment options for public health impacts and there is also the option of using Public Health reserves to fund any initial shortfall on a temporary basis.