

Briefing to Torbay Overview and Scrutiny Board

13 March 2024

Subject: Torbay Carers' Strategy

Purpose of this briefing

Healthwatch Torbay has been asked to provide assurance to Torbay Overview and Scrutiny Board that the voice of the Carer has been considered in the development of the new strategy for Carers in Torbay.

Engagement with Carers

To help shape Torbay Carers Strategy for 2024 – 27, Torbay Carers Service, in collaboration with Carers, developed a survey to find out how support could be improved for Carers in Torbay. They commissioned Engaging Communities South West, working in partnership with Healthwatch Torbay, to independently analyse the survey data and produce a report of the survey findings.

The survey was distributed in paper format to all Carers registered with Torbay Carers Service and an online version of the survey was shared widely throughout the Torbay Carers networks and throughout the voluntary sector network. Nearly 400 Carers of both adults and children and young people completed the survey and the report is due to be published imminently.

Healthwatch Torbay Observations

Healthwatch Torbay has considered the findings in the latest engagement report that will inform the Carers' Strategy for 2024 – 27 and has noted the following observations:

Most of the Carers (97%) who responded to the survey were adults over the age of 25. It is important to note at this point that this survey relates to Torbay's overarching Carers' Strategy, which has a separate Young Carers under 25 Strategy beneath it running from 2022-25. Extensive engagement with Young Carers under 25 will be undertaken for their specific Strategy.

Most of the Carers (80%) who responded to the survey cared for someone over the age of 18.

Healthwatch has seen a decline in people taking part in engagement activities locally and recognises that a more creative approach is needed to ensure we reach out to all communities to enable them to feel heard. Compared to the last survey, which was circulated in 2020-21, there was a slight drop (18%) in responses to this survey. This could be due to 'survey fatigue' as several other external surveys specific to Carers were in circulation at the same time.

The Torbay Carers' Strategy survey contained a large proportion of open-ended questions; therefore, the report is rich in commentary, resulting in the voice of the Carer being included throughout the body of the report, which we hope to see reflected in the new strategy and action plan, with details as to how progress against the action plan will be measured.

Within the report **The Carers' Voice** is evident in the Carers' 'I statements' – what they want from services- around which the Strategy is based. As in previous Carers Strategies, it is expected that the survey results will feature in the development of the detailed Strategy action plan which will be submitted to Health and Wellbeing Board in June.

Questions from Healthwatch Torbay

The key findings in the latest report are very similar to the findings that were published in the previous report [here](#). What changes and improvements have already been made in response to the key findings from the last report?

How will progress against a new / revised action plan be communicated to stakeholders - including Carers who took part in the survey and Healthwatch Torbay - so that we can see that action has been taken to address the issues raised by Carers? What assurances can you provide to those who took part that their voices have been heard and have helped to improve service design and delivery?

Healthwatch Torbay is aware from engagement locally and at a national level that many Carers feel unheard and struggle to navigate systems and services. The role of a care navigator / way finder or a main point of contact for Carers is invaluable in helping Carers to navigate services, access information, advice, and support. How will this service be developed in Torbay?