

**TORBAY**

HEALTH & WELLBEING

A VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK



working with

**TORBAY COUNCIL**

# **TORBAY HEALTH AND WELLBEING VCSE NETWORK**

**2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL REPORT**

**April 2024 – March 2025**

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## Introduction

The Torbay Health and Wellbeing Network was originally established by Pat Harris, Chief Executive of Engaging Communities South West. The vision behind the initiative was to create a collaborative platform for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Torbay. The aim was to work together more effectively to support local communities and amplify the voices of both service users and staff.

Although Torbay had a rich and diverse VCSE sector, it lacked a unified and strong collaborative voice. Yet there existed a wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise within the local community that, if shared, could lead to more integrated and effective service delivery. The Torbay Health and Wellbeing Network was intended to harness these strengths, encouraging organisations to support one another and deliver better outcomes for the people of Torbay.

The Network held its first meeting at the beginning of 2020. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, its plans were put on hold. In response to the crisis, the Network pivoted its focus and played a vital role in setting up and delivering the Torbay Community Helpline, a clear demonstration of what could be achieved through closer collaboration across the sector.

Though the pandemic delayed the formal development of the Network, it also showcased the power of unified action. Post-COVID, the Network has continued to face significant challenges, including the ongoing cost of living crisis. Yet these challenges have further reinforced the importance of a joined-up approach.

A key milestone for the Network has been the successful local procurement of services, enabling the delivery of a dedicated advice line and boosting the existing Wellbeing team, with the addition of three Coordinators across Torbay. This work is delivered in partnership with trusted local organisations, including Age UK Torbay and Eat That Frog CIC, ensuring coordinated support for both

older people and those under 50. This approach ensures that people of all ages across the community can access timely advice, wellbeing support and guidance tailored to their needs.

Further strengthening this support is the establishment of a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Hub at Paignton Library. This hub provides a welcoming and accessible space where local residents can receive help and guidance on a wide range of issues, including:

- Benefits advice
- Health and wellbeing support
- Volunteering opportunities
- Skills and employment support
- Digital inclusion and skills training
- Blood pressure and BMI Checks
- Domestic abuse support
- Services from Age UK Torbay and other local partners.

The Torbay Health and Wellbeing Network is now well-positioned to take collective action on local issues, build on its established priorities and workstreams, and continue strengthening the fabric of the community through meaningful partnerships, shared purpose, and a commitment to working better together.

## **Our Current Steering Group**

As a Steering Group our aim is to react and adapt a variety of changes. This includes the ever-changing climate that we live and work in, governmental policy change, the steady decrease in available funding, our changing client needs and any added requirements that need to be addressed.

The Steering Group continues to be committed to supporting our members to

meet the needs of our local community; working towards a sustainable preventative model alongside supportive and person-centred services, and reacting to each individual's needs and circumstances.

The Steering Group aims to adhere to the clear guidelines that are outlined in its "Terms of Reference" (TOR) and the group's core aims and objectives as outlined in the TOR are as follows:

## **Aims**



The aim of this group is to bring the VCSE together to support engagement, collaboration, voice, sharing intelligence and good practice, and peer support within the local health and wellbeing sector.




## **Objectives**

- To challenge decision making in a positive way.
- To work with the statutory sector in Torbay, and provide a link into the wider locality structures, i.e. Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, CCG, Torbay Council, and Devon County Council.
- To provide a vehicle for the VCSE to promote dialogue, collaboration, co-operation, and develop a coherent approach to funding and opportunities.
- Identify key issues and ensure that these are raised to the appropriate bodies.
- To assist policy and decision-making, and facilitate an approach as a body, to link into the local sector.
- To steer and further develop the Community Helpline and Hub.
- To maximise the potential of the Community Wellbeing Contract with Torbay Council for the benefit of the Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network members and the community.




## Current Steering Group Members

Our steering group chair works on rotation, allowing for the workload to be shared and to be inclusive of all views and priorities. Below are our current members:




Member Name & Organisation	Miniature Biography
<p><b>Current Chair:</b> <b>Amanda Moss</b> Director/Business development/NLP Therapist of “I can do that”</p> 	<p>We are a small team of 15 mentors who work 1:1 with customers to remove barriers to progression/employment and improve people's lives. We deliver grant funded projects and contract with DWP/Local Authority/NHS to assist those who are hardest to help with multiple barriers to progression such as homelessness and mental health. We are also a CMA Debt Centre so anyone on a project with us has access to debt advice.</p>
<p><b>Claire Bithell:</b> Torbay Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network Coordinator and Paignton Community Hub Lead</p> 	<p>I joined ECSW (<b>Paignton Community Hub</b>) and VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network team at the end of August 2024, prior to my new role, I have worked in education as a class teacher, inspector and head teacher in the UK and Internationally – returning to our home in Brixham in July 2024. My role is to gather and share relevant information from members of the network and Steering Group – ensuring that the support offered to clients of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network is up to date and relevant to their changing needs.</p> <p>My future aim as network coordinator is to host regular “area based” network events and catch ups, so members of the network can continue to strengthen their links. Within PCH, alongside our daily service provision to the local community, we will be hosting themed events and support identified by data trends across the service.</p>



<p><b>Pat Harris:</b> Chief Executive of Engaging Communities Southwest (ECSW)</p> 	<p><b>ECSW</b> works to help communities transform the way local services are designed and delivered by offering engagement, evaluation, communication support, digital support training and advice to the statutory, voluntary and private sector.</p> <p>ECSW currently delivers the Paignton Community Hub, Digital Health Devon and works in a partnership to deliver the Healthwatch contract across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. I am the Strategic Lead within the Healthwatch Contract.</p>
<p><b>Sarah Lonton:</b> Operations Manager for Engaging Communities South West (ECSW)</p> 	<p>My primary role within ECSW is Operational Lead for the <b>Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay</b> service, which is delivered in partnership with CA Devon and Colebrook SW in Plymouth.</p> <p>Healthwatch's statutory role is to act as the independent voice of patients and the public in health and social care, ensuring their experiences and views are heard and used to improve services. We do this by gathering feedback, making recommendations to service providers, and advocating for better care.</p>
<p><b>Tracey Cabache:</b> Director Torbay Communities</p> 	<p><b>Torbay Communities</b> is the VCSE Infrastructure organisation for Torbay and also delivers it's own activities. Its aim is to enable Torbay to be a place where all people feel included and can become involved in growing a connected, vibrant, thriving, creative and prosperous community. We encourage people to connect in their neighbourhoods and contribute to what they care about, primarily through our team of community builders. We support local VCSE groups and we stimulate cooperation and collaboration within our sector and between the VCSE, the statutory sector and the business community. All of Torbay Communities work has a strengths-based approach. On behalf of the Network we host the Torbay Community Helpline and we hold the Community Wellbeing</p>






	<p>agreement with Torbay Council. Prior to setting up Torbay Communities I was the Community Development Manager at Torbay Council having returned to the Bay in 2005. My earlier career was in international development primarily in East and Southern Africa and South Asia.</p>
<p><b>Karen Marcellino:</b> Helpline Manager Torbay Communities</p> 	<p>I am the manager of the <b>Torbay Community Helpline</b>, and have worked for Torbay Communities since August 2021.</p> <p>I have a background in health, social care and information and advice through the management of Healthwatch in Plymouth and advice services elsewhere in the country.</p>
<p><b>Helen Harman:</b> Chief Officer of Age UK Torbay</p> 	<p>I have worked for <b>Age UK Torbay</b> for nearly ten years, with a background in helping start up businesses and employment. I am passionate about Torbay, and obviously working with our older population. Age UK Torbay has changed immensely over the last few years, with a focus on supporting the most vulnerable older people in the bay. We offer the following services for over 50s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing – including Dementia and Housing</li> <li>• Mental Health support – via Torbay Community Helpline</li> <li>• Information and Advice</li> <li>• Home Support – a paid for service providing practical help at home</li> </ul> <p>As a very active partner within the Health and Wellbeing Network, we are honoured to be part of improving lives of local people.</p>
<p><b>Angie Manning:</b> Director of What's Your Problem C.I.C and Standing Tall Partnership Lead</p> 	<p><b>What's Your Problem</b> is a CIC offering friendly, confidential help and support for people in Torbay in a wide range of areas including family court, housing and welfare rights. Our vision is for all people in Torbay to have equal and fair access to justice and support.</p> <p><b>Standing Tall</b> is a partnership of local groups and organisations who work together. We provide a range of tailored support for people in Torbay who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence. Our vision is to stop domestic abuse and sexual violence for all people, families and communities. For more information or to access support please see here: <a href="https://www.whatsyourproblem.org.uk/standing-tall-partnership/">https://www.whatsyourproblem.org.uk/standing-tall-partnership/</a></p>



<p><b>Stuart Bakewell:</b> Head of Operations and Business Development at Shekinah.</p> 	<p><b>Shekinah</b> believes that each of us wants to live an ordinary, good life, and achieving this for everyone is a matter of social justice. For over 30 years, our services have supported people to build positive lives and futures. In Torbay we operate the Learning Exchange, a free and inclusive adult learning programme and host a range of Peer Support groups.</p> <p>Shekinah is a core member of the Devon Mental Health Alliance which provides direct support for people experiencing emotional distress alongside a range of activities to support building capacity in the wider local community. We also run a vibrant horticultural/nature-based project called Grow, located in Preston Down.</p>
<p><b>Chris Fleet:</b> Devon Clinic CIC</p> 	<p><b>The Devon Clinic CIC</b> is a mental health charity based in Paignton, providing affordable, accessible therapy and wellbeing services across Torbay and the South West. We offer counselling, trauma therapies (including EMDR and BWRT), massage, allergy testing, hypnotherapy, and holistic treatments.</p> <p>Our team of over 40 practitioners support individuals from all walks of life, including survivors of domestic abuse, single parents, carers, and those facing the cost-of-living crisis.</p>
<p><b>Sue Julyan:</b> CEO Citizens Advice Torbay and Citizens Advice Exeter</p> 	<p>I live in Torbay and have been in post for two years as CEO of both Citizens Advice Torbay and Citizens Advice Exeter (both independent, local charities). Prior to this, my working life has been spent in education – most recently as a primary school headteacher for 9 years. I am passionate about Torbay and am fully aligned with Citizens Advice Torbay's vision and mission:</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> All members of the community can solve the problems they face, and as a result, lead happier and more productive lives.</p> <p><b>Mission:</b> To provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities valuing diversity, promoting equality and challenging discrimination.</p> <p>As well as providing advice, we work hard in the field of social policy. We conduct research and campaign for change on a local and national level.</p> <p><b>Citizens Advice Torbay</b> is the lead partner for the FAIR (Financial Advice, Information &amp; Resilience) project. Funding from the National Lottery supports seven funded advice and information partners to take referrals from the Torbay Community Helpline.</p> <p>I am a member of the Torbay Health and Wellbeing Steering Group</p>

	<p>and chair the Advice and Information Network.</p> <p>I am the Integrated Care Partnership representative for the Torbay VCSE. Our biggest challenge is finding sustainable funding streams to support us with the increasing demands on our service. As our advice is free, we cannot charge for any of our services, meaning we are totally reliant on grants and fundraising. Over the coming months, we will be focusing on how we are viewed in the community. There is a common misconception that we are government funded, or that we are a national charity. We will be working hard on our messaging to ensure that people understand that we are an independent, local charity.</p>
<p><b>Hannah Rendle:</b> Eat That Frog CIC – Senior Leader</p> 	<p><b>Eat That Frog CIC</b> is an Independent Training Provider focused on Post-16 SEND education, adult learning, employability programs and community skills projects. With over 20 years of experience in education, skills and employment, Hannah is passionate about helping people find opportunities that lead to meaningful careers and lives.</p> <p>Hannah is dedicated to raising awareness around the importance of skills training and development, bringing a strategic approach to business development. Hannah's main goal is to make sure everyone has access to the skills they need to succeed, whether through education, training or career opportunities.</p> <p>Outside of work, Hannah enjoys spending time with her young children, going on coastal walks, and relaxing by the seaside in Torbay.</p>
<p><b>Karen Parker:</b> Brixham Does Care Manager</p> 	<p><b>Brixham Does Care</b> is a registered befriending charity founded in 1978, which attempts to combat loneliness and isolation.</p> <p>They aim to support and be supported by the local community; to enhance the independence of vulnerable individuals and enhance quality of life, health and social wellbeing.</p> <p>They offer support to individuals of all ages and needs in the community.</p>
<p><b>Eve Ashton:</b> Libraries Unlimited – Centre Manager overseeing Paignton, Torquay, Brixham and Churston Libraries.</p>	<p>Our libraries are run by Libraries Unlimited, a charity that runs the 54 libraries across Devon and Torbay. Our libraries are safe, welcoming spaces, which aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a love of reading</li> <li>• Provide free access to resources and information</li> <li>• Inspire everyone to learn, create and realise their potential</li> </ul>

	<p>through events and activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable everyone to explore and connect to the wider world with free Wi-Fi and computer use</li> <li>• Offer welcoming spaces</li> <li>• Support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, for example, providing Blood Pressure Monitors to loan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Si Culley:</b> Communications &amp; Digital Lead for Engaging Communities South West (ECSW) &amp; Lead for Digital Health Devon (DHD)</p> 	<p>Simon is also the Communications &amp; Digital Lead for Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth &amp; Torbay, who collate valuable feedback from patients using local health and social care services.</p> <p><b>Digital Health Devon (DHD)</b> was born out of this community feedback which highlighted the need for free public digital support.</p> <p>DHD has a proven national award-winning track record of delivering both face-to-face and online digital support to the local community, mainly via our dedicated e-Learning website – <a href="http://www.digitalhealthdevon.co.uk">www.digitalhealthdevon.co.uk</a>.</p>
<p><b>Rev. Laura McAdam:</b> Associate Pioneer Priest, Paignton Parish</p> 	<p>I am the Associate Pioneer Priest for Paignton Parish, working with the community where they are underserved and underrepresented.</p> <p>My particular areas of interest are trauma and shame, SEND and neuroinclusive practice and food insecurity.</p>

Torbay Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network is not a fee-paying membership organisation. Any organisation that has improving the health and wellbeing of Torbay residents as its primary purpose can be a member. If you want to be more actively involved, please contact [Claire.bithell@ecsw.org.uk](mailto:Claire.bithell@ecsw.org.uk).

## External Representation

An integral part of being part of the Torbay Health and Wellbeing Steering Group is that when members attend external meetings representing their organisation, they are often attending as a representative of the Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network and Steering Group. This means the Network Steering Group can gather, share, and offer insights into what is happening within our community and feedback pertinent information to Network Members.

As a Network and Steering Group, we are extremely fortunate to have a wide variety of shared expertise, for example; the Strategic Lead and Operational Lead for Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are active members of the Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network and Steering Group. Through members participation in several external meetings at a local, regional and national level, we can gain firsthand support and direction as to what changes are under review within the Health and Adult Social Care sector.

As a VCSE Network, we have successfully shared feedback and data gathered from our local community and through our Network Member organisations with Healthwatch. This additional information has supported Healthwatch when speaking with key stakeholders, providers and commissioners on behalf of Torbay residents, to influence how the future of the NHS provision locally and nationally will evolve and develop over the coming years. Given the current pressures and changes within the Health and Social Care landscape, it is especially important to listen to patient and service user feedback to ensure their journey, experiences and treatment are positive and meet expectations. As a Network, we really do have our voices heard in high places and by influential people.

The Torbay VCSE Network also ensures that the local voice of residents is heard at a Devon-wide level. We are fortunate to have Network members who represent the Torbay VCSE Network at Devon VCSE Executive meetings, which is part of the wider Devon, Plymouth and Torbay VCSE Assembly. The Assembly aims to create a more inclusive and collaborative way of working across the VCSE sectors Devon-wide. The aim and focus to ensure local voices are always represented.

The following is a sample of some of the external meetings that the steering group members attend on behalf of the network:-

- One Devon Integrated Care Partnership
- Local Care Partnership South Meeting
- Local Care Partnership South Population Health Steering Group
- Torbay Place Leadership Board
- Torbay Health and Wellbeing Board
- Adult Social Care Scrutiny Sub-board
- Torbay Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Board
- SEND Employment Forum
- Homelessness and vulnerability Panel
- Torbay Integrated Prevention Strategy across Torbay
- Torbay Employment and Skills Group
- Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Community Forum
- Torbay Wellbeing Network Group
- Torbay CVD Prevention Partnership
- Devon VCSE Digital Inclusion Group.

As indicated previously, these are just a sample of some of the groups, meetings and partnerships that steering group members are participating in on the Network's behalf.

It is vital that the links nurtured by the Network are maintained as we move forward in order that the themes, trends and needs of the community we all live and work within continue to be addressed.



## A Breakdown of the VCSE Networks within Torbay

Below is a visual representation of the number of organisations and networks working to support our communities across Torbay – it is forever changing. This information was last updated in January 2025 when the total number of VCSE groups in Torbay was over 700. Given the current external environment and challenges in our sector, this is an amazing achievement.





## Our Network Priorities and progress during 2024 to 2025

A visual representation of the identified VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network priorities is available in the Appendix on page 55. Each priority is discussed in more detail in the following pages.

### 1. Supporting Those in Financial Hardship, Those at Risk of Homelessness and offering advice. Supporting those in financial hardship, living in cold, damp or hard to heat homes or at risk of homelessness, with advice and practical support.

Lead: Sue Julyan (CA).

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority: –

- Torbay Advice and Information Network

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
We will bring together our advice providers and statutory partners to plan what services are on offer and maximise capacity within the sector	<p><u>FAIR 2:</u> Project has started. Doodle Poll in circulation to arrange a meeting arranged to discuss how the project has begun and address any issues. Training opportunities have been circulated to all.</p> <p><u>A&amp;I network:</u> Meetings continue. The referral flowchart has been checked and updated where necessary. Partners appreciate the update from those present about what is available for clients in the Bay.</p> <p><u>Impact/Data Collection:</u> Whole year data for 2024/25 has been requested from partners.</p>
We will work alongside and in partnership with key organisations and the voluntary sector alliance to tackle food and fuel poverty.	<p>The Food Alliance have been sending a representative from Turning Heads to A&amp;I meetings.</p> <p><u>Identified next step:</u> Establish what the</p>

	Food Alliance would like from the A&I network – e.g. expectations in terms of how many times they can access a food voucher without engaging with an A&I provider to support with addressing the cause of the need for a voucher.
We will investigate opportunities to increase debt advice and housing advice capacity across the Bay in response to the Money Advice and Pension Service estimate of a 60% increase in demand for debt advice.	HSF funding has been renewed, meaning CAT can continue to fund a debt advice service.
We will collaborate with Torbay Council (and others) to address peoples housing needs, especially around the functionality, timeliness and accessibility of Devon Home Choice and the process for people who are facing eviction.  Availability of energy efficiency advice and practical measures to help maintain healthy, liveable homes, and prevent homelessness.	An action plan has been produced to support the delivery of the Homelessness Prevention <b>Strategy</b> : –The Helpline and CAT is identified against some of the actions. KM from the Helpline is named in terms of the Community Helpline Discharge project and her attendance at meetings where individuals are discussed in terms of how best to support their needs. CAT is named to support cross working related to pre-enforcement action.
We will collaborate on joint investment opportunities to maximise the chances of success and collaborate with partners for a joined-up approach to tackle the challenges of hardship, housing and cold homes to improve health and wellbeing outcomes through advice and support services.	Local motion is encouraging collaborative input to inform future funding that will be allocated to the Bay. A&I network allows space to form partnerships and shares information on available funds.

## 2. Supporting our communities to maintain and promote good mental health and prevent loneliness.

Lead: Chris Fleet (Devon Clinic CIC)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority: -

- Devon Mental Health Alliance

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
Share learning, experience, and good practice	We are working with the Devon Mental Health Alliance to share knowledge and understanding of mental health issues.
Work within the sector to ensure that people receive the right support for their needs.	We are reaching out to other 3rd sector organisations to provide counselling support for those who may need it and encourage others to share skills and ideas with other 3rd sector organisations also.
Encourage peer support initiatives	We are encouraging other 3rd sector organisations that we come across to provide support for one another.
Provide a 'front door' for people to access appropriate support	We encourage all 3rd sector organisations to contact Torbay Helpline for general welfare issues, and we encourage people who have experienced abuse to contact Standing Tall.
Fill the gap, but not replace statutory services	I can't speak for organisations across the board, but we are providing spaces for placement counsellors and aim to be known as a "Centre of Excellence" for placement counsellors to come to. We provide counselling services for free with a small charge for room hire and admin.
Bring the sector together	As mentioned above, we are continuing to reach out to other 3rd-sector organisations to have a chat and see what we can do to work together and also help and support one another.

<p>Link with other initiatives that support wellbeing, and people with loneliness and isolation</p>	<p>We are working with Eat That Frog and I can do that with their focus forward programme to help people return to the workplace. We are working with standing Tall to provide support for those who have experienced DA. We have spoken with Shekinah with regards to using our space for learning exchange programmes. A representative from Eat That Frog has enquired about space for a drop-in workshop at the clinic.</p>
<p>Signpost to the right support</p>	<p>We work closely with various VCSE organisations, particularly <b>Torbay Helpline</b> and <b>Standing Tall</b>. From within Standing Tall, we can signpost to 26 other partners. We signpost to <b>Torbay Helpline</b> on a regular basis for issues such as housing, food poverty and financial problems. Over the years we have enjoyed a good working relationship with <b>I Can Do That</b> and <b>Eat That Frog</b> and often signpost people to them if they are struggling with employment issues.</p>
<p>Contribute and develop the new mental health strategies (i.e. the Devon STP Community MH Framework)</p>	<p>DPT have invited the VCSE sector to discussions around a 24/7 Mental Health Pilot. The 10 principles of the scheme are: – <b>Trusting relationships:</b> Everyone feels safe and cared for by the people providing support. People are supported to have ongoing/longer term relationships with staff who work hard to get to know them, what matters to them and earn their trust. <b>Continuity of care:</b> People are not passed from one team or service to another. The same people support you whether you are at home, in crisis or need to stay in a bed. <b>Neighbourhood-based:</b> People can get the help and support they need close to where they live and in their own community. <b>Open access:</b> People can get help when they need it, where they need it, there is no criteria or referrals needed. It is easy to get a bed when you need it, and easy to leave when you want to. <b>Close to primary care and system partners, collaborating with VCSE:</b> There will be good links</p>

between your mental health care with your GP and other organisations or charities that provide support. They will work together.

**Co-produced with community and people with lived experience:** People and families who use the services will be part of designing them and delivering them. **Services actively promote belonging and citizenship for all:** People who use services are seen as a whole person, just as important as anyone else in their community and are valued for who they are. Their human rights are upheld and protected, and they will be supported to do what matters to them.

**Promoting freedom, autonomy and choice:** People are in control of their own care and make choices about what they do and do not want.

**Do no harm:** The services provided are aware that many people will have experienced difficult things in their lives and will ensure they cause no further harm.

**All means all:** These services are for everyone. Nobody is excluded. We will work hard to respect and respond to the reasonable adjustments people need.

The plan is to deliver this across the region via Local voluntary sector, public health, primary care, mental health services and the local community working together, including expert by experience of using services or caring.

**The plan is to:**

Identify a physical wellbeing centre accessible to the local neighbourhood (30–50k pop/ PCN area)  
Recruit core staff of centre management, peer support and relational security to ensure open and welcoming space 24/7  
24/7 MH practitioner presence rostered from Core teams and Home treatment teams. Shared IG protocols and clarified pathways for escalating need and personalised stepdown plans multi-agency

	<p>training in psychologically informed environments and trauma informed care, neurodiverse needs and life stage appropriate interventions – Young adult and older adults. The centre will be available to all irrespective of gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or marital or civil partnership status. There is no requirement for a mental health diagnosis or existing involvement with services. Stuart from Shekinah is very involved with this project and further talks are planned.</p>
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### 3. Supporting Digital Access

Lead: Si Culley (Digital Health Devon)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority:-

- Devon VCSE Digital Inclusion Network

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
Maintaining a free-to-use and updated directory of useful local digital services on the DHD website and guidance on how to access them	The Digital Health Devon website is approved for another year; however, it will need updating. SC has met with NHS Devon Digital Team who are checking the site for accuracy and advising SC of any necessary updates.
Providing free access for VCSE staff/volunteers to their online e-learning resources showing how people can access local digital services	Free access to resources is still available via <a href="http://www.digitalhealthdevon.co.uk">www.digitalhealthdevon.co.uk</a> .  SC is meeting regularly with the Devon VCSE Digital Inclusion Network. As a collective they are putting together a Digital Skills Framework funding proposal around the need for digital support in the county.
Offering free remote support to anyone looking to access NHS services online either online, via social media, over the phone, via email or live web chat, or via Zoom meetings	The National Lottery Community Funding to host community digital drop-in sessions in Torbay libraries is due to finish at the end of March 25. SC has submitted two separate bids to either extend or expand this funding. Will expect a decision in April 25. If funding cannot be sought, these sessions may unfortunately need to be discontinued. SC is exploring other potential funding opportunities but can be difficult to meet both eligibility criteria and funded projects criteria (e.g. funding available too low or projects don't cover core costs/salaries).

<p>Develop in collaboration user friendly digital access points including easy read</p>	<p>Recent engagement with Torbay Council on the accessibility of their website led to us recommending them the online multiple format accessibility tool – 'Recite Me'. We understand the Council are exploring how to implement this feature on their website to improve accessibility.</p> <p>SC is also exploring an opportunity with NHS Devon so receive a small cohort of free, donated devices (Phones/tablets) that can be delivered to those most in need of them in the community. ECSW and ETF already have a small supply of donated SIM cards that can be used with these, which includes free internet data.</p>
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#### 4. Supporting strengths based development in our sector and our neighbourhoods

Lead: Tracey Cabache (Torbay Communities)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority:-

- Food Alliance
- Torbay Advice and Information Network
- Standing Tall Partnership

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
Encouraging partnership working	<p>We now have 11 active partnerships across the VCSE in Torbay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network</li> <li>- Information and Advice Network</li> <li>- Food Alliance</li> <li>- Imagine This Partnership (Children, Young People and Families)</li> <li>- Standing Tall (Domestic Abuse)</li> <li>- Greenspace Forum</li> <li>- Torbay Sport and Move It Torbay</li> <li>- Torbay Community Partnerships</li> <li>- Community Builders network of grassroots groups</li> <li>- Local Spark Torbay (Social Enterprise)</li> <li>- Torbay Culture and partners</li> </ul> <p><i>See page 33 for the partnership diagram</i></p>

<p>Encouraging innovation that draws upon the skills and expertise in our sector</p>	<p>The main innovation under the umbrella of the Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network is the Community Helpline and associated Paignton Hub. To March 2025 the Helpline has dealt with 97,883 calls. For the period April 2024 to March 2025 2,459 food parcel requests have been processed, 571 people have been referred for mental health support, 796 people have been referred for financial advice and 340 for Housing support. The Community Helpline became the Front Door for new Adult Social Care (ASC) referrals in May 2021. To date 2,785 referrals have come in. 84% of these people's needs were met by the voluntary sector. For 4% there is a joint approach of an element of VCSE support and statutory support. 7% of the referrals were passed back to ASC for a full Social Care Assessment, and 5% declined support offer. The Helpline has also been working closely with the NHS Foundation Trust and Torbay Hospital and has assisted 607 people to date on discharge from hospital. Responding to emerging need the Helpline is in the process of developing a sitting service for unpaid carers – Time for me. <i>(Also see Helpline section below.)</i></p>
<p>Sustaining the local Community Fundraising Advisor post to enable the sector to be adequately resourced</p>	<p>Over the 2024/25 the Community Funding Advisor worked with 315 groups, posted funding advice bulletins to 430 organisations and 79 individuals in Torbay, providing information on funding and capacity issues 135, signposting 180, Funding Advice Surgeries 56, funders events 4, supported 66 grant applications, administered 81 applications to Community Grant Fund and secured an extra £10,000 for the fund; distributed £30,509 in grants to 46 groups. The Advisor delivers general funding advice, bespoke funding advice including data and statistics for funding bids, tendering for contracts, fundraising strategy, business planning and fundraising law, advice on setting up a new voluntary or community group, registered charity, or social enterprise. charity governance, legal</p>

	<p>structures, setting up bank accounts and financial procedures, business planning, support for trustees, evaluation and impact measurement, policies, marketing and evaluation advice / consultations, volunteering good practice and recruitment, regular funding bulletins, funding advice surgeries, prospective research, mentoring new or inexperienced fundraisers, an up-to-date perspective on the ever-changing funding landscape, support for successful bid writing and improving sustainable fundraising strategies for organisations.</p> <p>Themes for grants included: people's health and wellbeing, developing arts, culture and experience of Torbay, improving the environment that people live in, supporting positive ageing and community and children and young people's experiences.</p>
Connecting people in the community	<p>This role is primarily undertaken by the Community Builders. For this period there were 16 Community Builders covering 29 of the 30 neighbourhoods in Torbay, and one Timebank Broker. Between April 2024 and March 2025 of this year they have collectively worked with over 1,000 connectors in the community including 133 new connectors and reconnected 667 isolated and/or vulnerable people back into their community – 89% of these are aged over 50.</p> <p>47 new community groups were established over the year. The collective benefit of these, and the existing groups initiated/supported by the Community Builders, reached 16,046 people.</p> <p>Over the year there were also 3,596 hours of timebank support exchanged between the 645 Torbay Timebank members, 60 of whom are organisations. There were 43 new members in the year and the total hours exchanged via the timebank to date is now 36,986.</p>

## 5. Promoting the Voluntary Sector as a Brilliant Place to Work and Volunteer (Volunteer Workforce)

Lead: Amanda Moss (I Can Do That)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority:-

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
We will promote the range and breadth of the sector so that it is seen as a viable career opportunity for all	Attended Careers fair at TA – not much interest, need more interactive stand if doing it again (games and sweets/giveaways).
We will work together to consider how the volunteering offer remains relevant and reflects the changing working practices.	Signed up to be part of research being done by University of Sheffield on VCSE paid workforce wellbeing.
Where possible we will share learning and development opportunities so that our people are able to increase their skills	The A & I partnership funded by national lottery provides funded training to all VCSE orgs for next 2 years.
We will consider the benefits that shared staffing and volunteering could bring to individuals and the wider sector, including secondments, job share, a volunteer's passport etc.	This action is yet to be completed and will be fully explored in 25/26.



## 6. Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse

Lead: Angie Manning (What's your problem)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority: -

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
We will ensure that people in our community know how to access support safely and that they are not alone.	<u>April 2025</u> -we have now supported more than 2000 people and continue to respond to requests for support for both Standing Tall and EPIC our whole family support programme. We have updated our leaflets to incorporate all our new partners and printed A3 posters to be displayed in local organisations. We are also developing local peer support groups.
We will work with our community to educate and understand more about the best ways to support people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence by listening to what people with lived experience tell us.	<u>April 25</u> - We have engaged with people with Lived Experience in the design and development of the Torbay Community Response Strategy. We have received facilitating engagement funding from Torbay Council and as a result we have started to develop a Lived Experience Network. We have also been provided with Appreciative Inquiry Training and plan to attend co-production training to support in the future co-design of our service
We will encourage and support victims to report abuse and access the relevant specialist support services. We will provide support and advocacy for all people to access support where there are additional barriers to accessing help.	<u>April 2025</u> -we continue to respond to requests for support from our community for both Standing Tall and EPIC our whole family support programme. We have raised awareness online and at events in the community and attended specialist training to understand where there may be barriers to accessing support.

<p>We will encourage all community organisations and providers to respond effectively to disclosures of domestic abuse and sexual violence and we will encourage all community organisations to access specialist training within their relevant field.</p>	<p><b>April 25</b> - We continue to deliver Domestic Abuse Champion and DASH training and support other relevant training such as economic abuse, anti-oppressive practice and trauma informed practice. The Torbay DASV Community Forum will now launch our Torbay Community Response Strategy which is a collaborative plan to tackle sexual violence and domestic abuse. This will provide opportunities to work collaboratively with our wider community and is supported by The Standing Tall Partnership.</p>
<p>We will collaborate with key stakeholders to respond to local needs and trends effectively, increase the provision of services and avoid duplication. We will seek to improve multi-agency work, particularly to engage and support adults who also have other needs.</p>	<p><b>April 25</b> - We have joined local specific working groups and also plan to support the Baton of Hope in September by arranging some activities to take place along the route. The launch of the Torbay Community Response Strategy will provide more opportunities to work with our local community and key stakeholders.</p>
<p>Through developing a community strategy, we will explore opportunities to work more effectively together to increase capacity and the coherent provision of services. We will support each other by sharing resources, opportunities, funding opportunities and learning.</p>	<p><b>April 25</b> - The Torbay Community Response Strategy which is a collaborative plan to tackle sexual violence and domestic abuse is now ready to be launched. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, this will provide more opportunities to work more effectively together enhancing collaboration across community organisations, building knowledge and capacity and enhancing support for people experiencing abuse. The funding will also support the wider work of The Standing Tall Partnership and enable the development of the Torbay Friends Network and Domestic Abuse aware workplaces over the next year.</p>

**7. Supporting Employment and Skills – ensuring the local community of Torbay has the opportunity to explore and access employment and skills support. We will raise awareness of local employment and skills opportunities to enhance individuals’ skills, confidence and resilience.**

Lead: Hannah Rendle (Eat that Frog)

Other known Networks working to support people in the priority:-

- Torbay Employment and Skills Group – Connor Conneely Torbay Council
- Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network – Sharron Robbie DCTPN
- Build Torbay – Lucy Lewis Torbay Council
- Torbay SEND Employment Forum – Hannah Baker Torbay Council

Priority Actions	Progress to date – May 2025
Supporting the Torbay Employment and Skills Group to represent the voluntary and community sector	<p>Attendance bimonthly with VSC representation. Awareness of changes with the CCA and projects to support economically inactive individuals across Torbay with skills, education and employment. Increase opportunities for supported employment and supported internships. Group represents VSC, training providers, local authority, DWP and NHS.</p> <p><u>April 25:</u> Still awaiting adult skills fund and connect to work procurement under the CCA; it was due to be released March/April 25 but now planned for July 25. Connect to Work to start Jan 26 and adult skills to start Sept 25.</p>
Enabling Torbay’s residents to access free impartial careers information, advice and guidance to support them to make decisions to move forward	<p>National Careers Service offered to all Torbay residents aged 18+ to support with impartial careers advice. Programme has been extended to Sept 25. Working in partnership with Careers Hub to ensure career opportunities are available to young people across Torbay.</p>

	<b>April 25:</b> Contract has been extended for Torbay from April 25 – Sept 26. Awaiting updates from Seetec and DWP on the future of NCS.
Awareness of the local labour market and the key employment trends across Torbay	LMI dashboard made available quarterly to have a clear picture of the local labour market across Torbay.
Awareness of local JCP, local authority, NHS and other funded employment and skills programmes available across Torbay	UKSPF provision including Focus Forward, Multiply, Sound Futures, Digital Skills, Business Start Up opportunities available to local Torbay residents to support with progression into employment, education and skills.  April 25: As above, adult skills fund and connect to work next opportunities for programmes to support Torbay residents in upskilling and moving closer to the labour market. UKSPF Focus Forward ending Sept 25 and Multiply provision has been reduced and in place till March 26 and can support 16+ with numeracy skills.
Work together to identify the skills and employment needs across Torbay	Ongoing updates from VSC at bimonthly Torbay employment and skills network and Build Torbay. Representation of VSC at Torbay SEND employment forum to ensure supported employment opportunities and engagement available to all Torbay residents.  Representation at Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network to promote all training opportunities across the South West.

## **Additional Key Network Achievements this year**

### **Torbay Community Helpline/Hub**

*Tracey Cabache Director of Torbay Communities*

The Torbay Community Helpline celebrated its 5th birthday in March 2025. Launched during the Covid Pandemic the Helpline has handled circa 100,000 calls from local people. Through a test of change process, the Helpline became the Front Door for Adult Social Care in May 2021. The Helpline is managed by the Torbay Health and Wellbeing VCSE Network and is hosted by Torbay Communities – the local VCSE infrastructure for Torbay.

The Helpline is co-produced by the community to meet its needs. No call is turned away. Callers are referred into VCSE services, and statutory services when needed. Gaps in provision are documented, evidenced and fed into commissioning processes at the Council, NHS and One Devon.

#### **What is the Helpline currently offering?**

In the last year alone, the Helpline supported the provision of 90,000 meals through referrals to Torbay Food Alliance, helping 2882 adults and 1402 children suffering food poverty.

During the year 2024/25, 796 referrals for specialist finance support (Debt and Welfare Benefits) were made to our delivery partners. 340 referrals were supported for local people to access specialist Housing advice.

Emotional support continues to feature as a key part of our work, with 571 referrals made for mental health support and 577 referrals for support from wellbeing teams within Age UK and Eat That Frog.

Tackling loneliness and isolation within our communities remains a focus with 1024 referrals to the Community Building team. And 49 referrals to the newly created Peer Enabler role, supporting people to be ready for specialist support.

The Community Helpline became the Front Door for new Adult Social Care referrals in May 2021. Callers to Adult Social Care are asked 3 questions – Is this an emergency? Do you have a health issue? Do you have an existing support worker? If callers answer no to these questions basic information is gathered and consent is taken for the individual's details to be transferred to the

Community Helpline. To March 2025, 2,785 referrals have been received with 84% of these have had their needs met by the voluntary sector. For 4% there is a joint approach of an element of VCSE support and statutory support. The remainder are either referred back to Adult Social Care for a Social Care Assessment, or they decide they do not need any help.

The Helpline has also continued to work closely with the NHS Foundation Trust and Torbay Hospital and has now received 607 referrals to date, to support patients ready for discharge from the hospital setting.

The work of the Helpline is summarised in the infographic on the following page, created by Torbay Communities Together in March 2025.

We continue to develop dedicated referral pathways for our local professional agencies, and now receive referrals from Probation, Police, Fire Service, Ambulance Service, Drug and Alcohol Services, Mental Health Services, Schools and Colleges, Primary Care and Social Prescribers, and Torbay Council to name a few.

The Helpline refers people directly into 49 VCSE organisations, our Wellbeing Coordinators and Community Builders will introduce people to the smaller unconstituted groups.

We also have direct referral pathways into the following statutory services:

- Adult Social Care and Safeguarding
- Torbay Carer's Service
- Welfare and Household Support Funds with Torbay Council
- We are negotiating pathways with:
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
- Children's Services
- Devon Partnership Trust.

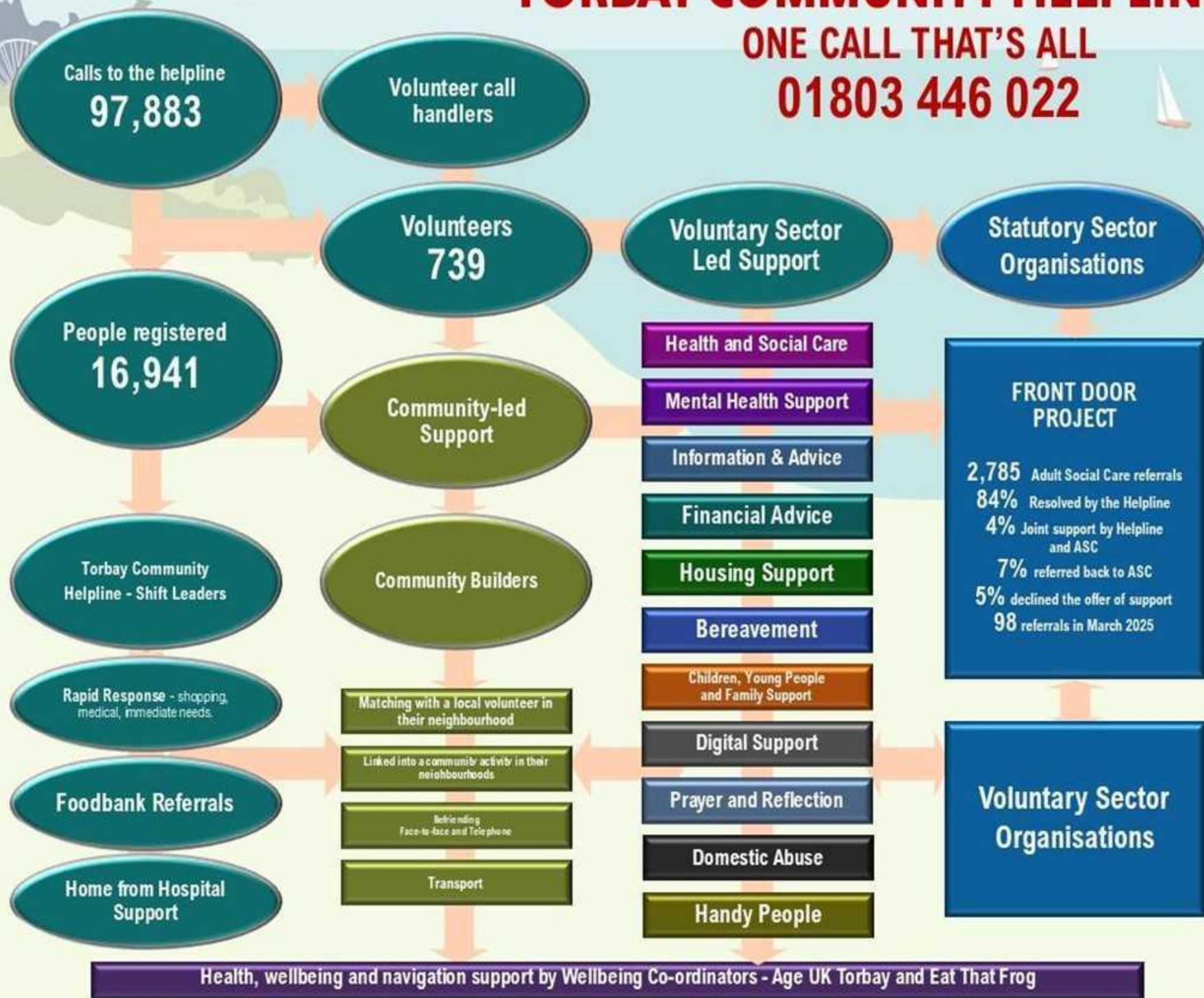
The Helpline continues to adapt and develop in response to callers' and the community's needs. The latest innovation is the development of a sitting service for unpaid carers – Time for You – following requests for this via the Helpline. This service is targeted at those who care for those with low level needs and the service is provided by trained volunteers.



# TORBAY COMMUNITY HELPLINE

ONE CALL THAT'S ALL

01803 446 022



## **Advice & Information (A&I) Meetings and Data sharing**

*Sue Julyan – Citizens Advice Torbay & Exeter*

### **Funding to support A&I providers to take referrals from the Helpline**

Effective collaboration and partnership working over a number of years across the A&I Network has led to a successful partnership bid from the National Lottery Community Fund. This funding is enabling partners to continue to take referrals from the Torbay Community Helpline to meet the rising demand. Citizens Advice Torbay has funding through this project to enable them to take referrals from Torbay Helpline again, after not having the capacity to do so for some time.

### **Refreshing the A&I Network**

Active membership of the network has increased. We have welcomed additional VCSE organisations and are also pleased to have welcomed Steve Darling MP's caseworker. Representatives from Torbay Council continue to have an input into the network, as well as representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Network members support the people of Torbay by considering where the gaps are in provision and working collectively to support each other with work which might plug these gaps, instead of competing against each other.

### **Data collection to demonstrate the impact of the A&I network collectively**

Early steps have been taken to report on the impact of the A&I Network as a whole. While this is difficult, due to the nature of each individual's data collection tools and the fact that we all collect different data, we are able to report on some joint statistics, such as the number of clients we help.

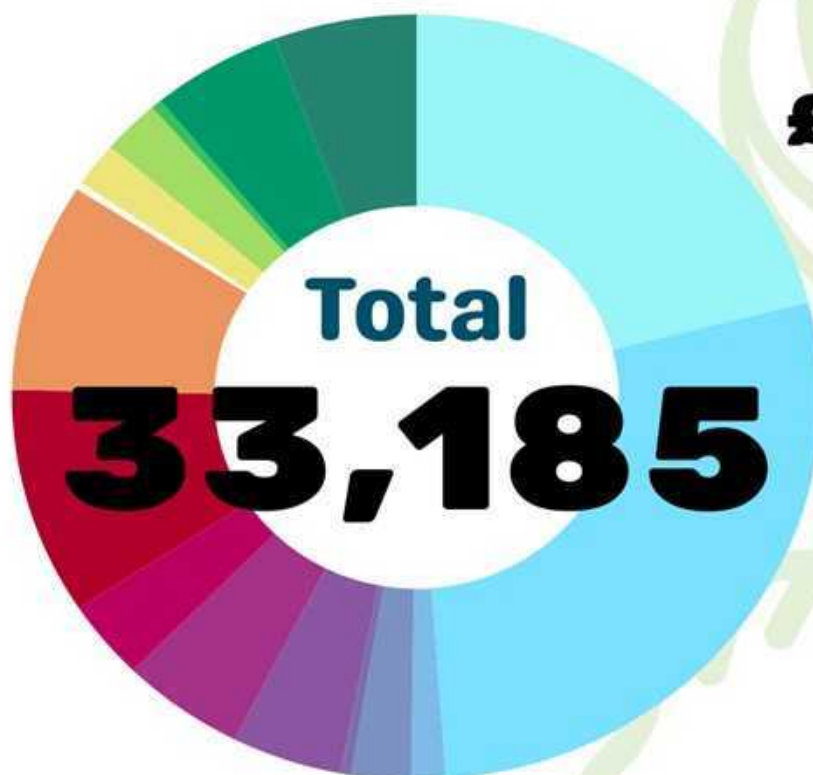
On the following page is the collation of a year's data from six of the organisations that attend, support and share information within the A&I Network – a sample of the number of clients supported across Torbay and the specifics of the support they have received from one or more Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing network members.



# Torbay Advice and Information

## Network Data 24-25

Benefits	3544
Charitable support & food banks	4695
Consumer goods & services	233
Debt	400
Education	71
Employment	745
Financial services and capability	832
Gender based abuse & hate crime	566
Health & community care	1617
Housing	1492
Immigration & asylum	50
Legal	321
Relationships and family	391
Tax	73
Travel & transport	875
Utilities & communications	964



Client income  
maximisation:

**£6,263,655.89**

Value of debt  
written off:

**£666,660**



## Paignton Community Hub (PCH)

*Claire Bithell – VCSE Health & Wellbeing Network Coordinator/PCH Coordinator*

Paignton Community Hub is situated within the multi-purpose Paignton Library building opposite Paignton Bus Station and next to Paignton Train Station. It really is a one stop shop, as together with the hub there is Paignton's public library (run by Libraries Unlimited), Torbay Registrar for births, deaths and marriages, Café Cosi, Paignton Heritage group, the Neighbourhood Policing unit, Torbay Carers and Healthwatch.

Over the past nine months the hub has gone through many changes – evolving and developing the face-to-face support and signposting that is available to the community.

Through building relationships and closer collaboration with VCSE and statutory partners, the hub has successfully hosted the local PCN COVID Vaccination team and are looking to extend a further welcome in the Winter months when flu and COVID vaccinations will be offered. During April and May we have seen over 5,500 people come to the hub to receive their COVID jab.

Whilst hosting these clinics we invited our network partners to offer drop-ins and information sessions for people attending. Healthwatch have gathered information around patient experiences, Citizens Advice Torbay have offered feedback and support around questions about benefits, housing and legal support, Barclays Bank have shared initiatives to support the raising of awareness when identifying frauds and scams, the DWP have offered support and guidance – whilst our hub team have been available at all times to catch up, listen and signpost those that have needed it.



**PCH Team** – Claire Bithell Torbay VCSE Health & Wellbeing Network Coordinator and Community Hub Lead, Claire Ball and Katrina Down PCH Customer Service Administrators.



The development of the hubs links with the NHS services have continued to strengthen through the following collaborations:

- The Diabetic Eye screening service – hosting a weekly Monday and Friday clinic throughout the year.
- The use of private and confidential spaces for the mental health team to meet with clients.
- The Drug and Alcohol team offer drop-in and pre-arranged meetings to clients.
- The Long COVID support group meets monthly.
- The use of our hub offices by the local social prescribers' team to meet with clients and sign post them.

This continued collaborative work has also enabled the hub to upgrade one of the offices to make it even more suitable for NHS clinics by having it fitted out with hand washing facilities.



**Summer 2025 COVID Vaccination Programme** based at PCH – just one of the 5000+ members of the community who visited for their vaccination. An initiative we are planning on building on during the Winter Flu and COVID vaccination period.

*"I would like to say what an absolute pleasure it is a pleasure holding our covid clinics in the Library Hub.*

*My team and I are finding clinics here a pleasant working environment, it is set up for us perfectly, with great access for our patients.*

*Screens being covered between vaccinators for patient privacy.*

*The chairs for patients to use when waiting before and/or after vaccines are great.*

*It is a very adaptable working space and lends itself very well to holding our vaccine clinic here, for this campaign and future campaigns.*

*We are getting a lot of positive feedback from our patients to say they prefer coming to the library for their vaccine rather than over to our previous location, and especially from patients that have not visited the library for many years.*

*There is a lot of interest in other services the library offers and patients appear very interested in returning."*



**Kay Wilson**

Operations Manager for  
Paignton & Brixham and  
Baywide PCN Vaccination  
Programme

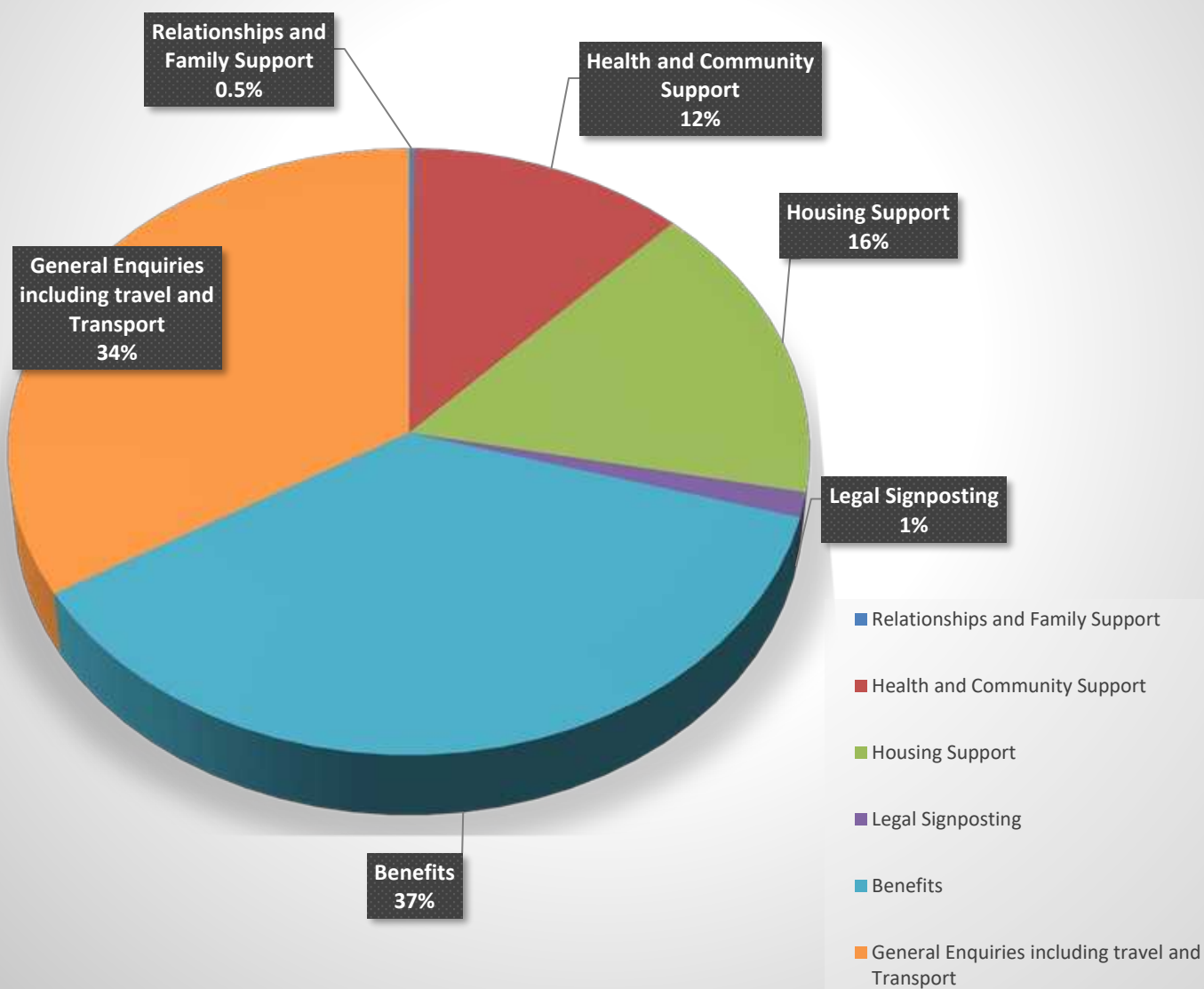


## Number of clients supported at PCH over the past year

The diagram below shows a breakdown of the number of the type of enquiry the 1692 people who have visited the Hub have requested support with:

### The number of clients that have been supported or signposted at PCH during the period of April 2024 – March 2025

Total number of clients – 1692





## Events hosted at PCH over the past few months and coming up

Over the past few months, PCH has led or supported the running of a number of events. Events that have been shared not only with many of our VCSE partners but also with our local statutory services and the local council include:

- Beat the Freeze Event – a special event in Paignton to help provide local people with energy advice and financial support during the Winter months. To view a short video of the event, please [click here](#).
- Attendance and input in a planning event for the Band of Hope Event in September 2025.
- Moving Forward Event – DWP – Access to Work.
- Torbay Councils Damp and Mould South Devon Landlords Event.
- Attending and Supporting Carers Rights Day 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2024 with blood pressure checks and health checks.
- Walk in COVID-19 and Flu Vaccinations in January 2025 – for those who missed their Winter 2024 vaccinations.
- Several joint Mental Health initiatives with a community event planned for August 2025.
- NHS BSA Exemption Certificates event partnering with Healthwatch.
- Red Cross – High Impact User Service Launch.
- NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Awareness event.
- Diabetic Awareness drop-in support.
- 1:1 Diet by Cambridge Weight Plan's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event.
- During National Diabetes week, on June 13<sup>th</sup>, the hub is co-hosting information and advice drop-ins for the local community.
- Summer 2025 COVID Vaccination Programme – running weekly throughout April May and a final date in June.
- Torbay Pride in collaboration with Healthwatch Torbay in June 25.
- Involvement with and support in planning 2025 Adult Social Care Practice Week – later in the year.
- ARA – Recovery for All training, from Chaz Singh (Community Engagement Officer Lead) where in person and online training was offered.
- Nominated Torbay Councilors host regular surgeries in the hub.

## Helping to reduce barriers to accessing appointments

We are proud to continue our strong links with Corner Place Surgery and be part of their blood pressure monitoring initiative.

People in Torbay have improved access to low-level healthcare support after we co-led on a collaborative Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) prevention project offering free blood pressure and health checks in the local community.

We were approached by Primary Care and Public Health to ask if we could trial 'Building Healthy Heart Communities', as our offices are based in central Torbay. This followed research which stated that you're six times more likely to die from heart disease in Torbay, with 1 in 6 of these from preventable CVD. Feedback from this suggested that barriers accessing GP Appointments to have blood pressure and health checks were contributing to the increase in CVD in our local area.

With support from the Corner House team, all PCH staff have had training on how to take a person's blood pressure, and we have a clear SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) that was put together by Corner House surgery and the PCH team. Data collected from blood pressure checks is feedback to the surgery and the CVD Prevention Partnership to support future events.

Since May 23, we've carried out 359 verified blood pressure checks. Seven patients were identified with high BP readings and advised to seek medical attention the same day. 124 readings were classified as raised (but not acutely high). Several patients identified with raised readings have since returned for follow-up monitoring after seeing their GP and being prescribed anti-hypertensive medication.



Dr John McGuinness of Corner Place Surgery overseeing a blood pressure check.

Early detection of high blood pressure and access to blood pressure monitors allows patients to feed data back to their GP without the need for an appointment, so they can identify and treat them for early CVD. This has helped reduce barriers accessing GP Appointments and address the increase in CVD locally. We presented these findings directly to decision makers via our local Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board, who stated that our work evidences *"the impact of providing support in the community to enable this to be rolled out wider."*

## **Building Links and Partnerships to support the hub and Network as we move forward**

Alongside specific events hosted or co-hosted in the hub, we have been working hard to establish and build solid foundations and links across the Torbay community. In particular with the young people of the bay who attend South Devon College (SDC).

We are particularly proud to have hosted and to continue hosting Level 2 and 3 SDC Health and Social Care students for their work placements. All students are DBS checked through the college prior to starting their placements. We have found that they are bringing a thirst for knowledge and understanding of how the VCSE sector works and how they can be part of a support system that strengthens and raises awareness of health and wellbeing within the immediate community that they live in and potentially will work in.

In September 2025, the hub will be welcoming a cohort of Level 1 Health and Wellbeing students and their tutors to support community display/information boards, taking blood pressures and gathering feedback from the clients using the hub. Our aim is to encourage more and more young people to look at the VCSE sector as a place of employment and growth and not something that "someone else does."

The past year has also seen PCH develop greater links with Barclays Bank Fraud and Scam team, with them attending a number of events and doing drop-in clinics for people to ask questions and find out what scams are circulating locally and nationally.

Further links have been established with local groups EMOTION, Sound Communities and Parkfield, ensuring that as a hub we have a clear understanding of the ever-changing support needs of our local community.

## **A review of volunteering in Torbay**

*Amanda Moss – “I can do that”*

Volunteering has many benefits for those who take part and supports many not-for-profit organisations in the bay who do amazing work for our communities. It is an excellent way to build skills and confidence, meet new people and attain a sense of purpose for those who volunteer. To ensure this is communicated widely and is easily accessible, the Health & Wellbeing Network were tasked by Torbay Council to evaluate volunteering in Torbay from all aspects.

The work included extensive research into what was already in place, what was working well and what could be improved, speaking to those already involved in volunteering in Torbay made up a large part of this research.

From the findings, an action plan was developed to detail improvements.

Local volunteers and not-for-profit organisations were tasked with renaming/branding volunteering in Torbay, and it was agreed **‘Volunteer Torbay’** would be the new brand name.

A new logo and web landing page was developed, giving the local residents a clearer way to access volunteering opportunities currently advertised on the Torbay Together portal – 270 opportunities have been advertised on Torbay Together to date. Development of this landing page is ongoing and ways of linking up with local businesses that may wish to donate resources/staff to local projects is being explored.

If you would like to be involved in volunteering, please take a look at the website: [www.volunteertorbay.com](http://www.volunteertorbay.com).

## **Increased engagement with Torbay Council**

*Amanda Moss – “I can do that”*

The Health & Wellbeing Network have been working with Torbay Council for many years to ensure the local community is heard. This essential relationship has evolved further over the past couple of years as the council have become increasingly aware of the value of the Network. We have a representative sitting on the Adult Social Care sub-scrutiny Board and the Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Board whose purpose is to communicate the voices of the Network to the council on a regular basis and feedback Council matters to the Network.

Following the excellent joint work between the Council and the VCSE sector during, and since the pandemic, including in response to the recent cryptosporidium outbreak in Brixham, the Council has sought to find a way to have a more strategic and empowering relationship with the sector.

The new Director for Adult and Community Services at Torbay Council recently attended a Network Steering Group meeting to further outline the Council's commitment to this approach. All NHS and Council health and wellbeing related contracts are now being managed by one commissioner and a 3-year Community Wellbeing Contract was won by the Network late last year to continue to work of the Community Helpline, Paignton hub and associated activities.

This contract can be built upon in the coming years as new needs are identified and new funding streams secured by the Council. This will be crucial as we move forward into a period of change as the NHS restructuring is implemented.



## Torbay's Community Response Strategy: A Collaborative Plan to tackle sexual violence and Domestic Abuse 2025 – 2030





## Devon Mental Health Alliance

*Stuart Bakewell – Shekinah*

The Devon Mental Health Alliance (DMHA) is a partnership between five voluntary sector organisations (CoLab, Devon Mind, Improving Lives, Shekinah, and Step One) dedicated to providing support for people experiencing challenges with their mental health. The goal of the Alliance is to improve access to services and identify new opportunities to support people across all of Devon's communities, using a collaborative approach that reaches across and brings together partners from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

Since inception in 2022, the DMHA has been working hard to connect support in communities and improve the experience for people seeking Mental Health support. Some notable areas of our work over the last 12 months have been:

- Continued development of drop-in offer in Endeavour House, one of 14 drop-ins we deliver across the county.
- Progress in convening Locality Leadership Groups.
- DMHA/VCSE Assembly Mental Health Hub programmes, attracting 60+ participants.
- Delivery of cultural humility and trauma practice to over 120 practitioners from across statutory, VCSE and research communities.
- Co-production Group successfully embedded and meeting monthly
- Ongoing successful delivery of FRS activity.
- Successful support for contracted Psychological Services provision.
- Over 150 people attended county level development groups focusing on trusted assessments and peer support.
- Over 150 people trained in cultural humility and trauma informed practice.
- Over 1,200 visits to our learning network in the last month, with a growing calendar of activity.
- Ongoing delivery of 'bite-sized' training videos.
- Support for South Hams CVS in mitigating closure – providing wrap around for peer support and other groups with view to continuing those communities that align with our work.
- Continuous Engagement with all sectors.

- Regular attendance at all PCN/Mat meetings.
- Site visits people/organisations, building connections and partnership working across all sectors.
- Ensuring that everyone knows what the Alliance is for- encouraging presence in the PCN's from VCSE- ensure that organisations know they can bring clients to the PCN meetings.
- Co facilitating the Festival of Human Connection – an annual Collaboration between clinical and community staff creating a day initiating discussion on Physiology of trauma, psychoeducation, eco therapy/spirituality. Attendees consist of a wide range of organisations and individuals from across Torbay, Teignbridge and South Hams and members of the communities across the area.



**Devon Mental Health Alliance**  
Working together for better mental health across Devon

### Partnership Panels

We know that it can be hard to find and access the right support.

The Devon Mental Health Alliance Partnership Panel is a forum to hold a warm discussion with a team of people who are connected across NHS and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) services. Our aim is to help you find the right opportunities for the person that you are supporting, with a particular focus on connecting with community resources.

It is not a clinical space, however our panels do link into Mental Health Multi-Agency Team meetings where a clinical discussion can take place if required.

We welcome applications from anyone, including VCSE partners, Clinical, Local Authority and Statutory teams. Please note, we cannot accept self-referrals.

Partnership panels take place virtually on a fortnightly basis in North, East, South and Plymouth & West Devon.

To enquire or to attend a meeting, please complete our simple access form at

[www.mentalhealthdevon.co.uk/partnership-panels](http://www.mentalhealthdevon.co.uk/partnership-panels)

and our Community Development Lead for your area will respond. We will endeavour to connect you with appropriate resources, but we cannot guarantee that we can provide support. Please note that consent is required from the person being discussed, although we can also provide advice regarding anonymised scenarios.

### Mental Health Multi-Agency Team (MAT) Meetings


Devon's mental health system recognises that outcomes for people are best achieved by working in partnership. To achieve this, Multi-Agency Team (MAT) meetings have been introduced across all Primary Care Network areas as a formal clinical space for partners to connect to discuss someone's situation and identify the right solution to meet the person's needs.

MATs are open to any organisation from across NHS, Local Authority and Voluntary and Community sectors.

You should contact your local MAT facilitator directly if you believe there is a clinical need or if you know the person is accessing a NHS service and you would like to connect with the professional supporting them.

Information about your local MAT meeting can be found at [www.dpt.nhs.uk/gps/pcn-mental-health-graphics](http://www.dpt.nhs.uk/gps/pcn-mental-health-graphics)

For further information, or if you have any questions regarding the MAT meetings, please contact us via the Partnership Panels website page [www.mentalhealthdevon.co.uk/partnership-panels](http://www.mentalhealthdevon.co.uk/partnership-panels)



For more information about the DMHA please visit our website (<https://www.mentalhealthdevon.co.uk>) or contact the Community Development Lead for South Devon, Bernie McAuley ([Bernadette.McAuley@shekinah.co.uk](mailto:Bernadette.McAuley@shekinah.co.uk)).



## Some of the Network events this year

### Beat the Freeze Network Event – Dec 2024

The Health and Wellbeing Network coming together to support the local community in finding solutions on how to keep warm over the winter months and ensuring everyone was aware of the benefits they were eligible for.

Blood pressure and health checks were offered by Paignton Community staff.



Chaz Singh from ARA, Claire Bithell from PCH/Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network Coordinator, Claire Ball PCH and Sarah Reeves from ECOE

### NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening event in April

This event was to help give patients an overview of the aneurysm process to alleviate their fears, reduce their anxiety, and give them an idea as to what to expect next. It included a presentation from Dr Robert McCarthy, vascular surgeon at Torbay and Exeter Hospitals, and the Clinical Lead for the national aneurysm screening program.



## Parliamentary Visit in February

Sir Ed Davey – Leader of the Liberal party, and Steve Darling – MP for Torbay meeting to discuss facilities and support for Torbay communities and carers.



Dr. Kevin Dixon – Chair of Healthwatch Torbay and ECSW  
Chair of Trustees, Claire Bithell – Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network Coordinator, Steve Darling – MP for Torbay, Jennie (guide dog) Pat Harris – CEO Healthwatch Torbay and ECSW, Strategic Lead for Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, Sir Ed Davey – Leader of the Liberal party, and Torbay Councillor Swithin Long.

## NHS Business Services Authority Event in May

A joint event hosted by Torbay Healthwatch and Paignton Community Hub for professionals working with people on low incomes, pregnant or with children under 4 years old. Information was shared by presenter Louisa Mackenzie – Regional Partnership Lead (South West) Strategy, Performance, Business Development and Growth.





## Moving forward and Challenges Ahead

As we move into 2025-26 there are many challenges ahead that the Health & Wellbeing Network will be working on to support the VCSE sector to further integrate its services alongside statutory offers.

The Network will also help and offer support to VCSE sector organisations to navigate these changes and challenges over the coming years.

The challenges we are currently aware of include the NHS restructuring implementation, the Combined Authority (Devon County Council/Torbay Council) impact, the move to a Unitary Authority and the financial pressures on NHS services.

The VCSE sector is best placed to work with local communities to ensure services are co-produced and services meet the needs of local residents. The network will be assisting statutory bodies to co-produce future service offers, making sure local communities get the services they are telling us they need.

We are very pleased to be working closely with the new CEO of the Torbay and South Devon Partnership Trust, Joe Teape. This working relationship will make best use of the VCSE sector's wide range of support, alongside the NHS, to support the health and wellbeing of Torbay's communities. We continue to work closely with the Local Authority Leads at Torbay Council, including Anna Coles (Director of Adult Social Care) and Dr Lincoln Sargeant (Director of Public Health).

There is a massive opportunity to look at a neighbourhood approach, using the VCSE sectors range of skills and support, to further build neighbourhood communities and make best use of financial resources, thus ensuring that the funding gets to the people who need it and they in turn, can use it to support and benefit them best

The Network will continue to ensure the value and impact of the amazing VCSE organisations in the Bay are united and embedded in community service offers going forward.




**Amanda Moss** – Chair of Torbay VCSE Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, June 2025



## Partnership working and building links

In order for members of the network to connect and share information, training, questions, concerns and celebrations, I would like to take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on some of the amazing VCSE organisations and partners within this network and promote the great work that they do.

For the full list of Torbay Health and Wellbeing VCSE members please contact Claire Bithell via email on [Claire.bithell@ecsw.org.uk](mailto:Claire.bithell@ecsw.org.uk)

 <b>PHOENIX RISING CIC</b>	<p><b>Phoenix Rising CIC</b> supports female survivors after domestic and sexual abuse. We are a trauma-informed service that provides support to help women rebuild their lives after abuse. We provide trauma stabilisation courses online, and also in person courses to help women recover after domestic abuse and a specific course for women who have experienced sexual abuse. We offer a drop-in service every Friday and women can also access our activities such as wellbeing walks, exercise classes, yoga, and more, all as a holistic approach to long term recovery after abuse. We are a community where women have a safe space to grow and build new trusting relationships as well as accessing essential support.</p> <p><a href="mailto:Phoenixrisingcic20@gmail.com">Phoenixrisingcic20@gmail.com</a></p>
	<p><b>Living Options Devon</b>  <b>We empower disabled people to live the life they choose.</b>          Providing a range of help and support services for people with a long-term health condition, disability and / or who are Deaf, where British Sign Language is their first language.</p> <p><a href="http://www.livingoptions.org">www.livingoptions.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Living Room</b> – Wednesdays and Fridays: 10.30–1.00pm  <b>Community cafe for the town centre.</b> Hot food, cake, coffee, a warm building, a listening ear, sign-posting to other services and prayer.  <b>Store Room</b> – Tuesdays – 1.30 pm – 5.30 pm  <b>Food Bank</b> – working as part of the food alliance.          Parcels given on a referral basis through the Torbay helpline.          8–15 referrals each week for seven days food supply.  <b>Play Room</b> : Mondays – 10 am – 12 noon : Stay and play for pre-school children and their family or carer. £1 per family. Soft toys, craft, food, hot drinks, community with other parents. We welcome 20–40 infants and their parents/ carers each week.  <i>St Mary Magdalene – Upton, Union Street, Torquay, Devon TQ1 4BX</i>          01803 211868  <a href="mailto:office@stmarymagdalene.org.uk">office@stmarymagdalene.org.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.stmags.org.uk">www.stmags.org.uk</a></p>



	<p><b>EOCE Advice – Energy and Money Saving Advice.</b> Impartial energy advice and practical hand-holding support for local residents to save money and maintain a warm and healthy home. Home visits for vulnerable residents to install free energy saving measures. Help with bills, tariffs, applying for discounts, fuel vouchers, hazards check. Benefits and debt advice. Make a referral online, by phone or email or signpost to a local drop-in clinic. EOCE Advice: Energy Advice Centre, Parkfield House, Paignton. <a href="http://www.ecoeadvice.org.uk">www.ecoeadvice.org.uk</a> / 0800 772 3617 / <a href="mailto:healthyhomes@ecoeadvice.org.uk">healthyhomes@ecoeadvice.org.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>Shared Lives South West</b> is an innovative care model that allows trained Shared Lives Carers to work from home while providing support to adults with learning disabilities, autism, mental health problems, or dementia. <b>Shared Lives Carers</b> open their home to provide person centred support in a homely environment and Shared Lives is seen as an alternative to traditional live in care, supported living and residential care. <b>Our mission is to help people live full, independent lives, stay connected to their communities, and develop new skills.</b> <a href="http://www.sharedlivesw.org.uk">www.sharedlivesw.org.uk</a></p>
 The Devon Clinic Putting People Before Profit	<p><b>The Devon Clinic CIC</b> is a mental health charity based in Paignton, providing affordable, accessible therapy and wellbeing services across Torbay and the South West. We offer counselling, trauma therapies (including EMDR and BWRT), massage, allergy testing, hypnotherapy, and holistic treatments. Our team of over 40 practitioners support individuals from all walks of life, including survivors of domestic abuse, single parents, carers, and those facing the cost-of-living crisis. Email: <a href="mailto:reception@devonclinic.co.uk">reception@devonclinic.co.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.devonclinic.co.uk">www.devonclinic.co.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>The Singing for Wellness Torbay Choir:</b> <i>The group meets on Thursdays (term time), 2.00pm-4.00pm, at People's Parkfield, Parkfield House, Esplanade Road, Paignton TQ3 2NH. Each session starts with a series of breathing, relaxation and oxygenation exercises followed by pitch, tuning and harmonising exercises. The group then learns and sings a few songs. The meetings are also an opportunity for people with respiratory conditions to socialise in a safe environment and there is time at the start of the sessions for a chat and a hot drink.</i> <i>No singing experience is necessary, and there are opportunities for gigs, for people wishing to take part in performances.</i> <i>The Singing for Wellness project is delivered by Wren Music and professional singing leader Jon Dyer. All receive special training from a respiratory physiotherapist at the University of Plymouth – Kath Donohue.</i> For more information email <a href="mailto:info@wrenmusic.co.uk">info@wrenmusic.co.uk</a> or call 01837 53754</p>



**Brixham Does Care** is a registered befriending Charity which attempts to combat isolation and loneliness and has been since 1978. We offer support to people of all ages living in Brixham and surrounding areas.

**Brixham Does Care Aims**

- To relieve social isolation and improve quality of life.
  - Inspire people to be involved as valued members of the community.
  - Support and encourage wellbeing, raise awareness and promote understanding.
  - Help people to overcome their challenges and to provide befriending support in the home and out in the community.
  - Reassure all those who are vulnerable and encourage independence.
- We provide a safe and friendly environment to encourage social interaction by:
- Offering a wide variety of community activities, groups and excursions.
  - Providing support, information and signposting, and a visiting Team.
  - A community cafe for friendship and affordable refreshments.
  - Lunch club to bring people together to enjoy a hot meal and to socialise with friends.
  - To assist with Attendance Allowance, Blue Badge forms, and other advice.
  - To encourage health and wellbeing.
  - Supporting and training a committed team.
  - Working closely with other organisations and acting as a facilitator to ensure that the needs of our local people are met.

**The Friends Centre** builds on our existing services and provides a friendly flexible community space to help provide care needs, a positive and social environment to encourage social interaction. There are a wide range of activities and services.





- To be a flexible Community based project.
- Resilient and cohesive community venture bringing people together whilst promoting the authentic voice of Brixham.
- To provide the local community an opportunity to receive both mental and social stimulation.
- Access to a variety of health & care services.
- To enable people to continue living within the community.
- Find out about the everyday tasks you can and cannot manage.
- To provide wellbeing, social interaction and sign posting.
- To give care givers a much-needed break.

**The Friends Centre aims to provide:**

- Day Care services with support, to encourage wellbeing, with meaningful daily activities.
- Help individuals to overcome challenges and to provide befriending and support.
- a healthy 2 course cooked meal.
- transportation to those living in the TQ5 area.
- choice when making decisions in their care and activities whilst attending.

**Who is eligible to attend?**

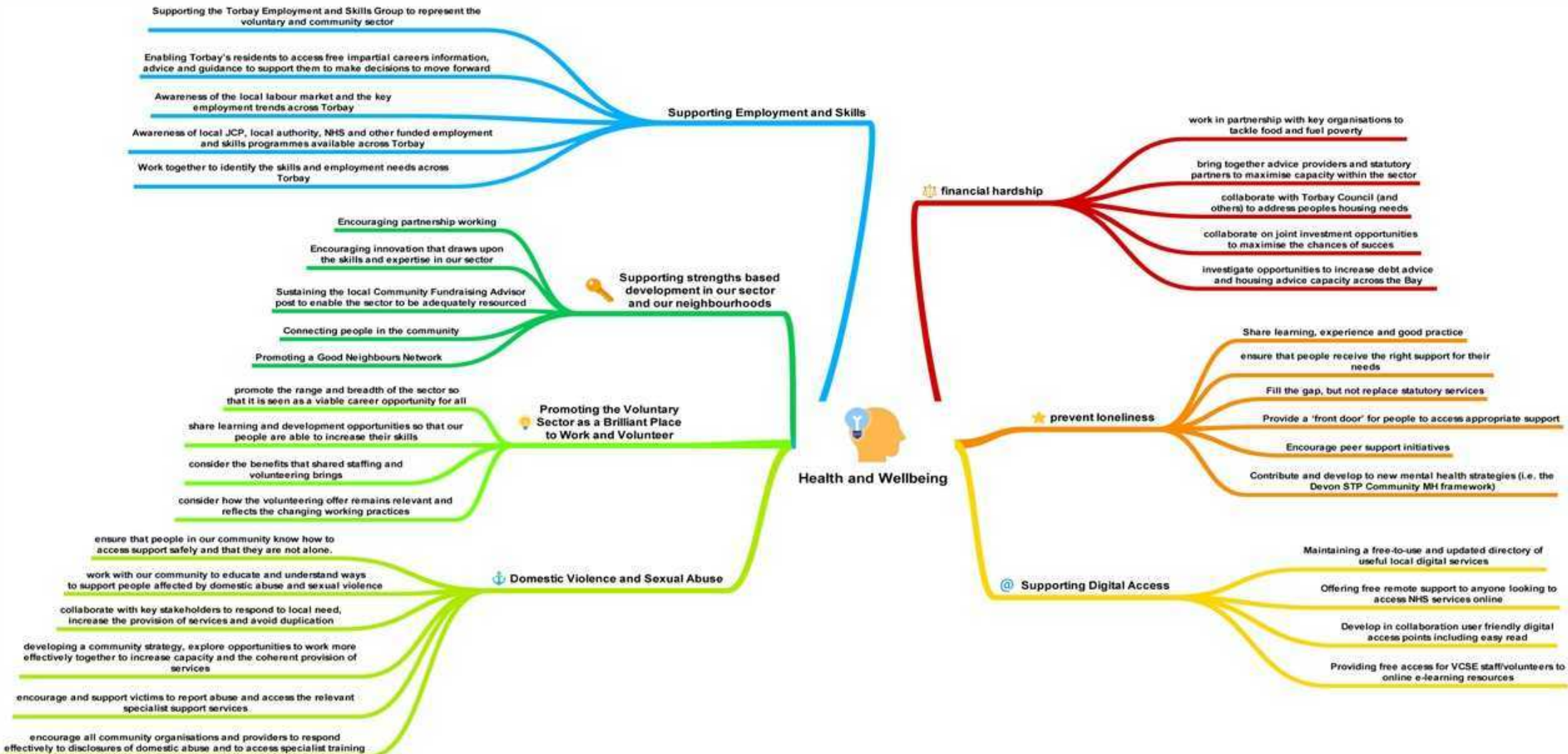
If you think you or your loved-one may want to come to The Friends Centre, contact us for a free trial day. We will arrange your transport and lunch for the day. If you have already been assessed by Health and Social Care as needing support and financially be below their threshold, you may qualify for your placement to be paid by them. If not, you can pay privately at a rate of £52.65 a day, including all your food, drinks and transport.

	<p><b>Carers Aid Torbay</b> is a community interest company benefiting unpaid Carers across the towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. The one-to-one enabling service provides emotional support, advocacy and signposting. It operates out of the Olive Cares Centre, St Edmunds, Victoria Park Road, TQ1 3QH. It is open for appointments and information via the phone 01803 323510 and at the centre 9-4 Monday to Thursday and 9-1 on Fridays. Carers Aid Torbay also provides the Bay Benefits service for unpaid carers and their families – providing help with benefit advice, entitlement information and paperwork support. <b>Bay Benefits</b> operates Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-4 at the <b>Olive Carers Centre</b> and can be contacted on 07530 790354.</p>
	<p>What's Your Problem is a CIC offering friendly, confidential help and support for people in Torbay in a wide range of areas including family court, housing and welfare rights. Our vision is for all people in Torbay to have equal and fair access to justice and support.</p> <p><a href="http://whatsyourproblem.org.uk">whatsyourproblem.org.uk</a></p>
	<p><b>Standing Tall</b> is a partnership of local groups and organisations who work together. We provide a range of tailored support for people in Torbay who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence. Our vision is to stop domestic abuse and sexual violence for all people, families and communities. We can arrange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship Courses</li> <li>• Emotional Support</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Family Interventions</li> <li>• Help with Housing</li> <li>• Help with Benefits</li> <li>• Access to free legal advice</li> <li>• Recovery Courses</li> <li>• Fun, family activities</li> <li>• And much more.</li> </ul> <p>For more information or to access support, call <b>01803 446022</b> or visit: <a href="https://www.whatsyourproblem.org.uk/standing-tall-partnership/">https://www.whatsyourproblem.org.uk/standing-tall-partnership/</a></p>
	<p>Healthwatch are your independent health and social care consumer champions. If you've recently visited your doctor, hospital, or any health or care service in Devon, Plymouth or Torbay we want to hear from you. Whether you've had a good or bad experience, we can use your feedback to improve services for all and we have the power to make NHS leaders and other care providers listen to what you have to say. We're completely independent so anything you say is confidential. Our service is free, easy to use and can make a real difference to people in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay.</p> <p>Call us free on 0800 520 0640 or visit <a href="http://www.hwdpt.org">www.hwdpt.org</a></p>
	<p>Engaging Communities South West (ECSW) is a not for profit organisation that works to help communities transform the way local services are designed and delivered, by offering engagement, evaluation, communications support, digital support, training and advice to the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.</p> <p>We manage the contract for award-winning independent health &amp; social care community champion Healthwatch Torbay, local community digital support project Digital Health Devon, and run a number of different projects in the community.</p> <p>T: 08000 520 029 E: <a href="mailto:info@engagingcommunitiesouthwest.org.uk">info@engagingcommunitiesouthwest.org.uk</a></p>



## APPENDIX 1: Our Focus and Priorities

A visual representation of the identified VCSE Health and Wellbeing Network priorities:





**This report will be shared with  
network members, VCSE  
organisations, key stakeholders and  
other networks working in Torbay.**

Torbay Health & Wellbeing VCSE Network is run in partnership with:



*Registered Charity No: 1153450*

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Great Western Road  
Paignton  
TQ4 5AG  
T: 08000 520 029  
E: [info@engagingcommunitiesouthwest.org.uk](mailto:info@engagingcommunitiesouthwest.org.uk)