

Recommendations from Board Advisory Committee

FOR DISCUSSION AND SIGN OFF

Background and Purpose of the Paper

This paper was presented for consideration and discussion at the 30th of July 2025 Board Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting. That discussion informed the proposals in this paper, which are brought to Board for approval.

The paper contains two sections, one proposing changes to the:

- Annual Business Plan (limited, recognising capacity for change needed), and
- the Annual Research and Engagement Programme (affecting only two projects, by reducing scale and partnering complexity to ensure delivery within FY25/26)

The changes proposed intend to **ensure our delivery of our statutory duties and contractual commitments**, serving the people of Hertfordshire, always the primary focus of our efforts. **The changes proposed do not represent any less impact, value or change the scopes of our commitments and deliverables.** We must continue to be clear that we work to public benefit and champion improvement, and of the continued importance and value of the statutory duties we deliver.

Whilst we had built in a number of activities to grow our scale of impact, networks, collaborative partnerships and evidence base, the changes in the external environment around legislation and funding picture has meant that our focus has also been directed at protecting core services, supporting staff wellbeing and ensuring there is sufficient capacity for scenario planning and governance input in the decisions that need to be taken in the coming months.

Each section presents the updated version of our plans for this financial year, as endorsed and recommended by Board Advisory Committee.

Recommendation: Board are asked to agree and signoff the proposed changes to the annual business plan and annual research programme.

a) Proposal for changes to the Annual Business Plan

Board Advisory Committee agreed that it would be expedient for Board to revisit the Annual Business Plan to **ensure we have capacity and resource to thoughtfully consider the upcoming changes** and make sound decisions, such as:

- Prioritising efforts that best serve our communities and deliver our objectives.
- Bolster our governance and improve agility of our decision making.
- Scale back efforts whose aspirations are built on longer term trajectories to more appropriate timelines.
- Prioritise stronger alignment of partnership building efforts with existing work streams.
- Prioritise relationships that would enable us to have insight and understanding about where future opportunities might lie and how the timeline of upcoming changes can be best managed.

Summary of changes

- The core program of work remains the same, and our commitments to communities and partners stay on track – delivering our statutory functions through high quality services continues to be our top priority.
- Team success and wellbeing is central to everything, and we are ensuring that the team are supported in navigating the transition ahead, maintain a supportive and resilient culture, and build in time for change management activity and pivoting to arising needs.
- A new strand of activity has been introduced to recognise the importance of change management activity arising from external context change.
- In order to create space for new activity, a number of 'second order' work streams have been paused, including a review of reward and remuneration, brand awareness growth activity, governance review and a costing model for the research program. All these activities may be brought back 'online' as appropriate.

(Links to strategy)	Goals for 2025–2026	Key strands of work supporting this goal <i>Leads are identified by their initial. F–Fiona, N–Nuray, I–Ivana, C–Chloe, TL – all team leaders</i>
Efficient and impactful CORE services (2 & 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximising evidence and insights - Impactful Holding to Account relationships - Build reputation on coproduction expertise. - Research and engagement programme focuses on key areas of impact and inequalities. - Resilient and robust signposting service 	- An impactful and well evidenced Research and Engagement plan Completed
		- Analyse Holding to Account conversations and agendas, make explicit the change we want to see <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Leverage our coproduction insights and expertise to champion public voice in decision making and help shape the future system <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Update HCC reporting in line with updated spec Completed
		- <i>Ongoing</i> review of signposting flows and cases, with process to ensure capacity
Change management and transition activity (new)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evolving new workstream focusing on key principles of staff support and equipping the organisation to manage risks and leverage opportunities, working closely with Board 	- Scenario planning and robust decision making considering financial, resource, capacity, staffing, stakeholders, public and partner impacts. (new)
		- Increased focus on enabling governance for key decisions Board and team, including new working groups and additional meetings (new)
		- External advice procurement and oversight, to ensure sound decision making (new)
		- Key external stakeholder conversations and workgroups, to understand risks and opportunities (new)
Staff team success and wellbeing (1, 2, 3 & 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create space for team building and support. - Ensure clarity of roles and priorities. - Review resilience and capacity challenges. - Maintain supportive culture and relationships 	- Update and reprioritise team annual areas of focus, ensuring core services success (new)
		- Review of reward and remuneration. <i>Paused.</i>
		- Review and create professional development priority plan. <i>Paused. Refocused on staff wellbeing and managing change (new)</i>
		- Enable ways of working, gaps and overlaps, team building <i>Ongoing</i>
Influencing at a strategic level (1 & 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shaping the core of our efforts by focusing on our statutory duties and services - Clarity on which partnerships require most focus and effort given the opportunity. - Leverage our comms profile and reach to 	- Nurture most significant relationships in the system so that we are aware of any opportunities in the medium to long term <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Support and influence key decision makers in shaping the system in the way it continues to serve our local communities as best as it can, before, during and after transition if possible. (new)
		- Using the success of our existing comms networks to deliver maximum value to Hertfordshire residents and key system stakeholders, and

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	maximise the impact of our work - Leverage Healthwatch national and regional links	ensure they understand the role we play and the value we add <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Deliver an impactful annual report and AGM Completed
		- Pilot to test raising brand awareness with insights via comms <i>Paused.</i>
		- Continue our horizon scanning and external changes responsiveness <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Continue building, collating, and effectively using our evidence of impact <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Build impact reporting into scoping negotiations and contracts <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Active engagement with Healthwatch regional and national networks, insights, and resources for opportunities to bolster impact or revenue <i>Ongoing</i>
Enabling and empowering governance (1, 2, 3 & 4)	- Explore frameworks to better leverage Board expertise - Continue to meet statutory, legal and compliance requirements. - Clarity of direction and purpose to enable <i>future planning</i>	- Pilot ways of working with Vice Chair Completed
		- Build on Board expertise and bolster their ability to take sound and appropriate decisions during uncertainty, to ensure the organisation is able to manage the transitions ahead. <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Where agreed in advance, trustees to support delivery of key narratives to external stakeholders, feeding back conversations and opportunities for involvement. <i>(new)</i>
		- Governance review plan for action in FY2627. <i>Paused</i>
		- Review annual Board cycle for alignment to decision making timelines <i>Ongoing</i>
		- Recruit and induct three new trustees Completed
		A financially sustainable HwH (1, 2, 3 & 4)
- Maintain awareness of public funding streams, opportunities, and upskilling needs <i>Ongoing</i>		
- Work with key system decision makers to understand how we can add value to our communities by working in partnership through additionally commissioned activity <i>Ongoing</i>		
- An updated research programme costing model. <i>Paused</i>		
- Financial scenario modelling to support decision making on appropriate timescales <i>Ongoing</i>		

b) Proposal for changes to the annual research and engagement programme

Sitting within the Annual Business Plan is the Annual Research and Engagement Programme, a key mechanism for delivering our statutory functions.

It was signed off by Board in March 2025 and outlined the projects we have committed to in 2025–26 and the evidence base on which they were chosen for this year. The Programme highlighted where we sought to work with partners to maximise impact, and projects that were additionally commissioned outside of our core funding.

It is important to note that there is no proposed change to work in the programme for FY 2025–2026. We are on track for all planned delivery timelines across the programme.

The changes proposed affect only two projects, where we:

- scale back one project whose aspirations are built on a two year trajectory to deliver a finished product by end of FY25–26, smaller in scale.
- put emphasis of focus on working with *existing* partners to deliver the other project, instead of building additional relationships with a potential new network of partners which would have added value in *future* projects.

This means that we are **creating capacity in team resource for different ways of planning and working to accommodate upcoming changes, reprioritising efforts that were pointed at future work programs anyway.**

This is because the lifecycle of a project requires several months from gestation to delivery and comms, and the moving timelines may cut across the ability to plan as far ahead as previously. This requires a change of approach and understandably needs refocused energies.

Research and Engagement Programme for FY 25-26

Project [C] = core funding, [P] -Involves partners	Agreed approach	Recommended changes to approach
1. Refugees and asylum seekers: experiences of healthcare. [c]	Focus groups and interviews. [P]	None – report live.
2. Support for autistic adults post-diagnostic support. [c]	Interviews and online survey. [P]	None – engagement closes soon. On track.
3. Co-Occurring needs: lived experience of mental health condition and a drug or alcohol addiction services.	Focus groups and interviews. [P]	None – report in final stages of writing.
4. Smoking cessation services: Hearing from smokers, ex-smokers and friends and family.	Focus groups, interviews and online survey.	None –report in final stages of writing.
5. ICP monitoring framework: Seeking resident's perspective on health and wellbeing services.	Survey.	None –Final report under review.
6. Improving primary care: - Project 1. Ageing well/ frailty - Project 2. Pharmacy – scope to be agreed.	Focus groups, interviews and online survey.	None. Project 1 – engagement completed. Report on track. . Project 2. On track
7. Drugs and alcohol coproduction – creating a dialogue between services and users	Design and support	None – Scoping live.
8. Supporting engagement with the deaf community	Insights and analysis	None – Engagement live.
9. Advanced Care Planning: Working with partners to improve information and support for social care or end of life. [c]	Survey and interviews, working with partners [P]	Work with existing partners. To be scoped.
10. Children and young people: Case studies of experience – initially intended to span across this and next year's programme. [c]	Interviews to produce case studies. [P]	Create smaller scale product. Scoping live.
11. East and North Hertfordshire Health and Care Partnership Community Assembly [c]	Co-production leadership. [P]	None – continues as usual.
12. South and West Hertfordshire Health and Care Partnership Coproduction Board [c]	Co-production leadership. [P]	
13. Research and Engagement Network Programme [c]	Leadership. [P]	