

Budget Consultation



Budget Consultation 2026/27 – Summary

This document summarises what people told Dundee Integration Joint Board (IJB) during its 2026/27 budget consultation. It explains:

- why the consultation took place
- who responded
- what people said matters most
- what concerns were raised about impacts on specific groups

The full consultation report is over 100 pages. This summary highlights the key messages and themes to help people understand the issues and how views will be used in decision-making.

Why the consultation took place

Dundee IJB plans and funds adult health and social care services across the city. Like many public bodies, it is facing significant financial pressure and must make difficult decisions to balance its budget for 2026/27.

To help inform these decisions, the IJB consulted on a number of **possible** savings options. People were asked:

- what principles should guide budget decisions
- how services should be delivered in the future
- how proposed changes might affect them, their families or their communities

The consultation was designed to understand potential impacts and priorities before decisions are made.

How people took part

The consultation ran for 29 days (February–March 2026).

People were able to take part in several ways:

- an online or paper survey (available in community locations)

- group responses using a facilitators' pack
- public drop-in sessions
- online sessions with the workforce and with third and independent sector organisations

In total, **565 responses** were received, alongside additional written submissions.

People who were responded could answer as many or as few questions as they wanted to. This meant they could answer questions about services that they had use / were using, as well as about services that did not directly affect them.

Who responded

Most responses were from individuals, including members of the public, people who use health and social care services, unpaid carers and people working in health and social care.

Key points about respondents:

- around three-quarters were women
- around two-thirds were aged 45 or over
- almost one in three reported having a disability
- around four in ten said they provide unpaid care
- most respondents lived in Dundee, with responses from all areas of the city

Not all groups are equally represented in consultation responses. Findings will therefore be considered alongside wider data and formal equality and fairness impact assessments.

What people said is most important

Before looking at specific saving options, people were asked what should guide decisions about health and social care spending.

Priorities for how services are targeted

People consistently said that the IJB should prioritise:

- helping people **stay independent at home** rather than going into hospital
- **preventing problems early**, before they become crises
- supporting people with the **greatest level of need**
- making sure help is available **quickly in a crisis**

Preventing problems early was repeatedly highlighted as better for people and better for the wider health and care system.

Priorities for how services are delivered

People said services should:

- be **quick to access**
- allow people to **see someone in person when needed**
- be **free to use**
- be **local and easy to reach**

While some people welcomed digital options, many stressed that online or telephone services **cannot replace face-to-face support** for everyone.

Overall themes from the consultation

Across survey responses, consultation sessions and written submissions, several strong messages came through. Prevention, fairness and concern about pressure shifting elsewhere in the system were raised repeatedly.

Prevention matters - People warned that cutting preventative services is likely to increase costs elsewhere, particularly in hospitals and crisis services.

Vulnerable people would be most affected (Health Inequalities) - Older people, disabled people, unpaid carers, people with long-term conditions and people living in poverty were frequently highlighted.

Demand does not disappear – it shifts - Savings in community services were seen as likely to increase pressure on GPs, hospitals, emergency services, unpaid carers and families.

Third sector services are essential - Community and voluntary organisations were widely described as a core part of Dundee’s health and social care system.

Fairness and transparency matter - People asked for clear explanations and meaningful involvement in decisions.

What people said about the proposed savings

The consultation asked about seven possible savings options. People were invited to rate the likely impact and explain their views.

[Ending funding for Food Train and Bharatiya Ashram Lunch Club](#)

People who rely on these services raised strong concerns, describing them as preventative, dignified and socially important. Respondents stressed that these services help prevent loneliness and health problems before they escalate. Suggested alternatives were seen as unrealistic for many users.

Many people described this proposal as a false economy, warning of increased isolation, poorer health and greater pressure on other services.

Reducing funding for third and independent sector services

This option received the highest overall impact ratings. Reductions to the third sector were widely seen as affecting the whole health and care system, not just individual organisations.

People said that third sector services support people who often do not meet statutory thresholds. Concerns included fewer people being supported, longer waiting lists, loss of specialist staff and increased pressure on NHS and council services.

People said any cuts to third and independent sector services should be phased in over time and focused where they make the most sense.

Tayside Nutrition and Dietetics Service

Many respondents described nutrition support as essential preventative care, not an optional service. People emphasised the role of nutrition support in preventing deterioration and hospital admission.

Concerns included longer waiting times, increased risk of malnutrition and widening health inequalities.

Review of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy

This proposal generated a large volume of feedback. Respondents repeatedly linked these services to staying independent and avoiding long-term care.

People highlighted that these services support recovery, independence, safe discharge from hospital and falls prevention. Strong concern was expressed about the potential loss of specialist services and unequal access if people are forced to pay privately.

Reducing provision of some Occupational Therapy equipment

Respondents strongly opposed removing access to basic equipment such as shower chairs and stools. Many felt that removing basic equipment could lead to higher costs elsewhere.

People described this equipment as low cost but high impact, supporting dignity, safety and independence.

Older People's Mental Health Services – weekend cover

Views were mixed. Respondents noted that mental health crises do not only happen during weekday hours.

Concerns focused on mental health crises at weekends and increased pressure on emergency services and families.

Review of The Corner (young people's service)

People highlighted The Corner as a trusted, confidential and early help service. Many respondents stressed the importance of support before problems escalate.

Concerns included young people presenting later in crisis and loss of a safe and inclusive space.

Impacts on specific groups

The consultation included analysis of how different equality and fairness groups might be affected. It was not possible to look in detail at the combined impact of the proposals on people who are part of more than one group.

Overall, the proposals with the highest reported impacts across many groups were:

- reducing funding for third and independent sector services
- reviewing Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services
- reducing access to Occupational Therapy equipment

Only one instance was identified where a group's reported impact was notably higher than the average. This related to people who identified their sexual orientation as bisexual or "other", in response to the proposal to review The Corner.

- Average impact rating for this group: 2.7
- Overall average rating: 1.7

This finding is based on a small number of respondents (17 people) and should be treated with caution. However, it highlights a concern that changes to The Corner could have a greater impact on some LGBTQ+ young people.

Potential disproportionate impacts will be explored further through formal equality and fairness impact assessments.

Ideas for alternative ways to save money

Many respondents suggested ways to save money without cutting essential frontline services, including reducing non-frontline costs, improving systems and focusing on long-term planning. There was strong support for protecting services that prevent crisis and reduce future demand.

What happens next

The consultation findings will be considered alongside financial requirements, legal duties and equality and fairness impact assessments. No decisions are made through this summary alone. Any proposals taken forward will be subject to further assessment and decision-making.

This document is a summary of the consultation findings. The full report and future decision papers are available through at dundeehscp.com.