

DRAFT - Supporting Information and Impact Assessment

Proposal:	Reduction in the funding given to Healthwatch Torbay
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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 is to reduce the level of funding provided by the council to Healthwatch Torbay as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• £10,000 in 17/18 (this includes £5,000 previously agreed in the 16/17 budget – therefore an additional £5,000 reduction is now proposed); and• £11,000 in 18/19 (this includes £5,000 previously agreed in the 16/17 budget – therefore an additional £6,000 reduction is now proposed). <p>The current funding provided by Torbay Council to Healthwatch is £135,000 (16/17).</p> <p>Healthwatch additionally receives grants and 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).</p>
2.	<p>What is the current situation?</p> <p>Healthwatch 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. Healthwatch Torbay support 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 2016/17 is £135,000. Healthwatch additionally receives grants and 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).</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 £5,000 in 17/18 and £5,000 in 18/19 were identified during 2016/2017 budget development and this reducing contract value is recorded as part of contract variation so will be achieved. Further savings of £5,000 in 2017/18 and £6,000 in 2018/19 are proposed alongside potential reductions in the level of service.</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 will be 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.
<p>6.</p>	<p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Consultation on this proposal will take place as part of the general consultation on the budget proposals and via the service provider.</p>
<p>Section 2: Expected Implications and Impact Assessment (These sections will be updated and expanded following the consultation period.)</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>What are the <u>expected</u> financial and legal implications?</p> <p>The proposal would achieve a financial saving of £11,000 over the next two years (in addition to the £10,000 savings that will be realised as a result of previously agreed reductions).</p> <p>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.</p>

8.

What are the expected risks?

As we are not proposing to discontinue funding to this statutory service and the proposed budget reductions are relatively small, the expected risks are minimised. However, the impact on the provider might require them to reduce their service. 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;
- 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.