


EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – RECOMMISSIONING OF HEALTHWATCH CONTRACT

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Andrea Langman	Department and service:	Strategic Cooperative Commissioning	Date of assessment:	15/04/2025
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Emma Crowther	Signature:		Approval date:	22/04/2025
Overview:	<p>As an independent consumer voice organisation, local Healthwatch functions on behalf of the whole population in the area it covers, including children, young people, adults and carers, and its monitoring role applies to all citizens, whether NHS patients, people who are eligible for statutory social care support or people funding their own health or social care provision.</p> <p>The local Healthwatch organisation for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay will serve a total population of circa 1.199m (comprising of Devon circa 795k, Plymouth circa 265k and Torbay circa 139k).</p> <p>In carrying out its statutory Healthwatch activities, contractual specifications the Provider must adhere to will include requirements to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect into local community networks, including people facing health inequalities • Apply equity, diversity and inclusion across the work of Healthwatch • Have robust methodology for research and engagement in line with Healthwatch England guidance, including collection and analysis of demographic data to inform reports and recommendations 				
Decision required:	<p>1. To recommission the contract for Healthwatch (the independent health and social care consumer voice organisation), jointly with Devon County Council and Torbay Council, with a new contract commencing in April 2026 for a period of six years.</p> <p>2. Following a joint procurement process led by Devon County Council, to delegate the subsequent contract award decision to the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities, where they do not already have authority to do so.</p>				

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes		No	X
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	X
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	Yes		No	X
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.	<p>As an independent consumer voice organisation, local Healthwatch functions on behalf of the whole population in the area it covers, including children, young people, adults and carers.</p> <p>By law, every local Healthwatch must prepare an annual report each year, outlining how the Provider has met statutory Healthwatch responsibilities; the report will include how Healthwatch has engaged with diverse communities and maintained its independence of voice – including speaking up on behalf of groups who may be at risk of being marginalised and/or face disadvantages or discrimination.</p> <p>As the proposed recommissioning approach will realign funding up to the level recommended in guidance from the Department of Health and Social Care (less an 8% economy of scale efficiency achieved through joint commissioning across three local authorities) this will result in a positive impact in terms of Healthwatch resources to meet equality requirements effectively.</p>			

	<p>Healthwatch is an externally commissioned service, not a service directly delivered by Plymouth City Council employees.</p> <p>Recommissioning the Healthwatch contract will therefore not have the potential to negatively impact people with protected characteristics, care experience or Plymouth City Council employees.</p>
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SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
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Age	<p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. • 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
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<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p>	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
<p>Disability</p>	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A

Gender reassignment	0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married. 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	None identified	N/A	N/A

Race	<p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	<p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p>	None identified	N/A	N/A
Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).	None identified	N/A	N/A

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
	None identified	N/A	N/A

SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Work together in partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote equality, diversity and inclusion facilitate community cohesion support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together 	None identified	N/A	N/A
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.	None identified	N/A	N/A
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.	None identified	N/A	N/A
Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.	None identified	N/A	N/A