



FULL COUNCIL - TUESDAY, 20 MAY 2025

10.00 AM COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

Documents being circulated with the County Council agenda.

Document	Report in County Council agenda to which it is related
Allocation of places on committees (Appendix 1 of the Governance Committee report) (Page 3)	Governance Committee report, paragraph 1
Allocation of places on committees, panels and other bodies (Appendix 2 of the Governance Committee report) (Page 5)	Governance Committee report, paragraph 2
ASEND inspection report (Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report) (Page 7)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Possible outcomes for an ASEND inspection (Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report) (Page 15)	Cabinet report, paragraph 1
Call-in request – Linden Court (Appendix 1 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 17)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 1
Cabinet report and appendices (Appendix 2 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 19)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 1
People Scrutiny summary of comments to Cabinet 25.02.25 (Appendix 3 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 91)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraphs 1 and 2
Minutes of the Cabinet meeting 25.02.25 (Appendix 4 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 97)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraphs 1 and 2
Response from Director Adult Social Care and Health – Call-in Linden Court (Appendix 5 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 109)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 1
Minutes of the People Scrutiny Committee meeting – 17.03.25 (Appendix 6 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 113)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraphs 1 and 2
Call-in request - Housing-Related Floating Support Service (Appendix 7 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 123)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 2
Cabinet report and appendices (Appendix 8 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 125)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 2
Response by Director Adult Social Care and Health – Call-in Housing-Related Floating Support Service (Appendix 9 of the People Scrutiny Committee report) (Page 261)	People Scrutiny Committee report, paragraph 2
Complaints considered (Appendix 1 of the Standards Committee report) (Page 265)	Standards Committee report, paragraph 1
Code of Conduct for Members (Appendix 2 of the Standards Committee report) (Page 267)	Standards Committee report, paragraph 1
Consultation response (Appendix 3 of the Standards Committee report) (Page 281)	Standards Committee report, paragraph 1

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive

Agenda Item 7

Appendix 1

Group	Number of Councillors	%	Number of Seats
Conservative	24	48	38
Liberal Democrat	12	24	19
Labour	5	10	8
Green	5	10	8
Independent Democrat	2	4	3
Independents	2	4	3
Total	50	100	79

Committee	Conservative	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Green	Independent Democrats	Independents
Number of Councillors	24	12	5	5	2	2
Regulatory Committee (18)	(8.64) 9	(4.32) 4	(1.8) 2	(1.8) 2	(0.72) 1	(0.72) 0
Planning (7)	(3.36) 4	(1.68) 2	(0.70) 1	(0.70) 0	(0.28) 0	(0.28) 0
Governance Committee (6)	(2.88) 3	(1.44) 1	(0.60) 1	(0.60) 1	(0.24) 0	(0.24) 0
Standards Committee (7)	(3.36) 3	(1.68) 1	(0.70) 1	(0.70) 1	(0.28) 0	(0.28) 1
Pension Committee (5)	(2.40) 3	(1.20) 1	(0.50) 0	(0.50) 1	(0.20) 0	(0.20) 0
Scrutiny Committees						
Audit (7)	(3.36) 3	(1.68) 2	(0.70) 0	(0.70) 1	(0.28) 0	(0.28) 1
Place (11)	(5.28) 5	(2.64) 3	(1.1) 1	(1.1) 1	(0.44) 1	(0.44) 0
People (11)	(5.28) 5	(2.64) 3	(1.1) 1	(1.1) 1	(0.44) 1	(0.44) 0
HOSC (7)	(3.36) 3	(1.68) 2	(0.70) 1	(0.70) 0	(0.28) 0	(0.28) 1
Totals (79)	38	19	8	8	3	3

Appendix 2

This allocation relates to the following Committees and Panels.

Committee size	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	Labour	Green	Independent Democrats	Independents
5	2.40 (2)	1.20 (1)	0.50 (1)	0.50 (1)	0.20 (0)	0.20 (0)
7	3.36 (3)	1.68 (2)	0.70 (1)	0.70 (1)	0.28 (0)	0.28 (0)

(a) County Joint Consultative Committee (5 members of the County Council).

Conservative
 Conservative
 Liberal Democrat
 Labour
 Green

(b) County Consultative Committee (Governors) (5 Members of the County Council, one of whom should be the Lead Cabinet Member Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability who chairs the Committee).

Conservative
 Conservative
 Liberal Democrat
 Labour
 Green

(c) Joint Advisory Committee (Schools) (5 Members of the County Council of whom one should be the Lead Cabinet Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability, and another should be a member of the Cabinet).

Conservative
 Conservative
 Liberal Democrat
 Labour
 Green

(d) Corporate Parenting Panel (7 Members of the County Council).

Conservative
 Conservative
 Conservative
 Liberal Democrat
 Liberal Democrat
 Labour
 Green

(e) Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (5 members of the County Council).

Conservative
 Conservative
 Liberal Democrat
 Labour

Green

(f) Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel (3 Members of the County Council). The County Council has a custom of agreeing to waive the political balance provisions in relation to this Panel.

Conservative
Liberal Democrat
Green

Area SEND inspection of East Sussex Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 18 to 22 November 2024

Dates of previous inspection: 5 to 9 December 2016

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately 3 years.

Ofsted and CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

East Sussex County Council and NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board share responsibility as a local area partnership for planning and commissioning services to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in the area.

Since the previous inspection, NHSE granted the dissolution of the seven Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Sussex, and subsequent merger into three CCGs (East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove) on 1 April 2020. The NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board was then established on 1 July 2022, taking on the commissioning functions previously carried out by CCGs.

The local area partnership commissions a range of alternative provision (AP) to provide places to children and young people who are unable to attend school, as well as for those who have been permanently excluded.

What is it like to be a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in this area?

Children and young people with SEND in East Sussex have variable experiences. Many families describe the excellent support that they receive from some individual practitioners, but report that the system as a whole can be confusing and difficult to navigate. Leaders have rightly identified the areas that need to improve. However, for many children and young people the impact of these improvements is still emerging.

Early years settings play a crucial role in identifying children with communication and interaction needs. Working with specialist teams commissioned by the local partnership, practitioners in these settings ensure that children's needs are identified quickly so that they receive timely support.

For many families, securing an education, health and care (EHC) plan in East Sussex has not been a positive experience. Inspectors heard from parents and carers who described this process as lengthy and adversarial. Recently, the quality and timeliness of EHC plans have improved. The majority of new plans in East Sussex are finalised within the expected time frame. Co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) plays a greater role than before. This means that parents are more involved and children and young people have more say about the support that they should receive. Despite these improvements, delays in the annual review process lead to outdated advice in some existing EHC plans. As a result, some children and young people do not get the support that they need to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Children wait too long for necessary interventions from some services, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). The wait for wheelchairs is also too long. This has a significant negative impact on the well-being and development of some children and young people with SEND. At times, these delays lead to a worsening of their conditions and hinder their ability to participate fully in society. While interim support is available through local charities and community services, this is not currently addressing the level of need. Despite recent improvements, some parents are frustrated about the lack of support and advice available while waiting for services.

Support for the most vulnerable children and young people and their families is rightly prioritised by the local partnership. A multi-agency approach to early help services and family hubs enables families to navigate the system and gain access to the other support that they might need. Those supported by the children with disabilities team benefit from effective oversight. Children and young people on the dynamic support register are closely monitored and receive effective support from a key worker. Equally, groups of schools meet together along with professionals from health and social care to agree early interventions for children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion.

The local partnership recognises that children and young people with SEND have mixed experiences of inclusion in mainstream schools. Although there is more to do in this area, the partnership is committed to making improvements and has made significant strides

forward. For example, it has facilitated groups of schools working together in regional clusters to promote more inclusive approaches.

A lack of specialist provision in some areas, including AP and suitable post-16 options, hinders the progress of some children and young people with SEND. This results in some children and young people attending provision that does not fully meet their needs, impacting their outcomes negatively. The partnership is in the process of addressing this by working with local providers.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Leaders in East Sussex are ambitious to improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND. Leaders have renewed their focus on SEND in the local area. Ambitious plans are focused on securing better outcomes for children and young people with SEND across East Sussex.
- The local partnership is committed to co-production with parents. While the East Sussex Parent Carer Forum is involved in strategic meetings, they would welcome more consistent and meaningful involvement in decision-making. A recent review has led to a new co-production charter, aiming to enhance parental involvement in shaping SEND services.
- The local partnership has focused on developing early interventions and more preventative approaches to meeting children and young people's needs. For example, working closely with groups of schools has started to have an impact on reducing exclusions.
- The SEND information, advice and support service provides important guidance to families. It is highly regarded in the local area by parents who have benefited from the service.
- There are positive examples of multi-agency working where professionals from education, health and social care come together to provide holistic support for children and young people and their families. In such cases, information is shared effectively and ensures that the support provided to children is joined up coherently.
- A higher proportion of children and young people with SEND in East Sussex attend specialist education settings compared with the national average. Those who attend these settings often receive high-quality provision and therapeutic interventions which meet their needs well. A small number of children and young people attend residential special schools, including some outside East Sussex. Careful thought goes into the commissioning of these places. The partnership complete rigorous checks on the suitability of residential provision.
- The local partnership maintains a robust oversight of children who are not in school, including those who are electively home educated or have a package of education other than at school. This includes suitable checks on any commissioned AP.
- The local partnership has increased its provision of short breaks for families. Leaders recognise that the need for this provision remains high, particularly for children and young people who require more specialist medical care. They continue to review this

offer to better reflect local need.

- When families receive support from social care teams or early help, strong multidisciplinary working enables effective interventions that prioritise the needs of children and young people. For example, the needs of children and young people with SEND have been prioritised in the design of family hubs.
- Leaders continue to strengthen their understanding of the needs of children and young people with SEND in the local area. For example, a dashboard for health data has been developed across Sussex localities and is starting to inform decision-making. Education teams make effective use of data on attendance and exclusions to support and challenge schools.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- The quality of EHC plans is variable. Although more recent plans are of a higher quality, this does not reflect the experience of the majority of families who have been through the process of securing an EHC plan. Sometimes plans contain inconsistent information, particularly in relation to health needs. Over time, it has been common for plans to contain out-of-date information because EHC plans have not been updated promptly following annual reviews. Recent changes to the process have started to address this weakness, for example focusing on annual reviews conducted at times of transition in the first instance.
- Waiting times are excessive for some health services, including for those children awaiting attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism assessments and targeted mental health interventions from CAMHS. Some children and young people wait for around three years before they can access targeted mental health interventions. During this time, their needs frequently change and escalate. Although there are some services which provide support to those who are waiting, they do not have the capacity to help the large number of families who are waiting.
- Waiting times for wheelchairs are too long. This is having a profoundly negative impact on the physical and mental well-being of those children and young people affected. This can also prevent them from being involved in their community in a meaningful way. Although there are plans to recommission this service in the future, this will not happen for some time.
- Although the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme in East Sussex is an improving picture, there have been capacity challenges in delivering the service. The partnership recognises that this needs to be an area of ongoing focus to ensure that all children have their needs identified at the earliest opportunity.
- The proportion of children and young people with SEND who are not in education, employment or training when they leave school is too high. The local partnership recognises that opportunities for some children and young people are limited by a lack of suitable post-16 places, particularly for those with social, emotional and/or mental health needs.
- The local partnership recognises that key transitions are particularly important for children and young people with SEND. Pupils, parents and practitioners in East Sussex

told us that these points in time could be challenging, for example when there is not a smooth transition between services or school phases. The local partnership has made recent improvements in this area, which are beginning to have a positive impact.

- Through a 'team around the school' approach, the partnership works with leaders in education settings to focus on issues such as exclusions and attendance. Although this is beginning to have an impact, children and young people with SEND do not achieve consistently positive outcomes.
- The arrangements for the commissioning of AP are currently not meeting the local need for placements. The partnership is in the process of recommissioning AP provision. Support to help pupils make an effective transition back into a permanent mainstream or special provision has been established.

Areas for improvement
<p>The local area partnership should continue to improve the quality of EHC plans, so that there is consistent input across all agencies to better identify the provision that children and young people require to meet their needs. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ improving joint working of practitioners, particularly health, to contribute to EHC plans; and ■ ensuring a more timely and precise annual review process.
<p>The local area partnership should take further action to reduce overall waiting times in relation to neurodevelopmental pathways, CAMHS interventions and the provision of wheelchairs. They should ensure that the support that they provide to families while waiting is well used and beneficial.</p>
<p>The local area partnership should develop and embed its work with education settings on improving inclusion, so that the proportion of children and young people achieving strong outcomes increases.</p>
<p>The local area partnership should continue to work with relevant stakeholders to ensure that there is sufficient and suitable AP and post-16 options for children and young people with SEND.</p>

Local area partnership details

Local authority	Integrated care board
East Sussex County Council	NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board
Carolyn Fair, Director of Children's Services	Adam Doyle, Chief Executive Officer
www.eastsussex.gov.uk	www.sussex.ics.nhs.uk
County Hall St Anne's Crescent Lewes East Sussex BN7 1UE	NHS Sussex Sackville House Brooks Close Lewes BN7 2FZ

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors including: two HMI/Ofsted Inspectors from education and social care; a lead Children's Services Inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children's Services Inspector from CQC.

Inspection team

Ofsted

Mr Chris Ellison, Ofsted Lead inspector

Simon Brown, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Anthony, Ofsted HMI

Care Quality Commission

Andrea Crosby-Josephs, CQC Lead inspector

Elizabeth Fox, CQC inspector

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Appendix 2

Extract from the ASND guidance

There are 3 possible full inspection outcomes, leading to different subsequent inspection activity:

Inspection outcome	Subsequent meetings and inspection activities
The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.	Engagement meetings Full inspection usually within 5 years
The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.	Engagement meetings Full inspection usually within 3 years
There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.	Engagement meetings Submission of priority action plan (area SEND) Monitoring inspection usually within 18 months of the publication of the full inspection report Full reinspection usually within 3 years

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Appendix 1 – Call-in Request

Councillors Anne Cross, Kathryn Field, Carolyn Lambert and Trevor Webb request a call-in of the decision by Cabinet to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service for the following reasons:

In principle, the agreement that has been made between the District, Borough and County Council leaders in preparation for unitarisation processes, includes this: ‘...Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day [when the Unitary Authority takes control] will have the interests of future unitary council as an explicit consideration.’ The impact of this decision on districts and boroughs was also not sufficiently considered.

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Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	25 February 2025
By:	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Title:	Proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service
Purpose:	To consider the outcome of the public consultation and to make a decision on the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for adults with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) **Agree the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability in Eastbourne;**
- 2) **Agree to reprovision the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a learning disability in Bexhill and to revise the days of opening and opening hours, as set out in paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 of this report;**
- 3) **Agree to establish a satellite day service in Eastbourne as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, to be provided two days per week and to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision; and**
- 4) **Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above recommendations.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed on 26 September 2024 to launch a consultation exercise relating to the potential closure of Linden Court Day service in Eastbourne, which provides services for adults with a Learning Disability, and to merge this with the existing Beeching Park Day Service in Bexhill (the papers are available: [here](#)). By expanding Beeching Park to open five days a week, and through maximising its current capacity, all adults who attend Linden Court Day service could be offered their day service provision at Beeching Park where this meets their assessed needs; or at alternative provision elsewhere where necessary. This proposal, as well as other potential service changes being explored by Adult Social Care and Health, is to help close the Council's funding gap.
- 1.2 The consultation ran between 3 October and 28 November 2024. The impact of the new funding settlement for the Council has been taken into account when making the proposals in this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Linden Court Day Service is run by the Council and it is based in one of our buildings in Eastbourne. The service currently has 19 members of staff, although there are some vacant posts. The staff are all employed by the Council.
- 2.2 The service delivers support to people with a learning disability and has several aims including to:
 - prevent social isolation;
 - enable vulnerable adults to learn and maintain skills; and
 - provide respite for parent/carers.
- 2.3 There are two sessions a day based in the building, from 9am to 12pm (known as 'AM sessions') and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm (known as 'PM sessions') on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, as well as a community based session from 4pm to 7pm on Thursdays (known as 'the twilight session'). The service has capacity to provide space for up to 45 people at each of the sessions. The service is closed on a Tuesday.
- 2.4 The building-based daytime sessions include art, cookery, music, sport, multimedia, and gardening with some community sessions utilising the local library. Community sessions include exploring the local area on public transport.
- 2.5 There are currently 44 people regularly attending the day service, with around 60% of available spaces filled during day time sessions. The twilight session has low attendance, with approximately 10% of available spaces filled. Some adults require a smaller, quieter setting as they struggle with large groups and noise, and Linden Court has been used to meet the support needs of such people.
- 2.6 The majority of people who attend the day service at Linden Court live at home with their family. Most of them live in Eastbourne or the surrounding area.
- 2.7 If the proposal to close Linden Court Day Service is agreed, the Council will still have a duty to meet the assessed needs of adults that use the service. The Council will support all affected adults to access alternative day service provision. The proposal is, wherever possible, to support the adults attending Linden Court to access another Council Day Service, Beeching Park, in Bexhill, where they wish to do so.
- 2.8 Beeching Park day service is run by the Council and is based in Bexhill. It has a satellite provision, Working Wonders, in Hastings. The service currently has 32 staff with few vacancies. All staff are employed by the Council.
- 2.9 Beeching Park has sessions across AM, PM and seven twilight sessions a week and community based sessions utilising Working Wonders as their starting point. The service is currently closed on a Wednesday.
- 2.10 The service at Beeching Park has the capacity in the building to support 85 adults a day. There is an average attendance of 56 people a day and a total of 75 adults attending each week. By expanding Beeching Park to open five days a week, and through maximising its current capacity, all adults who attend Linden Court Day service could be offered their day service provision at Beeching Park.
- 2.11 Appendix 3 shows where the adults currently attending Linden Court live in East Sussex. Noting that this shows data for 47 adults, 44 of which are regular attendees.

3. The Proposal consulted on

- 3.1 The proposal consulted on was to close the Linden Court Day service for people with a learning disability, and to merge with the Beeching Park day service, or to support people to access alternative services in the community.
- 3.2 The estimated annual revenue savings for a full year for this proposal are £327,000.
- 3.3 To determine the potential savings we took the overall gross budget for the service and subtracted any ongoing costs of providing alternative services. One-off costs, including the costs of restructuring staff, have been considered in the context of the ongoing saving but not included in the figures presented.

4. Insight

- 4.1 An eight-week public consultation on the proposal ran from 3 October to 28 November 2024. We asked people for their views on the proposal and how they would be affected if it went ahead.
- 4.2 All the feedback received during the consultation is available within the Members' and Cabinet Rooms for Members' consideration.
- 4.3 373 responses were received across the survey, consultation meetings and other feedback methods.

Respondent method	Total
Survey	203
Email and letters	16
Consultation meetings (attendees)	154

- 4.4 The majority of respondents across all response methods disagreed with the proposal to close the day service at Linden Court and find people places in alternative services. The table below shows how much survey respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposal:

Answer	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	4%
Agree	5	2%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	4%
Disagree	9	4%
Strongly disagree	164	81%
Not sure	7	3%
Didn't answer	2	1%

- 4.5 The full consultation results report can be found in Appendix 1, but the key messages included the following themes:
- Linden Court is a vital service, and people are full of praise for the service and its staff. It provides a safe environment and opportunity to socialise;
 - Those who attend love seeing their friends and taking part in activities, while it allows families and carers to continue in their caring role and to maintain their employment;

- Family and carers are angry and worried by the proposal, which they feel targets vulnerable people. It would be devastating if Linden Court closed and they want to know why Beeching Park isn't being proposed for closure as there are alternative services in that area;
- Linden Court is a nicer building than Beeching Park and it is local to where people live. It is also better able to support those who need a quieter service;
- Families and carers feel that Beeching Park isn't a realistic alternative, with the biggest concern being the journey, which would be much longer and more complicated;
- People who attend the service are particularly concerned about being able to: attend on the same days for the same sessions, and continue taking part in the activities they like and see their friends;
- The routine change would be very disruptive for people who attend the service, as well as increasing the burden on families and carers. It would lead to poorer mental health for those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour;
- People's needs wouldn't be met and their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to;
- Family and carers challenged the Council to provide detailed figures setting out how the savings would be achieved and questioned how much would actually be saved due to the cost of providing alternative support, transporting people further to access support and the risk that people may have to go into residential care if there is no day service for them;
- People said the proposal should not go ahead and instead the service at Linden Court should be enhanced and more widely promoted.

Equalities Considerations

- 4.6 In considering these proposals, Cabinet must have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
- as required under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.7 To better understand the likely impacts of the Proposal on those who have one or more protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out, a copy of which can be found out in Appendix 2.
- 4.8 The responses from the consultation were used to inform the analysis carried out in the EqIA. Cabinet members must read and have regard to the EqIA when making the decision about this Proposal.
- 4.9 The Equality Impact Assessment told us that all of the people accessing the services included in the original proposals have a learning disability or have recognised additional needs. Some people may have other complexities such as sensory impairment, physical disabilities and other health conditions which may impact on them further. A change in routine may cause adults anxiety and provide less opportunity for social interaction/ ongoing skills development.

- 4.10 Carers of working age who are employed may be negatively impacted if they have structured their working hours around day services at Linden Court. This may result in carers not being able to maintain their current employment and potentially experience a reduction to their income. There could be a financial impact in terms of increased travel costs to Bexhill (although noting that where people attending Linden Court moved to alternative services, transport arrangements, where necessary, would be part of the Adult Social Care and Health support planning process).
- 4.11 All people who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package continues to meet their assessed needs. Considering carers' respite will be part of these reviews.
- 4.12 The full equality impact assessment can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

5. Revised Proposal

- 5.1 Our priority in Adult Social Care and Health is to meet our legal duties under the Care Act. To help us to do this, we have identified funding areas that we think need to be protected when we are looking at savings options.
- 5.2 These priority areas are the community care budget, carers support services, funding for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, and funding for staffing frontline and care market roles.
- 5.3 While we recognise the importance of these services, the budget pressures we face mean that we have to make difficult decisions about how we spend our money.
- 5.4 The pandemic reduced the number of people attending learning disability day services. Since the pandemic ended, attendance has returned to previous levels at most of our day services. Linden Court is the exception, where attendance levels remain relatively low. For example, we currently have 44 adults using the service, but before the pandemic we generally had more than 60 people using the service. The service has therefore been used to provide a day service to adults who need a quieter environment.
- 5.5 Given the financial pressures we face it is important to get the best value from the services we run. The fact that we can potentially accommodate everyone from Linden Court at Beeching Park means we can make savings by reducing both staff costs and building-based costs, whilst continuing to fulfil our statutory duties and meet people's assessed needs.
- 5.6 For those who do not wish to move to Beeching Park, Bexhill, there are also alternative day services in Eastbourne and other parts of the County that people could attend, please see appendix 4. This provision may be especially useful for those adults requiring a quieter environment.
- 5.7 The need to deliver day service provision whilst making significant savings informed the proposals to reduce from the current four Learning Disability day services in the County. With this in mind, Beeching Park in Bexhill offers a better location for a day service serving the east of the county, with the location of adults covering not only Eastbourne and Bexhill but spanning as far as Lydd in the east and Wadhurst in the North. In addition, Beeching Park has the capacity, along with Working Wonders, to provide a service for all adults attending Linden Court, should they wish to attend.
- 5.8 Nevertheless, the consultation responses have highlighted a number of potential impacts for those currently attending Linden Court, and a number of alternative options were proposed. Details of the alternatives proposed are including in the Consultation Summary in Appendix 1. Following the consultation, the Council has considered whether there is scope to retain day service provision in the Eastbourne area.

- 5.9 Unfortunately, it is not possible to retain Linden Court as-is, or with reduced capacity and/ or reduced hours of operation, and still achieve the required level of savings.
- 5.10 However, the savings can be achieved by having Beeching Park as the main day-service provision offered to people living in the East of the County, but with sessions also being delivered from Working Wonders in Hastings (as is currently the case) as well as an additional location in Eastbourne.
- 5.11 The Eastbourne location has not yet been confirmed. As a temporary measure the existing building at Linden Court may be used as a smaller satellite centre, pending a long term base being established and whilst the future use of the Linden Court premises is being finalised.
- 5.12 Within the proposed staffing model and budget for Beeching Park, it would be possible to deliver a service in Eastbourne two days a week, initially for up to 15 adults. Whilst this wouldn't accommodate all adults who are currently at Linden Court, this would reduce the potential disruption for some adults currently using Linden Court.
- 5.13 To ensure sufficient capacity at Beeching Park, if the proposal to close Linden Court is agreed, it is proposed that the opening hours for Beeching Park be extended, returning it to a five-day a week service (Monday to Friday). This would increase the number of adults who could be supported at the service by 25% (increasing the number of sessions available by 200). This would allow us to offer a place at the day service to everyone currently attending Linden Court, if the service can meet their assessed care needs.
- 5.14 Beeching Park would continue to offer three sessions a day. However, the timings of those sessions would need to change to manage the increase in adult numbers. Changing the times of the sessions would ensure people have the support they need over lunchtime, as well as providing enough non-contact time for staff to do admin tasks and attend team meetings. We would continue to have a standard adult to staff ratio of five-to-one and provide one-to-one support to adults where they are assessed as needing this. Transport to the day service would continue to be provided by ASCH, as part of the adult's support plan, where required.
- 5.15 The table below sets out the proposed changes to session times at Beeching Park:

Session name	Current times	Proposed new times
AM session	9am to 12pm	9.30am to 12pm
PM session	12.30pm to 3.30pm	1pm to 3.30pm
Twilight session	4pm to 7pm	4pm to 6.30pm

Adults attending Beeching Park would still be able to arrive from 08:30.

6. Impacts and risks

6.1 This section explores the impacts and risks of going ahead with the proposal, including those outlined in the EqIA.

6.2 Financial implications:

	Current Budget	Revised Budget		Total Savings
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Expenditure budget	692	482	355	
Income budget	(40)	(30)	(30)	
Net budget	652	452	325	
Net savings	0	200	127	327

The calculation of the revised budget assumes that:

- Services will be provided at Beeching Park with an additional day of operation, which form the basis of the revised budget;
- One-off costs to remodel the service will be absorbed in current ESCC budgets or met corporately.

6.3 The table below explores the potential impacts the proposal would have on the health and care system, organisations, services and residents.

Health and care system	<p>All adults who attend Linden Court have an assessed eligible Care Act need and whilst the proposals are not a reduction in services, there would be a change to how services are provided. This would have an impact on Adult Social Care and Health which will need to review all of the adults, alongside offering a carers assessment or review to unpaid carers.</p> <p>The change in service delivery could impact on some adults' emotional wellbeing and there is a possibility this could increase demand on health settings, particularly specialist provision such as the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust Community Learning Disability Team.</p>
Organisations and services	<p>As above, the proposal could generate an increase in demand for health input.</p> <p>If adults currently attending Linden Court choose to have their day service provision met somewhere other than Beeching Park, there could be an increase in demand for independent day service provision or for Personal Assistants. ASCH would work with adults and carers to identify Personal Assistants where possible. It is anticipated that it would be possible to find personal assistants for the number of adults who choose that option. However, where it is not possible to find a suitable Personal Assistant, ASCH would secure alternative provision to meet the adult's assessed eligible needs (this is a statutory duty under the Care Act).</p> <p>Some contributions to the consultation have indicated the closure of Linden Court could result in the need for alternative residential or supported living placements – were this to be the case there would be increased demand for social care providers who deliver those types of service.</p>
Residents	<p>The adults who attend Linden Court, and their parent/carers, are East Sussex residents. This proposal has caused a degree of anxiety already and, if agreed, could cause further anxiety and disruption as the service provision would change.</p> <p>This change could put additional stress on adults receiving a service and unpaid carers, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By impacting on their ability to maintain existing routines and work; • Increasing travel time to an alternative day service; • The emotional impact of managing this proposed change; • The potential that adults attending Linden Court are no longer able to stay in their family home and require an alternative place to live; • Adults who require a smaller, quieter day provision may not have their needs met.

6.4 The main risks of going ahead with the proposal are:

- The alternative options for day provision do not meet the needs of adults attending Linden Court due to location or the set-up of the service;
- For those choosing to attend Beeching Park there could be further disruption through changes to the pattern of attendance. This can be a pressure for adults who may find change difficult, and parent/carers who may have pre-existing commitments;
- The pressure on unpaid carers could mean that some adults could not remain in their family home. In this instance Adult Social Care and Health may need to provide a 24/7 service to meet these people's needs;
- For some adults and their families there would be an increased journey time where they choose to access Beeching Park;
- The estimated cost savings are not achieved as the result of the above.

Mitigation

6.5 To mitigate the risks identified above:

- The Day Service at Beeching Park is a good provision. The management teams of Linden Court and Beeching Park work closely together, and they are confident they can meet the needs of adults attending Linden Court at Beeching Park;
- If agreed, the revised delivery model at Beeching Park, i.e. the satellite provision in Eastbourne, will mean it is possible to reduce the need for a number of adults (approximately 15 adults) currently at Linden Court to travel to Bexhill, thereby reducing some of the stress the original proposal could cause;
- Through having a bespoke service to support the transition of adults with more complex needs we can ensure they receive the level of service that they require;
- If the proposal is agreed, the staff at Beeching Park are committed to minimising the disruption caused by a change of day service and would aspire to offer a like for like service where possible.

6.6 Even under the revised proposal, it is acknowledged that there will still be disruption for people currently using the day services at Linden Court and Beeching Park. To minimise this, the Council will put a team together for one year to support people in adjusting and/or finding alternative independent provision if they either chose not to move to Beeching Park, or opt to move but the service provided is unsuitable for them.

7 Outline implementation plan

7.1 If the revised Proposal is agreed, as set out in section 5, the implementation plan will look as follows:

- 25 Feb 2025 – Cabinet Decision.
- March 2025 - Adults reviews will commence and take place over a 4-week period.
- April 2025 - As reviews identify alternative provision, adults will be supported in the transition to their new service, either Beeching Park or an alternative service.
- June 2025 - Linden Court closes.

7.2 In addition, the property department will lead on identifying proposals for an alternative use, or disposal, of the building.

- 7.3 To ensure the timescales for delivering savings can be met, we have taken steps to begin consulting staff affected by the proposed closure of Linden Court and the merger with Beeching Park; however, the final proposals for staff consultation won't be known until after Cabinet have made a decision on the future of both Linden Court and Beeching Park.

8 Conclusions and reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.
- 8.2 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.
- 8.3 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that the proposal for Linden Court and Beeching Park is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. We have considered all the feedback to the consultation and explored how we can modify and mitigate the proposal where possible to address the concerns raised.
- 8.4 Whilst it is recognised that closing Linden Court would cause an element of disruption and potentially increase travel times for some adults that attend the service, and the parent/carers involved, the alternative provision at Beeching Park would be able to meet the needs of most adults, with alternative options to Beeching Park being available where required.
- 8.5 As set out above, the Council will take steps to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposal, by offering bespoke support to adults with more complex needs to help them manage this transition. This is designed to meet the specific needs of adults who would need additional support to access an alternative provision.
- 8.6 Cabinet are therefore recommended to agree to close Linden Court Day Service in Eastbourne for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Cabinet are also recommended to agree to merge the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a Learning Disability in Bexhill, and to revise the days of opening and opening hours of Beeching Park, to operate five days per week (Monday to Friday) between the hours of 09:00 and 18:30.
- 8.7 Cabinet are also recommended to agree to the establishment of a satellite service in Eastbourne, which will operate as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, two days a week. It is anticipated that this will initially have capacity to support up to 15 adults per week. If agreed, this would ease the impact for several adults and parent/carers, offering a flexibility to how their day service provision could be provided. In the interim, this satellite provision will be offered from the existing Linden Court site, but Cabinet are recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision.
- 8.8 Cabinet are recommended to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the recommendations set out in this report and in order to deliver Adult Social Care and Health Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) requirements.

8.9 Cabinet members must read and have regard to the EqlA when making decisions related to this proposal.

Mark Stainton

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Local members

Councillor David Tutt, Councillor Nuala Geary and Councillor Ian Hollidge

Background Documents

Consultation responses

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Report

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Map of Linden Court Attendees Locations

Appendix 4: Map of Alternative Day Service Provision

Appendix 1: Consultation results report

Linden Court and Beeching Park day services

About this consultation

This consultation is about the proposal to close the day service at Linden Court and find people places in alternative services. It started on 3 October and closed on 28 November 2024.

Taking part in the consultation

The consultation survey was available to complete online and people could download printable versions of the standard and easy read surveys too. Emails, letters and feedback in phone calls were also accepted.

All of the consultations were promoted in our newsletters for residents, providers and staff. We also shared news stories with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to include in their newsletters for residents, organisations and staff.

General posters were shared with library teams and each affected service had a dedicated poster to put up in their service or building. Consultation meetings with those who use the service and their families and carers also took place.

The consultations were widely promoted in the local media and consultation leads talked about the proposals at relevant stakeholder meetings.

Who took part in the consultation

We received 373 responses to this consultation. The table below shows the different ways in which people took part. We also had 1 late email response received after the consultation closed.

Respondent method	Total
Survey	203
Email and letters	16
Consultation meetings (attendees)	154

There were also 10 responses submitted by email or letter that addressed all of the consultations more generally. A general petition opposing the funding gap proposals for adult social care in the Lewes district was submitted by Lewes Liberal Democrats. It was signed by 100 people. This means it does not meet the threshold of 5000 signatures which is required for the petition to be considered by Full Council. We are also aware of a specific petition about this proposal, although it hasn't been

submitted to us. This had over 1,300 signatures when this report was finalised in January 2025.

People were given the option of answering ‘about you’ equality questions in the survey, with 57% of respondents choosing to do so.

- We had the most survey responses from people who attend Linden Court and their families and carers (38%). Residents of East Sussex was the next biggest respondent group (25%), while Beeching Park attendees and their families and carers accounted for 4%.
- The age range of 45 to 54 years old was the top respondent group (12%), followed by age 65+ (9%), although we had responses from most age groups.
- More women than men took part in the survey - 41% compared to 12%, although 43% didn’t answer the question.
- 18% of respondents have a physical or mental health condition or long-term illness.
- The proportion of carers taking part (26%) reflected the fact that the family and carers of people using the services was the top respondent group.
- It is notable that 14% of respondents provide 50 or more hours of care per week and 5% provide 9 or fewer hours.

Key messages

These key messages reflect the feedback received from organisations, groups and individuals across surveys, meetings and other feedback such as emails and letters.

- Most people strongly disagree with the proposal to close Linden Court and find people places in alternative services, with only 6% agreeing.
- People are angry, upset and worried about the proposal, which they said targets vulnerable people.
- People say it is a vital service and people say they will fight to save it.
- People are full of praise for the service and the staff, which they say provides a safe environment and the opportunity to socialise.
- Linden Court is seen as being a nicer building than Beeching Park and the service as being better able to support those who need a quieter service. Crucially, it is also local to where people live.
- Those who attend the service love seeing their friends and taking part in activities. Families and carers say it is a lifeline, that allows them to continue in their caring role, and to maintain their employment if they have a job.
- There was a strong feeling that closing the service wouldn’t lead to savings, partly because of the cost of travelling to Beeching Park and because it is likely that some would end up in residential care if their local

day service closed. This would be much more expensive than keeping Linden Court open.

- People said more detailed financial information should be provided about how the proposal was arrived at. They asked why Beeching Park wasn't being proposed for closure as there are alternative services in that area.
- It would be devastating if the service closed and people feel that Beeching Park isn't a realistic alternative for them.
- The biggest concern with Beeching Park is the journey. People say that it would be a much longer and more complicated commute, with many saying that it just wouldn't work for their family. Some had already tried it out to confirm this.
- Change is hard for people who use the service, and if the proposal went ahead the alteration to routine would be very disruptive for them. It would also increase the burden on families and carers, some of whom said they wouldn't be able to cope if Linden Court closed.
- People who attend the service say that they would have to attend on the same days and times at another service as they have other commitments they can't move. They are also keen to continue taking part in the activities they like and are worried they wouldn't see their friends at a new service.
- Closing the service would lead to poorer mental health for those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour. Even without the travel issues, Beeching Park will be a busy service and won't be suitable for everyone.
- People's needs wouldn't be met and their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to.
- The main suggestion was not to go ahead with closing the service and instead enhance it and do a better job of promoting it.
- People said the money to save the service should be found by selling unused buildings and cutting the number of service managers. They also suggested using volunteers to deliver the service.

Sample quotes

These comments are a small selection of the responses we received in the consultation. They reflect the key themes or offer a specific suggestion.

Organisation comments:

- **Healthwatch East Sussex:** "There is some inconsistency between the proposals seeking to reduce the cost of home-to-school transport, whilst simultaneously transporting adults with learning disabilities from...Linden Court to alternative day services. Whilst it is important for people to have

choices about their care and support, this should ideally be provided in the communities where they live.”

- **NHS Sussex:** “Consideration should be given to what services there would be for people who need a quieter environment due to other diagnoses and sensory sensitivities...Issues which may result in a service user requiring a quieter service, such as sensory sensitivities, can overwhelm and lead to difficulties with social communication and/or interaction, requiring appropriate support and provision. If these needs are not met, it could lead to increasing instances of behaviours that challenge services, and require more resource-intensive, higher-cost, multi-agency input in the medium and longer term.”
- **Wealden Citizens Advice:** “Change is unsettling for clients. Linden Court users have been used to having a quieter environment which will then become busier. They may not cope and a drop in attendance may be seen.”

Individual comments:

- “It is taking us away from our friends, a building we know and staff who know us. That makes me sad. It works here. I have been coming here for ten years.”
- “The individuals who access Linden Court are vulnerable adults who rely on the service to not only keep them safe but support them with social interactions and meaningful activities. Without the service there would be more carer breakdowns, resulting in more people being placed in residential care (costing the council more money in the long term), an increase in social isolation and reduced independence.”
- “It's taking away services for vulnerable people who are less likely [to be] able to advocate for themselves. This should be the last resort, not the first.”
- “People get settled in one place and feel safe. They get used to being helped and looked after regularly by the same person. They make friends with others using the same facilities.”
- “People need continuity of care. Uprooting people with disabilities causes them distress. Overloading another service with users means that individual needs may not be met if staff have too many users to look after.”
- “These options are not safe. The prolonged journey to Beeching Park would exacerbate behaviours and could also lead to medical emergencies that could put clients and staff at risk.”
- “I was really concerned to see that the underuse of Linden Court was being used as a reason to close it - I'm not aware of it being offered to the people I work with, many of whom would probably gain a lot from it, if it was offered...Fill the empty spaces by offering it to people and you will cut the money you spend on unstructured personal assistant support etc.”
- “Placing more people at Beeching Park will likely lead to the social exclusion of clients who struggle with noise or crowding, clients...who rely upon structure and routine the most, so would suffer most from losing a regular service.”

- "Linden Court has better resources and capacity than either of the alternatives. The road and rail connections to either Lewes or Bexhill are poor and neither are close to the stations. Clients will end up needing private personal care as they won't be able to get to the alternatives, and the council will have to pay for this, so real savings will be below what is expected anyway. You will also lose highly experienced and motivated staff, who will be difficult to replace, leading to staff shortages."
- "This service gives me respite and gives [named person] independence. We cannot afford £25 each way taxis to Bexhill twice a week. [Named person] will have to stop coming as my health affects my driving a lot."
- "The added pressure and expense on travelling to Bexhill, and possibly losing friendships which my son has had since he started school...will [have] a very detrimental effect on his anxiety and mental health. The times on offer at Inspire are less than already received and it is in a church, which possibly is echoey, which my son cannot cope with."
- "It will make me very sad. I do not want to lose my friends and I feel safe with the staff. I like doing lots of things."
- "I rely on the service to look after my daughter whilst I am at work. There is no way I would have the time to take her to Bexhill in the morning and then get back to work in Eastbourne by 9am. The same applies at the end of the day. I feel that my daughter would become socially isolated, withdrawn and depressed if I had to have her at home permanently. This would also mean that I would have to give up work which would have a negative impact on my family generally. My daughter is very happy at Linden Court and for everything to change in her world would exacerbate her already challenging behaviour and negatively affect the whole family."
- "It would be a nightmare, upset to all routine, a stagnation of learning/education. Going on the minibus, which is much loved, would be non-existent. The sensory room for moments of calm would not be available. Making sense of the world around us, the change of the seasons & things that would not have any meaning."
- "I would be prepared for the client contributions to be increased if it means Linden Court could be kept open, if we all did this (increased a little for all service users, according to individual circumstances)."
- "Where would all the vulnerable people go? Are there enough placements for them to move onto? What would they cost? Would they be appropriate placements of the individuals? Will they be local? Private venues will be more costly, providing less hours and days of care. This will lead to even more family breakdowns, leading to these vulnerable people needing full-time care in residential settings, costing ESCC a hell of a lot more, over time, than the gap which has already been created."
- "We disagree [with] the proposed closing of Linden Court as it will affect the lives of the vulnerable adults we have in Eastbourne. Linden Court is needed for those adults with additional needs and in the future for those coming of age with additional needs. Please can the council continue to support our

vulnerable adults in Eastbourne. The council is in charge of our services and monies - please do not let us down."

Results summary across all methods

Views on the proposal

Survey: 85% of respondents disagree with the proposal, with the majority choosing strongly disagree (81%). Only 6% said they agree or strongly agree.

The top comment themes for why people agree or disagree were:

- Views: Commute to services would be more complex (44 comments)
- Service: Service is vital (42)
- Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support (35)
- Impact: Socialisations (26)
- Impact: Increased burden on family/carer (22)
- Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable (22)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (18)
- Views: Disagree with proposal (18)
- Service: Lifeline to people (17)
- Impact: People's needs won't be met (14)

Emails etc: Again, people disagreed with the proposal (3) and said the service shouldn't be closed (3), although the same number did recognise the need to make savings (3).

People said the services provide an opportunity to socialise (5) and are a lifeline to people (4). They also praised the staff (3) and the person-centred support they provide (3).

The commute to the service was the main issue, with people pointing out it would be more complex (7) and that the cost of travel makes the cut harder to justify (4). People feel the cuts target the most vulnerable (3).

Meetings: There is strong opposition to the proposal and people are disgusted it has even been proposed, as it targets vulnerable people. People are worried, upset and angry and some said they will fight it.

People said it isn't clear how the proposal was arrived at, and believed more detail is needed about the finances and how the savings were calculated. They felt the closure wouldn't save money in the long run, as support needs would still need to be paid for, and there would be extra costs from transporting people further. In addition, the cost impact could be massive if more people can't live at home any more due to the service closing.

People love Linden Court and the staff. They are happily settled there and have made lots of friends. Linden Court is seen as being a better building, and the quieter nature of the service suits people.

Those who attend Linden Court don't want it to close and they are worried they won't see their friends if it does. Some said they would move to Beeching Park, but a lot of people said it wouldn't work for them because of the travel.

People who use both services are concerned about their sessions. They want to be able to go on the same day/times as they do now due to other commitments. People are also keen to know if they would still be able to do their favourite activities and take part in community sessions.

Change is hard for this group of people and there is already a lot of anxiety about the proposal, although a few people did say they were looking forward to making new friends if the services merged.

Potential impacts of the proposal

Survey: The top comment themes for how people would be affected are:

- Views: Commute to services would be more complex (40 comments)
- Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support (36)
- Impact: Increased burden on family/carer (32)
- Impact: Socialisations (25)
- Comment about personal circumstances (20)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (20)
- Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify (18)
- Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities (16)
- Impact: Cause upset to people who access support (16)
- Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support (12)
- Impact: People's needs won't be met (12)

Emails etc: People said closing the service would increase the burden on families and carers (6) and lead to poorer physical and mental health for everyone affected (4 each).

The routine change would be disruptive for people (4) and destroy their stability and support structure (3). This could lead to more challenging behaviour (3).

They also said it would add more costs in the long run (3).

Meetings: Beeching Park would not provide the local service that people need and value. The journey there would take a lot longer and lots of people said the journey wouldn't work for their family.

Beeching Park is a busier service and that won't suit everyone. The change would be difficult for people and could affect everyone's mental/physical health and the behaviour of people who attend the service.

The service allows people to stay living at home, so closing it could push people into residential care, which would be a lot more expensive. The longer journey and shorter sessions would also affect some people's ability to maintain their employment, and future school/college leavers locally wouldn't have a nearby service they could transition to.

Suggestions

Survey: General suggestions are covered in the background report on the funding gap consultations, while service-specific ones are included here.

The top theme was that the service shouldn't be cut (29). The other themes were:

- Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it (6)
- Suggestion: Review number of service managers (6)
- Suggestion: Use volunteers (6)
- Suggestion: Charge for some usage (5)
- Suggestion: Cut operational costs (5)
- Suggestion: Liaise with community sector about service provision (5)
- Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens (4)
- Suggestion: Make access to services means tested (4)
- Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services (4)
- Suggestion: Cut non-essential parts of the service (3)
- Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum (3)
- Suggestion: More joint working (3)
- Suggestion: Charge people more to use services (2)
- Suggestion: Reduce on-site support hours (2)
- Suggestion: Reduce public transport costs (2)
- Suggestion: Streamline current roles (2)
- Suggestion: Utilise staff skills better (2)
- Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact (1)
- Suggestion: Calculate the cost for other services that this proposal will cause (1)
- Suggestion: Close other buildings instead (1)
- Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions (1)
- Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it (1)

- Suggestion: Offer smaller blocks of respite (1)
- Suggestion: Reduce use of external private services (1)
- Suggestion: Use empty buildings for the service (1)
- Suggestion: Use funding generated from other sales or sources (1)
- Suggestion: Use learning from current service to develop new model (1)

Emails etc: The top suggestions were to look for private investors/business to run the service (3) and to do more joint working (3).

The other suggestions were:

- Suggestion: Keep parts of the service running (2)
- Suggestion: Provide transport to services (2)
- Suggestion: Cut operational costs (1)
- Suggestion: Explore alternative solutions with partners/other providers (1)
- Suggestion: Joint transport between services (1)
- Suggestion: Listen to the consultation feedback (1)
- Suggestion: Locate any replacement in the same area (1)
- Suggestion: Make income by selling spaces to other local authorities (1)
- Suggestion: Partnerships with transport providers to help with cost (1)
- Suggestion: Use church buildings to limit costs of day services (1)

Meetings: Suggestions included closing Beeching Park instead, selling unused council property to use the money to save Linden Court, and cutting management roles to save money.

Other topics

Survey: The top comment themes are that the cuts target the most vulnerable (12), and that the proposal would increase the burden on family/carers (11).

Other common themes included:

- Service: Service is vital (8)
- Other: Criticism of council (6)
- Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular (6)
- Impact: Loss to the community (5)
- Views: Commute to services more complex (5)

Emails etc: People criticised the Council and the consultation process/information (2 each). They said the Council must provide detailed financial information on the savings (2) and more information about the alternative services and what capacity they have (2).

Many of those affected don't have a voice or can't communicate (2). There also needs to be clarity about how parents of adults with Special Educational Needs will be consulted with (2).

Meetings: The Council wastes a large amount of money. People need to be kept updated about the proposals, and to know that the decision is transparent and fair.

Charts and tables

Survey responses including about you information

1) Are you completing the survey as:

There were 197 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Someone who uses/has used the Linden Court day service	21	10.34%
The family or carer of someone who uses/has used the Linden Court day service	56	27.59%
Someone who uses/has used the Beeching Park day service	1	0.49%
The family or carer of someone who uses/has used the Beeching Park day service	7	3.45%
Someone who works for the Linden Court or Beeching Park day services	20	9.85%
Someone who lives in East Sussex	51	25.12%
Someone who works in health or social care in East Sussex	26	12.81%
Someone who works in housing in East Sussex	0	0.00%
Someone who works in the voluntary or community sector	2	0.99%
Other (please provide details below)	13	6.40%
Not Answered	6	2.96%

Responses to "Other"

There were 18 responses to this part of the question. Some responses fitted into more than one of the following groups:

- User or potential user of service or their family (9 responses)

- Comment on professional role/former role (7)
- Expressed a view about the service/proposal (3)
- Described where they lived (2)

2) How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close the Linden Court day service and move people to either Beeching Park day service or an alternative service?

There were 201 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	8	3.94%
Agree	5	2.46%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	3.94%
Disagree	9	4.43%
Strongly disagree	164	80.79%
Not sure	7	3.45%
Not Answered	2	0.99%

Please use the box below to tell us why you agree or disagree:

There were 175 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services more complex	44
Service: Service is vital	42
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	35
Impact: Socialisations	26
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	22
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	22
Impact: Poorer mental health	18
Views: Disagree with proposal	18
Service: Lifeline to people	17
Impact: People's needs won't be met	14
Service: Safe environment	13
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	12
Impact: Cause upset to people who access support	11
Service: Service is beneficial	11

Views: Don't close service	11
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	11
Comment about personal circumstances	10
Impact: Poorer physical health	9
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	9
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	8
Service: Only service of its sort	8
Service: Immensely valued	8
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	7
Impact: Isolation	7
Service: Praise of staff	7
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	7
Views: Costs will increase not go down	7
Views: Service has already suffered from cuts	7
Impact: Less independence	6
Impact: Lower quality of life	6
Impact: People would have to go into care	6
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	6
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	6
Impact: More people in crisis	6
Impact: Strain on remaining staff	6
Service is a community benefit	5
Impact: Loss to the community	5
Impact: Staff	5
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	5
Other: Criticism of council	5
Service: Current service location is good	5
Service: Praise of service	5
Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it	5
Views: Alternative services not adequate	5
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	5
Impact: Negative on carers	4
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	4

Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	4
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	4
Views: Recognise need to make savings	4
Views: Services already limited	4
Views: East Sussex County Council are responsible for looking after vulnerable people	4
Views: Morally wrong	4
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	3
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	3
Impact: Poorer access to support	3
Views: There is no other support like this	3
Service: High quality	3
Service: Service well run	3
Views: Unhappy with proposal	3
Views: Agree with proposal	3
Views: Loss of jobs	3
Views: Need for this service is increasing	3
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	3
Views: Shameful proposal	3
Service offers help with life skills	2
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	2
Impact: Confidence will be lost	2
Impact: Expensive home care packages	2
Impact: Boredom	2
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	2
Other: Unsure why East Sussex County Council cannot afford budget gap	2
Service helps with people skills	2
Service offers practical skills like cooking	2
Service: Very accessible	2
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	2
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	2
Views: Already fought for service before	2
Views: Short sighted	2

Views: People who access support may lack advocacy and representation	2
Views: Proposals could/do break discrimination laws	2
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	2
Views: Services already limited	2
Service helps with mental health	1
Impact: Ability to care for child	1
Impact: Carers' ability to have longer breaks	1
Impact: Family member would need more support from them	1
Impact: Feeling less safe	1
Impact: Lower quality of service	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Cuts would reduce costs	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Even more limited services	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: People discouraged from seeking help	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: Risk of East Sussex County Council not meeting statutory duties	1
Impact: Undo what staff have worked hard to build	1
Other: Allow redundancy requests	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment on other council spending	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to explain why saving proposals were made	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	1
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	1
Other: Money recently spent on the building	1
Service provides peace of mind	1
Service: Service offers respite	1
Service: Efficient	1
Service: Criticism of service efficiency	1
Service: Current service works well	1

Service: Service built trust with people who access it	1
Service: Service key to wellbeing	1
Service stopped people who accessed it going into residential care	1
Suggestion: Cut general carers services as these are not useful	1
Suggestion: Better monitoring of service performance	1
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Encourage more people to use service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Improve quality of care	1
Suggestion: Invest in upskilling staff	1
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	1
Service: Tailored support	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Agree with proposal	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Already fought for service before	1
Views: An alternative exists	1
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1
Views: Hopefully capacity exists at other service	1
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	1
Views: New times or hours are concerning	1
Views: Poor management treatment of both staff and people who access support	1
Views: Service is cost effective	1

3) How would the proposal to close Linden Court affect you or someone you care for?

There were 167 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services would be more complex	40
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	36
Impact: Increased burden on family/carers	32
Impact: Socialisations	25

Comment about personal circumstances	20
Impact: Poorer mental health	20
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	18
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	16
Impact: Cause upset to people who access support	16
Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	12
Impact: People's needs won't be met	12
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	10
Impact: Poorer physical health	9
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	9
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	8
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	8
Service: Service is vital	8
Impact: Isolation	7
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	7
Impact: Lower quality of life	6
Impact: People would have to go into care	6
Service: Current service location is good	6
Service: Lifeline to people	6
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	6
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	5
Impact: Financial hardship	5
Impact: More inconvenient for people who access support	5
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	5
Impact: Poorer access to support	5
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	5
Service: Praise of staff	5
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	5
It does not affect me	4
Service: Service is beneficial	4
Views: Don't close service	4
Views: New times or hours are concerning	4
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	4

Service offers help with life skills	3
Impact: Less independence	3
Impact: Loss to the community	3
Impact: Staff	3
Impact: Boredom	3
Impact: Lose my job	3
Impact: More pressure on the police	3
Impact: NHS	3
Impact: Would no longer be able to attend	3
Service: Praise of service	3
Views: Alternative services not adequate	3
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	3
Views: Person accessing the support wouldn't want to go into residential care	3
Impact: Ability to care for child	2
Impact: Expensive home care packages	2
Impact: Loss to the community	2
Impact: Lower quality of life	2
Impact: Undo what staff have worked hard to build	2
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	2
Other: Criticism of council	2
Service: Services offers practical skills like cooking	2
Service: Service provides a safe environment	2
Service: Immensely valued	2
Service: Service is vital	2
Service: Well used	2
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	2
Views: Care at home is not a substitute	2
Views: East Sussex County Council is responsible for looking after vulnerable people	2
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	2
Views: Need for this service is increasing	2
Views: Services already limited	2
Views: Shameful proposal	2
Impact: Confidence will be lost	1

Impact: Will take a long time for people who access support to adjust to changes	1
Impact: Ability to find work	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: Lack of hope for those needing support	1
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	1
Impact: Poorer access to other services as a knock-on effect	1
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	1
Impact: Service won't be replaced if cut	1
Views: No other support like this	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	1
Service: Service helps with people skills	1
Service: Service helps with practical living skills	1
Service: High quality	1
Service: Service built trust with people who access it	1
Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact	1
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	1
Suggestion: Restructure hours	1
Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions	1
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	1
Suggestion: Encourage more people to use service	1
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Unhappy with proposal	1
Views: Costs will increase not go down	1
Views: Proposals could/do break discrimination laws	1
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	1
Views: Short sighted	1

4) Do you have any other suggestions or comments you would like to make?

There were 177 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Suggestion: Don't cut service	29
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	12
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	12
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	11
Service: Service is vital	8
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	7
Other: Criticism of council	6
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	6
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	6
Suggestion: Sell buildings to make money	6
Suggestion: Use volunteers	6
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	6
Impact: Loss to the community	5
Suggestion: Cut non-emergency services (other Council spend)	5
Suggestion: Charge for some usage	5
Suggestion: Cut operational costs	5
Suggestion: Liaise with community sector about service provision	5
Views: Commute to services more complex	5
Views: Service has already suffered from cuts	5
Views: Shameful proposal	5
Comment about personal circumstances	4
Impact: People would have to go into care	4
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	4
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	4
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	4
Other: Unsure why East Sussex County Council cannot afford budget gap	4
Service: Praise of staff	4
Service attendance has a social aspect	4
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before any change happens	4

Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	4
Suggestion: Fundraise locally	4
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	4
Suggestion: Make access to services means tested	4
Views: Find an alternative way to save money	4
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	4
Views: Service is not cost effective	4
Views: Services already limited	4
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	3
Impact: People would have to go into care	3
Service: Immensely valued	3
Service: Lifeline to people	3
Service: Service is vital	3
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	3
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	3
Suggestion: Cut non-essential parts of the service	3
Suggestion: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Remove and condense office buildings	3
Views: Recognise need to make savings	3
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	3
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	3
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	3
Impact: Even more limited services	2
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	2
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	2
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	2
Impact: People's needs won't be met	2
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	2
Views: No similar services exist	2
Other: Criticism of councillor	2
Other: Comment on other council spending	2
Other: Criticism of council	2

Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	2
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	2
Suggestion: Bring in income from unused properties	2
Suggestion: Charge people more to use services	2
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should lobby government	2
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens	2
Suggestion: Consider system budget issues	2
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	2
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	2
Suggestion: Reduce on-site support hours	2
Suggestion: Reduce public transport costs	2
Suggestion: Streamline current roles	2
Suggestion: Utilise staff skills better	2
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	2
Views: Unclear what savings will result	2
Impact: Already have to battle for services	1
Impact: Carers' ability to have longer breaks	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Increase homelessness if cut	1
Impact: Increased support needs	1
Impact: Less independence	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: Ability to care for child	1
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: Poorer access to other services as a knock-on effect	1
Impact: Poorer mental health	1
Impact: Poorer physical health	1
Impact: Private support more expensive	1
Impact: Service won't be replaced if cut	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment re government spending	1

Other: Criticism of government	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to explain why saving proposals were made	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	1
Other: How are parents of special education needs adults consulted with?	1
Other: Reduce councillors' pay	1
Service: Current service works well	1
Service: Safe environment	1
Service: Very accessible	1
Service: Service stopped the person going into residential care	1
Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact	1
Suggestion: Better use of funding	1
Suggestion: Consider system budget issues	1
Suggestion: Fundraise nationally	1
Suggestion: Increase council tax	1
Suggestion: Offer smaller blocks of respite	1
Suggestion: Calculate the cost for other services that this proposal would cause	1
Suggestion: Close other buildings instead	1
Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions	1
Suggestion: Cut East Sussex County Council staff pay	1
Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it	1
Suggestion: Reduce use of external private services	1
Suggestion: Review remote working	1
Suggestion: Use empty buildings for the service	1
Suggestion: Use funding generated from other sales or sources	1
Suggestion: Use learning from current service to develop new model	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Disagree with proposal	1
Views: Poor decision	1
Views: Costs will increase not go down	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1

Views: Need for this service is increasing	1
Views: New times or hours are concerning	1
Views: Priorities are wrong	1
Views: Service is cost effective	1
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	1
Views: Short sighted	1

About You equality questions

People were given the option of answering these questions, with 115 choosing to take part and 88 choosing not to answer these questions.

What age are you?

Age	Total	Percentage of all 203 respondents
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	5	2%
25-34	10	5%
35-44	11	5%
45-54	25	12%
55-59	10	5%
60-64	11	5%
65+	19	9%

What is your gender?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Female	83	40.89%
Male	24	11.82%
Non-binary	3	1.48%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	6	2.96%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Self-described gender:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	54.68%
No (please write in your gender identity below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	5	2.46%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Gender identity:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

What is your ethnic group?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British	104	51.23%
White Irish	2	0.99%
White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0	0.00%
White Roma	0	0.00%
Any other White background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Black African	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Asian	1	0.49%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0	0.00%
Any other Asian background (please write in below)	0	0.00%

Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0.00%
Black or Black British African background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Arab	0	0.00%
Any other ethnic group (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	8	3.94%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Other:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

There were 114 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
'Straight' / Heterosexual	99	48.77%
Gay or Lesbian	2	0.99%
Bisexual	1	0.49%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	12	5.91%
Not Answered	89	43.84%

Self-described sexual orientation:

There was 1 response to this part of the question.

What is your religion or belief?

There were 114 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
No religion	43	21.18%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	62	30.54%

Buddhist	2	0.99%
Hindu	0	0.00%
Jewish	0	0.00%
Muslim	0	0.00%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Any other religion (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Philosophical belief (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Prefer not to say	6	2.96%
Not Answered	89	43.84%

Other religion:

There were 3 responses to this part of the question covering spiritualism, paganism, and Christianity.

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 115 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes (please answer part B below)	37	18.23%
No (go to the next question)	64	31.53%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	14	6.90%
Not Answered	88	43.35%

Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

There were 81 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, a lot (please answer part C below)	19	9.36%
Yes, a little (please answer part C below)	13	6.40%
Not at all (go to the next question)	34	16.75%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	15	7.39%

Not Answered	122	60.10%
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Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 46 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Physical Impairment	14	6.90%
Sensory Impairment	6	2.96%
Learning Disability/Difficulty	20	9.85%
Long-standing illness	10	4.93%
Mental Health condition	7	3.45%
Neurodivergent condition	9	4.43%
Other Developmental Condition	0	0.00%
Other (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Prefer not to say	8	3.94%
Not Answered	157	77.34%

Other:

There were 6 responses to this part of the question covering mental health issues, Diabetes, ability to speak, and learning disabilities.

Are you currently pregnant or did you give birth in the last twelve months?

There were 100 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	0.49%
No	95	46.80%
Prefer not to say	4	1.97%
Not Answered	103	50.74%

Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	52	25.62%
No (go to next question)	52	25.62%
Prefer not to say	9	4.43%
Not Answered	90	44.33%

Hours of care given a week

There were 58 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
9 hours a week or less	11	5.42%
10 to 19 hours a week	3	1.48%
20 to 34 hours a week	4	1.97%
35 to 49 hours a week	4	1.97%
50 hours or more a week	29	14.29%
Prefer not to say	7	3.45%
Not Answered	145	71.43%

Who you care for

There were 57 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Parent	15	7.39%
Partner/spouse	6	2.96%
Child with special needs	20	9.85%
Other family member	14	6.90%
Friend	1	0.49%
Other (please give details)	8	3.94%
Prefer not to say	4	1.97%
Not Answered	146	71.92%

If you answered 'other', please explain here:

There were 11 responses to this part of the question. Two cared for more than one person. Seven clarified the nature of their relationship to the cared for (for example, as a partner or a parent). One mentioned the needs of the cared-for, and two described a job role, while one noted that they did not look after anyone.

Armed Forces Service: Are you currently serving, or have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces (this includes Reservists or part-time service)?

There were 109 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	5	2.46%
No	103	50.74%
Prefer not to say	1	0.49%
Not Answered	94	46.31%

Are you in a household or family where someone is currently or was previously serving in the UK Armed Forces?

There were 107 responses to this part of the question.

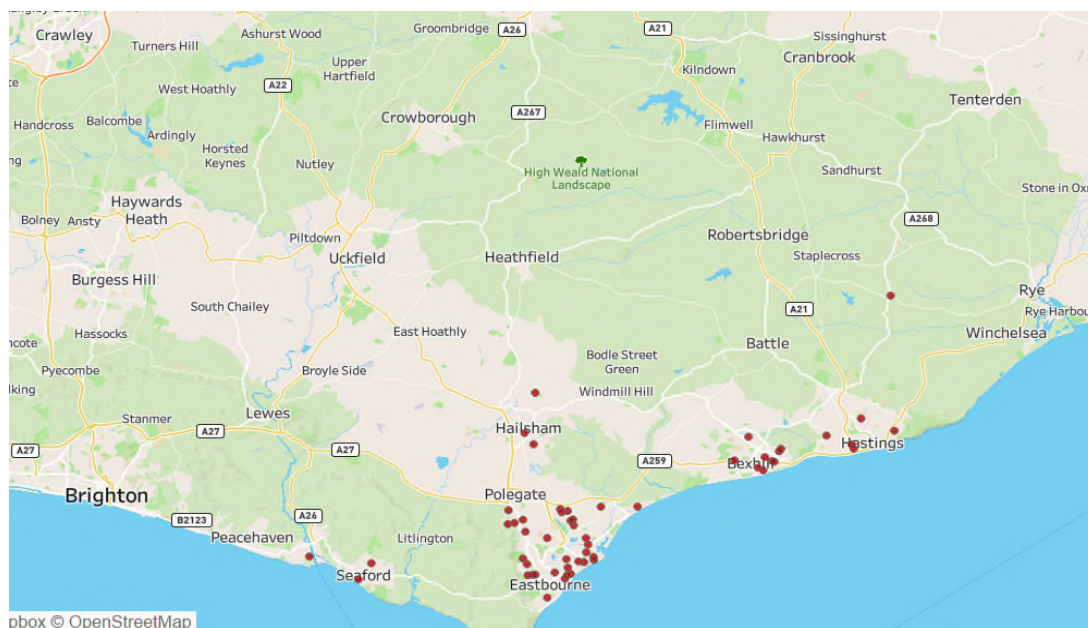
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	13	6.40%
No	93	45.81%
Prefer not to say	1	0.49%
Not Answered	96	47.29%

Please tell us your postcode:

There were 69 responses to this part of the question and 44 chose prefer not to say.

Postcode area	Total	Percentage of all 203 respondents
Eastbourne	36	18%
Wealden	12	6%
Lewes	1	Less than 1%
Rother	11	5%
Hastings	8	4%

1 postcodes (under 1%) provided outside of East Sussex.



Other feedback by email etc

Linden Court and Beeching Park consultation responses

There were 16 responses to the Linden Court and Beeching Park consultation by other feedback methods. The majority were submitted by email (14 responses) and the rest by letter (2).

The top respondent groups were family and carers (5 people) and organisations (5 responses). There were also responses from residents of East Sussex (3), a former worker and a member of parliament. One respondent did not say in which context they were responding as.

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- Healthwatch East Sussex
- Heartwood Project
- Ideal Complex Care
- NHS Sussex
- Wealden Citizens Advice

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services would be more complex	7
Views: Commuting cost to services would be harder to justify	4
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	3
Views: Disagree	3

Views: Don't close service	3
Views: Recognise need to make savings	3
Views: Alternative services are too far away	2
Views: Alternative services not suitable	2
Views: Care at home is not a substitute	2
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	2
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	2
Views: Shameful proposal	2
Service: Service is vital	1
Views: Agree in theory but travel issues make it unworkable	1
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Concerned where else people who access support would get it	1
Views: Concerned where families will get support instead	1
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	1
Views: Disagree with using private organisations	1
Views: Don't cut and replace with substandard service	1
Views: Money won't be saved	1
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	1
Views: Need for this service is increasing	1
Views: Priorities are wrong	1
Views: Private support too expensive	1
Views: Proposal might work if there is support with transport and travel	1
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	1
Views: Short sighted	1

Service

Comment theme	Total
Service: Opportunity to socialise	5
Service: Lifeline to people	4
Service: Praise of staff	3
Service: Provides support centred on people who access it	3
Service: Safe environment	3
Service: High quality	2

Service: Only service of its sort	2
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	2
Service: Service key to wellbeing	2
Service offers help with life skills	1
Service: Achieved good outcomes	1
Service: Consistency of staffing is a positive	1
Service: Day services offers safeguarding opportunities	1
Service: Facilitates improved outcomes for people who access support, via family engagement	1
Service: Helps people to regain independence	1
Service: Immensely valued	1
Service: Praise of service	1
Service: Service built trust with people who access support	1
Service: Service is vital	1
Service: Supports family/friends of people who access support	1
Service: Value of day services generally	1
Service: Well integrated into local communities	1

Impact

Comment theme	Total
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	6
Impact: Poorer mental health	4
Impact: Poorer physical health	4
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	4
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	3
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure for people who access support	3
Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	3
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	2
Impact: Even more limited services	2
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	2
Impact: Isolation	2

Impact: Loss of jobs	2
Impact: NHS	2
Impact: People's needs won't be met	2
Impact: Poorer access to support	2
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	2
Impact: Travel and parking would be worse	2
Views: Cause distress for people who access support	2
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	1
Impact: Cuts create inequality	1
Impact: Demoralise frontline staff affected by cut	1
Impact: Disruption to people's support	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: Increase in crime	1
Impact: Less tailored or bespoke support	1
Impact: Lose connections built with people who access support and with colleagues	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: More pressure on the police	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: People would have to go into care	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Risk of East Sussex County Council not meeting statutory duties	1
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	1
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	1

Suggestions

Comment theme	Total
Suggestion: Look for private investors/business to run it	3

Suggestions: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Keep parts of the service running	2
Suggestion: Provide transport to services	2
Suggestion: Cut operational costs	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Encourage alternative support - e.g., religious groups or wellbeing services	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should lobby government	1
Suggestion: Explore alternative solutions with partners/other providers	1
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	1
Suggestion: Joint transport between services	1
Suggestion: Listen to the consultation feedback	1
Suggestion: Locate any replacement in the same area	1
Suggestion: Make income by selling spaces to other local authorities	1
Suggestion: Partnerships with transport providers to help with cost	1
Suggestion: Use church buildings to limit costs of day services	1

Other comments

Comment theme	Total
Comment about personal circumstances	2
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	2
Other: Criticism of council	2
Other: Criticism of government	2
Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	2
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	2
Other: How are parents of special education needs adults consulted with?	2
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	2
Other: Question about staffing under the proposals	2

East Sussex County Council must be accountable for any consequential suicides or harm to people who access support	1
Other: ASC is poorly run	1
Other: Comment on other council spending	1
Other: Comment re consultation financial figures	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Question about attendance numbers under the proposals	1
Other: VCSE need services to signpost to	1
Other: Want to see the Equality Impact Assessment and proposed mitigations	1
Other: What assessments are required when changing special education needs services?	1
Other: What routes of appeal are there for challenging the decision?	1
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	1

Overall consultation responses

Responses addressing all 11 consultations combined

There were 10 responses addressing all 11 consultations at once by letter and email. These were from both organisations (5), residents (4) and a member of parliament (1).

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- Rother District Council
- Lewes Liberal Democrats
- Care for the Carers
- East Sussex VCSE Alliance
- East Sussex Seniors Associations

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment themes	Total
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	6
Views: Recognise need to make savings	5
Views: Disagree	3
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	2

Views: Concerned about impact of proposal	2
Views: Don't close service	2
Views: Limited capacity for VCSE sector to provide the support instead	2
Views: Morally wrong	2
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	2
Views: Will shift cost onto districts and boroughs	2
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Carers of people who access support care for multiple people already	1
Views: Carers vital for health and social care economy	1
Views: Concern about impact on level of support services can provide post-cuts	1
Views: Concern re timeframe for cuts	1
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: Disagree with using private organisations	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1
Views: Homelessness prevention statutory under the Homeless Reduction Act	1
Views: Impacts will be immediate for people who access support and for statutory services	1
Views: Insufficient time for other organisations to respond/mitigate risks	1
Views: Knows disabled people who could work but don't	1
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	1
Views: Other services already struggling	1
Views: Private support too expensive	1
Views: Service vital for safeguarding people who access support and/or people around them	1
Views: Shameful proposal	1

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	1

Impact

Comment themes	Total
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	3
Impact: Poorer mental health	3
Impact: Financial hardship	2
Impact: Increased cost for other organisations	2
Impact: Poorer physical health	2
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	1
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	1
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	1
Impact: At risk of suicide	1
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Community at increased risk	1
Impact: Encourages negative attitude towards people who need support	1
Impact: Hardship and poverty	1
Impact: Homelessness	1
Impact: Isolation	1
Impact: Loss of staff results in loss of tax revenue	1
Impact: Loss to the community	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: More people who access support would be in out-of-area accommodation	1
Impact: More hospital admissions	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: NHS	1
Impact: Poorer access to support	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	1
Impact: Risk of abuse/domestic abuse	1
Impact: Significant increase in people living in temporary accommodation	1

Impact: Unsuitable housing detrimental to child development	1
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	1

Suggestions

Comment themes	Total
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	3
Suggestion: Utilise existing and effective volunteer/charity support services	3
Suggestions: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	2
Suggestion: Allow VCSE partners to reduce rental outgoings	1
Suggestion: Build accommodation under a Community Land Trust	1
Suggestion: Consider impact of loss of winter fuel allowance	1
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Don't cut prevention services	1
Suggestion: Don't cut service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for young people coming out of care	1
Suggestion: Run accommodation/care homes as a business to generate profit	1
Suggestion: Signpost charities to other sources of funding	1
Suggestion: Transfer assets to voluntary sector	1
Suggestion: Work with partners to develop new model	1

Other comments

Other: Supporting and working with VCSE sector vital for improved outcomes	2
Other: Appreciation of East Sussex County Council's acknowledgement of impacts and commitment to co-production	1
Other: Care for the Carers must represent carers in design of alternative support	1

Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment on government policy and country-wide issues not specific to consultations	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Cost of temporary accommodation is driving financial instability in local authorities	1
Other: Districts and boroughs not in a financial position to cope with impacts of cuts	1
Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	1
Other: Provide information on proposed alternatives/mitigations	1
Other: Question re raising awareness of consultations with public	1
Other: Want to see the Equality Impact Assessments and proposed mitigations	1
Other: Will this be all the cuts or is more needed?	1
Other: Would NHS & ASCH save by working together?	1

Consultation meetings

Consultation meetings were held at the day services for people who attend them and their parents and carers. Where needed a virtual meeting was also held. Lots of questions were asked at the meetings and [answers to these can be found in the frequently asked questions section](#) of the consultation webpage.

Date	Service	Meeting type	Number of attendees
14 October	Linden Court	In-person for people who attend the service	34
		In-person for parents and carers	51
17 October	Beeching Park	In-person for people who attend the service	45
		In-person for parents and carers	21
31 October	Beeching Park	Online for people who attend the service and parents/carers	3

Linden Court themes from adults who access the service

- **Views:** People are worried, upset and sad about the proposal and some said they don't like change. They love it at Linden Court and are settled there. They don't want the service to close and they are afraid they won't see their friends if it does.

People said it is unfair that the service could close because there isn't enough money. They are sad that the service could be taken away and they are worried about what it would mean for them.

Some said they would move to Beeching Park, but a few people said they would stay at home if Linden Court closed.

- **Service:** People said they like going to Linden Court and have made lots of friends. They wanted to know what the proposal would mean for the days/sessions they attend and if they would still be able to take part in the same activities.
- **Impact:** People talked about travel and how it would be harder to get to Beeching Park, as well as making their day much longer. Those living in supported living said the timing wouldn't work with staff shifts.

They were also worried about what the change would mean for their days/sessions and their other outside commitments. Some people said they would need to stick to their current days/sessions.

Some people are worried that a busier service won't suit them and others are worried about not knowing anyone. There are also concerns about how the change could affect people's health, and college leavers in the future.

- **Other comments:** A few people wanted more information about Beeching Park and the activities that would be on offer, including community sessions.

Linden Court themes from parent/carers

- **Views:** Everyone who spoke stated their strong opposition to the proposal. People said it is disgusting that closure of the service is even being considered, and added that they would be heartbroken if it closed.

People said they would fight the closure of the service, and that more money is needed from the government to fund essential services like this. Eastbourne has already lost services and they were determined that it should not lose another.

Many people said that Beeching Park wouldn't work for them or their family member. Bexhill is too far away and it is not practical to send people by bus or taxi. Travel times would be much longer and the journey is impossible for them and their family.

People said they hadn't seen a sound financial basis for closing the building. They felt the closure wouldn't save any money, as support still has to be paid for and transport and escort costs would be higher. There would also be a greater risk that people might not be able to remain at home if they couldn't attend a day service.

When other day services have closed the buildings have just been left to sit empty, and the same will happen if Linden Court closes.

- **Service:** People praised the service and the staff who work there. The people who attend the service are like family to each other.

Linden Court has a lovely big kitchen and garden, as well as offering a quieter service for those who wouldn't cope with a busier one.

People talked about how the service provides a lifeline to them. For some it has allowed the family to stay together.

Some people said the revised session times wouldn't work for them, as they need to be at work before then. One person challenged the rationale for changing the sessions being based on staff feedback.

- **Impact:** Simply hearing about the proposals has created a lot of worry. Change is difficult for people who use this service, and more of it would affect their life and wellbeing.

Meeting new people is hard and the stress of the change could affect people's behaviour. Parents and carers need the quality of life the service provides to allow them to keep looking after their family member.

If the proposal went ahead, people who attend the service would be negatively affected. It would also mean huge changes for parents and carers, as well as affecting their mental health. Many people have been coming to Linden Court for several years and some wouldn't understand the need to move.

People felt that Beeching Park wouldn't be suitable for them, because travelling there would be hard, or impossible, for their family member. Even if they could do the journey, it would take a lot longer.

For this reason, if Linden Court closed they would have limited options. This is because the service helps them to keep their family member at home. Meeting attendees said that it would push people into moving into supported living and residential care much sooner than needed. These services are more expensive so it would cost the Council more in the long term.

For some people the proposal would affect their ability to maintain their employment. Older parents and carers were also worried for the future and what it would mean for their family member.

- **Suggestions:** There is an alternative service in Bexhill, so why not close Beeching Park instead. Promote Linden Court and get more people using it so it is viable to keep it open.

Find the savings elsewhere and don't cut services for the vulnerable. Sell underused buildings and use that money to save Linden Court.

- **Other comments:** The Council wastes so much money and everyone knows that. People need to know that the decision is transparent and fair. The Council admits that there is more demand for services, but is still proposing to close Linden Court.

A few people said they hadn't had an assessment for years, so they didn't see how everyone could be assessed in time before the proposed closure of the service.

Beeching Park themes from adults who access the service

- **Sessions:** The top comment theme was about the sessions and the changes that would happen if the proposal went ahead. People said they enjoy their sessions and don't want them to change. They were also keen to know whether particular activities that they enjoy would still be offered.
- **Views:** Lots of people shared their views on the proposed change. Some thought it was a good idea and were looking forward to making new friends, but others were worried about it, particularly the fact that the service would be busier.
- **Impact:** Most of the comments about impact focused on what the change would mean for the days they attend the service, with most people keen to stick with their current days. Some also asked if it would affect the money they pay for the service. A couple of people wanted to know what the change would mean for their bus journey.
- **Other comments:** People asked questions about Linden Court and how many people/staff would move to Beeching Park, as well as asking about what the change would mean for them and their days/sessions/activities.

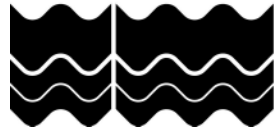
Beeching Park themes from parent/carers

- **Views:** Attendees were concerned about the implications of the proposal for people who attend the service and their families, particularly in relation to the disruption to the service and the impact on timetabling.

People felt it wasn't clear how the proposal had been arrived at, and that more information was needed on that. They also felt the proposal seems to target vulnerable people and said that councillors should spend a day in their shoes.

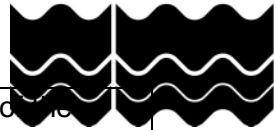
People said that the priority should be to maintain people's existing provision for those already attending Beeching Park. They also said the cost of transport would reduce the amount of savings that can be made.

- **Service:** One attendee said that the person they care for loves the service and doesn't talk about anything else.
- **Impact:** The reduction in session hours would affect everyone at both services. Attendees had concerns about changes to session times and the disruption that would cause, particularly if the person had other existing commitments.
- **Suggestions:** Suggestions included cutting management roles to save money and focusing on individual need, as not everyone will understand the reason for making the change.
- **Other comments:** It will be important to keep people updated about what is being proposed and when changes would happen.

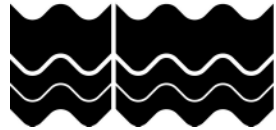


Appendix 2 – Linden Court Day Services Equality Impact Analysis

Title of Project/Service/Policy	Linden Court day services in Eastbourne
Team/Department	Learning Disability Directly Provided Services
Directorate	Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)
Provide a comprehensive description of your Project (Service/Policy, etc.) including its Purpose and Scope	<p>Summary of changes to original proposal The main body of this EqlA is for the original proposal to close Linden Court. Following the consultation process and equality impact analysis the proposal remains to close Linden Court but it is now recommended that the impact of this can be partly mitigated for some of the people who use the service, by another directly provided service, Beeching Park, running a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days per week. A small team would be available for one year to support people who would find the transition to Beeching Park or alternative independent options particularly difficult.</p> <p>Whilst there would still be some negative impact and disruption to adults attending Linden Court and their families, the revised recommendation would reduce this.</p> <p>Original proposal East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is facing a financial gap of £55million next year. This is the difference between the funding available and the cost of keeping services at their present level. We have developed a savings plan that sets out how we will close the funding gap. Where the proposals include significant changes to services there has been a public consultation on the area.</p> <p>The services that are managed within Learning Disability Directly Provided Services support over 500 adults across East Sussex. This support is offered in a number of different service areas: day services, community support services, respite services, Shared Lives and supported accommodation. As part of the savings plan a proposal was made to close the service at Linden Court in Eastbourne and instead find adults places in alternative services run by ASCH or other providers. As above, this now includes a</p>



	<p>proposal for a satellite service in Eastbourne to help reduce the impact of the closure for some of the people using the service.</p> <p>Linden Court is a day service for people with learning disabilities and it is based in Eastbourne, the service is operational four days a week (closed on Tuesdays) between the hours of 08:30 to 16:30 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 08:30 to 19:00 on Thursday. Sessions are offered throughout this time from 09:00 –12:00; 12:30 – 15:30 and 16:00 to 19:00 on Thursday in the community. The building-based daytime sessions include art, cookery, music, sport, multimedia, and gardening.</p> <p>The service is used by 46 adults accessing the day service, mostly within the building and a small amount of community activity.</p> <p>Some adults require a smaller, quieter setting as they struggle with large groups and noise.</p> <p>The day service in Eastbourne has had low occupancy since the pandemic where, unlike other day services, attendance failed to pick up.</p> <p>It will be possible to offer the same quantity of provision at Beeching Park in Bexhill which would extend its opening to five days a week, increasing its current building-based provision by 25%, and maintain the offer of 3 sessions a day: morning, afternoon and twilight. Beeching Park, as with all our day services, has a standard attendee to staff ratio of 5:1 and provides 1:1 support to attendees where required.</p> <p>To enable us to provide a day service option for the adults who use Linden Court at Beeching Park, we would need to increase its staffing capacity and open for an additional day each week. Therefore, the saving is calculated as the budget of Linden Court less the cost of increased provision at Beeching Park.</p> <p>Adults with Learning Disabilities and their Carers will be affected by this proposal.</p> <p>Staff affected by this proposal are outside the scope of this EqIA and the change process will be managed in conjunction with Human Resources.</p>
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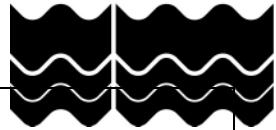
1. Update on previous EqlAs and outcomes of previous actions (if applicable)

What actions did you plan last time? (List them from the previous EqlA)	What improved as a result? What outcomes have these actions achieved?	What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take? (add these to the Action Plan below)
<p>When savings had to be made in 2018, the EIA action plan included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult and carer individual reviews • providing information taking communication needs into account • putting transition plans in place • support in finding alternative services 	<p>The changes allowed us to focus support on those who needed it most. Alternative support provisions were arranged by Care Management.</p>	<p>None. Actions for the current proposal are set out for each section below.</p>

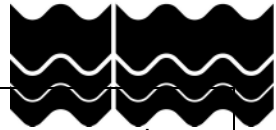
2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Consider the actual or potential impact of your project (service, or policy) against each of the equality characteristics.

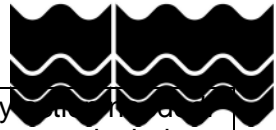
Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations										
Age	<p>According to the 2021 Census, the proportion of the population of East Sussex aged 65 and over now stands at 26.1%, up from 22.7% in 2011.</p> <p>Proportion of Population by age range (%):</p> <table> <tr> <td>East Sussex</td> <td>0-19</td> <td>20-44</td> <td>45-64</td> <td>65+</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>21</td> <td>25</td> <td>28</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </table>	East Sussex	0-19	20-44	45-64	65+		21	25	28	26	<p>Within the consultation, the age range for 45 to 54 years old was the top respondent group (12%), followed by age 65+ (9%), although we had responses from most age groups.</p>	<p>There is a smaller proportion of those aged 65+ compared to the population of the county and ASCH adults receiving long term support overall. This is to be expected as life expectancy is considerably lower for people with a learning disability.</p>	<p>No specific mitigations required for this characteristic.</p>
East Sussex	0-19	20-44	45-64	65+										
	21	25	28	26										



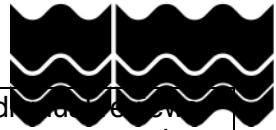
	<p>England 23 33 26 18</p> <p><u>According to Age UK</u>, three out of ten people aged 65 to 74 and two-thirds of those aged 75 and over are not online. The age range of adults using this service is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18-30 24 • 30-40 6 • 40-50 8 • 50-60 5 • 60+ 5 <p>The total number of young people who will be turning 18 and transitioning to ASC are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this financial year (2024-2025): 10 (4 of these are 18 already, 6 are 17 years old), (2 of the 10 are external referrals so did not transfer from CDS) • 2025-2026: 14 • 2026-2027: 15 			
Disability	<p>In the 2021 census, 20.3% of East Sussex residents were living with a long-term physical or mental health condition or impairment that affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities in 2021, the same proportion as in 2011 (compares to 18% for England & Wales).</p>	<p>The 2024 consultation told us that change is particularly unsettling to people using these services; Linden court users have been used to having a quieter environment and are likely to experience a busier environment in alternative service provision.</p>	<p>All adults accessing the services included in the proposals have a learning disability or have recognised additional needs. Some people may have further complexities such as sensory impairment or sensitivities, physical disabilities</p>	<p>All adults who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package, in light of service changes, continues to meet their assessed needs.</p>



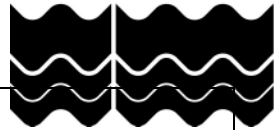
	<p>34.8% of households in East Sussex had at least one member identifying as disabled under the Equality Act in 2021.</p> <p>The number of working age adults with a Primary Support Reason of Learning Disability Support receiving community based services during the year 2023/4 is 1068.</p> <p>According to Ofcom research, people with a learning disability are most likely to say that their use of TVs or computers is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition. Nearly two in ten (18%) said their use of TVs or computers was limited or prevented, while around one in ten said the same for the internet, landline, smartphones or simple mobile phones.</p> <p>All adults are being supported due to learning disability. In addition there are 9 adults with Autism (with one with additional physical needs), 5 with additional physical needs (one of these with an additional sensory impairment), and 4 with a neurological disability. - 18 adults in total.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Some people may find this difficult. People with sensory conditions are particularly likely to be negatively impacted by this proposal.</p> <p>NHS Sussex told us that consideration should be given to what services there would be for people who need a quieter environment due to other diagnoses and sensory sensitivities. Sensory sensitivities, can lead to people feeling overwhelmed in noisy or busy environments and can lead to difficulties with social communication and/or interaction, requiring appropriate support and provision. If these needs are not met, it could lead to increasing instances of behaviours that challenge services, and require more resource intensive, higher cost, multi-agency input in the medium and longer term.</p> <p>Those responding to the consultation told us that closing the service would lead to poorer mental health for</p>	<p>and other health problems which may impact on them further.</p> <p>A change in routine may cause adults anxiety and less opportunity for social interaction and ongoing skills development. Any changes agreed may also cause adults increased emotional and/ or psychological distress. There may be an increased reliance on other services for example, health services.</p>	<p>There are several adults who attend Linden Court that would find moving to a full, busy day service challenging. We propose to have a small specific team to work with these adults for a year to either assist them to integrate into Beeching Park or, if their needs remain for a more bespoke provision, assist the transition to this when it is identified.</p> <p>Where ASCH directly provided services are not sufficient or appropriate to meet the assessed needs of individuals, Care Managers will seek alternative support solutions.</p> <p>We will communicate changes to adults and their parents/carers appropriately and will work with them to</p>
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		<p>those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour.</p> <p>People who attend the service say that they would have to attend on the same days and times at another service as they have other commitments that cannot move.</p> <p>18% of respondents have a physical or mental health condition or long-term illness.</p>		<p>identify... Options may include information and advice about alternative services where available as well as referral to advocacy services. Communications' preferences will be met, for example, via Easy read Adult Consultation pack/ covering letter, Easy read leaflets relating to proposed changes in services, etc. Staff will provide additional support to help adults understand the changes being proposed.</p> <p>Information will be provided in an accessible format for those with sensory impairments.</p>
Gender reassignment	The 2021 East Sussex Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer + (LGBTQ+) ¹ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be 5,572 Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD)	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	There are no adults with this protected characteristic.	If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during



	<p>people (1% of the population) living in East Sussex</p> <p>2021 Census: 1640 residents declared their gender identity was different to that assigned at birth which is 0.4% of the population.</p> <p>Adult data tells us that there are no adults with this protected characteristic.</p>			<p>the individual review or assessment and appropriate support would be provided.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>There are just under 5,000 births per year in East Sussex. Hastings has the highest overall birth rate as well as for women aged 15-19 years. Lewes and then Rother have the highest birth rates for women aged 35-44 years.</p> <p>Adult data for the service tells us that there are no adults with this protected characteristic</p>	<p>No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>There are no adults with this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during the individual reviews or assessment and appropriate support would be provided</p>
Race (ethnicity) Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	<p>88.3% of usual residents of East Sussex said that they belonged to the White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnic group. Black and minority ethnic groups including white minority groups (Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, Other White) make up 11.7% of usual residents in East Sussex.</p> <p>This compares to 18.8% in England. In 2021, 93.9% (512,440) of usual residents in East Sussex identified their ethnic group within the high-level "White" category, a decrease from 96.0% (505,420) in the 2011 Census, but still significantly higher than the English national average (81.0%) and</p>	<p>No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>The data indicates that the race and ethnicity of adults using the service is reflective of the County generally.</p>	<p>We will ensure access to translation and interpreting services if required; ensure staff are aware of the process and that the information translated is still in Easy Read.</p> <p>Culturally appropriate services to be considered as part of the individual review of needs as required.</p>



also higher than the average for the South East region (86.6%).

4.6% were of another white background; 1.6% were Asian/ Asian British, 0.5% were Black/ Black British and 1.3.% were from other ethnic backgrounds.

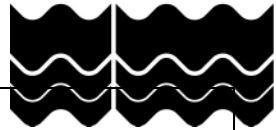
Those selecting a non-UK identity only accounted for 5.5% of the overall population (29,880 people), which is an increase from 4.3% of the population (23,090 people) in 2011. The most common non-UK identities are Polish, Irish, Romanian, Portuguese and Italian.

A higher percentage of the population in East Sussex identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller than the national average (0.2% compared to 0.1%).

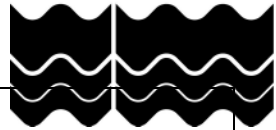
Of adults using this service:

- 37 White British
- 1 Asian/ Asian British
- 1 Black/Black British – African
- 1 Mixed - White And Black Caribbean
- 2 Any Other Ethnic Group
- 2 White - Any Other Background
- Ethnicity not recorded for 2 adults

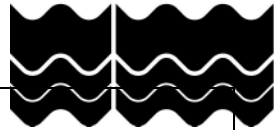
One adult speaks Italian and does not speak English.



Religion or belief	<p>In 2021, 45.9% (250,330) of usual residents of East Sussex identified as Christian, down from 59.9% (315,650) in 2011.</p> <p>The second most common religion in East Sussex after Christianity is Islam. The proportion of the population stating they were Muslim increased from 0.8% of the usual resident population (4,200) in 2011 to 1.1% (6,190) in 2021. This is low compared to both the South East Regional and the English national averages, with 3.3% of residents in the South East specified their religion as Islam, and 6.7% across the whole of England.</p> <p>Details of the impact upon religion and belief on ASC: Religion and Belief in Health and Social Care Assessments -</p>	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	We do not routinely collect this information. However, where an adult requests a specific need to be supported with their religion this is recorded on their support plan.	Ensure any support requirements relating to religion or belief are identified via the review process and recorded on support plans.
Sex	<p>Of the population of East Sussex, 299,064 (52%) are female and 270,788 (48%) are male.</p> <p>Of adults attending Linden Court:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 are female 14 are male 	<p>More women than men took part in the consultation survey – 41% compared to 12%, although 43% did not answer the question.</p> <p>No responses were received in terms of impact upon those</p>	Compared to the population of the County, proportionately more women will be affected by this proposal.	Any support needs specifically based on a person's sex will be covered in the individual reviews.



		with this protected characteristic.		
Sexual orientation	<p>The 2021 East Sussex LGBTQI+ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be between 17,273 and 39,004 LGB+ people living in East Sussex (between 3.1% and 7% of the population)</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census 3.3% of East Sussex residents declared themselves as LGB+.</p> <p>11 adults recorded as heterosexual, data was not available for the remainder.</p>	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	Data on this protected characteristic is limited and we cannot make an accurate assessment of dis/proportionate impact.	<p>If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during the individual reviews or assessment and appropriate support would be provided.</p> <p>Improve data collection on this characteristic.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>According to 2021 census data for East Sussex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single 29% • Married 46.5% • Civil Partnership 0.4% • Divorced 11% • Widowed 8% <p>One adult is recorded as married.</p>	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	One adult is married, the majority are single.	No specific mitigations required.
Armed Forces	There were 19,917 households (8.3% of all households) in East Sussex with at least one person who had served in the UK armed forces.	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	This does not affect any of the adults using this service.	N/A

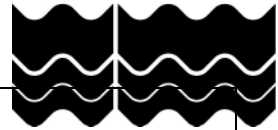



	Whilst adults will not have served in the Armed Forces, it is not known whether anyone in their households has.			
Impacts on community cohesion		Respondents to the consultation told us that socialisation is a key part of attending Linden Court and this will be lost if the service closes. People told us that their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to.	Community connections built up around Linden Court, via for example the use of local venues or businesses, will be lost.	There are no identified specific mitigations.

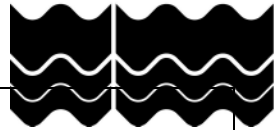
Additional categories

(identified locally as potentially causing / worsening inequality)

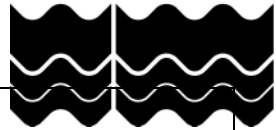
Characteristic	What do you know?	What do people tell you?	What does this mean?	What can you do?
Rurality	74% of the population in East Sussex lives in an urban area with the remaining 26% living in a rural area (2021 census). Adult data shows they live: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 in Eastbourne • 10 in Hailsham • 2 in Seaford, • 1 in Bexhill, • 1 in Hastings 	Concern over transport was a recurring theme within the consultation although this was in terms of distance to Bexhill rather than specifically relating to those in rural areas.	Transport links and services are less available in some rural areas compared to larger towns, which may reduce the availability and choice of alternative services e.g. personal assistants, should these be required.	Transport requirements will be reviewed as part of an individual assessment. Transport to alternative service provision will be part of support plans.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 in the more rural areas - Westham, Polegate and Pevensey. <p>Below is a map of adults' addresses.</p>  <p>LD%20Linden%20Map.docx</p>			
Carers	<p>There are over 10,000 persons claiming Carer's Allowance in East Sussex. (Source Department of Work and Pensions Feb 2020). Care for the Carers estimates that there are 69,241 unpaid carers in East Sussex, it is difficult to know the actual number of carers because many are hidden.</p> <p>There are 36 adults who live with family/ carers and have unpaid carers.</p>	<p>The number of carers taking part (26%) in the consultation reflected the fact that the family and carers of people using the services was the top respondent group; 14% of respondents provide 50 or more hours of care per week and 5% provide 9 or more hours.</p> <p>Carers told us that driving longer distances to reach another day centre would add extra pressure to their already difficult lives.</p> <p>Families and carers told us that Linden Court is a lifeline that allows them to continue in their caring role and to maintain their</p>	<p>Carers of working age who are employed may be negatively impacted if they have structured their working hours around day services at Linden Court. This may result in carers not being able to maintain their current employment and potentially experience a reduction to their income. The proposals may cause additional stress on family environments and family life as a whole. Carers may also have other caring responsibilities for other family members e.g. children or other relatives.</p>	<p>Carers will be offered assessments or reviews.</p> <p>Impact of the change and support will be considered as part of these reviews. This will include the benefits and timing of respite breaks.</p> <p>Continuing to provide a satellite day service in Eastbourne will mitigate this risk for those most impacted by the proposed change.</p>



		<p>employment if they have a job.</p> <p>The biggest concern with Beeching Park is the journey. People say that it would be a much longer and more complicated commute, with many saying that it just wouldn't work for their family; some had already tried it out to confirm that.</p>		
<p>Other groups that may be differently affected (including but not only: homeless people, substance users, care leavers)</p>	<p>East Sussex is fifth most deprived of 26 County Councils. 13% of people aged 60 plus were living in poverty in 2019 (source Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). 10.3% of households were in fuel poverty in 2019 compared to 9.3 % in England.</p>	<p>People told us that they cannot afford the taxi fare to Bexhill so will not be able to access services.</p>	<p>According to research by British Association of Social Workers (2023) people with a learning disability are likely to be at higher risk of the potential health risks and consequences of cold weather and fuel poverty than the general population. It was estimated that people with a learning disability spent far more on things like transport, medication and energy than someone without a disability. So the financial implications of additional transport costs are more likely to impact</p>	<p>Any transport requirements to alternative service provision will be considered as part of support planning and the person's package of care.</p> <p>Learning Disability England has been running a cost of living hub . There is information on resources, campaigns, advice on staying warm & financial help in there.</p>



			people who use this service.	
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Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations - include assessment of cumulative impacts (where a change in one service/policy/project may have an impact on another)

We received 373 responses to the consultation. Most people strongly disagreed with the proposal to close Linden Court, with only 6% agreeing. The key issues raised within the consultation were that the commute to alternative provision in Bexhill is more complex/ expensive, a change in routine is disruptive for adults with learning disabilities, there will be an increased burden on family/carers and there will be an impact upon socialisation as well as mental health of adults and carers.

If the proposal is agreed, whilst alternative locations would be offered, meaning access to day services would remain, it is likely that there would still be a negative impact on adults with a learning disability.

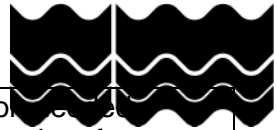
It is likely that adults and their families and carers would experience anxiety related to change.

Through consolidating two day services into one building it is likely that an environment will be created that will be busier than the current position at Linden Court which could be challenging for adults with who require a quiet environment. If the proposal is agreed we will offer a small specific team to work with these adults for a year to either assist them to integrate into Beeching Park or, if it is not a suitable placement after this input for a more bespoke provision, assist the transition to this when it is identified. We will also offer a satellite day service at Eastbourne which will mitigate the impact. Noting that there is likely to be a reduced overall provision of smaller, quieter day services in the county if Linden Court were to close.

If the proposals are agreed, all adults who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package, in light of service changes, continues to meet their assessed needs. Where it is identified that the services directly provided by ASCH are not sufficient to meet the assessed needs of individuals, Care Managers will seek alternative support solutions.

The proposed reduction may also impact directly on carers' mental and physical health. As part of the individual service reviews mentioned above, carers would be offered a carer's assessment, or a review of their assessment, to determine whether support packages continue to meet their assessed need.

There will be as much notice as possible to allow consultation and time for adjustments to be made .



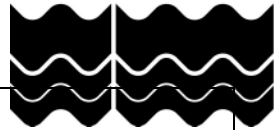
If the proposal is agreed, we will communicate changes to adults and their parents/carers appropriately and will work with them to identify action points. Options may include information and advice about alternative services where available as well as referral to advocacy services. Communications' preferences will be met via the following options:

- All communication materials produced in 'Easy read' formats
- Any meetings about the changes for parents/carers will be scheduled to take place both during the day and in the evenings to provide flexibility for people who work during the day. Meetings will be held in a range of venues across the county.
- Easy read posters giving details of Advocacy support and scheduled Advocacy meetings
- Information in required, accessible formats for those with sensory impairments
- Information and advice translated into other languages, in easy read format, as required

To ensure existing and future service provision continues to meet the needs of those coming through from Children's Services, we will work closely with the Transitions team.

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqIA

Source and type of data (e.g. research, or direct engagement (interviews), responses to questionnaires, etc.)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
ESCC 2024 Consultation	Nov/ Dec 2024	N/A	N/A
East Sussex in Figures – Data Observatory – Welcome to East Sussex in Figures			

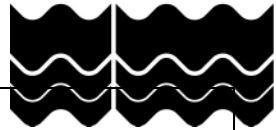


Await outcomes of Disability Rights Reference Group and Inclusion Advisory Group.			
Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services Research summary: Learning disability (Ofcom 2019)			
Learning Disability - Health Inequalities Research Mencap			
Stuck at home - the impact of day service cuts on people with a learning disability FINAL.doc (mencap.org.uk)			
Spotlight on Poverty: People with Learning Disabilities BASW			

4. Prioritised Action Plan

NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.

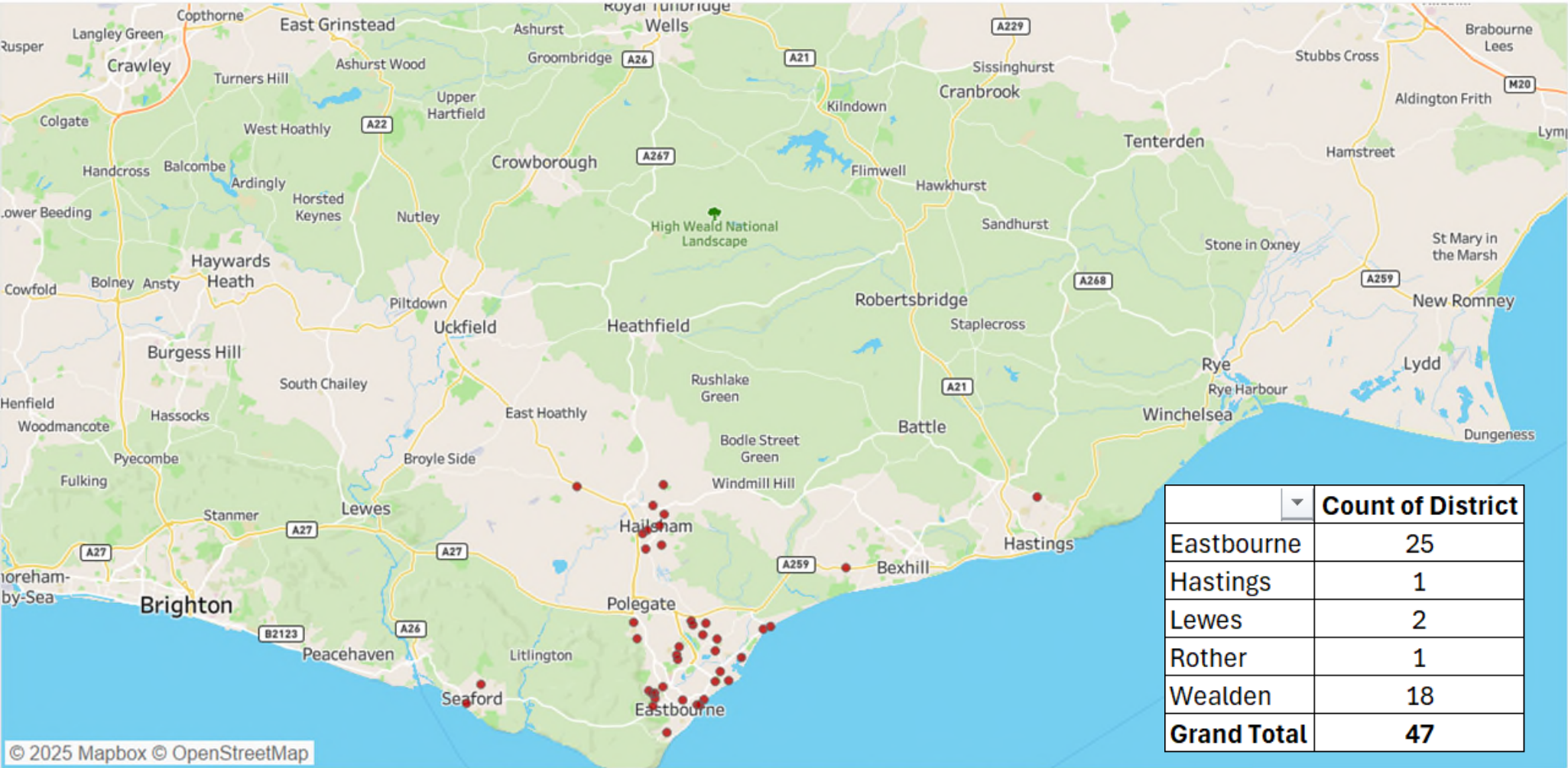
Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
All	Individual reviews of adult's support needs will be undertaken for everyone affected by a reduction in service. Care managers, adults and	Support plans updated to reflect changes in services.	Care and support needs continue to be met	To reflect implementation of savings' proposals (all actions).



	carers will have a discussion about the impact of the change and how best to support them through it.			
All	A transition plan is proposed to ensure that all adults experience a consistent level of support from at least one service.	As above.	As above.	
Disability	Consultation, information and guidance to be provided in accessible formats as required such as Easy Read. Additional help to understand the changes will be provided by staff.	Adults and carers have input into changes to services.	Care and support needs continue to be met.	
All	Where possible, new solutions would be sought through the use of Direct Payments which can be used flexibly and adults would be supported to make choices and decisions about available options.	Support plans updated to reflect changes.	As above.	
Carers	Carers' reviews will also be undertaken.	As above.	As above	
All	Beeching to set up a satellite service in Eastbourne on 2 days per week. A dedicated team will be set up to support those affected by the changes, to help them adjust and provide support in finding alternative options.	Support plans updated to reflect changes in services.	Care and support needs continue to be met .	
Sexual orientation	Improve data collection on sexuality	Better information on sexual orientation of people with a learning disability	Better dataset on this characteristic	From March 2025

Appendix 3 – Map showing where adults currently attending Linden Court reside

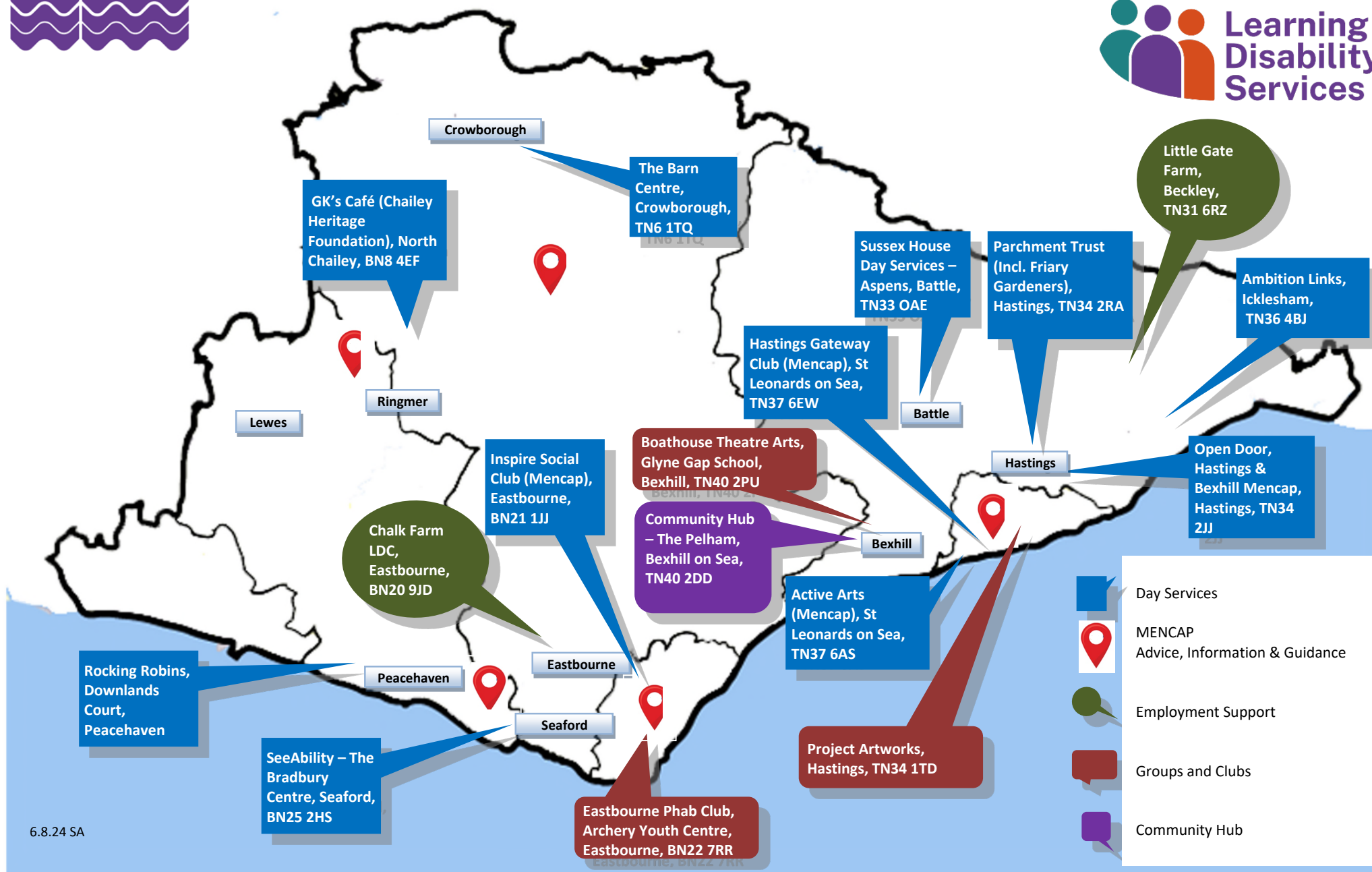
Linden Court



Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated).The data is filtered on Service, which keeps Linden.



Appendix 4 – Map of alternative day service provision



Appendix 3

People Scrutiny Committee Pre-decision Board - 20 February 2025

In attendance: Councillors Howell (Chair), Belsey, Cross, Field, Geary, Lambert, Shing and Swansborough

Also in attendance: Councillor Maynard (attended online)

Mark Stainton, Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Frood Radford, Assistant Director, interim Assistant Director
Planning, Performance and Engagement.

Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

Summary of Comments to Cabinet

1.1 The People Scrutiny Pre-decision Board met on the 20 February 2025 and agreed comments to be put to Cabinet, on behalf of the Committee, on savings proposals related to Adult Social Care and Health for consideration on 25 February 2025.

1.2 The Director of Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) introduced each Cabinet report which detailed the recommendations to Cabinet on each saving proposal and information to be considered by Cabinet, including alternative proposals considered, consultation responses, and equality impact assessments.

1.3 The comments of the People Scrutiny Pre-decision Board are set out below:

General comments

1.4 In discussing each of the savings proposals, the Board considered the financial context in which savings had been identified; the potential impacts of savings on individuals, carers and family members, including journey times, as well impacts on strategic partners; and the proposed mitigations for these impacts.

1.5 The Board overall was deeply concerned about the impacts that all proposals would have on vulnerable individuals and services but recognised the extremely challenging financial position of East Sussex County Council and the need to identify significant savings in order to set a balanced budget. The Board was concerned about the capacity of the independent and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to meet increases in demand as a result of proposals going ahead, and noted the fragility of the care market, particularly since the recent increases to national living wage and employer national insurance contributions. The Board discussed plans for local government reorganisation and commented that some savings proposals would have significant impacts on district and borough council services, which would become the responsibility of any new unitary authority.

The Board agreed that it was important for the Council to continue to lobby Government for sustainable funding that met the needs of East Sussex residents.

Proposal to close the Milton Grange Day Service for older people

1.6 The Board recognised the value of this service to its clients and carers and welcomed assurance that the revised proposal for Milton Grange Day Service would be able to continue to meet demand.

1.7 The Board agreed that, in light of the challenging financial context, the revised proposal was the best possible outcome for clients and their carers.

Proposal to close the Phoenix Centre Day Service for older people

1.8 The Board considered the impact of this proposal on clients and their carers, including a recent successful temporary move to Milton Grange during building work on the Phoenix Day Service Centre, and agreed that although there would be some impact on individuals, Milton Grange could offer appropriate alternative provision to clients. The Board considered the travel arrangements for clients and carers who used the service and welcomed assurance that alternative provision would be appropriate for the individual and would take travel journeys into consideration. The Board, therefore, in light of the current financial context, recognised that the proposal was the best outcome available. However, the Board's acceptance of this proposal was dependent on Cabinet agreeing to keep providing services at Milton Grange.

1.9 The Board was concerned about the future of the Phoenix Talking Newspaper and welcomed the Department's efforts to seek ongoing ways to provide this.

Proposal to cease the specialist mental health community outreach service

1.10 The Board agreed that the revised proposal was the best outcome possible, in light of the current financial context, and was reassured that clients using the service would be unlikely to notice any change in delivery. The Board therefore accepted the proposal and requested that the Department report to People Scrutiny Committee in 6-9 months' time on the impact of changes to service delivery and the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

Proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service

1.11 In light of the financial context, the Board regrettably accepted this proposal, however the Board was deeply concerned about the potential impacts this would have on vulnerable clients, particularly on mental health, and sought and welcomed assurance that any transition to a new service would be managed sensitively through client and carer reviews. The Board was also concerned about the increased travel time which could impact clients and their carers and welcomed assurance that alternative provision would be appropriate for individuals affected and would take travel journeys into consideration.

1.12 The Board requested that the Department report to the People Scrutiny Committee in 6 – 9 months time on these impacts and noted that the committee would seek assurance that the relocation of clients had not been detrimental to their or their carer's health.

Proposal to close the Steps to Work service for people with a learning disability

1.13 Overall, the Board recognised that the proposal was the best available outcome in light of the financial context and welcomed the ongoing provision of employment support. However, the Board was concerned that support once people were in employment would cease and that this could affect clients' ability to remain in work. The Board did however recognise that some support was provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.

1.14 Councillor Cross did not support this proposal and expressed a view that the service should be reduced rather than ceased. Councillor Cross expressed concern that the proposal for job coaches to deliver employment support through a re-modelled Learning Disability Day Service Offer would be less effective as coaches would not sit within a dedicated employment service.

Proposal to cease the Community Support Service for adults living independently at home and adapt the service for adults living in supported accommodation

1.15 The Board accepted the revised proposal, in light of the financial context, and received assurance that the individuals affected by ceasing of support at weekends would be supported through a review and offered either a change of day that they received support, or an alternative form of support at the weekend. The Board also noted the potential benefits of existing day services providing a wider range of support.

1.16 The Board welcomed that the revised proposal had generated a larger saving, and that Cabinet was being recommended to use this to mitigate the impact of a reduced saving on another ASCH proposal.

1.17 Councillor Cross expressed concern at increasing the delivery of services through the independent sector and expressed the view that this could be more costly long term.

Hookstead Day Service

1.18 In light of the revised proposal for the Community Support Service for adults living independently at home and service for adults living in supported accommodation, the Board accepted the revised proposal to continue to provide a service at Hookstead Day Service, but at a reduced rate. The Board expressed that it was important to ensure there was provision in the north of the county and that, by preserving the service, it could be expanded in the future if there was increased demand. The Board was concerned that the revised timetable would impact on clients and carers, particularly carers who may use the service in order to work and welcomed assurance that clients and carers impacted by the revised timetable would

be supported and that, although the proposal was to reduce activity times, the morning drop off time would remain unaltered.

Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

1.19 The Board was deeply concerned about this proposal and its likely impact on vulnerable clients, including increased risk of homelessness, and on strategic partners and the VCSE sector, including BHT Sussex. The Board felt that the proposal would shift additional pressures onto district and borough councils which had a statutory responsibility to provide support. The Board also expressed concern that this was a short term solution and that housing support could be the responsibility of a new unitary authority in 3 years' time. However, the Board recognised that this service was not a statutory responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect. In light of this, the Board reluctantly accepted the proposal.

1.20 The Board received assurance that, although referrals would be reduced, priority would be given to referrals from Children's Services and individuals most at risk of developing Care Act eligible needs, which included those with care experience.

1.21 The Board welcomed that the Department would continue to work with partners, including districts and boroughs to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention.

Supported Accommodation for adults with mental health, and additional needs

1.22 The Board was deeply concerned about this proposal and its likely impact on vulnerable clients, including increased risk of homelessness, and on strategic partners. The Board felt that the proposal would shift additional pressures onto district and borough councils which had a statutory responsibility to provide support. The Board also expressed concern that this was a short term solution and that housing support could be the responsibility of a new unitary authority in 3 years' time. However, the Board recognised that this was not a statutory responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect and reluctantly accepted the proposal.

1.23 The Board welcomed that the Department would continue to work with partners, including districts and boroughs to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention.

Proposal to cease the funding for Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services when the current contracts end in summer 2025

1.24 The Board recognised the value of this service and, with no statutory responsibility for any organisation to provide this support, was deeply concerned that there would be no alternative provision if the service was to cease, and that there would be a subsequent increase in service needs. The Board was concerned about the impact this could have on strategic partners and the VCSE sector, including the Seaview Project. However, the Board recognised that this was not a statutory

responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect. In light of this, the Board reluctantly accepted the proposal.

1.25 The Board recommended that the service should be retained if possible but recognised that this was contingent on the Department receiving Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant funding from the Government. The Board expressed deep concern about the significant impacts on vulnerable people, carers, the health and care system, and wider community if this funding was not forthcoming.

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CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 25 February 2025.

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Penny di Cara, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Bowdler	- item 13 (minute 62)
Councillor Cross	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Daniel	- items 5, 8, 13, 14 and 15 (minutes 54, 58, 62, 63 and 64)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Field	- items 11 and 14 (minutes 60 and 63)
Councillor Galley	- item 12 (minute 61)
Councillor Hilton	- items 5 and 13 (minutes 54 and 62)
Councillor Hollidge	- item 9 (minutes 55)
Councillor Howell	- items 5, 9, 12 and 14 (minutes 54, 55, 61 and 63)
Councillor Lunn	- item 14 (minute 63)
Councillor Maples	- items 5, 7, 10, 13 and 14 (minutes 54, 57, 59, 62 and 63)
Councillor Maynard	- items 5, 6 and 13 (minutes 54, 56 and 62)
Councillor Robinson	- items 7 and 13 (minutes 57 and 62)
Councillor Scott	- item 5 (minute 54)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- items 5 and 13 (minutes 54 and 62)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- items 9 and 13 (minutes 55 and 62)
Councillor Standley	- items 5 and 12 (minutes 54 and 61)
Councillor Swansborough	- item 5 (minute 54)
Councillor Taylor	- item 12 (minute 61)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 (minutes 54, 56, 55, 59, 62 and 63)
Councillor Wright	- items 13 and 14 (minutes 62 and 63)

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2025

51.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

52. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

52.1 Councillor Daniel declared a personal interest in items 5 to 15 as an Associate Hospital Manager for Sussex Partnership Trust. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.2 Councillor Field declared a personal interest in items 5 and 13 as a Member of Rother District Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.3 Councillor Hilton declared a personal interest in item 13 as the Leader of Hastings Borough Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.4 Councillor Maples declared a personal interest in items 5 to 15 as a Member of Lewes District Council and Lewes Town Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.5 Councillor Maynard declared a personal interest in items 5, 13 and 14 as a Member of Rother District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.6 Councillor Robinson declared a personal interest in item 13 as the Deputy Leader of Lewes District Council. She did not consider this to be prejudicial.

52.7 Councillor Stephen Shing declared a personal interest in item 13 as a Member of Wealden District Council. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

53. REPORTS

53.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

54. ADULT SOCIAL CARE 2025/26 PROPOSALS

54.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health together with comments from the People Scrutiny Committee.

54.2 It was RESOLVED to note the background to the Adult Social Care proposals that have been subject to public consultation, when considering the individual proposals found later on the agenda.

Reasons

54.3 The autumn 2024 budget and confirmation of the Local Government Settlement in December 2024 has not created any significant improvement in the Council's financial situation. Adult Social Care and Health still needs to make the savings identified.

54.4 Overwhelmingly, the responses to the consultation process for the 11 original proposals, found later on the agenda, are against the proposals.

54.5 It is clear from the individual Equalities Impact Assessments and consideration of the cumulative impact that many people with protected characteristics (and those people who East Sussex County Council have identified as additional categories requiring consideration e.g. carers and those living in rural areas) will be impacted by the proposals if they go ahead. In many instances there is likely to be a cumulative impact as many people will have more than one protected characteristic and may be impacted by more than one of the proposals.

54.6 Having considered the feedback to the public consultation, the impacts identified through the Equality Impact Assessment and reviewing the original proposals, some significant changes to the original proposals are now being recommended. These have the advantage of mitigating some of the impact on the adults, carers, families and staff affected whilst still delivering the required level of savings.

54.7 Depending on which proposals are agreed, the Council's Property Services Team will make best use of any properties / space that becomes available, looking across the Council's entire estate in order to make the optimum decisions regarding use of properties.

54.8 When considering the more detailed reports on the 11 public consultation proposals found later on the agenda, and making decisions in respect of those, Cabinet will also take into account the report which sets out the overarching information which is relevant to all the proposals.

55. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE LINDEN COURT DAY SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND MERGE IT WITH BEECHING PARK DAY SERVICE

55.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

55.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability in Eastbourne;
- 2) Agree to re-provision the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a learning disability in Bexhill and to revise the days of opening and opening hours, as set out in paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 of the report;
- 3) Agree to establish a satellite day service in Eastbourne as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, to be provided two days per week and to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision; and
- 4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

55.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

55.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

55.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that the proposal for Linden Court and Beeching Park is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. All the feedback to the consultation has been considered and modification and mitigation of the proposal was explored where possible to address the concerns raised.

55.6 Whilst it is recognised that closing Linden Court would cause an element of disruption and potentially increase travel times for some adults that attend the service, and the parent/carers involved, the alternative provision at Beeching Park would be able to meet the needs of most adults, with alternative options to Beeching Park being available where required.

55.7 The Council will take steps to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposal, by offering bespoke support to adults with more complex needs to help them manage this transition. This is designed to meet the specific needs of adults who would need additional support to access an alternative provision.

55.8 It is anticipated that a satellite service will initially have capacity to support up to 15 adults per week. This would ease the impact for several adults and parent/carers, offering a flexibility to how their day service provision could be provided. In the interim, this satellite provision will be offered from the existing Linden Court site until the Director of Adult Social

Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, determines the final location for this satellite provision.

55.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

56. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE MILTON GRANGE DAY SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

56.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

56.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree to continue to provide day services at Milton Grange, in Eastbourne, for older people with a range of physical and mental health needs associated with dementia;

2) Agree that the service provision at Milton Grange Day Service in Eastbourne be remodelled as set out in paragraph 5.8 of the report; and

3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

56.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

56.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

56.5 The original proposals put forward by ASCH were designed to contribute to the savings required by the County Council. It is clear from the feedback highlighted in the consultation that most respondents disagree with the original proposals to close Milton Grange and to support people to access alternative service in the community.

56.6 The feedback received has been considered and officers have been able to produce an alternative proposal that maintains day services at Milton Grange in Eastbourne and which still achieves the same level of savings.

56.7 The re-modelled service will operate five days per week instead of six, which will deliver savings of £203,000.

56.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

57. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE PHOENIX CENTRE DAY SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

57.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

57.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree to close the Phoenix Centre Day Service in Lewes for older people with physical and mental health needs;
- 2) Agree that the Council will support people to access alternative services in the community which, will include the East Sussex County Council run Day Service, Milton Grange in Eastbourne; and
- 3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

57.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

57.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

57.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required by the Council. It is clear from the feedback highlighted in the consultation, that most respondents disagree with the proposal to close the Phoenix Centre Day Service and to support people to access alternative services in the community.

57.6 However, the savings of £191,000 cannot be met unless the Phoenix Centre Day Service closes and alternative options are looked at for meeting the assessed care needs of the 32 people currently using the service.

57.7 Having considered the feedback from the consultation process a potential mitigation has been identified and is set out in the report, namely, to offer adults receiving a service at the Phoenix Centre the opportunity to consider the Milton Grange Day Service as well as other alternative services in the community.

57.8 This will ensure that the eligible needs of these people are still met whilst allowing the Council to achieve the required £191,000 savings.

57.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

58. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICE

58.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

58.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to cease the existing Mental Health Community Outreach service in its current format and to provide alternative Mental Health Community Outreach services specifically via the Council's Joint Community Rehabilitation (JCR) Team and Milton Grange

Mental Health Intermediate Care beds (part of the existing Older People Directly Provided Services); and

2) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolution.

Reasons

58.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

58.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

58.5 During the consultation process it was apparent that both JCR and Milton Grange Mental Health intermediate Care beds already offer a service for the cohort of people served by the Mental Health Community Outreach service:

- Older people with depression and/or anxiety who may also be living with psychosis (which is in remission and deemed to be low risk);
- Individuals with 'mild' cognitive impairment, defined as impairment not accompanied by behaviours which challenge or present high levels of risk in the community;
- Older people with dementia.

58.6 It was ascertained that JCR and the Milton Grange Mental Health intermediate care beds can provide services which would mitigate the impact if the Mental Health Community Outreach service were to be ceased.

58.7 This will deliver savings of £318,000 but ensure that those requiring mental health support still have a clear pathway to access services that meet their needs.

58.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

59. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE STEPS TO WORK SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

59.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

59.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree the proposal to close the Steps to Work Service, including Shine Car Valet based at County Hall in its current format and implement a revised supported employment offer with job coaches aligned to a re-modelled Learning Disability Day Service offer; and

2) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolution.

Reasons

59.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

59.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

59.5 It is clear that the majority of respondents value Steps to Work and the service it provides. Supporting adults into work achieves positive outcomes that would be jeopardised were the service to cease. However the financial position of the Council requires Adult Social Care and Health to make savings.

59.6 In order to mitigate the impacts on those adults currently using the Steps to Work service, and adults who may need the service in the future, a revised employment support provision that retains job coaches as part of a re-modelled day service provision will be implemented. This would retain Council run support and mitigate the risks and impacts identified through the consultation process whilst still achieving the required savings.

59.7 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

60. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICE FOR ADULTS LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AT HOME AND ADAPT THE SERVICE FOR ADULTS LIVING IN SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

60.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

60.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to cease the Council's Community Support Service for adults living independently in the community in its current format;
- 2) Agree to re-model the way care and support is provided by the Council's Learning Disability Directly Provided Service to tenants in the Council's Learning Disability Supported Living Schemes;
- 3) Agree to establish a new community outreach provision to meet the care and support needs of adults living independently in the community, as a replacement for the existing Community Support Service; and
- 4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

60.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

60.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

60.5 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that these proposals are not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. All of the feedback from the consultation process has been considered in putting together the revised proposals set out in the report.

60.6 It is recognised that ceasing the provision of the Council's Community Support Service (CSS) for adults living independently would cause an element of disruption for those involved and anxiety for the parent/carers involved. It has also become clear that the Personal Assistant market is not in a position to address the care and support needs of all of the adults accessing CSS support in the community. The establishment of a new community outreach service will provide these services instead.

60.7 Re-modelling supported living provision will improve the way that element of the service is delivered and therefore the experience of adults living in Supported Living settings. The remodelled support will improve the consistency of support adults receive and therefore the quality of their care. The remodelled service provision at the Council's Learning Disability Supported Living Schemes means that all tenants' care and support is provided by the accommodation-based staff.

60.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

61. HOOKSTEAD DAY SERVICE

61.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

61.2 Mr Stuart Martin, a representative of the petition opposing the closure of the Hookstead Day Service facility in Crowborough spoke to highlight the concerns regarding the original proposals that were consulted on, the collaborative work between the Hookstead Parents' Association and the County Council to explore alternative options and spoke in support of the revised proposals recommended to Cabinet.

61.3 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Agree to reduce the capacity of Hookstead Day Service by 25%, as detailed in section 5 of the report;
- 2) Agree the revised session times for both Hookstead and St Nicholas Day Services, as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report;
- 3) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to determine the days of the week on which 'Twilight' sessions can continue to be offered at Hookstead Day Service; and
- 4) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

61.4 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

61.5 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

61.6 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the consultation responses that the proposal to close Hookstead and merge with St Nicholas is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing with the proposal.

61.7 Closing Hookstead would cause an element of disruption for adults who attend the service, and their parent/carers. While the alternative provision at St Nicholas in Lewes would be able to meet the needs of most adults if needed, the distance would be a significant barrier for some. The lack of alternative independent sector provision in the north of the county has exacerbated this concern.

61.8 The consultation feedback has been carefully considered and a revised proposal to retain the day service at Hookstead on four days per week and to reduce the capacity by 25% from 45 adults per day to 34 has been developed. The Day Service at Hookstead will be retained, on this basis. As a result of this revised proposal, additional capacity would no longer be required at St Nicholas. No changes to the service at St Nicholas are to be made at this time but the session times will be revised at both Hookstead and St. Nicholas, as set out in paragraph 5.9 of the report.

61.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

62. PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE FUNDING FOR THE HOUSING-RELATED FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

62.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

62.2 Mr David Chaffey, a petition representative and Mr Paul Goddard, the Lead Petitioner for the petition calling on the County Council to protect and retain the East Sussex Floating Support Service, spoke to highlight the changing political landscape in terms of responsibilities at different local government levels, the impact of the proposals on vulnerable residents in East Sussex and proposed an alternative option to reduce the contract value by £2m instead of £3.8m.

62.3 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year from October 2025;

2) Agree that the Council serve a contract variation notice on the service provider, BHT Sussex, to give effect to the reduction of funding set out in resolution 1; and

3) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above resolutions.

Reasons

62.4 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

62.5 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

62.6 The Housing Related Floating Support service is a highly valued service that provides support for people with significant, housing related, support needs. The Council has noted the significant concerns raised through the consultation, the potential impacts for those with protected characteristics identified through the Equality Impact Assessment and the potentially significant additional costs and pressures that will be placed on other parts of the system if the proposed funding reduction for these services is agreed.

62.7 It has not been possible to identify any viable alternative proposals that would achieve the required savings from the ASCH budget. The reduction of funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year with effect from October 2025 will help to address Council's funding gap and the need to make savings.

62.8 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

63. SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION FOR ADULTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH, AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS

63.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

63.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Agree that the on-site support provided at three Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report) cease from 31 December 2025.

2) Agree that the on-site support provided at two Supported Accommodation services for adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness (as set out in paragraph 2.4 of the report) cease from 31 December 2025.

3) Agree that the contract with Pathways be terminated with effect from 31 December 2025 and delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to serve notice of early termination; and

4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all other necessary actions to give effect to the recommendations set out in the report in order to deliver Adult Social Care and Health Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) requirements.

Reasons

63.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

63.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

63.5 The accommodation-based services covered within the report provide support to a range of homeless people with mental health needs and adults with multiple complex support needs. Demand for the services is high, and the unit costs represent exceptional value for money. The impact of withdrawing the funding for the support element of the contract is likely to render the services financially unviable and the providers have informed the Council that as a result they will be forced to close.

63.6 The people currently living within the service will need to move out. These individuals have been referred into the service because they were homeless, or at risk of homelessness, so many will not have accommodation options available to them. This is therefore likely to result in an increase in homelessness, including outcomes that are related to homelessness, including among others, alcohol and drug misuse and criminal behaviour. The Cabinet had due regard to the likely impact of the proposals on crime and disorder in the area, reoffending and the use of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

63.7 Notwithstanding the above, the on-site support provided at three Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs and two Supported Accommodation services for adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are not services that the Council has a statutory duty to provide, and therefore ceasing these services will support the Council's legal duty to set a balanced budget.

63.8 Delaying the implementation of these proposals from the initial date proposed in the consultation (i.e. 30 September 2025) by three months, to take effect from 31 December 2025 will allow additional time for people currently living in the services to secure alternative accommodation and for partners to explore alternative funding sources or means of keeping these or equivalent services available. The extension could be funded from an underspend in another ASCH contract which has been generated by a vacancy freeze pending the outcome of RPPR consultations.

63.9 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

64. PROPOSAL TO CEASE THE FUNDING FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL RECOVERY SERVICES WHEN THE CURRENT CONTRACTS END IN SUMMER 2025

64.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

64.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Subject to confirmation of sufficient Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant (DATRIG) allocation by 31 March 2025, agree to:

- (i) continue funding a carers drug and alcohol recovery service for an additional year to June 2026 subject to the amendments described in paragraph 5.7 of the report;
- (ii) combine the drug and alcohol recovery support services currently provided by the Seaview Project (as described in paragraph 2.1 of the report) into a single contract and to continue funding these services for an additional year to June 2026 subject to the amendments described in paragraph 5.7 of the report.

2) In the absence of confirmation of sufficient Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant (DATRIG) allocation by 31 March 2025, agree to cease funding for drug and alcohol recovery service (as described in paragraph 2.1 of the report) following expiry of the current contracts on 30 June 2025; and

3) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all actions considered necessary to give effect to the recommendations set out in the report, including but not limited to, issuing any required contract notices.

Reasons

64.3 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

64.4 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

64.5 It is anticipated that the additional funding to be made available to the Council for 2025/26 through the DATRIG makes it possible to achieve the required saving of £319,000, whilst also preserving drug and alcohol recovery services for people in the County for an additional year. The recovery services provided will be at a reduced level to reflect the funding anticipated to be available; however, officers will work closely with the service provider to minimise this reduction through reconfiguring the existing service model.

64.6 If, however, the DATRIG allocation is not confirmed by 31 March 2025 or the confirmed allocation is insufficient to fund these services, the funding will cease for drug and alcohol recovery services with effect from 30 June 2025 when the existing contracts expire.

64.7 Cabinet members have read and had regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment when making decisions related to this proposal.

65. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

65.1 There were no items to report to the County Council.

Appendix 5 - Information provided by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service

1. Call-in

1.1 The call-in relates to two areas of concern and how these were taken into account in the decision making process:

- Whether the impact of the proposal on districts and borough councils was sufficiently considered; and
- Whether the interests of a future unitary authority were explicitly considered in the context of the agreement that has been made in principle between the District, Borough and County Council leaders in preparation for unitarisation processes, which includes: ‘...Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day [when the Unitary Authority takes control] will have the interests of future unitary council as an explicit consideration.’.

2. Impact on District and Borough councils

2.1 A thorough review of all consultation responses and all other papers relevant to the proposals for Linden Court, indicates that the decision to close and re-provision Linden Court will not have a material impact on any Borough or District Councils. Borough and District Councils do not have any responsibilities for delivering adult social care services such as those provided at Linden Court.

2.2 The review of documentation included:

Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet 25 February 2025

Appendix 3 – Minutes of Cabinet 25 February 2025

Appendix 4 – People Scrutiny Pre-decision Board comments to Cabinet

All written references to the impact of the closure and re-provision of Linden Court, from across the process are summarised in Appendix 6. Verbal references to the impact on other organisations, including District and Borough authorities, drawn from the Cabinet meeting on 25 February 2025 are listed in Appendix 7.

2.3 The Council ran a public consultation for 8 weeks, between 3 October and 28 November 2024, to understand any impacts that may arise from each of the proposals. The District and Borough Councils engaged extensively with these consultations, with their responses focussing on their concerns in relation to the proposals for the Housing Related Floating Support Service, Supported Accommodation Services and Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services. However, the District and Borough Councils chose not to comment specifically on the consultation relating to Linden Court and Beeching Park. This is not surprising

in the context of the District and Borough Councils not having any responsibility for providing Adult Social Care services.

- 2.4 In particular, the response from Eastbourne Borough Council (i.e. the authority for the area in which Linden Court is based) set out concerns relating to the original proposals for Milton Grange, but did not include any comments specifically on Linden Court. We would not expect the proposals relating to Linden Court and Beeching Park to have an impact on District and Borough Councils, given the current division of statutory responsibilities, and no such impact was borne out through the consultation responses.
- 2.5 Similarly, the potential for proposals to impact on District and Borough Councils was raised by a number of members at the Cabinet meeting in the context of other proposals. However, no members raised any concerns at the meeting about the impact the Linden Court proposal would have on District and Borough Councils. This is consistent with the consultation responses and the fact that District and Borough Councils do not have any adult social care responsibilities.
- 2.6 Cabinet is required to take into account all relevant considerations. The weight to be given to any particular consideration, in reaching their decision, is a matter for Cabinet to determine.

3. Impact on a future unitary authority

- 3.1 As part of the Government's Devolution White Paper, all two-tier authorities were invited on 5 February 2025 to submit proposals for local government reorganisation. An interim plan for working up the proposal for East Sussex is being considered by Full Council and Cabinet on 20 March. Part of the proposal is to establish principles about how the Councils will work together and this includes the principle that *'Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day will have the interests of the future unitary Council as an explicit consideration'*. These principles will be considered as part of the plan, and a decision made on how to proceed.
- 3.2 Therefore, whilst working principles have been drafted with District and Borough Councils, these are yet to be considered through the County Council's formal decision-making process and therefore do not form part of the Council's policy framework. Notwithstanding, the Council continues to work with District and Borough Councils and the impacts of decisions on partners, including District and Borough Councils and any potential unitary authority have where relevant been considered as one of a number of factors within the decision making process, as noted above.
- 3.3 In discussions with the Boroughs and Districts it has also been recognised that each council remains sovereign and has legal responsibility to balance its budget until vesting day for a new unitary. Whilst all councils are committed to strong partnership working to consider fully impacts on other councils and/or the new unitary, the principle cannot be the only factor considered.

- 3.4 The potential to form a unitary was raised by a number of members at the Cabinet meeting, as well as how these proposals (or indeed a decision not to proceed with them) would impact a future unitary authority. Similarly, it was expressly referred to in the comments from the pre-Cabinet Scrutiny Board which formed part of the Cabinet papers. Cabinet was therefore aware of this and considered it as one of the factors that was relevant to the decisions. The weight to be given to this particular consideration in reaching their decision is a matter for Cabinet to determine.
- 3.5 In the context of the requirement for ESCC to make savings to deliver a balanced budget for 2025/26, in making decisions on specific proposals the Cabinet considered all material considerations relevant to that proposal. When making the decision, It is evident that Cabinet did have regard to the impact on any potential new unitary authority, and put such weight as they considered appropriate on this consideration bearing in mind it relates to a future organisation, which as yet, has no worked up proposal in place, no government decision, and if agreed will not come into being for a number of years; this was balanced against all the other relevant and more immediate considerations.

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 17 March 2025.

PRESENT Councillors Johanna Howell (Chair), Colin Belsey, Anne Cross, Nuala Geary, Stephen Shing, Colin Swansborough, Trevor Webb, Paul Redstone, Brett Wright and Steve Murphy and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative)

LEAD MEMBERS Councillor Bob Standley
Councillor Bob Bowdler and (via MS Teams)
Councillor Carl Maynard (via MS Teams)

ALSO PRESENT Carolyn Fair, Director of Children's Services
Mark Stainton, Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Bekki Freeman, Solicitor
Kaveri Sharma, Head of Inclusion and Support Services
Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 19 NOVEMBER 2024

30.1 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 as a correct record.

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

31.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark, Field, Lambert and Pragnell and Maria Cowler (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Representative). Councillor Murphy attended as a substitute for Councillor Field, Councillor Redstone attended as a substitute for Councillor Pragnell and Councillor Wright attended as a substitute for Councillor Lambert.

32. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

32.1 Councillor Redstone declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under item 7, School Exclusions Scrutiny Review and item 9, Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report as Chair of Governors for the Genesis Federation.

33. URGENT ITEMS

33.1 There were no urgent items.

34. CALL-IN: DECISION MADE BY CABINET REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE LINDEN COURT DAY SERVICE FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND MERGE IT WITH BEECHING PARK DAY SERVICE

34.1 The Chair introduced the report and outlined that the purpose of the report was to allow the Committee to consider the call-in in relation to the decision by Cabinet regarding the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service.

34.2 The Committee considered the call-in and the information contained in the report. A summary of the questions raised, and comments made is given below.

- **Impact of decision on a future unitary authority** - Some Members raised concerns about the potential financial impacts of the proposal on a future unitary authority, including a potential increase in residential care costs for individuals who would not be able to access alternative provision. Some Members also expressed concern that this proposal could impact on vulnerable people's emotional wellbeing which would increase demand for local health services, including specialist provision such as the NHS Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust Learning Disabilities service and, subsequently, increase costs for a future unitary authority. Some Councillors expressed the view that there needed to be more financial assessment of any impacts on a future unitary authority, including increased demand for residential care.

In response, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) recognised the concerns and the impact of all the ASCH savings proposals on clients, carers and families but noted that these were put forward in light of the need for the Council to deliver its statutory duties to meet Care Act eligible needs and to deliver a balanced budget. In relation to the agreement in principle between ESCC and the district and borough councils, there was no formal agreement yet in place and final proposals for a unitary authority would not be submitted until September 2025. He also noted that potential impacts of decisions on a future unitary authority had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee and at Cabinet and confirmed that there were no anticipated impacts of this proposal on any future unitary council. In response to concerns about increased demand for residential care, the Director clarified that there was no anticipated increase to residential care needs as a result of this proposal due to the re-provision of care for those with eligible needs.

- **Impact of decision on districts and boroughs** - Some Members raised concerns about the potential financial impacts of the proposal on district and borough councils, including a potential increase on demand for Revenue and Benefits services if people needed to pay more for care. Some Members expressed the view that there needed to be more financial assessment of any impacts on district and borough councils. In response, the Director confirmed that there were no anticipated impacts from this proposal on district and borough councils and no anticipated increased costs for clients' care.
- **Use of consultations** - Some Members raised concerns about the responses to the public consultation in relation to the proposal, noting that the majority of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal to close Linden Court Day Service and raised concerns about public engagement in future consultations if residents felt their views had not been heard. In response, the Director noted that the proposal to close Linden Court had been made after extensive consultation and views on all proposals had been considered. In response to these views, a number of adjustments had been made to the original proposals, where it was possible to achieve required savings in an alternative way. This included the updated proposal in relation to Linden Court to provide a satellite service two days a week in Eastbourne.
- **Alternative provision** - Some Members of the Committee expressed concerns about potential challenges for clients and carers accessing alternative provision, including increased travel times for some, and that this could lead to an increase in people receiving residential care which would be costly, compared with providing existing services at Linden Court, and would not provide the same experience for clients. Some Members therefore felt there should be more financial assessment before a decision could be made on this proposal. Concerns were also raised about the provision of transport to alternative provision, and that this could not be confirmed until individual assessments had been undertaken. Councillor Murphy also commented that this proposal would increase travel emissions which contradicted the Council's priority to reduce

emissions. Councillor Wright commented that some families and carers had expressed doubt that the Council could meet client's eligible needs with the proposed alternative provision.

In response, the Director clarified that as part of a Care Act Assessment for individuals and their carer/family members, the Department would review transport needs and had already made provision for anticipated additional transport costs. Although the detail could not be worked through until these assessments had been completed, the Director confirmed that that where transport was an identified eligible need, this would be met. Where there was a lack of trust in this process from family/carers, the Department would continue to work with them to build that trust.

The Chair noted that the Committee had considered the locations and anticipated travel times for current clients at its pre-decision scrutiny board in February. The Director also confirmed that this information had been included in the original Cabinet report and had therefore been considered.

- **Ongoing costs for Linden Court** - Councillor Murphy sought clarification about the ongoing costs to maintain and secure Linden Court and if these had been included in the proposal. The Director clarified that the proposal included the expected costs to maintain a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days a week, the additional staff needed to support Beeching Park and the additional associated costs for the premises and transport, and included costs to support clients who would access alternative services to Beeching Park following their care assessment.
- **Respite provision** – Councillor Webb enquired if the Department had considered a potential increase in respite provision. The Director responded that the demand for respite was not expected to increase as result of this proposal.
- **Alternative savings** – Some Members of the Committee questioned whether required savings could have been identified elsewhere. The Director noted the difficulty in identifying savings in the current financial context, with significant savings delivered in previous years, and outlined the areas the Department had identified to protect as far as possible. He reiterated that the Department would continue to meet Care Act eligible needs and support people to live as independently as possible.

34.3 The Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health welcomed the Committee's engagement with the ASCH savings proposals, including at its pre-decision scrutiny board, which had considered the proposals in detail. He commented that these were difficult decisions, but in response to concerns about the impact of these decisions on a future unitary authority, noted that it was currently unclear what form a future authority would take, and the County Council had a current responsibility to set a balanced budget. The Department also had a responsibility, and would continue, to meet Care Act eligible needs on an individual basis.

34.5 Councillor Tutt expressed the view that the proposal would impact on clients' and carers' mental health and wellbeing and affect clients' relationships with other attendees of the service if different alternative provision were required. Councillor Tutt also commented that it was currently unclear what future costs of provision would be, including for transport, potential requirements for residential care, staff redundancy, and ongoing building costs and that more financial analysis was needed. Councillor Tutt also commented on the reduced attendance at Linden Court and suggested that there could be more demand for this service. In response, the Director noted the standardised approach that was used to cost the reprovision of services and that costs for transport included the maximum possible costs of every client attending Beeching Court, which was unlikely. The Director noted the Council's Employment Stability Policy which aimed to reduce redundancies and clarified that expected redundancy costs for all proposals had been included in the Cabinet report. The Director reiterated the view that this proposal was

unlikely to result in an increase in residential care as individuals' needs would be met through reprovisioned care. The Director also commented that occupancy for all day services had seen a reduction and commented that those who do attend, often attend on a part time basis throughout the week.

34.6 The Lead Member for Education and ISEND, commented that Members had heard that the proposal would not impact on district and borough councils and that it was unclear what form a future unitary authority would take. He also noted that the proposal had been considered in detail by the Committee at its pre-decision scrutiny board and the Committee had noted that in light of the financial context it regretfully accepted the proposal.

34.7 Councillor Cross moved a Motion that the matter be referred to the County Council on the grounds that more financial assessment of the impact on a future unitary council and on district and borough councils was needed, including any additional costs for respite care. Councillor Webb seconded the Motion.

34.8 A recorded vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Cross. The motion was CARRIED with the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Cross, Murphy, Shing, Swansborough, Webb and Wright

AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Belsey, Geary, Howell and Redstone

ABSTENTIONS

None

34.9 The Committee RESOLVED to refer the matter in relation to the decision by Cabinet in relation to the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service to the County Council.

35. CALL-IN: DECISION MADE BY CABINET REGARDING THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE FUNDING FOR THE HOUSING-RELATED FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE

35.1 The Chair introduced the report and outlined that the purpose of the report was to allow the Committee to consider the call-in in relation to the decision by Cabinet regarding the proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service.

35.2 The Committee considered the call-in and the information contained in the report. A summary of the questions raised, and comments made is given below.

- **Use of consultations** – Councillor Cross commented that 92% respondents to the public consultation either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal and expressed concern about public engagement in future consultations if residents felt their views had not been heard, which could impact on a future unitary council. In response the Director of ASCH commented that consultation responses had been considered and that the value of the service and potential impacts, including an increase in demand, had been acknowledged and debated by the Scrutiny Committee and by Cabinet.
- **Impact of decisions on district and borough councils**– Some Members commented that district and borough housing teams had estimated an additional annual cost to housing authorities of £9m if the service had not been available and sought clarification about conversations with district and borough councils about alternative funding arrangements. Some Members commented that, although they understood that the Housing-Related Floating Support Service was

not a statutory responsibility, reducing the funding would have significant financial implications for district and borough councils and, in light of local government reorganisation, that these implications, as well as plans for the transition period, needed further consideration.

In response, the Director noted that, although the £9m cost to district and borough councils was unverified, the impacts had been transparent in the original Cabinet papers and had been considered in detail by the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. The Director clarified that ESCC made up approximately 50% of the referrals to the service (although noted that most referrals were housing related), and the remainder came from district and borough councils (approximately 25%), other organisations (approximately 20%) and self-referrals (approximately 5%) and noted that it was currently fully funded by ESCC. The Director clarified that, as well as the consultation, formal and informal conversations had been taking place with district and borough councils since prior to the publication of the proposals and that these were continuing. ESCC had requested funding from district and borough councils to support the service, but as of yet this had not been forthcoming. If the implementation of the decision was delayed for six months, as requested by the districts and boroughs, ESCC would need to identify £1.9m of savings elsewhere. The Director reiterated that, although the implications of reducing the service had been considered by Cabinet, housing and homelessness prevention was not a statutory duty for ESCC.

The Chair noted the discussion at the pre-decision scrutiny board where it was recognised that this proposal would have an impact on the district and borough councils but the Committee, in light of the financial situation, had understood it was not a statutory duty of the Council.

- **Impact of decisions on a future unitary authority** – Some Members raised concerns that the proposal did not align with the draft East Sussex Local Government Reorganisation Interim Plan which set out in principle that councils would consider the interests of the future unitary council in decision making, and noted that district and borough councils had requested to delay the proposal in order to seek alternative funding arrangements. Councillor Wright expressed concern that there was a risk a future unitary authority would need to issue a Section 114 notice if funding for support services, including Floating Housing Support, was reduced.

In response, the Director reiterated that there was currently no formal agreement in place between the County Council and district and borough councils and final proposals for a unitary authority would not be submitted until September 2025. He also noted that the impacts of decisions on a future unitary authority had been considered in detail by the Scrutiny Committee and at Cabinet.

- **Draft Homelessness Strategy** – Some Members raised concerns that the aims of the draft Homelessness Strategy had not been considered in Cabinet's decision to proceed with the proposal to reduce funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service. In response the Director noted that housing related support was a key element of this strategy, and had significant preventative value, but that this could only be achieved with sufficient funding which required input from partners, and clarified that as yet, there had been no financial commitments from partners.
- **Future of the service provider** – Councillor Cross noted the work of the service provider, BHT Sussex, and commented that their alternative proposal to reduce the contract value by £2m would enable them to continue supporting 3,500 people and she expressed concern about the sustainability of providing support if the funding were to reduce as set out in the proposal. In response, the Director recognised BHT Sussex as a valued strategic partner but commented that if the

alternative proposal put forward by BHT Sussex were to be implemented, ESCC would need to identify £1.8m of savings each year from other services.

- **Impact on Children's Services** – Some Members commented on the original Cabinet report which noted a potential impact on Children's Services with increased demand to prevent families from homelessness. The Director reassured the Committee that the service would continue to prioritise and support households with children at risk of homelessness. Priority would also be given to adults at risk of presenting with Care Act eligible needs if their housing needs were not met.

35.3 The Lead Member for ASCH and the Lead Member for Education and ISEND commented that Cabinet had given due consideration to the impact of this proposal on district and borough councils.

35.4 Councillor Cross moved a Motion that the matter be referred to the County Council on the grounds that a full mediated assessment of the position of the district and borough councils on the proposal was needed, and that further consideration was needed about the impact of this proposal on a future unitary authority. Councillor Webb seconded the Motion.

35.5 A recorded vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Cross. The motion was CARRIED with the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Cross, Murphy, Shing, Swansborough, Webb and Wright

AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Belsey, Geary, Howell and Redstone

ABSTENTIONS

None

35.6 The Committee RESOLVED to refer the matter in relation to the decision by Cabinet in relation to the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service to Full Council.

36. SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW

36.1 The Committee considered the report which provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the School Exclusions Scrutiny Review.

36.2 The Committee RESOLVED to note that all the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review had been embedded within the work of the Department which had resulted in a reduction in permanent exclusions. The Committee agreed that any questions on the report would be followed up outside of the meeting.

37. NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

37.1 The Director of Children's Services Department (CSD) introduced the report which detailed key national policy developments in Children's Services, including the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which set out 39 new policies across social care and education, which would impact on the services provided by ESCC. The Director welcomed the direction of travel, noting that many of the reforms aligned with current CSD priorities, including a focus on prevention, although did note some concern with the speed in which these were being implemented. The report outlined the Department's response to these reforms and the Director welcomed scrutiny's input into this.

37.2 The Committee asked questions and made comments on the following areas:

- **Use of agency workers** – The Committee enquired about the Council's use of agency workers and if this would be impacted by the reforms to reduce council spend on this. The Director welcomed the change as it promoted a more permanent and stable workforce and clarified that this would have less of an impact on ESCC as they did not use many agency social workers.
- **Funding**- The Committee sought clarification on the likely costs for ESCC, as well as government funding, to deliver the reforms. The Director noted that local authorities had been allocated some funding through the Government's Prevention Grant to deliver these reforms and commented that the ambitions of the reforms mirrored local priorities on prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for families as well as significantly reduce the cost of care.
- **Departmental priorities** – The Committee welcomed some of the reforms, including increased school places, changes to Multi Academy Trusts and inclusive education in schools, but recognised the Council's financial limitations and asked how the Department would prioritise its resources. The Director clarified that the Department would provide services in line with the legislation and reiterated that work currently underway to support families earlier and focus on prevention mirrored the ambitions of these reforms and the Prevention Grant would be used to further resource the delivery of these ambitions. The Director also noted that it would be working with partners to ensure there was wider support for this work.
- **Educational outcomes** – A question was asked about the educational outcomes in schools in East Sussex compared to national outcomes. The Director commented that there was more to do in East Sussex to improve attainment and that there was focussed work in targeted areas to improve outcomes.

37.3 The Committee RESOLVED to note the breadth and depth of policy reforms affecting the delivery of services to children, young people and families in East Sussex and agreed to receive updates on progress of these reforms by the Department quarterly through a Reference Group.

38. STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) ANNUAL REPORT

38.1 The Chair of SACRE introduced the annual report which outlined the work of SACRE for 2023-24 and thanked the team involved with SACRE, including teachers and volunteers.

38.2 The Committee welcomed the report and noted the positive addition of a Humanist Representative to SACRE and that there had been no complaints regarding Collective Worship which was a testament to the hard work of SACRE. The Committee also welcomed the number of school visits arranged by SACRE.

38.3 The Committee RESOLVED to note the work of SACRE in the implementation of the Local Agreed Syllabus, raising the profile and importance of religious education and supporting the high-quality teaching of Religious Education in East Sussex and academies.

39. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR)

39.1 The Chair introduced the report which reviewed the Committee's input into the RPPR cycle for the 2024-25 financial year and provided an opportunity for the Committee to review the priorities on its work programme.

39.2 The Directors of ASCH and CSD welcomed scrutiny's input into the RPPR process.

39.3 Councillor Wright commented that the Committee could explore how to make the process more agile.

39.4 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report and identify topics for the Committee's work programme in the work programme item.

40. WORK PROGRAMME

40.1 The Chair introduced the report which outlined the Committee's latest work programme.

40.2 The Committee discussed its current reference groups and RESOLVED to combine the School Attendance Reference Group and the Prevention in Children's Services Reference Group into one reference group focussed on Children's Services reforms. The Director of ASCH commented that the CQC Reference Group could provide input into the Department's action plan in response to the awaited CQC report.

40.3 The Committee discussed a potential focus on the recruitment of foster carers and agreed that this would be included in the Children's Services reforms Reference Group.

40.4 Councillor Wright enquired if the Committee could look at the Council's consultation process. The Lead Member for Education and ISEND commented that this would be within the remit of the Governance Committee.

40.5 The Committee discussed transport for all age care and RESOLVED to establish a scoping board for a potential scrutiny review of this topic. The scoping board would include officers from ASCH, CSD and Communities, Economy and Transport.

40.6 The Director of ASCH informed the Committee of work underway to develop a Climate Change Health Impact Assessment and asked if the Committee would like to receive a briefing on this. The Committee RESOLVED to receive a briefing on this as well as a report to Committee in July.

40.7 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the updated work programme incorporating the changes above.

41. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IN ASCH SCRUTINY REVIEW

41.1 The Director of ASCH introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Equality and Inclusion in ASCH Scrutiny Review. The action plan included significant progress including a new Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Group and the use of data to understand how seldom heard groups accessed services.

41.2 The Director noted that work on the Community Engagement Framework had paused due to the resources needed for the recent CQC assessment and the RPPR savings proposals, however this would continue in the near future.

41.3 The Committee welcomed the positive outcomes outlined in the report and action plan and asked questions in following areas:

- **East Sussex Gypsy Roma Traveller Health Inequalities Partnership Group –** There Committee enquired about the membership of the East Sussex Gypsy Roma Traveller Health Inequalities Partnership Group. The Head of Inclusion and Support Services commented that the Department had taken time to establish this Group to ensure a Terms of Reference was drafted in collaboration with key partners including members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

community and confirmed that the Group included representatives from this community.

- **ASCH complaints** – The Committee enquired about the work to collect data around complaints and if people were happy to share this data. The Head of Inclusion and Support Services noted that analysis was being undertaken to understand groups that are not making complaints, as well as those who are, and noted that they had not received a lot of feedback to date. The Department was working to complete data impact assessments to collate data from the liquid logic system when complaints are made. The Director added that data was being used to understand how the Department was engaging and supporting seldom heard groups and confirmed that its annual complaints report could be circulated to the Committee.

41.4 The Committee thanked officers for the report and requested another update in 6 months time.

41.5 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm.

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Appendix 7 – Call-in Request

Councillors Anne Cross, Kathryn Field, Carolyn Lambert, Stephen Shing and Trevor Webb request a call-in of the decision by Cabinet to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service for the following reasons:

In principle, the agreement that has been made between the District, Borough and County Council leaders in preparation for unitarisation processes, includes this: '...Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day [when the Unitary Authority takes control] will have the interests of future unitary council as an explicit consideration.'

The impact of this decision on districts and boroughs was also not sufficiently considered.

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Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	25 February 2025
By:	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Title:	Proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service
Purpose:	To consider the outcome of the public consultation and to decide on the proposal to reduce funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Agree to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year from October 2025;**
 - 2) Agree that the Council serve a contract variation notice on the service provider, BHT Sussex, to give effect to the reduction of funding set out in recommendation 1; and**
 - 3) Delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above recommendations.**
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed on 26 September 2024 to launch a consultation exercise relating to the Housing-Related Floating Support Service which provides housing advice to residents across the county (the papers are available: [here](#)). The proposal presented to Cabinet in September 2024 was to reduce the funding for this service from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year. This would be a reduction in the budget of 88.5%.
- 1.2 If the proposal is agreed, the change would happen from October 2025 at the earliest, as the Council is required to give six months' notice to the provider. This proposal, as well as other potential service changes being explored by Adult Social Care and Health, is to help close the Council's funding gap.
- 1.3 The consultation ran between 3 October and 28 November 2024. The impact of the new funding settlement for the Council has been considered when making the proposal in this report.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council currently commissions BHT Sussex to deliver short-term direct support to East Sussex residents with housing-related needs. The Housing-Related Floating Support Service is available to East Sussex residents aged 16+ years, living in, or moving to, independent or supported accommodation in all housing tenures who require housing-related support.
- 2.2 East Sussex County Council has commissioned housing related floating support since April 2014. It originated from the Supporting People Programme under which the

Council was in receipt of the Supporting People Grant. From 2011, Supporting People was subsumed into the overall Formula Grant paid to Local Authorities. Unlike many other Local Authorities, the Council has continued to invest in housing related support in recognition of the relationship between suitable housing and improving health and reducing health inequalities.

2.3 The service aims to underpin the strategic priorities of Adult Social Care and Health, and to:

- Enable people with housing related support needs to live independently;
- Identify the key components that enable people to remain living independently in their own homes, and their experiences of accessing existing support and the service;
- Understand the barriers that prevent people from living at home independently and work collaboratively to look at how to improve outcomes and reduce pressure across the system;
- Provide flexible, personalised, and appropriate housing support, stratified to manage a range of levels of need and risk;
- Minimise risk of homelessness and address inappropriate housing;
- Signpost individuals and/or family members as appropriate to health and social care services, education, training, employment and support, voluntary, community and social enterprise sector services that will assist with accessing and maintaining their housing and ability to live independently for longer;
- Provide time-limited follow up support to prevent and reduce risks of homelessness/ unsuitable housing;
- Ensure people are appropriately signposted or referred to mental health, social care, health services and substance misuse services as needed and any other appropriate services according to need.

2.4 During 2023/24 the service supported 5,282 individual adults and their households, 60% of whom were aged 16-59 and 40% aged 60+; with 71% supported to remain in their existing accommodation.

2.5 The table below shows the organisations making referrals to the service:

BHT Sussex: Organisations making referrals 2023/24	
Adult Social Care	41%
Districts & Boroughs	22%
Children's Services	10%
Other (inc. Health, VSCE and other statutory organisations)	21%
Self-referral (60+)	7%

2.6 The table below shows the needs of the those supported by the service:

BHT Sussex: Adults by needs 2023/24	
Physical / Sensory Disability or long-standing illness / Acquired Brain Injury	61%
Mental Health Condition	30%
Learning Disability / Difficulty / Neurodivergent	7%
Other	2%

2.7 The service provides a time-limited intervention of individual support, normally for three to four months, for adults and their households. The services can help those who are:

- at risk of losing their home due to domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, money or health issues;
- already homeless or living in temporary accommodation, such as a bed and breakfast or hostel; or
- living in poor quality or unsuitable accommodation.

2.8 The service can also help to manage peoples housing issues including debts and benefits, repairs, landlords and neighbours and additionally support to manage their mental health or substance misuse.

2.9 While responsibility for unsuitable or poor-quality housing and homelessness prevention in relation to housing provision is not an ESCC statutory responsibility, improving health and reducing health inequalities is, as well as the duty to prevent, reduce and delay the need for support (under section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 and section 2 of the Care Act 2014 respectively).

2.10 The health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness is poorer than that of the general population and they often experience the most significant health inequalities and have poorer health outcomes. Many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives. This is driven/exacerbated by poor living conditions, difficulty maintaining personal hygiene, poor diet, high levels of stress and drug and alcohol dependence.

2.11 The map in Appendix 6 shows the location of adults who used the service in 2023/24.

2.12 BHT Sussex have worked with the Council to add a 'Homes for Ukraine Sustainment Service' to the contract. The aim is to support Ukrainian 'guests' and their East Sussex hosts to manage and maintain these living arrangements by supporting guests to access health and community services, and employment and educational opportunities to help guests to live independently and move on from host accommodation. This service is not in scope of the proposed savings targets.

2.13 BHT Sussex have also worked with the Council to allocate some of the underspend resulting from recruitment challenges directly to adults for a Voucher Top-Up Scheme for utilities and food, cold weather goods such as blankets, digital inclusion such as SIM cards and smart phones, and an emergency fund for things such as white goods, school uniform, and ID for benefits applications.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal, which was subject to public consultation, is to significantly reduce funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service from £4,372,615 to £500,000 per annum, a reduction of 88.5% in overall funding. This reduction in funding is to take effect from 1 October 2025, following a six-month notice period provided to the service provider, BHT Sussex.
- 3.2 The estimated annual revenue savings in a full year for this proposal are £3,872,615.
- 3.3 To determine the potential savings, we took the overall gross contract sum for the service, subtracted the six-month notice period (01/04/2025 to 30/09/2025) and the proposed remaining funding of £500,000 per annum. Therefore, the potential savings for 2025/26 will be a half year effect of £1,936,307 and full year effect of £3,872,615 from April 2026.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that in the 2024/2025 financial year there will be a further underspend, generated from reduced service levels due to vacancy control measures. This could be used, subject to Cabinet approval, to fund an extension to the Supported Accommodation notice period proposed in a separate report later on the agenda.

4 Insight

- 4.1 An eight-week public consultation on the proposal ran from 3 October to 28 November 2024. We asked people for their views on the proposal and how they would be affected if it went ahead.
- 4.2 All the feedback received during the consultation is available within the Members' and Cabinet Room for Members' consideration.
- 4.3 1,425 responses were received across the survey, consultation meetings and other feedback methods for this consultation as follows:

Respondent method	Total
Survey	1355
Emails	17
Consultation meetings (attendees)	53

- 4.4 Most respondents across all response methods disagreed with the proposal to reduce the funding for the East Sussex Floating Support Service. The responses were as follows:

Response	Total	Percentage
Strongly disagree	1118	83%
Disagree	118	9%
Strongly agree or agree	55	4%
Neither agree or disagree, not sure or did not answer	64	4%

- 4.5 The final public consultation analysis report is attached as Appendix 4. Members will need to have regard to the key themes raised in the feedback as detailed below and in Appendix 4. At a high level:

- The majority of people and organisations strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding for the East Sussex Floating Support Service, with some viewing the proposal as “shameful” and “immoral”;
 - The service is immensely valued and seen as a vital lifeline for the most vulnerable in East Sussex. It was reported as very responsive, providing personalised and flexible support, offered face-to-face, including home visits, and has much shorter waiting times than other services.
- 4.6 The key messages included the following themes:
- Cutting the service would target the most vulnerable;
 - Many people praised the service and the staff who deliver it, saying that no other service provides the same level of personalised and flexible support;
 - The service has much shorter waiting times than other services and people really value the fact it offers home visits and face-to-face support;
 - Professionals from other organisations rely on referring people to the service and value how knowledgeable and skilled the staff are;
 - The size of the cut is too great and it would have far reaching impacts for the housing system;
 - It would cause greater demand for other services including within the Council and the NHS, local housing authorities and charities;
 - Staff from other organisations say they would not be able to fill the gap, meaning that people’s needs would go unmet;
 - People would lose out on funding they are entitled to and be at risk of remaining in unsuitable accommodation;
 - More people and families would end up in crisis and would be at risk of becoming homeless or dying;
 - The services people would end up getting support from instead would be more expensive than maintaining the budget for this preventative service;
 - People and organisations said the budget shouldn’t be cut for this service, with some saying it should get more money not less;
 - Some people said if the proposal has to go ahead, the amount being cut should be reduced. It would also be important to ensure there is accessible support for the most vulnerable.
- 4.7 At the County Council meeting on 11 February 2025, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Daniel Shing, calling on the Council to “protect and retain the East Sussex Floating Support Service”. The petition has not reached the 5000-signature threshold to trigger a Full Council debate. However, Standing Orders provide that the Chairman will refer the petition to the Cabinet or relevant Cabinet member to consider. The Chairman has referred this petition to Cabinet to consider as a relevant factor when deciding whether or not to implement the proposal set out in this report. A copy of the petition is available in the Members’ and Cabinet Rooms.

Equalities Considerations

- 4.8 In considering these proposals, Cabinet must have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,

as required under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010.

- 4.9 To better understand the likely impacts of the Proposal on those who have one or more protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out (a copy of which can be found out in Appendix 5).
- 4.10 The responses from the consultation were used to inform the analysis carried out in the EqIA. Cabinet members must read and have regard to the EqIA when making the decision about this Proposal.
- 4.11 Key findings were that the service is skilled in engaging with people whose conditions and circumstances make it harder for them to engage with services due to cognitive difficulties and age-related frailty, long-term health conditions or disability, rurality, race and ethnicity, caring responsibilities and low income. Therefore, a significant reduction in funding and subsequent reduction in service will particularly disadvantage these communities.
- 4.12 Impacts identified from the EqIA are as follows:
 - It is likely that this proposal will impact older people negatively as the proportion of older people that are supported by the service (40%) is higher compared with the general East Sussex population (26%);
 - This proposal is likely to negatively impact people of working age as the service supports a greater proportion of people aged 16-59 (60%);
 - People who have a mental health condition are more likely to be affected by the proposal than those in the general population - 40% of the people the service supported self-report a concern with their mental health at the time of referral;
 - Applying for welfare benefits, and other financial support is challenging for people who use this service due to cognitive difficulties and age-related frailty, long-term health condition or disability, rurality, race and ethnicity, caring responsibilities and low income;
 - Face-to-face visits, which are part of this service, were reported as vital for people who find it difficult to engage with and navigate health and care systems and access support due to cognitive difficulties and age-related frailty, long-term health condition, disability, rurality, race and ethnicity, caring responsibilities and low income;
 - The service supports an above average proportion of the population that identify as Black and Minority Ethnic. The data tells us that the service supported a higher proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds (12.9%) compared to the East Sussex average of 8.0%. Withdrawal or reduction of face-to-face visits is likely to impact negatively on mitigating barriers to translation and interpretation when accessing information, advice and support. People from Black and Minority Ethnic groups will be disproportionately affected as they are more likely to experience homelessness and poor housing;
 - There is a lack of alternative housing-related support services that can support pregnant women and those with young children;
 - The service supports an above average proportion of the population that identify as not heterosexual. Prevalence of a mental health condition is known to be significantly higher in LGBTQI+ people. This can create a cumulative impact which

contributes to an increased risk of homelessness. There is a lack of alternative housing-related support services with expertise in supporting people from LGBTQI+ communities.

5 Alternatives considered

- 5.1 Our priority in Adult Social Care and Health is to meet our legal duties under the Care Act. To help us to do this, we have identified funding areas that we think need to be protected when we are looking at savings options.
- 5.2 These priority areas are the community care budget, carers support services, funding for the voluntary and community enterprise sector (VCSE), and funding for staffing frontline and care market roles.
- 5.3 While we recognise the importance of these services, the budget pressures we face mean that we have to make difficult decisions about how we spend our money. We have continued to fund housing support services over the last decade, despite the budget reductions we have experienced. This is because we recognise the value they provide to our residents and because they help prevent the need for other services from the Council and other organisations including the District and Borough Councils in East Sussex. The legal responsibility for providing advice, help and housing to those who are homeless, or at risk of becoming so, lies with the District and Borough Councils. We are therefore not required by law to provide these information and advice services for housing.
- 5.4 Given the feedback from the consultation and the impacts identified through the Equality Impact Assessment, officers have explored whether there are any alternative options that would safeguard the floating support service but still deliver the same level of savings.
- 5.5 BHT Sussex who currently provide the service suggested an alternative proposal to reduce the contract value by £2 million (46% reduction) instead of the proposed 88.4%. They have indicated that this would enable 3,500 people to be supported based on the current commissioned service model and noted that further remodelling of the service could further increase the number of people supported and safeguard service quality and successful outcomes. However, reducing the level of budget reduction would not achieve the required savings and therefore this is not considered a viable alternative option.
- 5.6 The five local housing authorities have stated that they would welcome an opportunity to work with partners to scope a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention. This would include providers and partners from across health, care and criminal justice and would build on the good practice already underway in existing services. The local housing authorities have therefore recommended that the Council consider extending the transition period for the Floating Support contract, i.e. delaying the implementation of the reduction in funding, to enable systems partners to develop a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention services.
- 5.7 However, again, any extension to the transition period to enable systems partners to co-design a cross-sector approach will not generate the required savings and therefore it is not possible to recommend this as an alternative option.
- 5.8 Appendix 1 sets out in more detail alternatives put forward through the consultation process.

6 Impacts and risks

- 6.1 This section explores the impacts and risks of going ahead with the proposal, including those outlined in the EqIA (see Appendix 5).
- 6.2 Older people, disabled people, carers and people living in rural areas are likely to experience a cumulative impact of the savings proposals.
- 6.3 Support to apply for and navigate welfare benefits, and other financial support can be challenging for people due to cognitive difficulties and age-related frailty, long-term health condition(s) or disability, rurality, race and ethnicity, caring responsibilities and low income thus impacting on their ability to access safe, secure housing and/or live independently in their own home. This can additionally be compounded for those who are living in poor quality/insecure/unsafe housing and/or are digitally excluded.

6.4 Financial implications

The proposal to reduce funding for the Floating Support service contributes to the required Council savings as set out in the table below:

	Current Budget	Revised Budget		Total Savings
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Expenditure budget	4,373	2,436	500	
Income budget	0	0	0	
Net budget	4,373	2,436	500	
Net savings	0	1,937	1,936	3,873

- 6.5 The wider system financial implications identified through the consultation are set out in detail in Appendix 2. In summary, it is estimated that with a significantly reduced Floating Support service, this would:
- generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000 per annum;
 - risk the loss of Benefits income of approximately £900,000 per annum;
 - increase the cost to Children's Services of supporting families found intentionally homeless;
 - increase time required by ASC staff to work with people as they will not be able to refer as many people on for alternative support with housing and/or benefits issues.
- 6.6 Any future service model will need to be designed and where possible seek to mitigate some of the risks in the last two bullet points above.
- 6.7 The potential impacts the proposal would have on the health and care system, housing system, other organisations, services and residents are set out in Appendix 3. In summary, there would be a significant risk to the system and people using a wide range of services with an increase in homelessness and increased pressure on already challenged services. The floating support service is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise

in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation. The proposed reduction to this service will fundamentally challenge the gains made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on districts and boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs. As set out below, we will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the remaining limited financial envelope, and it may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken. However there are no comparable services or significant mitigations to the potential impact of the proposal.

6.8 The main risks of going ahead with the proposal are:

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
The proposed significant reduction in funding will have a negative impact on older people, pregnant women, households with children, people with disabilities, those from ethnic minority communities and those who have experienced multiple disadvantages.	This is likely to have a knock-on effect to many areas ranging from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, District and Borough Housing teams, local VCSE services, health and criminal justice services.	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.
Ability to offer Housing Related Floating Support home visits will be lost.	<p>Identification of a range of issues facing adults using the service will be lost.</p> <p>The direct contact and referrals these professionals provide enables other services to provide suitable onward support, ensuring there is less 'slip-back' or, worse, acceleration into additional support services.</p> <p>May particularly impact people living in rural areas and those who are digitally excluded</p>	
Significant reduction in Housing Related Floating Support service delivery.	Increased risk of homelessness.	
	Potential increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services.	
	A further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation.	
	Loss of support to access private rented sector.	
	Potential impact on health and wellbeing as a result of living in unsuitable accommodation.	

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
	Added pressure on other VCSE agencies such as Citizens Advice and Money Advice/Welfare Benefits services.	
	Increase in fuel poverty and subsequent impact on individuals' health and greater risk of death.	
	Reduces opportunity to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt and could lead to more families and children facing homelessness and the negative outcomes that come with this for both parents and children.	
	Potential increase in delayed discharges and A&E attendances.	
	Adversely impact population health and healthcare outcomes and increase health inequalities.	
Older people served by this support tend to have complex and enduring mental health problems, cognitive difficulties, co-morbid health issues and are socially isolated. They often experience problems with debt and are struggling to navigate other systems of support for housing and benefits.	Unable to access other services.	
	Unmanaged debt is known to be a risk factor for suicide.	
Lack of resettlement support.	Individuals more likely to be unable to sustain new accommodation.	
Lack of support to maintain independent living.	Increased risk of older people developing greater need for care and support / moving to long-term care.	
Some individuals may be affected by more than one of the proposed service changes and experience an aggregated effect, including those with drug and alcohol dependencies, and people at risk of homelessness.	<p>Homelessness leads to premature mortality, and the ONS reported in 2021 that 35% of all deaths of homeless people were attributed to drugs or alcohol.</p> <p>Older people, disabled people, carers and people living in rural areas are likely to experience a</p>	

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
	cumulative impact of the savings proposals.	
The proposal to cease funding for the on-site support for adults with mental health and additional needs in supported accommodation could be exacerbated by the significant reduction in funding for the Floating Support Service.	The proposed changes may restrict people's access to essential prevention and support services, which in turn may negatively impact their mental and physical wellbeing, place pressure on other services and potentially have cost implications in the longer-term.	
Making financial reductions in one part of local government can adversely impact, other parts of the sector.	The interrelated issues between social care and housing services, and potential gaps in provision at county council level may result in Districts and Boroughs needing to fill these to ensure the needs of customers continue to be met; however, budgets for this are already challenged.	
Increased use of temporary accommodation.	Significant cost to Districts and Boroughs.	
	Potential increase in child protection and safeguarding issues, reduced access to health and education and a direct impact on the health of children living in poor standard housing.	
Reduction in successful benefit claims (e.g. Attendance Allowance, PIP, Council Tax Reduction, Pension Credit).	Reduces individual independence and increases demand for funded services from Adult Social Care.	
Residents turn to other voluntary sector services support.	No capacity to support additional numbers of people needing services.	
Potentially ceasing the on-site support provided at five Supported Accommodation services for adults with mental health needs, and adults with additional support needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	If these proposals go ahead this will further exacerbate the impact on East Sussex residents as a result of the significant reduction in funding for housing-related floating support services.	

7 Outline implementation plan

- 7.1 If this Proposal is agreed, the provider will be given six months' notice of the decision to reduce the annual funding. The intended notice period is 1 April to 30 September 2025. During the six month notice period, we will work with our Strategic Partner and District and Borough Authorities to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention. Work is ongoing to explore funding options for a reduced, but targeted homelessness prevention service, which may include contributions from the Council, Districts and Borough Councils or other financial arrangements.
- 7.2 As this is a short-term service, existing adults using the service will not be directly affected; however, in order to manage such a significant reduction, the provider will need to gradually reduce referrals into the service in advance of the implementation date of 1 October 2025. This will ensure that all adults accepted into the service during that period will receive the support needed to meet their outcomes from the start of the remodelled service.
- 7.3 Implementation Plan:

Milestone	Action
March 2025	Inform provider of outcome of Cabinet decision.
March -June 2025	Set up workshops with key stakeholders including the provider and District and Borough Housing Authorities to co-design a cross-sector approach to housing advice and homelessness prevention services.
01 April 2025	Issue notice to the provider of the reduction in contract value.
April – September 2025	Provider to restructure service within the available financial envelope.
July 2025	Determine model, levels and scope of service within the available financial envelope.
June – September 2025	Provider to start stepping down capacity of service and reduce number of referrals to ensure there are no adults unable to receive a service from 1 October 2025.
August 2025	Issue contract variation to provider for signing.
September 2025	Communications rolled out to residents and referrers describing the remodelled service.
01 October 2025	Remodelled service commences.
January 2026	Quarterly review of remodelled service.

- 7.4 Once the remodelled service has been agreed, communications to a wide range of referrers and the wider public will be undertaken to explain the changes to the service.

8 Conclusions and reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.
- 8.2 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition

to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.

- 8.3 The Housing Related Floating Support service is a highly valued service that provides support for people with significant, housing related, support needs.
- 8.4 The Council has noted the significant concerns raised through the consultation, the potential impacts for those with protected characteristics identified through the EqlA and the potentially significant additional costs and pressures that will be placed on other parts of the system if the proposed funding reduction for these services is agreed.
- 8.5 It has not been possible to identify any viable alternative proposals that would achieve the required savings from the ASCH budget. Consequently, given the Council's funding gap and the need to make savings, Cabinet are recommended to agree that the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service is reduced from £4.3 million per year to £500,000 per year with effect from October 2025.
- 8.6 Cabinet must read and have regard to the EqlA when making decisions related to this proposal.

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Local members

All.

Background Documents

Consultation responses

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Alternatives Considered
- Appendix 2: Wider System Financial Implications
- Appendix 3: Impact of savings proposals on the wider system
- Appendix 4: Consultation Report
- Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 6: Profile of Services

Housing-Related Floating Support Service - Appendix 1 - Alternatives considered

The five local housing authorities have stated that: “BHT Sussex are active within the local housing partnership and have supported service development within the sector, including new homelessness hubs. The local authorities have also been investing in additional homelessness prevention activity, including wellbeing and employability support and are keen to expand this further through grant funding opportunities. The local authorities would welcome an opportunity to work with partners to scope a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention including providers and partners from across health, care and criminal justice, building on the good practice already underway with existing services.” The local housing authorities have therefore recommended an extension to the transition period, i.e. delaying the implementation of the savings proposal, for the floating support contract to enable systems partners to develop a cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention services.

Rother DC have commented that the proposed timetable for the budget reductions is too short for the system to respond effectively to the impact. In the time available it will be challenging for the system to come together to try and support with additional funding or make improvements to the system, to compensate for the loss of funding. We are actively engaged with ESCC and BHT Sussex via the East Sussex Housing Partnership. We feel confident that a great deal can be done to support the service with additional funds from elsewhere across the wider health, social care, housing and criminal justice systems. The service offers excellent value for money in terms of the costs that can be avoided in expensive temporary accommodation costs. We encourage ESCC to consider extending the transition period by an additional 6-12 months to enable the partnership to collaborate to minimise the impact on vulnerable people.

Other organisations have also requested the opportunity to work in partnership to consider changes to the service model and collaboration with other providers: “A new model should be sought prior to looking at potential cuts, so the funding fits the model identified not finding a service to fit the funding available. Changes to the existing service and an alternative model should be considered and costing provided” (Wealden CAB).

BHT Sussex who currently provide the service have suggested a reduction of £2 million (46% reduction) would enable 3,500 people to be supported based on the current commissioned service model. Further remodelling of the service could further increase the number of people supported and safeguard service quality and successful outcomes.

Housing-Related Floating Support Service - Appendix 2 - Wider system financial implications

District and Borough Housing Teams

17% of adults referred by District and Borough Housing Teams were supported by the Floating Support Service to secure new accommodation in 2023/24. If this support had not been available and the households had gone on to be placed in temporary accommodation, this would generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000 per annum.

Hastings Borough Council

Hastings BC made 276 referrals into the service in 2023/24. It costs Hastings BC an average of £15,800 pa to accommodate a household in privately procured temporary accommodation (TA), so, considering the very high success rate of the BHT service (87% successful outcomes), if those 240 households (87% of 276) didn't have their homelessness prevented it would cost Hastings Borough Council over £3.7m a year to provide them with temporary accommodation. This would be a 50% increase in Hastings Borough Council's current, already unsustainable and unavoidable, spend on TA. Plus, that is only for one year, it is realistic to say that with the increased demand we would double current times for households spent in TA before a permanent home is available. So, a four year stay in TA for those 240 households is an extra cost of just over £15m to Hastings Borough Council.

BHT Sussex

In the 12 months Oct 2023 - Sept 2024, BHT supported 275 eligible adults to claim Attendance Allowance. Based on the 93% success rate for applications for Attendance Allowance in the Service, this constitutes annualised additional income of £903,000 for East Sussex residents.

We also supported 993 people/households in fuel poverty to reduce debt and keep their home warm.

Children's Services

Savings made by reducing the funding for this service would lead to potentially higher costs for Children's Services, especially in relation to families who have been found intentionally homeless and had their housing duty discharged by the Borough and District Housing Authorities. The number of families being found to be intentionally homeless has risen over the last two years at an increasing cost to Children's Services in cases where accommodation must be funded for families with no other housing options under S.17 of the Children's Act 1989. Referrals to the East Sussex Floating Support Service are regularly made to assist in the prevention of families becoming intentionally homeless in the first place and to support those that have had their housing duties discharged to move on from high-cost temporary accommodation funded by Children's Services to their own privately rented accommodation. Spend on providing accommodation for these families has more than doubled in the past two years and will continue to increase. There is a risk that more families will end up homeless and potentially intentionally homeless if they are not able to access specialist housing advice and support. The cost to ESCC in 2023/24 of supporting families found intentionally homeless was £639,000 and the forecasted cost for 2024/25 is £575,000.

Rother DC

“The Floating Support Service is an effective homelessness prevention tool and demonstrates better value for money than investments made after a household becomes homeless. The housing and homelessness system is in crisis. We have reviewed the performance of the ESFSS within Rother in 2022/23 and estimate the degree of reduction proposed could mean we experience an additional 200 temporary accommodation placements. It could increase our net temporary accommodation costs by up to £1.4m, which is almost 10% of our total net revenue budget.”

“RDC is concerned that the degree of the budget reductions to this specific service is heavily weighted on homelessness prevention and risks tipping some district and borough Councils into a position where they cannot deliver a balanced budget.”

Please note, the figures contained within this section have been provided by the relevant organisations and are unvalidated.

Floating Support Service - Appendix 3 - Impact of savings proposals on the wider system

<p>Health and care system</p>	<p>The service has co-located staff working in statutory services' teams (5 District and Boroughs and Children's Services) which enables frontline workers to undertake close joint working with people and share resources and knowledge to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>2,230 people were referred to the service by Adult Social Care in the 12 months Oct 23 – Sept 24, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 490 people referred due to Mental Health problems (anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, schizoaffective disorders, personality disorders); • 336 people referred directly from the Dementia Support Team (over 60's); • 132 people referred due to high levels of vulnerability due to frailty (over 60's) – (frailty relates to the adult's mental and physical resilience, or their ability to bounce back and recover from events like illness and injury). <p>Of these, 51% were aged under 60 and 49% aged 60+.</p> <p>55% of those referred were supported to remain in their existing accommodation whilst the remainder were supported to identify and/or move into new accommodation. They were also supported with their finances, access to health services and with their wellbeing and staying safe.</p> <p>Statutory Children's Services</p> <p>603 people were referred to the service by Statutory Children's Services (referrals from Children's Services are when the risk to children in the household is high), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 families at direct risk of homelessness; • 120 families already experiencing homelessness (families living in temporary accommodation, living in unsecure accommodation); • 101 people at risk of domestic violence. <p><i>"At a time when the need to prevent homelessness and ensure children, young people and families have access to stable housing has never been higher, a reduction in the capacity of this service to support individuals and families with housing related support would have a worrying and far-reaching impact across children's services and the outcomes for the families and individuals we work with. It would most certainly have an impact on the opportunity to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt and would lead to more families and children facing homelessness and the negative outcomes that come with this for both parents and children."</i> (Children's Services Managers)</p> <p>Health</p> <p><i>"Health and mental health services: acute services are reporting delays with discharges relating to housing needs."</i></p> <p><i>Housing colleagues have been supporting the development of Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams, it had been</i></p>
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	<p><i>envisaged that links to the housing-related floating support service would form a key opportunity to ensure housing is part of the core offer in each area.” (Hheads of Housing)</i></p> <p><i>“There is potential for this to have an impact on A&E services, which are already under pressure and at capacity, in the absence of the current support offer.</i></p> <p><i>Key considerations in regard to the support offer from this service include;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Access to safe and secure housing is a key determinant of health.</i> <i>• Across the county there are increasing numbers of people who do not have access to housing or whose housing is temporary.</i> <i>• Housing prices are 11x the average salary in East Sussex (ONS Housing Affordability, 2023 data).</i> <i>• 5% of East Sussex residents are either fairly or very dissatisfied with the quality of their housing, particularly renters, 18-34s and single parents.</i> <i>• 2.7% of households had fewer rooms than needed for the occupants, classified as overcrowded. Census, 2021.</i> <p><i>Noting the above, this proposal has the potential to materially impact the health and safety of a number of future service users across East Sussex and present a greater risk to many becoming homeless. There is also a strong risk that cutting funding will destabilise the system which is not set up nor has the expertise to cope with the influx of people in need of support.</i></p> <p><i>There could be a high risk that the proposals will adversely impact population health and healthcare outcomes and increase health inequalities.” (NHS Sussex)</i></p> <p><i>“The proposal to reduce funding for the Floating Support Service from over £4.3 million to £500,000 a year (88.5%) will have a significant impact on people who are at risk of homelessness. Many of those who use this service have been referred by housing colleagues in Borough and District Councils and may struggle to maintain their tenancies without this support, which may return pressures to Adult Social Care services.” (Healthwatch)</i></p> <p><i>“This is a person-centred service for vulnerable people who are not able to access other similar services. This service is skilled in engaging individuals whose conditions and circumstances make it difficult for them to engage with other services. The older people served by this support tend to have complex and enduring mental health problems, cognitive difficulties, co-morbid health issues and are socially isolated. They often experience problems with debt and are struggling to navigate other systems of support for housing and benefits. Unmanaged debt is known to be a risk factor for suicide. Clinicians believe that the people who tend to use this service would struggle to access alternatives.” (SPFT)</i></p>
Housing system	<p><i>“The Housing-related Floating Support Service is an integral part of local provision and meeting statutory duties in relation to homelessness prevention. Due to the high demand for homelessness services, there will not be capacity for local housing authorities to continue these interventions. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation.</i></p>

	<p><i>17% of clients referred by District and Borough Housing Teams were supported by the Floating Support Service to secure new accommodation in 2023/24. If this support had not been available and the households had gone on to be placed in temporary accommodation, this would generate an additional cost to the housing authorities in the region of £9,900,000.</i></p> <p><i>There are currently 1,232 households placed in temporary accommodation across East Sussex and approximately 1,400 children currently living in temporary accommodation. This trend has a significant impact on individuals and families, impacting access to education, employment and engagement with health and wellbeing. The cost of providing temporary accommodation is creating an unsustainable financial pressure on the local housing authorities, diverting resources away from other key services and threatening the overall viability of some councils. So far, this financial year (2024/25) the 5 local housing authorities have spent £6,358,800 on temporary accommodation. In In 2023/24, the cost of temporary accommodation in East Sussex was £14,194,421.</i></p> <p><i>The long waiting times for social housing mean the intensive support provided by the floating support service is key to ensuring people can access accommodation in other sectors, particularly the private rented sector.”</i> (Heads of Housing)</p> <p><i>“Eastbourne BC’s homeless hub (which is seen locally and nationally as a model of good practice) is hugely dependant on partnership working. The proposed significant reduction in funding to the floating support service threatens to compromise what has been a hard won, sector-leading piece of prevention work. The work of BHT Sussex in delivering floating support is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. We note that an 88% reduction to this service is proposed, which would fundamentally challenge the gains we have made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on districts and boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs.”</i> (Eastbourne BC)</p>
Organisations and services	<p>The VCSE Alliance has stated that the voluntary sector’s likely future landscape and capacity will not be sufficient to pick up the shortfall and increased demands that will follow as a result of the proposed cuts.</p> <p>Wealden Citizens Advice state that they need to be able to work in partnership with other agencies to support their most vulnerable clients as they do not have the capacity nor expertise to meet the needs of floating support clients.</p> <p>Care for the Carers have told us that these services are vital for carers at risk of homelessness and are a key support for Care for the Carers in enabling some of the carers with the most complex caring roles to continue caring.</p>
Residents	<p><i>“Homeless children are more likely to be at risk, face upheaval that adversely impacts their education, fail to thrive because temporary accommodation doesn’t meet their needs, and because homelessness often leads to relationship breakdown for their parents</i></p> <p><i>Adults who end up sleeping rough or sofa surfing are more likely to develop mental and/or physical health problems, addictions, loss of employment, relationship breakdown and to engage in anti-social or criminal behaviours</i></p>

	<p><i>The county is an area of high housing costs and shortage of affordable accommodation, so the impacts of increased spending on addressing the issues outlined above are likely to be significant.” (Resident)</i></p> <p><u>Feedback from residents</u></p> <p><i>“I find this proposal to cut funding morally reprehensible. When there’s a tough decision to be made it’s always the vulnerable and the poor who get hit the hardest. Often dealing with council paperwork is bewildering and having help in getting what one is entitled to is invaluable.”</i></p> <p><i>“In my experience this wonderful service is Vital. They literally saved my life. I think one shouldn’t underestimate the importance of their work for people in crisis, like i was. I could not have managed to survive without their expert help and patient advice and support.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Floating Support Service has been a lifeline for us during extremely challenging times. They provided essential support and guidance when we needed it most, helping us navigate difficult situations and access resources that improved our quality of life.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is no other service where a client would be contacted within 24 hours of starting the service and had a support session either over the telephone or face to face within a week of that contact.”</i></p> <p><i>“This service is pivotal to East Sussex as it provides a home visiting service to vulnerable clients in order to prevent homelessness. Many clients do not have access to the internet, especially the elderly, and being able to visit them at home to support them with important paperwork and access the benefits system ensures inclusion, income maximisation and tenancy sustainment.”</i></p> <p><i>“We would never have managed the housing forms without the support of the support worker.”</i></p> <p><i>“They also helped us to fill in very difficult forms to claim what otherwise we may not be able to do by ourselves.”</i></p> <p><i>“ASC require the support of the specialist teams such as the East Sussex Floating Support Service to be able to offer a comprehensive and knowledgeable service to our clients. ASC CANNOT take on this role as well, we are over run and running on empty as it is.”</i></p> <p><i>“Everyone I knew who worked for the service was kind, caring, knowledgeable and just wanted to help people.”</i></p> <p><i>“Many clients will no longer have bespoke, knowledgeable support with their housing and/or financial needs which in turn is likely to increase the disadvantages they are already facing.”</i></p> <p><i>“88.5% might as well be 100%, it won’t be indistinguishable. And if anyone thinks that these are ‘savings’, just wait and see what time bombs you’ve just set off.”</i></p> <p><i>“If it 88% cut you may as well say it is a closed service as the wait list will be enormous.”</i></p> <p><i>“The proposed cut in funding is far to large! It seems to us that if this goes ahead you may as well do away with this service.”</i></p> <p><i>“I couldn’t of coped if I did not have the support of BHT.”</i></p> <p><i>“Without this service I do no know what we would have done!”</i></p> <p><i>“The Floating Support Service brings badly needed professional help that just isn’t available elsewhere.”</i></p>
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	<p><i>"BHT are essential to keeping the homeless alive and feeling supported. I cannot express adequately how much BHT have helped me and continue to do so. I would probably be dead to be totally honest without the support and guidance from BHT and them fighting and working for my safety."</i></p> <p><i>"Service works with children as well as parents. Feedback from 10 year old (via staff member as she is at school) was sofa surfing then in temporary accommodation with her mum. Now they have their own accommodation and she has her own bedroom. Mum has been supported into work and is much happier. This has all made her life much better."</i></p>
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Appendix 4: Consultation results report

East Sussex Floating Support Service

About this consultation

This consultation is about the proposal to reduce the funding for the East Sussex Floating Support Service. It started on 3 October and closed on 28 November 2024.

Taking part in the consultation

The consultation survey was available to complete online and people could download a printable version. Emails, letters and feedback in phone calls were also accepted.

All of the consultations were promoted in our newsletters for residents, providers and staff. We also shared news stories with partners in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors, to include in their newsletters for residents, organisations and staff.

General posters were shared with library teams and each affected service had a dedicated poster to put up in their service or building. Letters and emails were sent to people currently accessing the service and people who had used it in the last year. We also held consultation meetings in each area of the county.

The consultations were widely promoted in the local media and consultation leads talked about the proposals at relevant stakeholder meetings.

Who took part in the consultation

We received 1,425 responses to this consultation. The table below shows the different ways in which people took part. We also had 8 late survey responses received after the consultation closed.

Respondent method	Total
Survey	1355
Emails	17
Consultation meetings (attendees)	53

A general petition opposing the funding gap proposals was submitted by Lewes Liberal Democrats. It was signed by 100 people.

People were given the option of answering ‘about you’ equality questions in the survey, with 74% of respondents choosing to do so.

- Over half of respondents (53%) were someone who uses or has used the service, followed by someone who works in health and social care (16%).
- We heard from all age ranges, with the top group being over 65 (22%) and 45-54 (15%).
- Just under half were female (48%), while males accounted for 24% of known gender for respondents.
- Respondents were from all areas of East Sussex, with the top areas being Eastbourne, Hastings and Wealden (14%, 13% and 12% respectively).

Key messages

These key messages reflect the feedback received from organisations, groups and individuals across surveys, meetings and other feedback such as emails.

- The majority of people and organisations strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding for the East Sussex Floating Support Service, with some viewing the proposal as shameful and immoral.
- The service is immensely valued and seen as a vital lifeline for the most vulnerable in East Sussex. It's very responsive and has much shorter waiting times than other services.
- People said that cutting the service would target the most vulnerable and they are concerned that the reduction in funding would mean the service couldn't run effectively.
- People said that at a time when they've been heading into crisis, with no understanding of the options available to them or how to get the support they need to survive, the service has given them reassurance, genuine person-centred support, and helped to navigate the labyrinth of housing or social care systems.
- Many people praised the service and the outcomes it helps people to achieve. They were also highly complimentary about the staff, expressing how compassionate, understanding and helpful they are.
- A large proportion of respondents explained there is no other service like this that can provide the same level of personalised and flexible support. Many said they wouldn't have known where else to go if this service hadn't been available.
- People particularly value the fact the service offers home visits and face-to-face support for those who would otherwise not be able to access the remote support provision from other organisations.
- People shared how the service provides a wide range of critical support, from general advice on housing, benefits or finance, to filling in detailed applications/forms, and obtaining accommodation, as well as liaising with and accessing the right support from other organisations.
- People who have used the service say the areas which made the most difference to helping them live independently were help to better

manage their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and help to find new accommodation.

- It's felt that the knock-on effects of reducing the service would be far reaching, impacting people's ability to access the support they are entitled to. This would result in people losing out on funding they are entitled to, and being stuck in unsuitable accommodation, becoming homeless, or at risk of dying.
- Professionals in other organisations expressed how knowledgeable and skilled the staff are, and said that they heavily rely on referring people to them for support.
- Without the service, frontline staff in other organisations say they would not be able to fill the gap in support, or have the skills and knowledge to replicate it, meaning people's needs would go unmet.
- Both people who use the service and staff in other organisations said they would not be able to cope without the important role the service plays in the housing system.
- People said that prevention work would be compromised by this proposal, as people's support needs would increase without support. This would push them and their families into crisis and could lead to more people becoming homeless.
- People said the size of the cut would be too great and cause greater demand on services from the NHS, charities, housing organisations, social care and local councils. Moreover, this increase in demand would be more expensive than the cost of maintaining the current budget for the service.
- The top suggestion was not to cut the budget and keep funding the service as it currently stands.
- Some people said it should get more funding or that the amount cut should be reduced, while people also said it would be important to ensure there is still accessible support for the most vulnerable.

Sample quotes

These comments are a small selection of the responses we received in the consultation. They reflect the key themes or offer a specific suggestion.

Organisation comments:

- **Wealden Citizens Advice:** "Floating Support Services remain an important part of the support that we can offer to our clients. The fact that they can support clients with home visits and build that relationship is very important as many of the clients we support have long-term illness, suffer with mental health and/or disability. If we are unable to refer to them there would be a huge gap."

- **Hastings Borough Council:** “We made over 200 referrals in the last 12 months, so it is a service we make considerable use of to prevent homelessness. As a very rough measure it costs us an average of £15,800 per annum to accommodate a household in private TA [temporary accommodation] - so if those 200 households didn’t have their homelessness prevented it would cost us over £3m a year in TA costs.”
- **BHT Sussex (provider):** “Our response concerns the scale and resulting impact of this cut, reducing the contract by £4million, constituting a service reduction of 88.5%. A cut of less severity would retain a service that could perform its key role as an integral part of provision across East Sussex”.
- **Care for Carers:** “These services are vital for carers at risk of homelessness and are a key support for us in enabling some of the carers with the most complex caring roles to continue caring.”
- **East Sussex Children’s Services:** “We know that housing instability can negatively impact a child’s health, development and school performance and often compounds trauma that they are going through or have experienced. East Sussex Floating Support Service provides a valuable service which complements and strengthens the statutory work of our case management teams in supporting children and families to remain in, manage or access safe and suitable housing.”
- **Eastbourne Borough Council:** “The work of BHT in delivering floating support is a critical component to the countywide approach to homelessness prevention. We note that an 88% reduction to this service is proposed, which would fundamentally challenge the gains we have made in reducing homelessness and placements into emergency accommodation. This, in turn, would place further pressures on districts and boroughs in terms of unaffordable and unavoidable costs.”
- **Heads of Housing in East Sussex Authorities:** “The Housing-related Floating Support Service is an integral part of local provision and meeting statutory duties in relation to homelessness prevention. Due to the high demand for homelessness services, there will not be capacity for local housing authorities to continue these interventions. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move-on accommodation.”
- **Rother District Council:** “The impact of these proposals is on some of our most vulnerable residents and on the financial position of Rother District Council. The concerns relate both to the degree of budget reduction to the ESFSS and Pathways scheme [separate service] as well as the timeframe in which it is proposed that these budget reductions are made.”

Individual comments:

- “I find this proposal to cut funding morally reprehensible. When there’s a tough decision to be made it’s always the vulnerable and the poor who get

hit the hardest. Often dealing with council paperwork is bewildering and having help in getting what one is entitled to is invaluable.”

- “In my experience this wonderful service is vital. They literally saved my life. I think one shouldn't underestimate the importance of their work for people in crisis, like I was. I could not have managed to survive without their expert help and patient advice and support.”
- “The Floating Support Service has been a lifeline for us during extremely challenging times. They provided essential support and guidance when we needed it most, helping us navigate difficult situations and access resources that improved our quality of life.”
- “There is no other service where a client would be contacted within 24 hours of starting the service and had a support session either over the telephone or face to face within a week of that contact.”
- “This service is pivotal to East Sussex as it provides a home visiting service to vulnerable clients in order to prevent homelessness. Many clients do not have access to the internet, especially the elderly, and being able to visit them at home to support them with important paperwork and access the benefits system ensures inclusion, income maximisation and tenancy sustainment.”
- “We would never have managed the housing forms without the support of the support worker.”
- “They also helped us to fill in very difficult forms to claim what otherwise we may not be able to do by ourselves.”
- “ASC require the support of the specialist teams such as the East Sussex Floating Support Service to be able to offer a comprehensive and knowledgeable service to our clients. Adult Social Care CANNOT [emphasis in original] take on this role as well; we are overrun and running on empty as it is.”
- “Everyone I knew who worked for the service was kind, caring, knowledgeable and just wanted to help people.”
- “Many clients will no longer have bespoke, knowledgeable support with their housing and/or financial needs ,which in turn is likely to increase the disadvantages they are already facing.”
- “88.5% might as well be 100%. It won't be indistinguishable. And if anyone thinks that these are 'savings', just wait and see what time bombs you've just set off.”
- “If it was 88% cut you may as well say it is a closed service as the wait list will be enormous.”
- “The proposed cut in funding is far too large! It seems to us that if this goes ahead you may as well do away with this service.”
- “I couldn't have coped if I did not have the support of BHT.”

- “Without this service I do not know what we would have done!”
- “The Floating Support Service brings badly needed professional help that just isn’t available elsewhere.”
- “BHT is essential to keeping the homeless alive and feeling supported. I cannot express adequately how much BHT has helped me and continue to do so. I would probably be dead to be totally honest without the support and guidance from BHT and them fighting and working for my safety.”
- “Service works with children as well as parents. Feedback from a ten year old (via staff member as she is at school) [who] was sofa surfing then in temporary accommodation with her mum. Now they have their own accommodation and she has her own bedroom. Mum has been supported into work and is much happier. This has all made her life much better.”

Results summary across all methods

Views on the proposal

Survey: 92% of respondents disagree with the proposal to reduce the funding for the East Sussex Floating Support Service. The majority chose strongly disagree over disagree (83% compared to 9%). A small portion of people (4%) agreed with the proposal.

The top 10 themes for why people agree or disagree with the proposal are:

- 1) Service: Service is vital/needed (582 comments)
- 2) Service: Praise of service and its benefit (316)
- 3) Views: Cuts target vulnerable people (266)
- 4) Impact: Couldn't cope without service (189)
- 5) Impact: Increased pressure on other services (149)
- 6) Comment about personal circumstances (125)
- 7) Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively (117)
- 8) Impact: Poor/no access to support (115)
- 9) Service: Immensely valued (115)
- 10) Views: Worry about where people will get support instead (112)

Emails etc: The most common views were that organisations recognised the need to make saving (10 comments), that the cuts target the most vulnerable (9 comments) and that they will add more cost in the long term (9 comments).

Other common themes are:

- Views: Equivalent services not available (7 comments)
- Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex (6)

- Views: Other services already struggling (6)
- Views: Will shift cost onto district and boroughs (6)
- Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular (5)
- Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular (5)
- Views: Disagree (5)
- Views: Need for this service is increasing (5)

Meetings: Where people expressed an opinion they said they disagree with the proposal. People highly value the service and feel it is sad and unfair that the budget could be reduced by so much. They are concerned about their support and where people would go in future for help, as they would have been lost without the service.

The Council needs to remember its duty of care. This service offers a level of support and understanding that isn't available from statutory services, while the staff bring in huge amounts of funding into the area through helping people to claim benefits.

Lots of people praised the service and how it has helped them. It was described as magnificent, amazing, and invaluable. Lots of people also talked about how amazing the staff are and how the support they provide is tailored to them. The staff advocate for people and champion their cause when other services won't listen.

The service helps people to navigate the system, ensuring they can access the benefits and support they are entitled to. People talked about their struggles dealing with housing services, private landlords and the police, and how those services don't care or listen, whereas this service does.

The service is really responsive and has much shorter waiting times than other services. The fact that it offers in-person support at home is critical, particularly for those who aren't online or who struggle to talk on the phone.

The service has supported people with advice and advocacy to access financial support, maximising benefits, accessing care, housing and courses, getting ID, opening bank accounts, securing Blue Badges and appealing negative decisions from statutory agencies.

It has also helped people to move from unsafe and unsuitable accommodation to something better. This has helped people to improve their life by finding work and having their children live with them.

Potential impacts of the proposal

Survey: 1,206 people answered this question and the top 10 themes are:

- 1) Impact: Poor/no access to support (261 comments)
- 2) Impact: Couldn't cope without service (168)
- 3) Impact: People won't get the support they need (157)
- 4) Views: Worry about where people will get support instead (140)

- 5) Impact: Negative impact (unspecified) (131)
- 6) Impact: Homelessness (128)
- 7) Impact: Poorer mental health (122)
- 8) Comment about personal circumstances (121)
- 9) Views: Cuts target vulnerable people (113)
- 10) Service: Service is vital/needed (103)

Emails etc: The most common impacts raised were about increased pressure on other services (13 comments), the increased cost for other organisations (10 comments), and people becoming homeless (8 comments).

Other common impacts are:

- Impact: Increased burden on family/carer (7 comments)
- Impact: Couldn't cope without service (7)
- Impact: Significant increase in people living in temporary accommodation (7)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (6)
- Impact: Financial hardship (5)
- Impact: Poorer access to support (5)
- Impact: Poorer physical health (5)

Meetings: Most people who use the service are referred by statutory organisations, so if the service is reduced it would increase the pressure on those organisations.

Other services that can help with similar issues are already overwhelmed and have long waiting times. If the service was reduced it would severely limit the number of people who could be supported and people would wait a lot longer to get help.

Digital inclusion is a real concern if the service is reduced and it is likely that a lot less people would be supported to apply for the benefits they are entitled to, such as pension credit, attendance allowance and the winter fuel allowance. Applying for support with benefits, housing and mental health is complicated and it can be difficult to navigate the system when you are unwell or in crisis.

Without the support of this service people could miss out on funding that could improve their financial situation. They could also be stuck living in unsafe housing and be at risk of becoming homeless. It would make it harder for people living in temporary accommodation to find work and have their children with them.

Local authorities have a duty to assess and provide services, so cutting the service would affect the Council's ability to meet that duty. There would be a risk of people self-harming and a real risk to life if people are left without this support.

Suggestions

General suggestions are covered in the background report on the funding gap consultations, while service-specific ones are included here.

Survey:

- Suggestion: Don't cut service (169 comments)
- Suggestion: Increase rather than cut service funding (28)
- Suggestion: Don't cut as much as proposed (24)
- Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable (26)
- Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services (8)
- Suggestion: Continue to provide accessible support (7)
- Suggestion: Prioritise welfare of people impacted who currently use service (4)
- Suggestion: Review number of service managers (4)
- Suggestion: Ensure equivalent alternative support is available (2)
- Suggestion: Improve service communication (2)
- Suggestion: Increase awareness of service (2)
- Suggestion: Increase service support offer (2)
- Suggestion: Increase training for staff (2)
- Suggestion: Make access to service means tested (2)
- Suggestion: Prioritise quick response for those in need (2)
- Suggestion: Prioritise support for filling in forms/applications (2)

Emails etc:

The top suggestions were:

- Suggestions: More joint working (7 comments)
- Suggestion: Focus on prevention (4 comments)
- Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable (3)
- Suggestion: Don't cut prevention services (3)
- Suggestion: Utilise existing and effective volunteer/charity support services (3)
- Suggestion: Don't cut service (2)
- Suggestion: Extend transition period of closing the service for partners to develop joint approach to homeless prevention (2)

Meetings: The following suggestions were all made by one person:

- Don't cut such an extreme amount, but find a better balance that would allow the work to continue more like it does now, and give more time for the provider to look for other funding. The service should be promoted better so people know about it.

- Use places like doctors' surgeries to promote things people are entitled to, like pension credit.
- People could pay for the cost of their support.
- Measure the impact of the service so its value can be evidenced.

Other topics

Survey: The survey included a question that gave people the chance to make any additional comments or suggestions. The top themes for the comments were:

- Service: Service is vital/needed (80)
- Service: Praise of service and its benefit (61)
- Views: Cuts target vulnerable people (61)
- Impact: Increased pressure on other services (51)
- Views: Worry about where people will get support instead (47)
- Service: Praise of staff (46)
- Views: Adds more cost in the long term for other services and/or East Sussex County Council (43)
- Comment about personal circumstances (34)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (30)
- Impact: Negative impact (unspecified) (30)

Emails etc: The top other comments were about the consultation process/information (3 comments) and that East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternative and capacity (3 comments).

Service specific questions

We asked additional service-specific questions in this survey.

Where people would have gone for support if the service hadn't been available: The majority said they wouldn't have known where else to go (436 comments).

The other top themes were:

- Views: Equivalent services not available (140 comments)
- Citizens Advice Bureau (96)
- Local council (71)
- Comment about personal circumstances (66)
- Council unhelpful (50)

- People supported by service struggle to access/engage with other services (45)
- Would have been homeless (41)

Which areas of support have made the biggest difference to helping people to live independently: The top answers were: help to better manage their mental health and emotional wellbeing (37%), and help to find new accommodation (35%).

The other top themes were:

- Stay in existing accommodation (28%)
- Improve your home environment (28%)
- Increase your income (26%)
- Manage your budget (24%)
- Better manage your physical health (21%)

Charts and tables

Survey responses including about you information

1) Are you completing the survey as:

There were 1,340 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Someone who uses/has used the Floating Support Service	714	52.69%
The family or carer of someone who uses/has used the Floating Support Service	101	7.45%
Someone who works for the Floating Support Service	59	4.35%
Someone who lives in East Sussex	115	8.49%
Someone who works in health or social care in East Sussex	215	15.87%
Someone who works in housing in East Sussex	50	3.69%
Someone who works in the voluntary or community sector	52	3.84%
Other (please provide details below)	34	2.51%
Not Answered	15	1.11%

If you ticked 'other' please provide details here:

There were 65 responses to this part of the question.

• Comment on personal circumstances	20
• I refer into service	8
• Comment re service	4
• Previously worked for the service	3
• Housing officer	3
• Responding on behalf of client	3
• Citizens Advice	3
• ESCC employee	3
• Family/friend of someone working at service	2
• Client	2
• Job Centre	2
• Charity	2
• Community support worker	1
• Domestic abuse service	1
• Never heard of service	1
• Voluntary worker	1
• Probation service	1
• Social worker	1
• Social prescriber	1
• Foodbank	1
• Local council	1
• BHT	1

2) How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the funding for the Floating Support Service?

There were 1,349 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	41	3.03%
Agree	14	1.03%
Neither agree nor disagree	37	2.73%
Disagree	118	8.71%
Strongly disagree	1118	82.51%
Not sure	21	1.55%

Not Answered	6	0.44%
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Please use the box below to tell us why you agree or disagree:

There were 1,205 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Service: Service is vital/needed	582
Service: Praise of service and its benefit	316
Views: Cuts target vulnerable people	266
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	189
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	149
Comment about personal circumstances	125
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	117
Impact: Poor/no access to support	115
Service: Immensely valued	115
Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	112
Service: Praise of staff	110
Service: Services rely on referring people to them for support	109
Service: Lifeline to people	107
Views: Unhappy/disagree with proposal	102
Impact: Homelessness	94
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	92
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	91
Views: Equivalent services not available	91
Impact: People won't get the support they need	90
Views: Adds more cost in the long term for other services and/or East Sussex County Council	89
Service: Very accessible	80
Service: Prevents homelessness	78
Impact: Poorer mental health	73
Impact: Loss of support filling in forms/applications	73
Impact: Loss of benefits/financial advice	72
Views: Need for this service is increasing	68
Service: Provides person-centred support	61
Impact: More people in crisis	58
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	57

Impact: Loss to the community/society	53
Views: Disagree with size of the cut	53
Impact: People at increased risk without service	50
Impact: Increased burden on frontline workers supporting people	49
Suggestion: Don't cut service	48
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	43
Impact: Poorer physical health	41
Views: Services already limited	41
Impact: Loss of signposting to further support	40
Impact: Financial hardship	39
Service: Face-to-face support is important	34
Impact: Ability to have a home/suitable home	32
Service: Gives people someone to reach out to	32
Views: Short sighted	31
Views: I wouldn't know where else to go	29
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	28
Views: Morally wrong	27
Impact: Increased support needs	25
Service: People would not be in a suitable home without service	25
Service: Helped me rebuild my life	24
Views: Unemployment	24
Views: Priorities are wrong	23
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	23
Views: Other services already struggling	22
Impact: Risk of abuse/domestic abuse	21
Impact: Isolation	20
Service: High quality	19
Suggestion: Increase rather than cut service funding	19
Views: Everyone deserves access to support	19
Views: Recognise need to make savings	19
Impact: More people having to use temporary accommodation	18
Impact: People could/will die	17
Other: Criticism of government	17
Service: Advocates for the people it supports	16

Service: Support navigating housing/benefits/social care system	16
Service: Would not be alive without service	15
Impact: Less independence	14
Suggestion: Don't cut as much as proposed	14
Views: Shameful proposal	14
Views: Unacceptable for social care staff to do this work instead	14
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	13
Impact: Detrimental to the family and/or carer of the people affected	12
Service: Criticism of service effectiveness	12
Views: Cuts create inequality	12
Other: Criticism of council	11
Impact: Cause hardship and poverty	10
Other: Comment on other council spending	10
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	9
Unspecific/unclear comment	9
Impact: Increase in crime	8
Impact: Lower quality of life	8
Impact: More hospital admissions	8
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	8
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	8
Views: Service already underfunded	8
Service: Flexible support	7
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	7
Impact: Cause hardship and poverty	6
Other: Comment re government spending	6
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	6
Views: Recognise need to make savings	6
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	6
Views: Same support can be received elsewhere	6
Views: Already can't cope with support they have	5
Service: Supports the family/friends of people who access the service	5
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	5

View: Poor experience of service	5
Impact: Cannot rely on care from family	4
Service: Efficient	4
Suggestion: Might as well cut entire service	4
Views: Comfort knowing the support is available	4
Views: Detrimental to neurodivergent people in particular	4
Views: Service is not a priority	4
Impact: People would have to go into care	3
Impact: Lose my current support	3
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	3
Other: Comment re consultation financial figures	3
Received no support from service	3
Service: Service built trust with people who they support	3
Suggestion: Cut East Sussex County Council staff pay	3
Suggestion: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	3
Suggestion: Tax the highest earners more	3
Views: Agree with proposal	3
Views: Cutting service is a mistake	3
Views: Disagree with proposal based on anticipated impact given in consultation overview	3
Views: Service has already suffered from cuts	3
Service: Cost effective	2
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	2
Suggestion: Equip other service staff with housing information	2
Suggestion: Remove and condense office buildings	2
Views: People receiving support lack advocacy and representation	2
Views: Detrimental to young people in particular	2
Impact: Education	1
Impact: Forces people to leave the county	1
Impact: People discouraged from seeking help	1
Impact: Quit my job	1
Impact: Transition will be hard for people supported by service	1
Not sure	1
Comment relating to different service	1

Other: Comment re Care Act	1
Other: Quote from report	1
Other: Quote from report re deprivation in East Sussex	1
Service: Criticism of service efficiency	1
Suggestion: Charge people more to use services	1
Suggestion: Continue to provide accessible support	1
Suggestion: Cut named public health service	1
Suggestion: Ensure equivalent alternative support is available	1
Suggestion: Ensure people pay their tax	1
Suggestion: Fund service out of NHS budget	1
Suggestion: Increase service support offer	1
Suggestion: Invest in upskilling staff	1
Suggestion: Keep parts of the service running	1
Suggestion: Make access to services means tested	1
Suggestion: Pay service staff fairly	1
Suggestion: Provide ongoing support for people	1
Suggestion: Reduce benefits for those not seeking employment	1
Suggestion: Reduce forms given to ASC people	1
View: Cuts breach disability rights	1
View: Decision makers lack any understanding of needing this support	1
Views: No experience or knowledge of service	1
Views: Need to know what other options for cuts are first	1

3) How would the proposal to reduce funding for the Floating Support Service affect you or someone you care for?

There were 1,206 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Impact: Poor/no access to support	261
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	168
Impact: People won't get the support they need	157
Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	140
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	131
Impact: Homelessness	128
Impact: Poorer mental health	122

Comment about personal circumstances	121
Views: Cuts target vulnerable people	113
Service: Service is vital/needed	103
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	91
Service: Praise of service and its benefit	81
Impact: Loss of benefits/financial advice	76
Impact: Loss of support filling in forms/applications	76
Impact: Financial hardship	71
Impact: More people in crisis	70
It does not affect me	70
Service: Services rely on referring people to them for support	64
Views: Equivalent services not available	60
Impact: Ability to have a home/suitable home	58
Service: Very accessible	54
Impact: Cause hardship and poverty	51
Impact: Detrimental to the family and/or carer of the people affected	50
Impact: People at increased risk without service	46
Views: I wouldn't know where else to go	45
Impact: Loss of signposting to further support	44
Impact: Poorer physical health	43
Service: Lifeline to people	43
Impact: Increased burden on frontline workers supporting people	42
Impact: It may affect me in the future	42
Service: Gives people someone to reach out to	39
Impact: Unemployment	37
Views: Adds more cost in the long term for other services and/or East Sussex County Council	36
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	35
Service: Provides person-centred support	34
Impact: People could/will die	33
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	33
Impact: Isolation	32
Service: Praise of staff	32
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	32

Views: Comfort knowing the support is available	30
Impact: Lose my current support	29
Impact: Less independence	28
Impact: Poorer mental health	25
Impact: Loss to the community/society	20
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	20
Impact: Lower quality of life	19
Service: Advocates for the people it supports	19
Service: Immensely valued	19
Service: People would not be in a suitable home without service	19
Views: Services already limited	18
Impact: Risk of abuse/domestic abuse	17
Impact: Increased support needs	17
Service: Prevents homelessness	17
Service: Face-to-face support is important	16
Suggestion: Don't cut service	16
Service: Support navigating housing/benefits/social care system	15
Impact: Ability to find work	14
Not sure	13
Service: Someone to listen to you	12
Views: Other services already struggling	11
Views: Priorities are wrong	11
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	11
Unspecific/unclear comment	10
Views: Need for this service is increasing	10
Views: Unhappy/disagree with proposal	10
Views: Everyone deserves access to support	10
Service: Criticism of service effectiveness	9
Service: Service built trust with people they support	9
Views: Morally wrong	9
Impact: Cannot rely on care from family	8
Impact: More people having to use temporary accommodation	8
Service: Would not be alive without service	8
Views: Short sighted	8

Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	8
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	8
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	7
Views: Cuts create inequality	7
Views: Unacceptable for social care staff to do this work instead	7
Impact: People discouraged from seeking help	6
Other: Criticism of council	6
Other: Criticism of government	6
Service: Supports the family/friends of people who access the service	6
Impact: Education	5
Impact: More hospital admissions	5
Received no support from service	5
Service: High quality	5
Views: Detrimental to neurodivergent people in particular	5
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	4
Views: People abuse service/social care system	4
Views: Detrimental to young people in particular	4
Views: Already can't cope with support they have	3
Impact: Poorer physical health	3
Other: Comment on other council spending	3
Service: Cost effective	3
Service: Rebuilds lives	3
View: Poor experience of service	3
Views: Service already underfunded	3
Impact: Lack of active outreach to those in need	2
Impact: Loss of skilled staff	2
Impact: Loss to the community/society	2
Suggestion: Cut East Sussex County Council staff pay	2
Suggestion: Don't cut as much as proposed	2
Suggestion: Increase rather than cut service funding	2
Suggestion: More joint working	2
View: Decision makers lack any understanding of needing this support	2

Views: People supported by service struggle to access/engage with other services	2
Views: I am passionate about this service	2
Impact: More people going to prison	1
Impact: Ability to maintain work and/or carer responsibilities	1
Impact: Ability to support the people I work with	1
Impact: Delay in discharge from bedded care	1
Impact: Fear for the future	1
Impact: I would struggle to evict tenants safely	1
Impact: I'd refer people to alternative services	1
Impact: Increase in crime	1
Impact: Loss of support to adapt my home	1
Impact: People would have to go into care	1
Impact: Relapse	1
Other: Comment clearly relates to different service	1
Other: Comment re government spending	1
Other: Comment with link to report	1
Service: Criticism of staff and their knowledge/skills	1
Service: Gives one dedicated support officer	1
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens	1
Suggestion: Charge people more to use services	1
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	1
Suggestion: Cut councillors' pay	1
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	1
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Cut non-essential parts of the service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Reduce service in gradual stages	1
Suggestion: Ring-fence funding for this service	1
Suggestion: Run fundraising activities	1
Views: Catastrophic to cut so many services at the same time	1
Views: Currently lack of safeguarding for East Sussex residents	1
Views: Cuts help alleviate pressure on other services	1
Views: Cutting service is a mistake	1

Views: Disagree with size of the cut	1
Views: Lack of hope	1
Views: Poor experience of other services	1
Views: Same support can be received elsewhere	1
Views: Shameful proposal	1

4) If the service had not been available when you needed help, where would you have gone instead for support with housing?

There were 890 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
I wouldn't know where else to go/Not sure	436
Views: Equivalent services not available	140
Citizens Advice Bureau	96
Local council	71
Comment about personal circumstances	66
Council unhelpful	50
People struggle to access/engage with other services	45
Would have been homeless	41
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	29
Service: Praise of service and its benefit	28
Long wait time for other services	26
Local authority/adult social care	26
Poor experience of other services/named providers	25
Impact: Poor/no access to support	24
Other services already struggling	22
Family member support	20
Impact: Poorer mental health	16
Service: Face-to-face support is important	16
Views: Services already limited	14
Friends' support	13
Local charity	13
Service: People would not be in a suitable home without service	12
Service: Would not be alive without service	12
Views: Alternative support options not adequate	12

Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	12
Received no support from service	11
Service: Very accessible	11
Unspecific/unclear comment	11
Age Concern	9
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	9
Service: Praise of staff	9
Impact: Loss of support filling in forms/applications	7
Brighton Housing Trust	6
Impact: Detrimental to the family and/or carer of the people affected	6
Impact: Cannot rely on care from family	5
Shelter	5
Solicitors	5
Council hard to contact	4
GP	4
Local MP	4
Food Bank	3
Hastings Advice and Representation Centre	3
Hospital	3
Housing Associations	3
Housing Authority	3
Impact: Isolation	3
Library	3
Mental health services	3
Other housing services	3
Samaritans	3
Seaview	3
Search online	3
Age UK	2
Council should signpost to adequate alternative services	2
Emergency shelters	2
I would go to my GP	2
Impact: Less independence	2
Impact: Cause hardship and poverty	2

Impact: Loss of benefits/financial advice	2
Impact: People at increased risk	2
Police	2
Service: Advocates for the people it supports	2
Service: Service is vital/needed	2
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	2
Views: Comfort knowing the support is available	2
Views: Cuts create inequality	2
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	2
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	2
Would have waited until my circumstances declined	2
Young Men's Christian Association	2
Advocacy service	1
Agency	1
Ask my manager where to refer people	1
Ask people around me	1
Association of Carers	1
Benefits agency	1
Care for the Carers	1
Charities limited in support they can provide	1
Church	1
Community Outreach Service	1
Counsellor	1
East Sussex Housing	1
Eastbourne homes	1
Emergency services	1
East Sussex Recovery Alliance	1
Government	1
Hastings Advice and Representation Centre	1
Homelink	1
Current services previous name given	1
Impact: Cannot afford private support	1
Impact: Fear for the future	1
Impact: More people having to use temporary accommodation	1
Impact: People could die	1

Impact: People discouraged from seeking help	1
Impact: People would have to go into care	1
Impact: People won't get the support they need	1
Impact: Unemployment	1
Impact: Use of drug/alcohol	1
Internet	1
Job Centre	1
Lack of trust in other services	1
Local media	1
Macmillan	1
Nearest housing support service	1
Other: Criticism of government	1
Poor experience with local MP	1
Private agency	1
Psychiatric Unit	1
Rough Sleepers Initiative	1
Armed Forces charity, the Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association	1
Sussex Community Development Association	1
Service found me	1
Service: Gives people someone to reach out to	1
Service: Lifeline to people	1
Service: Support navigating housing/benefits/social care system	1
Social media forums	1
Social Prescriber	1
Southdown Housing	1
Single Point of Advice (SPoA)	1
Stonewall	1
Suggestion: Council should provide directory of accommodation	1
Sussex Homemove	1
Unable to comment	1
Victim Support Service	1
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	1
Views: Detrimental to neurodivergent people in particular	1

Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: Lack of information on other services available	1

5) Which of the following areas of support from the service have made the biggest difference to helping you live independently?

There were 880 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Stay in existing accommodation	377	27.82%
Find new accommodation	471	34.76%
Improve your home environment	376	27.75%
Increase your income	353	26.05%
Manage your budget	319	23.54%
Reduce your debts	260	19.19%
Better manage your physical health	287	21.18%
Better manage your mental health and emotional wellbeing	495	36.53%
Avoid harm from others	154	11.37%
Manage the misuse of drugs or alcohol	75	5.54%
Use computers and/or digital devices	174	12.84%
Use health services	188	13.87%
Reduce self-harm	116	8.56%
Not Answered	475	35.06%

Please tell us about anything else the service has supported you with that has made a difference to helping you live independently:

There were 531 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Filling in forms	74
Support with benefits	72
Help with housing	64
Financial support/advice	61
Someone who listened to me	61

Avoid feeling overwhelmed	40
Comment about personal circumstances	39
Build independence	35
Help with mental health	35
Service: Praise of staff	32
Build confidence	28
Access to food and/or fuel vouchers	27
Clear advice on my options	26
Managing a tenancy	26
Service: Provides person-centred support	25
Signposting to other services	25
Accessing disabilities support	24
Received no support from service	24
Safe environment	23
Helped me find a suitable home	21
Liaising with other services	20
Service: Praise of service and its benefit	20
Service: Very accessible	20
Applying for housing	19
Getting utilities/furniture for my home	19
Moral support	19
Gave me hope	18
Help with physical health	18
Views: Comfort knowing the support is available	17
Information Technology/Digital support	15
Legal advice	15
Managing my home	15
Unspecific/unclear comment	13
Regular check-ups from staff	12
Service: Face-to-face support is important	12
Helps at time of crisis	11
Reduce isolation	11
Safeguarding people they support and/or their family	11
Adaptations to my home	9
Service provides a wide range of support	9

Feeling supported	9
Ability to afford living essentials	8
Build my knowledge	8
Liaising with local authority/adult social care	8
Service: Service is vital/needed	8
Service: Prevents homelessness	6
Support with addiction	6
Helps rebuild lives	5
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	5
Service: Would not be alive without service	5
The ability to access help	5
Views: I wouldn't know where else to go	5
Views: Poor experience of service	5
Help with life skills	4
Not sure	4
Accessing pension credit	3
Changed their life	3
Giving me a voice	3
Increases independence	3
Phone calls	3
Service: Lifeline to people	3
Support to attend appointments	3
Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	3
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	3
Accessing food banks	2
Get into work	2
Getting a personal assistant	2
Improve my quality of life	2
Keeping updated with relevant information	2
Service: Criticism of service effectiveness	2
Staying in my own home	2
Suggestion: Don't cut service	2
Support with basic living needs	2
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	2

Access to healthcare	1
Access to translation when meeting support services	1
Applying for identification documents	1
Appointing a Power of Attorney	1
Build social skills	1
Dementia support	1
Having a place for friends/family to visit	1
Impact: Loss to the community/society	1
Impact: People at increased risk without service	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Integrating with the community	1
Navigating eviction	1
Other: Criticism of council	1
Other: Criticism of government	1
Regular visits from other services	1
Respite	1
Setting up a bank account	1
Social interactions	1
Support to settle in new accommodation	1
Understanding letter	1
Views: People abuse service/social care system	1
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	1
Views: Detrimental to neurodivergent people in particular	1
Writing letters	1

6) Do you have any other suggestions or comments you would like to make?

There were 616 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Suggestion: Don't cut service	169
Service: Service is vital/needed	80
Service: Praise of service and its benefit	61
Views: Cuts target vulnerable people	61
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	51
Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	47

Service: Praise of staff	46
Views: Adds more cost in the long term for other services and/or East Sussex County Council	43
Comment about personal circumstances	34
Impact: Poorer mental health	30
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	30
Impact: More people in crisis	28
Suggestion: Increase rather than cut service funding	28
Impact: Poor/no access to support	27
Impact: Homelessness	26
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	26
Views: Equivalent services not available	26
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	25
Views: Recognise need to make savings	25
Suggestion: Don't cut as much as proposed	24
Impact: Loss to the community/society	23
Service: Lifeline to people	23
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	22
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	21
Views: Priorities are wrong	20
Impact: People won't get the support they need	18
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	18
Views: Unhappy/disagree with proposal	18
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	18
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	16
Views: Need for this service is increasing	16
Views: Short sighted	15
Other: Comment on other council spending	14
Service: Very accessible	14
Impact: People at increased risk without service	13
Impact: People could/will die	13
Impact: Financial hardship	12
Impact: Poorer physical health	12
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	12
Service: Face-to-face support is important	11

Suggestion: More joint working	11
Service: Gives people someone to reach out to	10
Service: Immensely valued	10
Impact: Loss of benefits/financial advice	9
Views: Services already limited	9
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	9
Views: Other services already struggling	9
Other: Criticism of government	8
Service: Prevents homelessness	8
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	8
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	8
Impact: Lower quality of life	7
Other: Comment re government budget	7
Other: Criticism of council	7
Suggestion: Continue to provide accessible support	7
Unspecific/unclear comment	7
Impact: Less independence	6
Service: Services rely on referring people to them for support	6
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	6
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	6
Views: Worry about where people will get support instead	6
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	6
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	6
Impact: Increase in support needs	5
Impact: Loss of support filling in forms/applications	5
Impact: More hospital admissions	5
Service: Provides person-centred support	5
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	5
Suggestion: Listen to the consultation feedback	5
Suggestion: Prioritise support for mental health	5
Suggestion: Remove and condense office buildings	5
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	5
Impact: Cause hardship and poverty	4
Impact: Detrimental to the family and/or carer of the people affected	4

Other: Comment re government spending	4
Suggestion: Prioritise welfare of people impacted who currently use service	4
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	4
Views: Find an alternative way to save money	4
Views: People will lose their job	4
Impact: Lower quality of life	3
Impact: Increased burden on frontline workers supporting people	3
Other: Comment re government	3
Service: Criticism of service efficiency	3
Service: Advocates for the people it supports	3
Service: Supports the family/friends of people accessing the service	3
Views: People abuse service/social care system/system	3
Views: Cuts create inequality	3
Views: Cutting service is a mistake	3
Views: Service funding should go to other services	3
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	3
Views: Shameful proposal	3
Views: Too many proposed cuts by East Sussex County Council at once	3
Impact: People would have to go into care	2
Impact: Ability to have a home/suitable home	2
Impact: Cannot rely on care from family	2
Impact: Loss of signposting to further support	2
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	2
Other: Comment re national finances	2
Other: Criticism of motivation behind proposal	2
Received no support from the service	2
Service: High quality	2
Service: Service built trust with people they support	2
Service: Service provides a wide range of support	2
Service: Would not be alive without service	2
Suggestion: Better use of funding	2
Suggestion: Cut councillors' pay	2

Suggestion: Ensure equivalent alternative support is available	2
Suggestion: Focus on providing stable and affordable housing	2
Suggestion: Improve service communication	2
Suggestion: Increase awareness of service	2
Suggestion: Increase service support offer	2
Suggestion: Increase training for staff	2
Suggestion: Look for private investors	2
Suggestion: Make access to services means tested	2
Suggestion: Prioritise quick response to those in need	2
Suggestion: Raise money from the highest earners	2
Suggestion: Reduce use of external private services	2
Suggestion: Tax the highest earners more	2
View: Decision makers lack any understanding of needing this support	2
Views: Comfort knowing the support is available	2
Views: Disagree with size of the cut	2
Views: Poor experience of other services	2
Views: Poor experience of service	2
Suggestion: Prioritise support for filling in forms/applications	2
Views: Already can't cope with support they have	1
Impact: Increase in crime	1
Impact: Isolation	1
Impact: More people having to use temporary accommodation	1
Impact: Reduce trust in East Sussex County Council	1
Other: Allow redundancy requests	1
Other: Comment on ineffectiveness of support in the long term	1
Other: Comment on survey	1
Other: Comment re impact of government actions	1
Other: Comment re impact on local politics	1
Other: Comment re law	1
Other: Comment re rent eligibility	1
Other: Unsure why East Sussex County Council cannot afford budget gap	1
Service: Support navigating housing/benefits/social care system	1

Suggestion: Focus on quality not just cost with contractors	1
Suggestion: Reduce public transport costs	1
Suggestion: Use technology	1
Suggestion: Use volunteers	1
Suggestion: Better monitoring of people's support needs	1
Suggestion: Better monitoring of service performance	1
Suggestion: Carry out full risk assessment of reducing service	1
Suggestion: Carry out risk assessment for other services impacted	1
Suggestion: Charge for use of NHS services	1
Suggestion: Close service and signpost to alternative support	1
Suggestion: Co-locate services	1
Suggestion: Consider the impact it has on the most vulnerable	1
Suggestion: Control population size	1
Suggestion: Cut Learning Disability services	1
Suggestion: Cut operational costs	1
Suggestion: Cut named Public Health service	1
Suggestion: Cut services supporting the least need	1
Suggestion: Develop the service with co-production	1
Suggestion: Education in schools on life skills	1
Suggestion: Find other ways to generate income	1
Suggestion: Focus on building young people's independence	1
Suggestion: Focus on helping people understand options available to them	1
Suggestion: Generate income from non-health-related/essential services and events	1
Suggestion: Hire compassionate staff	1
Suggestion: Improve service responsiveness	1
Suggestion: Incentivise the remaining support	1
Suggestion: Increase council tax	1
Suggestion: Invest in more accommodation	1
Suggestion: Joint transport between services	1
Suggestion: Limit amount of support per person	1
Suggestion: Lobby the government	1
Suggestion: Make decisions after May elections	1
Suggestion: Make small even cuts across all services	1

Suggestion: Manage immigration and/or international aid better	1
Suggestion: Offer group/peer support	1
Suggestion: Prioritise accessible support	1
Suggestion: Prioritise housing support	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for adults and children differently	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for dementia	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for domestic abuse victims	1
Suggestion: Produce more self-help resources	1
Suggestion: Promote house sharing	1
Suggestion: Provide clearer information on support available for residents	1
Suggestion: Provide more person-centred/co-produced support	1
Suggestion: Provide more support for blind people	1
Suggestion: Reduce benefits for those not seeking employment	1
Suggestion: Reduce homelessness	1
Suggestion: Reduce public transport salaries	1
Suggestion: Reduce service in gradual stages	1
Suggestion: Reduce tax for the lowest earners	1
Suggestion: Review housing benefit payments	1
Suggestion: Stricter enforcement of fines (e.g., parking)	1
Suggestion: Utilise staff skills better	1
Suggestion: Work closely with service to mitigate impact	1
Views: Concern re unpredictable outcomes	1
Views: Curious re impact of not balancing the budget	1
Views: Detrimental to neurodivergent people in particular	1
Views: I am passionate about this service	1
Views: Social Care system is broken	1

About you equality questions

People were given the option of answering these questions, with 996 choosing to take part and 359 choosing not to answer them.

What age are you?

There were 955 responses to this part of the question, one of which was not an age.

Age	Total	Percentage of respondents
Under 18	1	<1%
18-24	26	2%
25-34	80	6%
35-44	122	9%
45-54	203	15%
55-59	104	8%
60-64	116	9%
65+	302	22%
Not answered	401	30%

What is your gender?

There were 993 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Female	657	48.49%
Male	328	24.21%
Non-binary	3	0.22%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	5	0.37%
Not Answered	362	26.72%

Self-described gender:

There were 5 responses to this part of the question:

- Comment on relevance/motive behind question x 3
- Transgender female
- Female

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

There were 990 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	976	72.03%
No (please write in your gender identity below)	5	0.37%
Prefer not to say	9	0.66%
Not Answered	365	26.94%

Gender identity:

There were 8 responses to this part of the question:

- Comment on relevance/motive behind question x 4
- Female x 2
- Man
- Unspecific/unclear

What is your ethnic group?

There were 986 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British	868	64.06%
White Irish	18	1.33%
White Gypsy/Irish Traveler	4	0.30%
White Roma	1	0.07%
Any other White background (please write in below)	33	2.44%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4	0.30%
Mixed White and Black African	6	0.44%
Mixed White and Asian	6	0.44%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please write in below)	2	0.15%
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	0.07%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	3	0.22%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	4	0.30%
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0	0.00%
Any other Asian background (please write in below)	5	0.37%

Black or Black British Caribbean	3	0.22%
Black or Black British African background (please write in below)	5	0.37%
Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (please write in below)	1	0.07%
Arab	1	0.07%
Any other ethnic group (please write in below)	7	0.52%
Prefer not to say	14	1.03%
Not Answered	369	27.23%

Other:

There were 45 responses to this part of the question. People provided names of countries across Asia, Europe, and America; specific White, Black, and Mixed ethnicities; and comments on the motivations behind the questions.

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

There were 972 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
'Straight' / Heterosexual	851	62.80%
Gay or Lesbian	38	2.80%
Bisexual	26	1.92%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	8	0.59%
Prefer not to say	49	3.62%
Not Answered	383	28.27%

Self-described sexual orientation:

There were 17 responses to this part of the question.

- Unspecific/unclear x 7
- Fluid x 3
- Comment on question x 2
- Asexual x 2
- Straight
- Pansexual
- Asexual and Aromantic

What is your religion or belief?

There were 963 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
No religion	446	32.92%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	432	31.88%
Buddhist	12	0.89%
Hindu	1	0.07%
Jewish	2	0.15%
Muslim	15	1.11%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Any other religion (please write in below)	18	1.33%
Philosophical belief (please write in below)	12	0.89%
Prefer not to say	25	1.85%
Not Answered	392	28.93%

Other religion:

There were 47 responses to this part of the question.

People shared specific beliefs including different forms of Christianity, Paganism, Catholicism, Judaism, Muslim, Spiritualism, and forms of Humanism.

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 969 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes (please answer part B below)	621	45.83%
No (go to the next question)	322	23.76%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	26	1.92%
Not Answered	386	28.49%

Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

There were 818 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, a lot (please answer part C below)	400	29.52%
Yes, a little (please answer part C below)	196	14.46%
Not at all (go to the next question)	191	14.10%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	31	2.29%
Not Answered	537	39.63%

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 638 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Physical Impairment	343	25.31%
Sensory Impairment	94	6.94%
Learning Disability/Difficulty	59	4.35%
Long-standing illness	273	20.15%
Mental Health condition	312	23.03%
Neurodivergent condition	76	5.61%
Other Developmental Condition	12	0.89%
Other (please write in below)	64	4.72%
Prefer not to say	37	2.73%
Not Answered	717	52.92%

Other:

There were 115 responses to this part of the question. This included very specific details regarding illnesses falling under the above health categories, as well as how it impacts their ability to cope day-to-day. Conditions provided largely covered:

- Autoimmune diseases/disorders
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Conditions relating to energy levels

- Degenerative cognitive conditions
- Diabetes type 1 or 2
- Hormonal and/or vitamin imbalance
- Inflammatory conditions
- Mental health conditions
- Pain
- Physical injuries
- Respiratory conditions
- Visual impairment

Are you currently pregnant or did you give birth in the last twelve months?

There were 954 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	19	1.40%
No	922	68.04%
Prefer not to say	13	0.96%
Not Answered	401	29.59%

Are there any children under the age of 18 living in your household?

There were 965 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	224	16.53%
No	728	53.73%
Prefer not to say	13	0.96%
Not Answered	390	28.78%

Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

There were 959 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	310	22.88%
No (go to next question)	628	46.35%

Prefer not to say	21	1.55%
Not Answered	396	29.23%

Hours of care given a week

There were 308 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
9 hours a week or less	84	6.20%
10 to 19 hours a week	17	1.25%
20 to 34 hours a week	18	1.33%
35 to 49 hours a week	37	2.73%
50 hours or more a week	113	8.34%
Prefer not to say	39	2.88%
Not Answered	1047	77.27%

Who you care for

There were 328 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Parent	95	7.01%
Partner/spouse	120	8.86%
Child with special needs	48	3.54%
Other family member	36	2.66%
Friend	15	1.11%
Other (please give details)	19	1.40%
Prefer not to say	19	1.40%
Not Answered	1027	75.79%

If you answered 'other', please explain here:

There were 32 responses to this part of the question. Comments covered the following areas regarding who people care for:

- Family members (some specifying multiple family members) across different generations.

- Care via volunteering or job role.
- Assistant animals.

Armed Forces Service: Are you currently serving, or have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces (this includes Reservists or part-time service)?

There were 952 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	21	1.55%
No	924	68.19%
Prefer not to say	7	0.52%
Not Answered	403	29.74%

Are you in a household or family where someone is currently or was previously serving in the UK Armed Forces?

There were 970 responses to this part of the question.

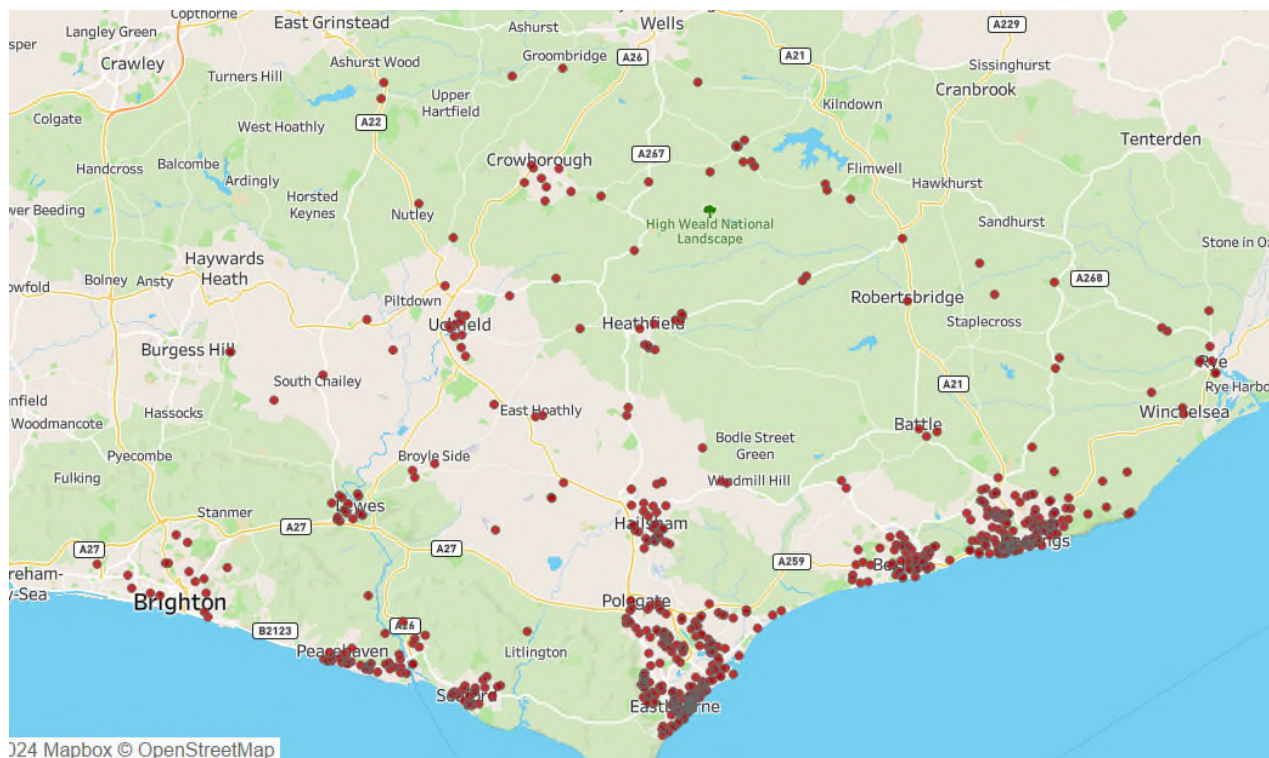
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	56	4.13%
No	904	66.72%
Prefer not to say	10	0.74%
Not Answered	385	28.41%

Please tell us your postcode:

There were 745 responses to this part of the question and 220 people chose prefer not to say.

Area in East Sussex	Total	Percentage of respondents
Lewes	77	6%
Eastbourne	193	14%
Wealden	156	12%
Rother	105	8%
Hastings	176	13%

Thirty-eight people (3%) provided postcodes outside of East Sussex.



Other feedback by email etc

Floating Support Service consultation responses

There were 17 responses to the consultation by other feedback methods. All of them were submitted by email and all but one came from organisations. The only individual response came from a resident of East Sussex.

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- BHT Sussex
- Care for the Carers
- Children's Services at East Sussex County Council
- Eastbourne Borough Council
- Hastings Borough Council (2 responses)
- Heads of Housing across the district and borough authorities
- Healthwatch East Sussex
- Lewes District Council
- Lewes Town Council
- NHS Sussex
- Rother District Council
- Sussex Community Development Association
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

- Wealden Citizens Advice
- Wealden District Council

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment themes	Total
Views: Recognise need to make savings	10
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	9
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	9
Views: Equivalent services not available	7
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	6
Views: Other services already struggling	6
Views: Will shift cost onto districts and boroughs	6
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	5
Views: Detrimental to people with mental illness in particular	5
Views: Disagree	5
Views: Need for this service is increasing	5
Views: Service vital for safeguarding people support by the service and/or people around them	4
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	3
Views: Detrimental to homeless people in particular	3
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	3
Views: Disagree with size of the cut	3
Service: Service is vital	2
Views: Catastrophic to cut so many services at the same time	2
Views: People supported by service struggle to access/engage with other services	2
Views: Concerned about impact of proposal	2

Views: Concerned about impact on Hastings residents	2
Views: Concerned where else people would get support	2
Views: Concerned where families will get support instead	2
Views: Cutting service is a mistake	2
Views: Impacts will be immediate for people accessing the service and statutory services	2
Views: No capacity for districts and boroughs to provide the support instead	2
Views: People may be affected by multiple proposed cuts	2
Views: Alternative services not suitable	1
Views: Carers vital for health and social care economy	1
Views: Concern re timeframe for cuts	1
Views: Cuts too big for service to run effectively	1
Views: Don't close service	1
Views: Families/carers need support too	1
Views: Homelessness prevention statutory under the Homelessness Reduction Act	1
Views: Insufficient time for other organisations to respond/mitigate risks	1
Views: Money won't be saved	1
Views: Priorities are wrong	1
Views: Short sighted	1
Views: Understand prioritising statutory duties	1
Views: Wellbeing relies on access to broad range of services	1

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	10

Service: Services rely on referring people to them for support	8
Service: Service is vital	6
Service: Works well alongside other services	6
Service: Praise of service	4
Service: Achieved good outcomes	3
Service: Praise of staff	3
Service: Provides person-centred support	3
Service: Very accessible	3
Service: Helps people to regain independence	2
Service: Helps to get/maintain employment	2
Service: High quality	2
Service: Immensely valued	2
Service: Lifeline to people	2
Service: Only service of its sort	2
Service: Specialist knowledge unique to service	2
Service: Supports engagement with other wellbeing initiatives	2
Service: Supports the most vulnerable	2
Service: Access to food banks/vouchers	1
Service: Cost effective	1
Service: Face-to-face support is important	1
Service: Flexible support	1
Service: Importance of the home visits	1
Service: Rebuilds lives	1
Service: Service built trust with people they support	1
Service: Service is beneficial	1
Service: Service key to wellbeing	1
Service: Support with finance and/or benefits	1
Service: Without service I would still be in an unsuitable home	1
Services: Signpost and connects to other services	1

Impact

Comment themes	Total
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	13
Impact: Increased cost for other organisations	10
Impact: Homelessness	8
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	7
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	7
Impact: Significant increase in people living in temporary accommodation	7
Impact: Poorer mental health	6
Impact: Financial hardship	5
Impact: Poorer access to support	5
Impact: Poorer physical health	5
Impact: Ability to have a home/suitable home	4
Impact: Ability to sustain living independently and maintaining accommodation	4
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	4
Impact: People supported by service at increased risk	4
Impact: Compromise other organisations' work	4
Impact: More people in crisis	4
Impact: People's needs won't be met	4
Impact: Unsuitable housing detrimental to child development	4
Impact: Education	3
Impact: Loss of partnership working	3
Impact: Loss of skilled/specialist workforce	3
Impact: Ability to care for child	2
Impact: Employment	2
Impact: Even more limited services	2
Impact: Families would split up	2
Impact: Increase in crime	2
Impact: Increased burden on frontline workers supporting people	2
Impact: Loss of jobs	2

Impact: Multiple disadvantages for some who use several services	2
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	2
Impact: NHS	2
Impact: People could/will die	2
Impact: Poorer long-term outcomes	2
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	2
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	2
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	1
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: Community at increased risk	1
Impact: Cuts create inequality	1
Impact: Destabilise wider 'system' with rise in demand	1
Impact: Detrimental to already deprived communities in East Sussex	1
Impact: Engagement with other services	1
Impact: Greater risk of people losing their homes	1
Impact: Increase homelessness if cut	1
Impact: Increase in anti-social behaviour	1
Impact: Increase in families becoming homeless	1
Impact: Isolation	1
Impact: Less tailored or bespoke support	1
Impact: Loss of signposting/access to other services	1
Impact: Loss of staff results in loss of tax revenue	1
Impact: Loss to the community	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: People would need to be in crisis to get help	1
Impact: Poorer recovery	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Reduce in wellbeing for people supported by services	1
Impact: Relapse	1
Impact: Size of cut hinders ability to scale up service in future again	1

Impact: Undo what staff have worked hard to build	1
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Suggestions

Comment themes	Total
Suggestions: More joint working	7
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	4
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	3
Suggestion: Don't cut prevention services	3
Suggestion: Utilise existing and effective volunteer/charity support services	3
Suggestion: Don't cut service	2
Suggestion: Extend transition period of the floating support service for partners to develop joint approach to homeless prevention	2
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens	1
Suggestion: Develop the model before you decide the funding	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Don't cut as much as proposed	1
Suggestion: Find other ways to save money	1
Suggestion: Lobby government in partnership with other services	1
Suggestion: Make decisions after May elections	1
Suggestion: Prioritise the housing elements of service	1
Suggestion: Reduce service in gradual stages	1
Suggestion: Reduce use of expensive residential care for adults	1
Suggestion: Use learning from current service to develop new model	1
Suggestion: Work with partners to develop new model	1

Other comments

Comment themes	Total
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	3

Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	3
Other: Appreciation of East Sussex County Council's acknowledgement of impacts and commitment to co-production	1
Other: Can re-model service with smaller cut to reduce impact on capacity	1
Other: Care for the Carers must represent carers in design of alternative support	1
Other: Comment re consultation financial figures	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Cost of temporary accommodation is driving financial instability in local authorities	1
Other: Districts and boroughs not in a financial position to cope with impacts of cuts	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial information on savings	1
Other: East Sussex County Council should provide more information on which neighbourhoods currently benefit most from service	1
Other: How are the proposals being communicated to other organisations?	1
Other: How will East Sussex County Council meet its duty to shape the local adult social care market?	1
Other: Near future changes in government funding possible	1
Other: Not everyone affected will qualify for housing services	1
Other: Proposal in conflict with East Sussex County Council housing strategy	1
Other: Should have allowed more time to discuss proposals	1
Other: Supporting and working with VCSE sector vital for improved outcomes	1
Other: Unrealistic to expect other services to mitigate impacts sufficiently	1
Other: VCSE need services to signpost to	1
Other: Want to see the Equal Impact Assessment and proposed mitigations	1

Other: Welcome work with partners to scope cross-sector approach to homelessness prevention	1
Other: Work with NHS Sussex to understand and mitigate risks	1

Overall consultation responses

Responses addressing all 11 consultations combined

There were 10 responses addressing all 11 consultations at once by letter and email. These were from organisations (5), residents (4) and a member of parliament (1).

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- Rother District Council
- Lewes Liberal Democrats
- Care for the Carers
- East Sussex VCSE Alliance
- East Sussex Seniors Associations

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment themes	Total
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	6
Views: Recognise need to make savings	5
Views: Disagree	3
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	2
Views: Concerned about impact of proposal	2
Views: Don't close service	2
Views: Limited capacity for VCSE sector to provide the support instead	2
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	2
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	2
Views: Will shift cost onto districts and boroughs	2
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Carers of people using service care for multiple people already	1
Views: Carers vital for health and social care economy	1
Views: Concern about impact on level of support services can provide post-cuts	1

Views: Concern re timeframe for cuts	1
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: Disagree with using private organisations	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1
Views: Homelessness prevention statutory under the Homelessness Reduction Act	1
Views: Impacts will be immediate for people accessing the service and statutory services	1
Views: Insufficient time for other organisations to respond/mitigate risks	1
Views: Knows disabled people who could work but don't	1
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	1
Views: Other services already struggling	1
Views: Private support too expensive	1
Views: Service vital for safeguarding people they support and/or people around them	1
Views: Shameful proposal	1

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	1

Impact

Comment themes	Total
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	3
Impact: Poorer mental health	3
Impact: Financial hardship	2
Impact: Increased cost for other organisations	2
Impact: Poorer physical health	2
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	1
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	1
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	1
Impact: At risk of suicide	1
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: People using service at increased risk	1

Impact: Community at increased risk	1
Impact: Encourages negative attitude towards people who need support	1
Impact: Hardship and poverty	1
Impact: Homelessness	1
Impact: Isolation	1
Impact: Loss of staff results in loss of tax revenue	1
Impact: Loss to the community	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: More people would be in out-of-area accommodation	1
Impact: More hospital admissions	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: NHS	1
Impact: Poorer access to support	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people supported by services	1
Impact: Risk of abuse/domestic abuse	1
Impact: Significant increase in people living in temporary accommodation	1
Impact: Unsuitable housing detrimental to child development	1
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	1

Suggestions

Comment themes	Total
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	3
Suggestion: Utilise existing and effective volunteer/charity support services	3
Suggestions: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	2
Suggestion: Allow VCSE partners to reduce rental outgoings	1
Suggestion: Build accommodation under a Community Land Trust	1
Suggestion: Consider impact of loss of winter fuel allowance	1

Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Don't cut prevention services	1
Suggestion: Don't cut service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for young people coming out of care	1
Suggestion: Run accommodation/care homes as a business to generate profit	1
Suggestion: Signpost charities to other sources of funding	1
Suggestion: Transfer assets to voluntary sector	1
Suggestion: Work with partners to develop new model	1

Other comments

Other: Supporting and working with VCSE sector vital for improved outcomes	2
Other: Appreciation of East Sussex County Council 's acknowledgement of impacts and commitment to co-production	1
Other: Care for the Carers must represent carers in design of alternative support	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment on government policy and country-wide issues not specific to consultations	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Cost of temporary accommodation is driving financial instability in local authorities	1
Other: Districts and boroughs are not in a financial position to cope with impacts of cuts	1
Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	1
Other: Provide information on proposed alternatives/mitigations	1
Other: Question re raising awareness of consultations with public	1
Other: Want to see the Equal Impact Assessment and proposed mitigations	1
Other: Will this be all the cuts or is more needed?	1
Other: Would NHS & ASCH save by working together?	1

Consultation meetings

A consultation meeting was held in each area of the county, as well as an online meeting.

Date held	Area of the county	Attendees
11 November	Newhaven	3 people who had used the service 6 staff members from the service
18 November	St Leonards	14 people who had used the service 5 staff members from the service
19 November	Bexhill	8 people who had used the service 5 staff members from the service
21 November	Polegate	2 people who had used the service 4 staff members from the service
25 November	Eastbourne	3 people who had used the service 3 staff members from the service
27 November	Online meeting	5 people who had used the service

Themes from the Newhaven meeting

- **Views:** One person recognised the need to make savings and another wanted clarification about whether the attendance allowance was affected. The service is often there at points of crisis and it is really valued for this reason.
- **Service:** The service has helped them to access support and funding they weren't aware of and is described as offering invaluable support at what is often a difficult time. People also said the staff are amazing and really positive, allowing you to build up a good relationship with them.

They help people to navigate the system and offer signposting to other organisations. This helps people to regain their independence and enables them to remain at home.

The fact the service is responsive and in-person also makes a big difference, particularly for those who aren't online. One person said they had recommended it to a friend who has recently come out of hospital.
- **Impact:** Without the support of the service they would have struggled to fill in the necessary forms themselves. This means that if funding for the service was reduced people may not find it easy to access the help that is out there, meaning they would miss out on funding that could make a real difference to their daily life and wellbeing.

So much is online now and the service is vital in making sure those who aren't digitally included don't miss out. It is difficult to navigate the system and without the support of this service many people would struggle.

- **Suggestions:** Use places like doctors' surgeries to promote things people are entitled to, like pension credit.

Themes from the St Leonards meeting

- **Views:** The vulnerable are always attacked first with cuts and it's not fair. There are already so many challenges with housing and it affects people's mental health when fighting for what they need.

The Council needs to remember its duty of care. People pay their tax and national insurance and should be able to expect support when they are older. This service offers a level of support and understanding that isn't available from statutory services.

- **Service:** People praised the service and said it was magnificent. The service is very responsive and the waiting time is much shorter than other services. The support is tailored to you, and they keep you updated.

People talked about how the service has helped them to complete forms and to move from unsafe and unsuitable accommodation to something better. They talked about their struggles dealing with housing services, private landlords and the police, and how those services don't care or listen.

The service saves money by limiting the support that people need from other services. People value the support it offers to navigate what is a complex system.

People emphasised how important it is to have the sort of face-to-face support that this service offers, and to not have to talk on the phone or to AI computers. The service has provided invaluable support to people, advocating for them and championing their cause when other services won't listen.

- **Impacts:** People would be stuck living in unsafe housing and be at risk of becoming homeless. If people can't get the support they need, there would be a risk of people self-harming, and a real risk to life if people are left without this support if the service is reduced.

Reducing the service and not advertising it will cost money in the long term. People won't have the information they need about what they are entitled to and many would struggle to cope without the help of this service.

- **Suggestions:** The service should be promoted better so people know about it.
- **Other:** The roads are the worst for potholes and there isn't enough money to run the Council. Cutting a service like this would have a negative impact on the Council's reputation.

Themes from the Bexhill meeting

- **Views:** People disagree with the proposal and highly value the support provided. They said the proposal is sad and tragic and were concerned about their support and where people would go for help in the future, as they would have been lost without the service.

This service is precious and must be protected. The Council has a duty to support people and this service is key in delivering that duty. The service gets lot of feedback from people saying how much difference it has made to them.

The staff bring in huge amounts of funding into the area through helping people to claim benefits. This money improves lives.

- **Service:** The service is amazing and the support it offers mustn't be lost. It is responsive and people feel really supported by staff. It offers hope at a difficult time and the human contact aspect is so important - both in terms of having home visits, and knowing you can pick up the phone and there will be a voice at the end of the line that's going to help you.

The service has supported people with advice and advocacy to access financial support, maximising benefits, accessing care, housing and courses, getting ID, opening bank accounts, securing Blue Badges and appealing negative decisions from statutory agencies. Support with form filling - sequencing all of these things together.

- **Impact:** People wouldn't know what they were entitled to in terms of housing and benefits. Other services don't have any time to help in the way the service does. As a result, people would struggle to fill in forms on their own and navigate what are often complex processes, so may not get the funding and support they need. At a time of housing crisis the service is particularly critical.

Digital inclusion is an issue and it is often the most vulnerable who can't afford the equipment or internet connection. A big proportion of people who use this service are in this group. If the service is reduced, it would have a big impact on their ability to claim the money they are entitled to.

Other services are already under pressure and if this service is reduced there will often be no alternative for people to get the help they need. People would also wait a lot longer to access help.

The money the service helps to bring into the area through claiming benefits would be lost. It's important to emphasize that these are benefits that people are entitled to, but the system is set up in a way that makes it hard for them to claim.

- **Suggestion:** One person suggested people could pay for the cost of their support. Measuring the impact of the service was proposed, so its value can be evidenced.

Themes from the Polegate meeting

- **Views:** People disagreed with the proposals and said they were determined to support the service by coming to the meeting. It is a valuable service that is needed and it would be morally wrong to cut it.
- It makes no sense to reduce this service as it prevents people needing help from other services when they are in crisis. The scale of the proposed reduction is particularly concerning.

People are concerned about how it would affect those accessing the service, or those who might need to in future. They would be marginalised if the proposal went ahead.

- **Service:** People talked about the challenges of getting hold of other services on the phone, how hard it can be to fill in forms on your own, and how other services don't support them with their issues in the same way. In contrast, this service was described as wonderful and the staff as so helpful.

People talked about the challenges they have in getting help and understanding financial information. The service helps them to overcome these issues and it achieves this in much shorter timeframes than other services.

Housing issues are often intertwined with mental health issues. The service deals with the financial side of things first and then supports people to improve their mental wellbeing. This includes establishing a support network for after the service ends for them.

- **Impact:** The proposed reduction would completely change the service and severely limit the number of people who could be helped and the amount of time that could be spent with them.

Digital inclusion is a real concern if the service is reduced, as lots of people at the meeting talked about the barriers they face to get help. This includes not being online, but also the issues with using the phone, such as being able to get through and not being able to hear.

There is a risk that fewer people would be able to claim the money they are entitled to including pension credit, attendance allowance and the winter fuel allowance. The systems in place to help people don't always work, so without this service people would struggle to apply on their own.

Local authorities have a duty to assess and provide services, so cutting the service would affect the Council's ability to meet that duty. The Council currently refers a lot of people to this service and if they couldn't do that then more [people] would probably need assessments.

It would also affect the work of the local housing partnership and potentially create a gap in the delivery of this work.

- **Suggestions:** Don't cut such an extreme amount but find a better balance that would allow the work to continue more like it does now. This would give the provider time to explore what they could do to mitigate the funding reduction.

Themes from the Eastbourne meeting

- **Views:** The funding cuts would be bad for East Sussex and services like this could have to close if they are not viable.

People also talked in detail about the struggles they are already facing to access services such as mental health and housing, and how there is no help available from statutory services in the south east any more.

- **Service:** People praised the service and talked about how it had helped them. The staff are key in your life and you remember them many years later. One person said they wouldn't have their own place or be in full-time employment without the support of the service.
- **Impact:** The service might have to close if funding is reduced, If it does stay open, some people would miss out if they did not meet the criteria, as it would become a niche service. People won't know what they are entitled to in terms of benefits and their lives will be put on hold while they are waiting for support to make applications.

People often find it difficult to explain the issues they are dealing with and without this service they would have to speak to multiple organisations. Other services that can help with similar issues are already overwhelmed and have long waiting times. If you are not IT-literate it is already harder to access support.

It would make it harder for people to get work, as living in temporary accommodation in a hotel is a barrier to employment. Living in temporary accommodation can also be a barrier to people having their children live with them or come to stay.

Themes from the online meeting

- **Views:** The service is often supporting people at the most vulnerable point in life and helps them to overcome the barriers that stop them getting the help they need.
- **Service:** People talked about the invaluable help provided by the service and how they wouldn't have been able to cope without it. The staff are like a helpful friend, helping you to navigate complex systems when you are struggling.

No other services do home visits, so the service is unique from that point of view. It also supports under 18s, which most other services don't. The work the service does helps the individual's whole family, with one child sharing how the service has helped her mum find accommodation and made her life better.

- **Impact:** Getting help often requires filling in lots of complex forms. People's medical condition can make this hard and in some cases impossible. With a reduced service, people who won't be able to navigate the system on their own will be left without the support they need. People would become more vulnerable as a result.

Most people who use the service are referred by statutory organisations, so if the service is reduced that will increase the pressure on those organisations. People would be homeless without the service and there would be a risk of an increase in suicides as a result.

Appendix 5 – Housing-Related Floating Support Service Equality Impact Analysis

Title of Project/Service/Policy	Housing-Related Floating Support Service
Team/Department	Housing & Support Solutions
Directorate	Adult Social Care and Health

Provide a comprehensive description of your Project (Service/Policy, etc.) including its Purpose and Scope

This is an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources budget planning 2025-26 of the proposal to reduce East Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care and Health funding for the East Sussex Housing Related Floating Support Service from £4,372,615 to £500,000 per annum, a reduction of 88.5 per cent in funding.

Overview of the Service

East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care and Health currently commissions BHT Sussex to support people with housing related needs to engage with support, preventing escalation and increased risks of homelessness or the failure to continue living independently.

This EqIA will focus on the provision of Housing-Related Floating Support services for people aged 16 and over, who are vulnerable and have support needs due to age, disadvantage, disability, substance misuse or ill health and who are experiencing a housing related issue.

For example, people who are:

- losing or at risk of losing their accommodation
- living in temporary/emergency accommodation
- living in unsuitable housing
- have no accommodation
- require resettlement support
- having trouble coping with their housing
- require support to maintain their independence or are at risk of losing their independence due to their housing situation
- require support to move to accommodation that will better meet their needs

East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) has commissioned housing related floating support since April 2014. It originated from the Supporting People Programme under which East Sussex County Council was in receipt of the Supporting People Grant. From 2011, Supporting People was subsumed into the overall Formula Grant paid to Local Authorities at a time that funding from central government was reducing as part

<p>of wider fiscal cuts. A decision was taken at the time by East Sussex County Council to maintain a contribution to housing related support.</p> <p>While homelessness prevention in relation to housing provision is not an East Sussex County Council statutory responsibility, improving health and reducing health inequalities are. Many of the cohort of individuals supported by this contract will have the poorest health and wellbeing within the County.</p> <p>The aim of this service underpins the strategic priorities of Adult Social Care and Health, Children's Services, our NHS partners and the District and Borough housing authorities and supports vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being one way of contributing towards Adult Social Care and Health responsibilities of the Care Act 2014 (as amended) to promote individual wellbeing and prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support and targeting those who need it most. • Preventing the need for Temporary and Emergency accommodation, where possible, and avoid homelessness or insecure housing including crisis interventions where needed. • Supporting adults to keep them safe. • Working collaboratively with statutory and non-statutory organisations across the system to support people at risk of losing their independence or becoming homeless. • Supporting individuals and families to improve their physical and mental health so they can experience greater healthy living and wellbeing and help to reduce health inequalities. • Building resilience • Supporting adults to gain independence, maximise their capacity to live as independent a life as possible by promoting self-care and avoid hospital or accommodation-based care. <p>Since 2021 BHT Sussex has delivered the East Sussex Floating Support Service.</p> <p>The East Sussex Floating Support (ESFSS) Service is available to East Sussex residents aged 16+ years, living in, or moving to, independent or Supported Accommodation who require housing related support. The service is available to residents living in all housing tenures and includes East Sussex residents who are in temporary accommodation outside East Sussex by a statutory agency.</p> <p>The service aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable people with housing related support needs to live independently. • Identify the key components that enable people to remain living independently in their own homes, and their experiences of accessing existing support and the Service. • Understand the barriers that prevent people from living at home independently and work collaboratively to look at how to improve outcomes and reduce pressure across the system. • Provide flexible, personalised, and appropriate housing support, stratified to manage a range of levels of need and risk. • Minimise risk of homelessness and address inappropriate housing.

- Signpost individuals and/or family members as appropriate to health and social care services, education, training, employment and support voluntary, community and social enterprise sector services that will assist with accessing and maintaining their housing and ability to live independently for longer.
- Provide time-limited follow up support to prevent and reduce risks of homelessness/ unsuitable housing.
- Ensure people are appropriately signposted or referred to mental health, social care, health services and substance misuse services as needed and any other appropriate services according to need.

The service supports people to achieve the following outcomes:

- Are adequately housed, preventing decline and the loss of independence.
- Can maintain and sustain their accommodation, avoiding homelessness.
- Are supported to identify appropriate accommodation and feel safe living in it.
- Are supported to maximise their income, and are supported to manage household bills, debts, and to keep warm and reduce energy bills.
- Maximise their quality of life.
- Can make informed choices about their support and how the Service is delivered.
- Receive timely support that meets their needs and delivers good outcomes.
- Are kept safe and free from avoidable harm.

East Sussex County Council has faced financial challenge arising from the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. In order to balance its budget, East Sussex County Council is still facing huge financial challenges and difficult decisions, so is reviewing all funding commitments.

One of East Sussex County Council's broad objectives is to support the prevention of homelessness by appropriate work with its District/Borough Council partners and this funding was a way of doing that. East Sussex County Council is still committed to that objective but the financial challenges facing the authority leave East Sussex County Council having to make difficult decisions to cease services.

Ceasing East Sussex County Council's Adult Social Care and Health funding of housing related support is one of the proposals being considered.

There is a minimum six month notice period on the contract, if the proposals are agreed the provider will be asked to communicate the notice period to people using the service and referrers and begin to reduce numbers of new adults to ensure that, as far as possible, work with adults is complete when the service significantly reduces.

During 2023/24 the Service supported 5,282 *(unique) people.

Individuals supported by the service do not have to have eligible care and/or support needs as described in the Care Act 2014, therefore do not need to have had an Adult Social Care and Health assessment to access this support.

Referrals come from a range key partner agencies across statutory and non-statutory organisations, and older people aged 60+ can self-refer into the service.

BHT Sussex: Summary of adults by

referrer pathway		
2023/24		
Adult Social Care and Health	3357	39%
Districts & Boroughs	2124	25%
Other	1468	17%
Children's Services	881	10%
Self-referral (60+)	732	9%

BHT Sussex sends East Sussex County Council information about the people using the service on a quarterly basis; this includes some demographic information which has been analysed below to understand how this decision may impact people with various protected characteristics.

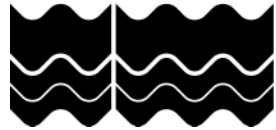
The health and wellbeing of people who experience homelessness is poorer than that of the general population and they often experience the most significant health inequalities, have poorer health outcomes with many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma in their lives. This is driven/exacerbated by poor living conditions, difficulty maintaining personal hygiene, poor diet, high levels of stress and drug and alcohol dependence [Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 - Health and Housing](#)

Issues coming to the fore following the end of pandemic protections: Lack of private rental sector security emerged as a significant concern for housing advice providers, following the withdrawal of pandemic-era protections and delays in implementing the draft Renters Reform Bill. Changes to homelessness laws contributed to a surge in people living in temporary accommodation. Additionally, higher interest rates and fierce competition for rentals has bolstered demand for social rent housing. Notably, over 822,000 households were in rent arrears in April 2023 nationally.

[The-value-of-justice-for-all-a-report-for-the-Access-to-Justice-Foundation-and-the-Bar-Council-from-Pragmatix-Advisory.pdf \(atjf.org.uk\)](#)

1. Update on previous EqlAs and outcomes of previous actions (if applicable)

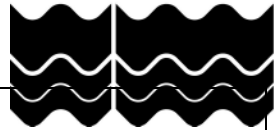
What actions did you plan last time? (List them from the previous EqlA)	What improved as a result? What outcomes have these actions achieved?	What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take? (add these to the Action Plan below)
An EqlA was completed when the service was recommissioned in 2021. The service provider was required to provide quarterly monitoring reports based on agreed targets and outcomes. This included equality data relating to all protected characteristics as well as detailed data relating to disability.	Targets set, e.g. based on % split between working age and older people, ensured fair and proportionate support was being provided.	To consider the impact on working age and older people on proposals to reduce funding to the service.
There was a mixture of face to face, telephone and virtual support to meet differing needs of, for example, disabled people or those who were digitally excluded.	Services were accessible and more inclusive.	To consider the impact of accessibility and inclusiveness on individuals on proposals to reduce funding to the service.
Translation and interpreting services were available	Language barriers were removed.	To consider the impact of accessibility and inclusiveness on individuals on proposals to reduce funding to the service.
In 2018/19 an EqlA was completed regarding savings within Home Works and STEPS services. Actions included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quotas for Adults and Children's Services; Referrals to other information and advice services; Producing an implementation plan to help mitigate any negative impact upon people based on their protected characteristics. 	Services targeted at those who need them most. Some barriers to accessing services minimised.	The data used in the previous consultation was reviewed to inform methodology, consultation, data and research for the current EqlA. Previously identified risks and impacts were reviewed against the current risks and impacts.



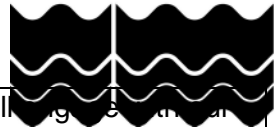
2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Consider the actual or potential impact of your project (service, or policy) against each of the equality characteristics.

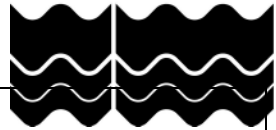
Protected characteristic groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations																											
Age	<p>Proportion of Population by age range (%):</p> <table><tr><th>Age range</th><th>East Sussex</th><th>England</th></tr><tr><td>0-19</td><td>21%</td><td>23%</td></tr><tr><td>20-44</td><td>25%</td><td>33%</td></tr><tr><td>45-64</td><td>28%</td><td>26%</td></tr><tr><td>65+</td><td>26%</td><td>18%</td></tr></table> <p>2023/24 Service Data:</p> <p>The service supported 5,282 unique people aged 16 and over and their households.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Proportion of people supported by age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60% were age 16-59• 40% age 60+	Age range	East Sussex	England	0-19	21%	23%	20-44	25%	33%	45-64	28%	26%	65+	26%	18%	<p>Percentage of adults (all ages) reporting satisfaction with the service:</p> <table><tr><th colspan="4">2023/24</th></tr><tr><th>Q1</th><th>Q2</th><th>Q3</th><th>Q4</th></tr><tr><td>95%</td><td>95%</td><td>99%</td><td>97%</td></tr></table> <p>The age-range of people that engaged in the consultation events included older people, adults of working age, young people and children.</p> <p>A common theme that emerged across all groups was that people didn't know where to turn to when they faced an unexpected health issue or what is available to them e.g. Council Tax Benefit, Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit.</p> <p>A person explained that they needed help but didn't know where to go. "I think the fact that we didn't know the</p>	2023/24				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	95%	95%	99%	97%	<p>This proposal will have a negative impact on people of all ages.</p> <p>People will be less able to access information and advice on welfare benefit eligibility the impact of this is that it is likely to increase the number of people experiencing financial hardship.</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
Age range	East Sussex	England																													
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Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																												
95%	95%	99%	97%																												



<p>Age</p>	<p>2023/24 Service Data –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% of adults were supported to remain in their existing accommodation. 	<p>service was there and when I needed them, they came and helped me. The support is still there, and they are amazing, these cuts are tragic, what are we going to do now? What about other people using the service and in the future. I feel very lucky to have been helped.”</p> <p>“It was overwhelming in a way. It helped me massively. They helped me understand what there is and what is there for us. It made us feel hopeful. It’s not easy. They were there for us.”</p> <p>“I also didn’t know about the service. I needed to get support and tried to register for housing. I went to Town Hall and went to see CAB but that didn’t work as well as I wanted to. Then someone from Heart Response referred me for BHT floating support and they came and helped me.”</p> <p>92% of all respondents to the consultation survey disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%</p>		
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Age 60+	<p>60+</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census, the greatest growth in the East Sussex population occurred in the 70-74 age category, which increased by 46.6% compared to a national average of 36.8%.</p> <p>2021 Census data identifies that the proportion of the population of East Sussex aged 65 and over now stands at 26.1%, up from 22.7% in 2011.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported aged 60+:</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">Age group (>60)</th></tr><tr><th>Age range</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>60 to 64</td><td>16.3%</td></tr><tr><td>65 to 69</td><td>14.2%</td></tr><tr><td>70 to 74</td><td>13.3%</td></tr><tr><td>75 to 79</td><td>19.8%</td></tr><tr><td>80 to 84</td><td>16.4%</td></tr><tr><td>85 to 89</td><td>14.0%</td></tr><tr><td>90+</td><td>6.3%</td></tr></table> <p>East Sussex is fifth most deprived of 26 County Councils.13% of people aged 60 plus were living in poverty in 2019 (source Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).</p> <p>Excess deaths in East Sussex for females, as a proportion of the population is higher than national average</p>	Age group (>60)		Age range	%	60 to 64	16.3%	65 to 69	14.2%	70 to 74	13.3%	75 to 79	19.8%	80 to 84	16.4%	85 to 89	14.0%	90+	6.3%	<p>60+</p> <p>Older people told us that they would not have applied for Attendance Allowance without the support of the service. This is due to a range of factors including digital exclusion, cognitive abilities, levels of stress caused by major health impacts (dementia, cancer, onset of long-term conditions), meaning they are eligible for the benefit at a point they are least able to apply independently.</p> <p>A common theme from older people was that the provision of advice and information on Welfare Benefits and other services as well as support to complete applications is essential in enabling them to remain in their homes.</p> <p>“BHT have supported with completing the attendance allowance forms, we didn’t know all this was available. This has allowed us to have a cleaner and a carer to support with washing. It has given us a little bit of independence.”</p> <p>“Attendance Allowance pays for chiropodist and the hairdresser. It’s like heaven. It has enabled us to remain at home together. It’s given us a new lease of life.”</p> <p>“I had a 29-page form which BHT staff member helped me fill out. Talking through and describing in more detail questions such as: Can you get out of a</p>	<p>60+</p> <p>It is likely that this proposal will impact older people negatively as the proportionately the number of older people that are supported by the service (40%) is higher compared with the general East Sussex population (26%).</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
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2023/24 Service Data – People supported to claim Attendance Allowance:

- 275 people supported
- 93% of applications were successful
- £903,000 of annualised additional income.

Health and Wellbeing

The Excess Winter Deaths index is a measure that compares the number of deaths that occurred in the winter period (December to March) with the average of the non-winter periods (August to November and April to July).

Excess Winter Deaths:

Source: PHE, Aug 2021 - Jul 2022

	East Sussex	England
Female - All ages	10%	8.1%
Male – all ages	7.40%	8%

chair. She described how I would get out of the chair, rather than just say I can.”

52% of respondents to the consultation survey, who use or have used the service, were aged 60+. Of these, 92% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%

Health and Wellbeing

Older people told us that they valued the fact the service was able to carry out face-to-face visits. They said that due to cognitive abilities and levels of stress caused by health impacts other methods made communicating their needs difficult.

“I can’t always hear on the phone either.”

“Very difficult to talk to someone over the phone and explain something”.

“People of a certain age need to know that we’ll be alright, that we can pick up a phone, ask for help and that we’ll get it.”

Feedback from clinicians within Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Older

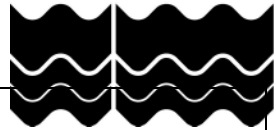
Health and Wellbeing

The removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance to older people who are not claiming Pension Credit may impoverish older people who are not aware of their eligibility to Pension Credit and will no longer have access to the service to assist in applying. [One million households will miss out due to the Winter Fuel Payment changes - Policy in Practice](#)

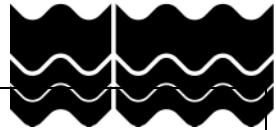
The impact of this is that people age 60+ are at greater risk of financial hardship as they are not in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance to assist them to ensure their home is warm.

We will continue to promote take up of Welfare Benefits and Pension Credit through the Multi-agency Financial Inclusion Project

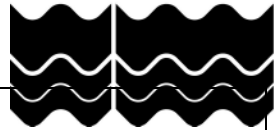
Age 60+



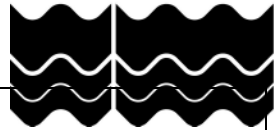
<p>Age 60+</p>	<p>Health - county East Sussex Report Builder for ArcGIS (eastsussexinfofigures.org.uk)</p>	<p>Adults Mental Health Service in East Sussex.</p> <p>This is a person-centred service for vulnerable people who are not able to access other similar services. This service is skilled in engaging individuals whose conditions and circumstances make it difficult for them to engage with other services. The older people served by this support tend to have complex and enduring mental health problems, cognitive difficulties, co-morbid health issues and are socially isolated. Older people, particularly with a Mental health condition, often experience problems with debt and struggle to navigate other systems. Unmanaged debt is known to be a risk factor for suicide. Clinicians believe that the people who tend to use this service would struggle to access alternatives.</p>	<p>The Floating Support service supports people to increase affordable warmth within their homes by referring to a Warm Home check service. There is a risk that fewer older people would be able to access support to keep their home is warm and this would impact negatively on their ill health. Many older people are already experiencing poor health due to a long-standing illness or condition. Deteriorating ill health has potential to have an impact on A&E services already under pressure and at capacity.</p> <p>Living in a cold home can lead to a range of poor health outcomes. People aged 65 and over are particularly vulnerable to the cold. It is also associated with additional winter deaths.</p> <p>Damp and mould primarily affect the airways and lungs, and the respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and, in the most severe cases, death. Damp and mould can cause disease and ill health in anyone, but</p>	
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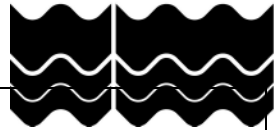
<p>Age 60+</p>			<p>people with underlying health conditions, weakened immune systems, and some other groups of people are at greater risk of ill-health from damp and mould</p> <p>Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK</p> <p>This group of people are at greater risk of harm or injury as one in three people aged over 65 trip or fall and the cost to the NHS is estimated to be more than £2bn per year.</p> <p>https://www.kingsfund.org/publications/exploring-system-wide-costs-falls-older-people-torbay</p> <p>Many falls take place in the home and are preventable, therefore housing related issues are major contributors in determining the risk of someone having a fall. The impact of falls on older people can increase demand on local NHS services and Adult Social Care and Health.</p> <p>Older people experience specific issues of isolation (often increased for those in</p>	
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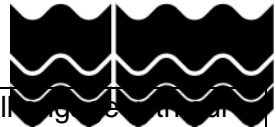
<p>Age 60+</p>	<p>Digital Exclusion According to Age UK, three out of ten people aged 65 to 74 and two-thirds of those aged 75 and over are not online. There is also a link to social disadvantage. For example, while only 15 per cent of people aged 65 to 74 in socio-economic group AB do not use the internet, this rises to 45 per cent in group DE.</p> <p>The Office of National Statistics (ONS) records the proportion of non-internet users as halving between 2011 and 2018, down from 20% of adults to 10%. Of those who are classed as non-internet users, 55% come from adults aged over 75, and 24% of those aged 65 to 74.</p>	<p>Digital Exclusion “post covid and everything is on-line – expectation from services since then that everyone is digitally enabled and capable, but everyone isn’t – we shouldn’t assume!”</p> <p>“She [BHT Worker] could do the paperwork online, she knew who to talk to. There was so many depts to call, I am not equipped for that. I do not have a computer or smart phone.”</p>	<p>rural areas and reluctance to engage with digital access because of potential for scams.</p> <p>This proposal will have a negative impact on older people as the proposal is likely to reduce the number of home visits. Home visits are vital in being able to identify and manage risks within the home.</p> <p>Digital Exclusion This proposal will impact negatively on older people as a reduced service is likely to impact on the level of face-to-face service delivery. With a reduced level of service there is potential for services to look to digital solutions. Digital exclusion is particularly high among the oldest age groups – nationally around a third (34%) of those aged 75+ and one in ten (10%) of those aged 65-74 do not use the internet. Even those who can carry out tasks such as emailing and video calls this does not mean they have the confidence and skills to safely apply for support online as this can involve inputting personal information and</p>	
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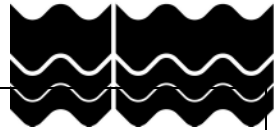
Age 16-59			<p>uploading photos or other evidence.</p> <p>LR Age UK ID202857 Digital Report.pdf</p> <p>There is an increased risk that this group will be unable to access and engage with services that may impact negatively on their mental and physical wellbeing with delays in accessing support. This has the potential to increased costs to health and Adult Social Care and Health services.</p>								
	<p>16-59</p> <p>There are 51,780 people claiming Universal Credit in East Sussex. 16.3% of all people aged 16-65 were claiming UC in June 2024 in East Sussex. The national average for England is 16.4%.</p> <p>10.3% of households in East Sussex were in fuel poverty in 2019 compared to 9.3 % in England.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported aged 16-59 years:</p> <table><tr><th colspan="2">Age group (<60)</th></tr><tr><th>Age range</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>16 to 24</td><td>13.4%</td></tr><tr><td>25 to 34</td><td>28.0%</td></tr></table>	Age group (<60)		Age range	%	16 to 24	13.4%	25 to 34	28.0%	<p>16-59</p> <p>“Personally, without BHT I wouldn’t be working, I work in the NHS as a practitioner. I was mentally unwell; my marriage broke down. I was living in a hotel and on the brink of going homeless.”</p> <p>“I am out of work at the moment as I don’t feel well. I struggle with forms at the best of times, I struggle with forms online. I needed help with this. They helped me. Thank you.”</p> <p>Feedback from Wealden Citizens Advice ‘Often where there is a housing issue, there is more going on in our clients’ lives. Many adults who approach Wealden Citizens</p>	<p>16-59</p> <p>This proposal will negatively impact people of working age as the service supports a greater proportion of people aged 16-59 (60%).</p> <p>People under 35 years are particularly affected as Housing Benefit rulings usually only allow for a person to be able to claim for a single room in a shared house. This is called the Local Housing Allowance shared accommodation rate (SAR). Housing costs and Universal Credit: Renting from a private landlord - GOV.UK</p>
Age group (<60)											
Age range	%										
16 to 24	13.4%										
25 to 34	28.0%										



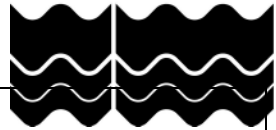
Age 16-59	35 to 44	25.6%	<p>Advice, not only have housing issues, but debt and income issues and have complex lives. People have benefited greatly from this service and outcomes to reduce homelessness are evident.</p> <p>48% of respondents to the consultation survey, who use or have used the service, were aged under 60 years. Of these, 92% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%</p>	<p>Nationally, the ability of young adults to form households of their own continues to fall.</p> <p>Insecure housing means living with the constant uncertainty of not having a stable place to stay. This could be due to the threat of eviction because of rising rent costs or having to live in temporary or unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The stress of not having a secure place to call home can worsen existing mental health problems or cause new ones to appear. Poor mental health can also make it much harder for someone to find and maintain a settled home. This increases their chances of being forced into homelessness or becoming trapped in a cycle of insecurity and increases the risk of family breakdown.</p> <p>Homelessness Monitor Crisis UK Together we will end homelessness</p>	
	45 to 54	21.4%			
	55 to 60	12.2%			



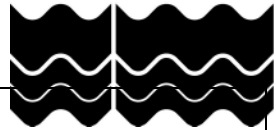
Age 16-59	Children According to the 2021 Census there were 20,908 (22.1%) of children living in relative low-income families in 2021/22.	Children Feedback from 10-year-old (via staff member as she is at school) "I was sofa surfing then in Temporary Accommodation with mum. Now have own accommodation and I have my own bedroom. Mum has been supported into work and is much happier. This has all made her life much better."	Children Children living in households will be affected as poor housing and/or homelessness may have particularly negative impacts.	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.								
	2023/24 Service Data: Number of households with children supported: 24% (1,287) of households supported by the service that included children.	From a younger couple with children: "We appreciate ASC coming. We used to have a very small place one bedroom with my three children. We now manage to have all my family. BHT contacted me- a very good person came and visited me- I was in one room with three children- I cannot afford to rent a bigger house as the rent was too high- over £1000pcm- wanting me to go into PRS - BHT helped me to find somewhere to live".	Children are particularly vulnerable to living in a cold home leading to ill-health and developing ongoing health conditions (childhood asthma) There would be increased associated risks for families with children and young people, including child protection and safeguarding issues, access to health and education and a direct impact on the health of children living in poor standard housing.									
	2023/24 Service Data: 603 referrals made by Children's Services		Homelessness during childhood can be a traumatic experience that affects life-long health and wellbeing. In 2019, Information Services Division (ISD) Scotland conducted a mixed method health needs assessment of children experiencing homelessness in the NHS Lanarkshire board area. They concluded that homelessness is a traumatic Adverse									
	<table><tr><th>Referral reason</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Families at direct risk of homelessness</td><td>13.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Families already homeless</td><td>19.9%</td></tr><tr><td>Families at risk of domestic violence</td><td>16.7%</td></tr></table>	Referral reason	%		Families at direct risk of homelessness	13.2%	Families already homeless	19.9%	Families at risk of domestic violence	16.7%		
	Referral reason	%										
Families at direct risk of homelessness	13.2%											
Families already homeless	19.9%											
Families at risk of domestic violence	16.7%											
	East Sussex Children's Services: All teams across Children's Services including our Single Point of Advice, Multi agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Duty and Assessment, and Locality Family and Youth Support teams regularly refer families or individuals to the service to prevent the risk of them becoming homeless or to support them with housing issues at both a preventative early help and											



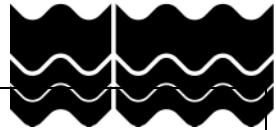
<p>Age 16-59</p>		<p>statutory level. The co-location of ESFSS support workers within the MASH teams leads to successful partnership working which is effective and valued by both East Sussex Children's Services staff and ESFSS, and leads to valuable joint working and successful outcomes for families. ESFSS offer a service that all teams are able to refer to easily and with confidence.</p> <p>The number of families being found to be intentionally homeless has risen over the last two years at an increasing cost to Children's Services in cases where accommodation must be funded for families with no other housing options under S.17 of the Children's Act 1989. Referrals to ESFSS are regularly made to assist in the prevention of families becoming intentionally homeless in the first place and to support those that have had their housing duties discharged to move on from high-cost temporary accommodation funded by Children's Services to their own privately rented accommodation. Spend on providing accommodation for these families has more than doubled in the past two years and will continue to increase.</p> <p>Feedback from the Lewes Family Support Team: "We regularly refer to the floating support service and I'm</p>	<p>Childhood Event (ACE) that can affect a person's health and wellbeing throughout their life, and that homeless children are also more likely to experience other ACEs. They often experience poorer physical and mental health than their housed peers and were significantly more likely to be referred to CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), although were less likely to attend appointments. Key recommendations arising from this work included the acknowledgement of inequalities in health outcomes faced by children experiencing homelessness, and the need for joint working across homelessness, health, care, schools and other public services that interact with homeless children.</p> <p>Equalities considerations for housing, homelessness, health and care</p> <p>Housing instability can negatively impact a child's health, development and school performance and often compounds trauma that they</p>	
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<p>Age 16-59</p>		<p>worried about the prospect of losing this support. Particularly I'm worried that not having this will at times prevent us from closing cases. Quite often, we reduce risks and can close, with BHT continuing to support with ongoing housing needs. This would be different if this support is removed."</p> <p>15% of respondents to the consultation survey, who use or have used the service, have dependent children in the household and of these, 94% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%</p>	<p>are going through or have experienced. The service provides a valuable service to front-line workers in Children's Services which compliments and strengthens the statutory obligations and case management teams in supporting children and families to remain in, manage or access safe and suitable housing.</p> <p>With increased demand on local children's services to prevent homelessness and ensure children, young people and families have access to stable housing a proposed reduction in this service will impact on the capacity of this service to support individuals and families with housing related support. This has the potential to have a worrying and far-reaching impact across children's services and the outcomes for children and their families.</p> <p>The proposal to reduce the service is likely to impact on the ability of Children's Services ability to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and</p>	
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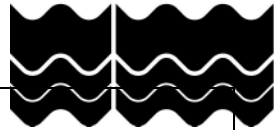


<p>Age 16-59</p>			<p>housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt, thereby lead to more families and children at risk of homelessness and the negative outcomes this will have on the physical and mental health and wellbeing for both parents and children.</p> <p>This proposal is likely to result in a significant increase in costs for Children's Services especially in relation to families who have been found intentionally homeless and had their housing duty discharged by the Borough and District Housing Authorities.</p> <p>This will impact negatively on children and their families as it is likely more families will end up homeless and potentially intentionally homeless if they are not able to access specialist housing advice and support.</p> <p>The proposal to reduce the service is likely to increase workloads and reduce capacity of front-line staff that will have a negative impact on children achieving good outcomes. Children's Services do not</p>	
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			have expertise in housing-related needs and support thereby, would not be able to replicate this service.	
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Disability	<p>In the 2021 census, 20.3% of East Sussex residents were living with a long-term physical or mental health condition or impairment that affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities in 2021, the same proportion as in 2011 (compares to 18% for England & Wales).</p> <p>34.8% of households in East Sussex had at least one member identifying as disabled under the Equality Act in 2021.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported by need:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>%</td></tr><tr><td>Physical / Sensory Disability or long-standing illness / Acquired Brain Injury</td><td>61%</td></tr><tr><td>Mental Health Condition</td><td>30%</td></tr><tr><td>Learning Disability / Difficulty / Neurodivergent</td><td>7%</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>2%</td></tr></table>		%	Physical / Sensory Disability or long-standing illness / Acquired Brain Injury	61%	Mental Health Condition	30%	Learning Disability / Difficulty / Neurodivergent	7%	Other	2%	<p>The service report that 40% of adults’ self-report a concern with their Mental Health at the time of referral.</p> <p>“I have recently retired. My worker has been invaluable to me. I cannot do forms and things. I find it impossible. My worker has been outstanding. I now have PIP and they have helped me get on the Housing Register. I can’t fault the service one bit. Long may it last. [Without the service] I wouldn’t have known what to do.”</p> <p>“The waiting list was only 6 weeks at BHT, they came and helped me straight away. I have a physical disability, and I am a wheelchair user. My flat was too small- there was no room for my mobility scooter. BHT helped me to move”.</p> <p>“I have the intelligence to read and fill in a form. My complex needs are</p>	<p>People who are disabled are likely to be more affected by the proposal than those in the general population, this is because the characteristics of this cohort evidence that many of the people who have been supported by the service are disabled. A person’s disability or long-standing illness may consequently create a housing need.</p> <p>People who have a mental health condition are more likely to be affected by the proposal than those in the general population - 40% of the people the service supported self-report a concern with their mental health at the time of referral.</p> <p>Having problems with housing can impact negatively on people’s mental health. People who have poor mental</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
		%												
	Physical / Sensory Disability or long-standing illness / Acquired Brain Injury	61%												
	Mental Health Condition	30%												
	Learning Disability / Difficulty / Neurodivergent	7%												
	Other	2%												



2023/24 Service Data –

Breakdown by age of people supported that identified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010.

Age range	Yes	No	Did not disclose
16-24	58.8 %	40.2 %	1.8%
25-34	61.1 %	37.9 %	1.0%
35-44	67.4 %	31.4 %	1.2%
45-54	76.5 %	21.9 %	1.6%
55-64	85.0 %	13.9 %	1.1%
65-74	86.1 %	12.5 %	1.5%
75-84	86.7 %	11.3 %	2.0%
85+	88.0 %	10.0 %	2.0%
Total	75.7 %		

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Digital Exclusion

around my eyes, I cannot see very well. A BHT worker came to my home and has helped me.”

“They were brilliant, I don’t know what I would have done without them. They know the phraseology of the forms, the detail required. I wish I could show you how detailed the forms were. I now have my benefits and a blue badge.”

“You feel vulnerable due to illness. The help from BHT has been invaluable - positive, friendly, nonjudgemental – amazing service.”

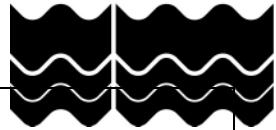
“I couldn’t cope- without BHT supporting me, it is a ‘must do’ service. This service is like drops that fall from heaven- this has saved me from depression, from being a burden on the NHS- of having to go to hospital- it saved me from a flat that wasn’t suitable- I didn’t even have a carpet. I was not able to do the paperwork- it no longer comes easy to me. I got assistance to come and support me, assistance to complete forms, and to get carpeting in my flat”.

“If BHT were taken away, people just won’t know what is available to

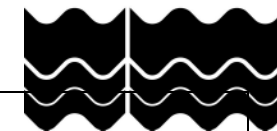
health may already be at increased risk to eviction due to behavioural and financial reasons.

The emotional and mental impact of losing a home can exacerbate poor mental health. The experience of applying for housing support can be stressful. People with a disability or long-standing condition may lack the skills to navigate a complex system of applications for social renting. There is a potential risk to exacerbate an existing condition that adversely affects their physical and mental health and well-being.

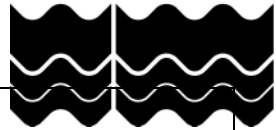
Having a disability or long-term health condition means many people rely on Welfare Benefits. This means managing money is harder, worrying about money (e.g. food insecurity, home insecurity, utility costs, debt, etc) can impact negatively on a person’s physical and mental health, thereby leading to a cycle that can impact every aspect of an individual’s life.



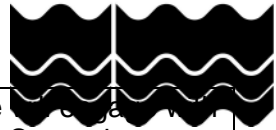
	<p>In people with at least one health/sensory impairment 26% of them don't have all the foundation digital skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people with multiple impairments this increases to 37% <p>Error! Bookmark not defined.</p> <p>Substance Misuse East Sussex is home to an estimated 2,300 people who use opiates and/or crack. Of these, 53.3% were in treatment at some point in 2021/22 which is above the national average of 46.3%. but it does indicate a possible further 1,050 people using opiates or crack who are not accessing treatment.</p>	<p>support them, or what they are entitled to. People's lives are put on hold whilst they sit on waiting lists waiting for support, this will happen more and CAB won't be able to cope".</p> <p>"My lifestyle has improved, there are many benefits- my main problem is hoarding. I hope that I can get better".</p> <p>"I'm now in a house share and I have been empowered by BHT to get out of a cycle- we need to spiral back up and this is key in supporting people like me. It's not easy. We need to know where to go. We need to be supported to access support when it is needed".</p> <p>"I was served with Section 21 notice and had to leave my home. I thought, what on earth will happen to me? BHT were referred to me and they helped me find somewhere else to live. I wouldn't have been able to cope with this on my own".</p>	<p>A 2014 health audit conducted by Homeless Link in England found that 41% of people experiencing homelessness have long-term physical disabilities compared to 28% of the general population, while 45% of people experiencing homelessness have a diagnosed mental health condition, compared to 25% of the general population.</p> <p>The Unhealthy State of Homelessness Homeless Link</p> <p>Disabled people were less likely to own their own home than non-disabled people of the same age and were more likely to live in social rented accommodation</p> <p>East Sussex 2021 Census Briefing: Disability (eastsussexinfofigures.org.uk)</p> <p>Damp and mould primarily affect the airways and lungs and the respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and, in the most severe cases, death. Damp and mould can cause disease and ill health in anyone, but people with underlying health</p>	
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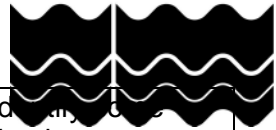
		<p>“People do not envisage or aspire to be homeless. Its life experiences, life events.”</p> <p>“The landlord owns nearly all the properties in the road we lived in and he didn’t fix any of the issues. It shouldn’t be allowed!</p> <p>The flat was assessed as a risk to life. BHT contacted the landlord, who served a no-fault eviction, rather than do the work.</p> <p>Council believed everything the landlord said but he is now doing the work needed since she left.</p> <p>BHT supported me to find a new property and I was eventually offered somewhere more appropriate.”</p> <p>“I asked the DWP for help with form filling and was told they can’t help as they’ve reached their quota. “This is the same for all these [statutory] services, they don’t have time to help people like BHT do”.</p> <p>Adult who identified as autistic – in Emergency Accommodation for 5 months, now in Council flat. Service enabled me to overcome mountain of paperwork, “I would still be homeless without the service”</p>	<p>conditions, weakened immune systems, and some other groups of people are at greater risk of ill-health from damp and mould.</p> <p>Research by Mind examined the relationship between mental health and housing and summarised the key impacts of housing conditions that affect emotional and mental wellbeing as follows:</p> <p>Physical condition of the property - Poor quality homes including those which are cold and or damp have a strong negative impact on both physical and mental health and can cause low self-esteem and increase isolation.</p> <p>Affordability of the property - Housing is one of the largest costs to a household and can cause a great deal of financial stress. Nearly half of people who have stress related to housing report that it is due to lack of finances. People who own and can afford their own homes tend to have higher life satisfaction, with those who rent privately having the lowest.</p>	
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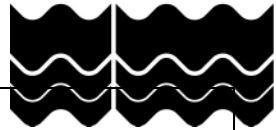
		<p>Adult has acquired brain injury, served with S21 after complained about damp, can't cope with forms. "Stress makes me very ill, couldn't cope without support. Service helped contact the Council, fill in forms to apply for housing and Blue Badge. Now in Private Rented Sector through council will get help to apply for social housing as will need more suitable accommodation as condition gets worse. "Service made all the phone calls and sent emails as I find this too difficult and don't remember to respond/send further information"</p> <p>Feedback from Wealden Citizens Advice 'Floating Support Services remain an important part of the support that we can offer to our clients. The fact that they can support clients with home visits'.</p> <p>76% of respondents to the consultation survey, who use or have used the service, said that they have a physical or mental health condition or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. Of these, 92% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%</p>	<p>Overcrowding - Overcrowding is strongly linked with depression, stress and anxiety. Local environment - if the neighbourhood is in disrepair, with a lack of green spaces and poor facilities this can affect mental health, as can the perception (and in some cases, the reality) of high rates of crime, sense of safety and noise.</p> <p>Room for Improvement: a review of mental health and housing (mind.org.uk)</p> <p>Housing is a source of identity and housing problems can have an impact on people's physical health and emotional and mental wellbeing. Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 - Health and Housing </p>	
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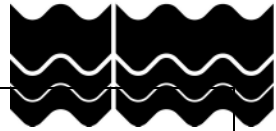
Gender reassignment	<p>The 2021 East Sussex Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer + (LGBTQ+)¹ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be 5,572 Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD) people (1% of the population) living in East Sussex</p> <p>2021 Census: 1640 residents declared their gender identity was different to that assigned at birth which is 0.4% of the population.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data</p> <p>Gender as presented below and therefore does not separate CIS and Transgender people.</p> <table><tr><td>Female</td><td>57%</td></tr><tr><td>Male</td><td>42%</td></tr></table>	Female	57%	Male	42%	<p>There were no specific views regarding this protected characteristic from the consultation sessions.</p>	<p>In the UK, one in four transgender people have experienced homelessness, with twenty-five per cent of participants experiencing discrimination when buying or renting accommodation</p> <p>The needs assessment also found that homelessness disproportionately impacts LGBTQ+ people - 18% of LGBTQ+ and TGD people surveyed had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.</p> <p>LGBT in Britain - Trans Report (2018) Stonewall</p> <p>This indicates it is likely to impact negatively on this group of people as they are more likely to struggle to find and maintain accommodation.</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
Female	57%							
Male	42%							
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>There are just under 5,000 births per year in East Sussex. Hastings has the highest overall birth rate as well as for women aged 15-19 years. Lewes and then Rother have the highest birth rates for women aged 35-44 years.</p>	<p>Feedback from the consultation heard from a young couple whose accommodation was no longer suitable due to expecting another child:</p> <p>“We appreciate ASC coming. We used to have a very small place one bedroom with my three children. We</p>	<p>Housing insecurity can impact negatively on pregnant women’s perinatal mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Reduced nutritional intake in pregnancy is common while homeless because of a lack of</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible</p>				



	<p>Nationally it is not known how many pregnant women are currently experiencing homelessness in the UK A survey by 'Dispatches and RCM find that 99.7% of midwives have seen mothers who were homeless over the past six months' 2023 saw the highest numbers of families experiencing homelessness and living in temporary accommodation since records began Statutory homelessness in England: Infographic 2023-24 - GOV.UK</p> <p>BHT figures for 2023/24 shows that the service supported 137 women who were pregnant. This information is only recorded for Female pregnant, no children (99) and Couple pregnant, no children (38). The actual figure is likely to be higher when including pregnancy is families that already have children.</p> <p>Pregnancy can also impact on job security around one in nine mother (11%) reported that they were either dismissed, or made compulsorily redundant, where others in their workplace were not; or treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job.</p>	<p>now manage to have all my family. BHT contacted me- a very good person came and visited me- I was in one room with three children- I cannot afford to rent a bigger house as the rent was too high- over £1000pcm- wanting me to go into PRS - BHT helped me to find somewhere to live".</p>	<p>access to cooking facilities in temporary accommodation. Poor diets can cause anaemia, pre-eclampsia, haemorrhage and death in mothers. They can also lead to stillbirth, low birthweight, wasting and developmental delays for children.</p> <p>Several studies link housing insecurity and adverse impacts on the health of the child including low birth weight, premature birth, maternal death and increased need for healthcare of the child post birth. (Housing instability and adverse perinatal outcomes: a systematic review - PMC (nih.gov)).</p> <p>This indicates people that share this protected characteristic are potentially at increased risk of being impacted by housing issues.</p> <p>This is likely to impact on District & Borough Councils and Children's Services as women who are classed as priority need under The Homelessness (Priority Need</p>	<p>to identify the mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
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			for Accommodation) (England) Order 2022.	
<p>Race (ethnicity) Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<p>8.0% of the adult population in East Sussex is from an ethnic minority Group (including White minority groups). This compares to 18.8% in England.</p> <p>In 2021, 93.9% (512,440) of usual residents in East Sussex identified their ethnic group within the high-level "White" category, a decrease from 96.0% (505,420) in the 2011 Census, but still significantly higher than the English national average (81.0%) and also higher than the average for the Southeast region (86.6%).</p> <p>4.6% were of another white background; 1.6% were Asian/ Asian British, 0.5% were Black/ Black British and 1.3.% were from other ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>Those selecting a non-UK identity only accounted for 5.5% of the overall population (29,880 people), which is an increase from 4.3% of the population (23,090 people) in 2011. The most common non-UK identities are Polish, Irish, Romanian, Portuguese and Italian.</p> <p>A higher percentage of the population in East Sussex identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller than the national average (0.2% compared to 0.1%).</p>	<p>An adult from Eastern Europe was living in accommodation where he felt unsafe due to with criminal activity and anti-social behaviour that he was experiencing in his accommodation. Due to his living circumstances, he was hospitalised under Psychiatry for three weeks. "People are not helping me, I was told to go to CAB, no help there. I needed to move as quickly as possible. I was advised to go to the Police Station, they didn't help. They (BHT) helped me to get this place, but it is temporary for one year".</p>	<p>The data tells us that the service supported a higher proportion of people with this protected characteristic (12.9%) compared to the East Sussex average of 8.0%.</p> <p>The service supported a higher proportion of Black/Black British (1.7%) compared with the East Sussex average (0.5%).</p> <p>A higher than East Sussex average of Black/Black British people using the service this would indicate this proposal would have a negative impact on this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Nationally, a higher proportion of people identified as homeless in Census 2021 identified within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" (15.0%), "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups" (5.1%), or "Other ethnic group" (6.1%) high-level categories, when compared</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>



East Sussex has over 1200 refugees from Ukraine staying in the county. Precise data on asylum seekers and refugees is not available however East Sussex currently has six adult asylum seeker hotels, with the majority in Eastbourne.

2023/24 Service Data - Ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Individuals	%
White British	4249	87.1%
All Other Ethnicities	628	12.9%

2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported by Ethnicity:

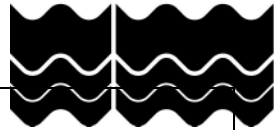
Ethnicity	Individuals	%
Arab	20	0.4%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	13	0.3%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	4	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	14	0.3%
Asian/Asian British: Other	22	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	9	0.2%

with the rest of the population of England and Wales (4.0%, 2.9%, and 2.1%, respectively).

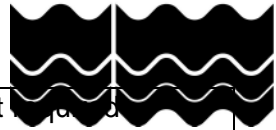
People from ethnic minority groups may be disproportionately affected as they are more likely to experience homelessness and poor housing.

Evidence suggests that ethnic minority individuals are at a higher risk of experiencing "hidden" homelessness. They were also less likely to perceive themselves as homeless and therefore less likely to access homelessness services, making homelessness in these communities less visible.

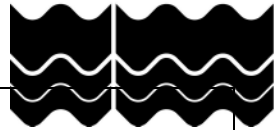
People from ethnic minority backgrounds may face additional barriers including access to translation and interpretation particularly when it comes to information and advice, appropriate information about housing options and rights,



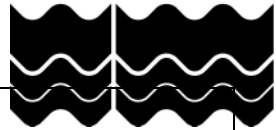
	<table><tr><td>Black/Black British: African</td><td>49</td><td>1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>Black/Black British: Caribbean</td><td>21</td><td>0.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Black/Black British: Other</td><td>16</td><td>0.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Gypsy/Irish Traveller</td><td>22</td><td>0.5%</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed: Other</td><td>29</td><td>0.6%</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed: White & Asian</td><td>12</td><td>0.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed: White & Black African</td><td>7</td><td>0.1%</td></tr><tr><td>Mixed: White & Black Caribbean</td><td>33</td><td>0.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Other Ethnic Group: Other</td><td>42</td><td>0.9%</td></tr><tr><td>Persian/Iranian</td><td>9</td><td>0.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Prefer not to say</td><td>34</td><td>0.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Roma Traveller</td><td>3</td><td>0.1%</td></tr><tr><td>White: British</td><td>4249</td><td>87.1%</td></tr><tr><td>White: Irish</td><td>47</td><td>1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>White: Other</td><td>222</td><td>4.6%</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>4877</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Blank/No Information</td><td>22</td><td>0.5%</td></tr></table>	Black/Black British: African	49	1.0%	Black/Black British: Caribbean	21	0.4%	Black/Black British: Other	16	0.3%	Gypsy/Irish Traveller	22	0.5%	Mixed: Other	29	0.6%	Mixed: White & Asian	12	0.2%	Mixed: White & Black African	7	0.1%	Mixed: White & Black Caribbean	33	0.7%	Other Ethnic Group: Other	42	0.9%	Persian/Iranian	9	0.2%	Prefer not to say	34	0.7%	Roma Traveller	3	0.1%	White: British	4249	87.1%	White: Irish	47	1.0%	White: Other	222	4.6%	Total	4877		Blank/No Information	22	0.5%		literacy issues, lack of familiarity with the system, institutional, structural and personal discrimination and difficulties in getting specialised advice. Currently the service can support people who share this protected characteristic by being able to offer face-to-face support. If this proposal is agreed, it is likely to impact upon the service's ability to undertake face-to-face support. This will impact negatively on people from ethnic minority backgrounds as access to face-to-face support can minimise barriers to interpretation and translation.	
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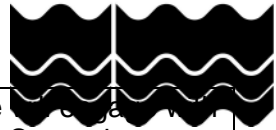
Religion or belief	<p>In 2021, 45.9% (250,330) of usual residents of East Sussex identified as Christian, down from 59.9% (315,650) in 2011.</p> <p>The second most common religion in East Sussex after Christianity is Islam. The proportion of the population stating they were Muslim increased from 0.8% of the usual resident population (4,200) in 2011 to 1.1% (6,190) in 2021.</p> <p>This is low compared to both the Southeast Regional and the English national averages, with 3.3% of residents in the South East specified their religion as Islam, and 6.7% across the whole of England.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported that disclosed their religion:</p>	<p>There were no specific views regarding this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>Most adults in the service either have no religion or are Christian. It is not felt that this proposal would have a significant impact on individuals from a religions or belief perspective.</p> <p>Whilst it may be possible for some individuals to seek additional support via their religious or spiritual groups it is not likely this would represent a mitigation as they are unlikely to have knowledge of housing-related support options.</p>	<p>Not supported</p>																																							
	<table><tr><th>Religion</th><th>Individuals</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>Agnostic</td><td>46</td><td>1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>Atheist</td><td>64</td><td>1.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Buddhist</td><td>18</td><td>0.4%</td></tr><tr><td>Christian (all denomination s)</td><td>1579</td><td>32.6%</td></tr><tr><td>Hindu</td><td>3</td><td>0.1%</td></tr><tr><td>Jewish</td><td>12</td><td>0.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Muslim</td><td>80</td><td>1.7%</td></tr><tr><td>None</td><td>2330</td><td>48.2%</td></tr><tr><td>Not known</td><td>462</td><td>9.5%</td></tr><tr><td>Orthodox</td><td>3</td><td>0.1%</td></tr><tr><td>Other</td><td>47</td><td>1.0%</td></tr><tr><td>Pagan</td><td>28</td><td>0.6%</td></tr></table>				Religion	Individuals	%	Agnostic	46	1.0%	Atheist	64	1.3%	Buddhist	18	0.4%	Christian (all denomination s)	1579	32.6%	Hindu	3	0.1%	Jewish	12	0.2%	Muslim	80	1.7%	None	2330	48.2%	Not known	462	9.5%	Orthodox	3	0.1%	Other	47	1.0%	Pagan	28	0.6%
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Sex	<p>Of the population of East Sussex, 299,064 (52%) are female and 270,788 (48%) are male.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported by sex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Female 57%Male 42% <p>32% of homeless women from the general population reported that domestic violence contributed to their homelessness and 52% of domestic abuse survivors need support to help them stay in their own home or move to new accommodation.</p> <p>Homelessness and domestic abuse spotlight - SafeLives</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data: Referrals made to the service for people at risk of domestic violence:</p> <table><tr><th>Referring organisation</th><th>Number</th></tr><tr><td>Statutory Children's Services</td><td>101</td></tr></table>	Referring organisation	Number	Statutory Children's Services	101	<p>From the consultation sessions a theme that emerged particularly for older women was that during their marriage their husband managed all household finances and bills.</p> <p>“I need help to fill these in (Pension Credit), I have never done this stuff before. I worked as a cleaner in the hospital. I have never had to do this; my husband always did everything before he passed away at 91yrs.”</p>	<p>The proportion of females supported by the service (57%) is a higher than East Sussex average (52%). This suggests that this proposal may disproportionately impact women as they are more likely to be supported by the service compared to men.</p> <p>Women over the age of 65 years may be more likely to be impacted negatively due to them reporting having not previously managed finances.</p> <p>Women are negatively impacted by their gender as women with experiences of domestic abuse described feeling more at risk in environments where they are exposed to men.</p> <p>A combination of traditionally disadvantaged aspects of identity may inform</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>											
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	<table><tr><td>Local Housing Authorities</td><td>98</td></tr></table>	Local Housing Authorities	98		<p>experiences or increase risk of homelessness. For example, a young woman who is under 18 and a refugee is likely to face greater complexity in navigating her homelessness. In-her-shoes-young-womens-experiences-of-homelessness.pdf</p> <p>The service contributes to supporting domestic abuse and sexual violence victims. The service works in partnership with the Domestic Abuse Portal and supports those women who do not meet the threshold for Domestic Abuse services but need support to manage their safety and mitigate risk. It is likely that this could increase the number of safeguarding referrals into Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Health.</p> <p>It is likely that this could see an increase in calls to the Police and an increased attendance at local A&E departments.</p>	
Local Housing Authorities	98					



**Sexual
orientation**

The 2021 East Sussex LGBTQI+ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be between 17,273 and 39,004 LGB+ people living in East Sussex (between 3.1% and 7% of the population)
In adults, the GP patient survey found that mental health condition prevalence was significantly higher in LGB+ people (41%), compared to heterosexual people (11%), especially in bisexual people (56%).

According to the 2021 Census 3.3% of East Sussex residents declared themselves as LGB+.

2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people supported that disclosed Sexual Orientation:

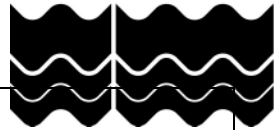
Sexual Orientation	Individuals	%
Unsure	90	1.9%
Queer	3	0.1%
Prefer not to say	157	3.2%
Pansexual	16	0.3%
Other	6	0.1%
Lesbian	40	0.8%
Heterosexual/Str aight	4388	90.3%
Gay	58	1.2%
Bisexual	87	1.8%
Asexual	12	0.2%
Total	4857	


There were no specific views regarding this protected characteristic expressed through the consultation sessions.

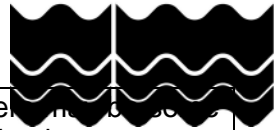
4.5% of people supported by the service in a 12-month period identified as not heterosexual which is above the estimated percentage within East Sussex (3.3%), therefore this indicates a negative impact on people with this protected characteristic.

Nationally, almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. This number increases to almost three in ten LGBT disabled people (28 per cent) compared to more than one in ten LGBT people who aren't disabled (11 per cent). One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, compared to one in six LGB people who aren't trans (16 per cent). LGBT people in category C2DE (lower income households) are more likely than LGBT people in category ABC1 (higher income households) to have experienced homelessness, 25

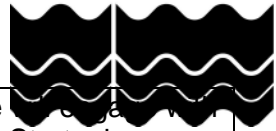
We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.



	<table><tr><td>Blank/No Information</td><td>42</td><td></td></tr></table>	Blank/No Information	42			<p>per cent compared to 15 per cent. One in four non-binary people (24 per cent), 20 per cent of LGBT women and 15 per cent of LGBT men have experienced homelessness lgbt in britain home and communities.pdf (stonewall.org.uk)</p> <p>This would indicate a potential increased risk that people within this group are likely to experience homelessness or risk of homelessness which is likely to exacerbate their health and wellbeing.</p>	
Blank/No Information	42						
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>According to 2021 census data for East Sussex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single 29%• Married 46.5%• Civil Partnership 0.4%• Divorced 11%• Widowed 8% <p>The service does not collect data on marriage and/or civil partnerships.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data – Break-down of people that disclosed relationship status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single 71%• Couple 21%• Other 8%	<p>N/A. There were no specific views regarding this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>There is no identified impact relating to marriage and civil partnership.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>			



<p>Armed Forces</p>	<p>In 2021, 21,173 people in East Sussex reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces (4.6% of usual residents aged 16 years and over).</p> <p>There were 19,917 households (8.3% of all households) in East Sussex with at least one person who had served in the UK armed forces.</p> <p>East Sussex had the 4th highest proportion of veterans in the 16 and over population (4.6%) in the Southeast.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data:– 3.5% of people supported by the service during 2023/24 identified as either currently serving, a veteran or dependent of someone in the armed forces.</p>	<p>There were no specific views regarding this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>People who currently serve or veterans of the armed forces are at increased risk of homelessness. As such Local Authorities have a legal duty to have due regard to the principles of the Home - Armed Forces Covenant when exercising certain statutory functions in the fields of healthcare, education and housing.</p> <p>Nationally the number of veterans has shown an increase from 1,850 to 2,110 homeless veterans in the period 2022-23. Homelessness among armed forces veterans in England rises by 14% Ministry of Defence The Guardian</p> <p>The proposal of a reduced service will impact negatively on people who currently serve in the armed forces, veteran or a dependent as the potential of a reduced service may exclude people from this group who are currently eligible.</p>	<p>The Homelessness Mitigation opportunities for this group who could be signposted to access VCSE organisations that specialise in the support people who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces.</p>
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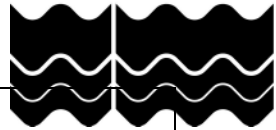


<p>Impacts on community cohesion</p>	<p>People said the size of the cut would be too great and cause greater demand on services from the NHS, charities, housing organisations, social care and local councils. Moreover, this increase in demand is likely to be more expensive than the cost of maintaining the current budget for the service.</p>	<p>Many of the comments in all of the feedback sessions were that the human cost of these decisions would negatively impact the community. It is felt that the knock-on effects of reducing the service would be far-reaching, impacting people's ability to access the support they are entitled to and resulting in people losing out on funding they are entitled to and being stuck in unsuitable accommodation, becoming homeless, or at risk of dying.</p>	<p>Potential for increases in homelessness and access to temporary accommodation, also increase in rough sleeping due to inability to maintain accommodation. Wider impacts for consideration are that insecure housing may impact on ability to maintain employment and/or attendance of school or college.</p> <p>Wider impacts for consideration would be deteriorating physical and/or mental health which could increase the risk of individuals misuse of alcohol or illicit substances a</p>	<p>We have engaged with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
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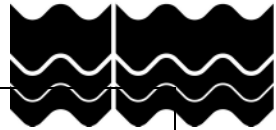
Additional categories

(identified locally as potentially causing / worsening inequality)

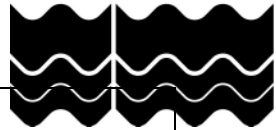
Characteristic	What do you know?	What do people tell you?	What does this mean?	What can you do?
Rurality	<p>The Floating Support Service provides a county-wide service and can offer home visits.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data: Analysis of postcode data has been mapped giving the location of adults who used the service in 2023/24 (see 2.9 of Cabinet report).</p> <p>The map shows that the larger proportion of adults are from coastal urban towns of Hastings and Eastbourne, it also demonstrates the reach of the service into the rural areas of the county and proportionate with data population for East Sussex.</p> <p>74% of the population in East Sussex lives in an urban area with the remaining 26% living in a rural area (2021 census).</p> <p>A report completed in 2023 Homelessness in the Countryside identified that rural areas receive 65% less funding per capita than urban for</p>	<p>A key theme from the views of both service users and partners is the value of being able to support adults with home visits and without this there would be a gap.</p> <p>People living in rural areas often must travel distances to access support, although no specific views on this were feedback, one lady who attended the consultation session covering the Wealden area share that she travelled two hours to attend the session.</p>	<p>The proposed reduction in funding is likely to put at risk or limit the offer of home visits.</p> <p>There is therefore a risk that this proposal will adversely affect people living in rural area of the county who have limited access to transport and increased costs associated with accessing support.</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>



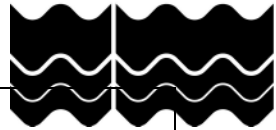
	homelessness prevention and there is a 24% increase in rural rough sleeping in the past year.			
Carers	<p>Care for the Carers estimates that there are 69,241 (11.7%) unpaid carers in East Sussex. It is difficult to know the actual number of carers because so many carers are hidden.</p> <p>Care for the Carers is a key referral partner with a direct referral pathway into the service.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data:- 112 carers were referred for support.</p> <p>2023/24 Service Data:- 12.8% of people supported by the Floating Support Service had a known caring responsibility.</p> <p>Care for the Carers Survey 2023 99% of carers in East Sussex responding said they feel stressed</p> <p>There are over 10,000 people claiming Carers Allowance in East Sussex. (Source DWP Feb 2020)</p> <p>8% of carers aged under 55 cannot afford their rent/mortgage payments. 14% of carers are in debt as a result of caring. This increased to 23% for carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance.</p>	<p>A common theme that emerged from carers is that they didn't know where to turn to when they were faced with the impact of caring for someone. This is exacerbated further when the carer experiences an unexpected health issue.</p> <p>One carer described, "Our life's a perfect storm. We've found it (the service) invaluable. I would describe myself as capable to complete a form but trying to care (for husband with dementia) and have cancer treatment isn't easy."</p> <p>Carer for her husband who is diagnosed with dementia and experiencing ill-health was referred to the service by the Memory Clinic. The service was able to offer support with forms, benefits, and Blue Badge, "This (the service) is desperately needed - like a friend. Non-judgemental, no expectations, was able to talk about our needs, came to help husband, helped me as well"</p> <p>A carer explained "If the service wasn't here, we would have missed</p>	<p>The proposal to reduce the service may place an additional burden on carers who are already stressed and fatigued by their caring role. People with this protected characteristic are at increased risk of their health and wellbeing being adversely affected due to their caring role.</p> <p>Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind at only £76.75 per week (2023/24 rates) for providing a minimum of 35 hours of care.</p> <p>People with caring responsibilities struggle financially often because their income has been affected by caring: many carers have had to reduce their working hours to care, while others are unable to work at all due to caring responsibilities. As a result of a reduced or limited income carers are more likely to find it difficult to maintain their accommodation or ensure a safe home environment.</p> <p>Care for the Carers outline the following impacts for carers:</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>



	<p>Carers UK State of Caring 2023 (carersuk.org)</p>	<p>out on the attendance allowance and left it.”</p> <p>Feedback from Care for the Carers, ‘Changes to service delivery at the proposed scale will come with significant consequences for some of the most vulnerable residents in East Sussex and our deep concern in respect of the impact of these proposals on vulnerable people in East Sussex and their carers’.</p> <p>21% of respondents to the consultation survey, who use or have used the service, are carers and of these, 93% disagree or strongly disagree with the proposal to reduce funding by 88.5%</p>	<p><i>Reducing their ability to take a break from their caring role</i> - A lack of access to breaks / respite is already one of the most challenging aspects of caring in East Sussex, which carers consistently tell us significantly reduces their wellbeing and increases the likelihood of carer breakdown.</p> <p><i>Increasing the likelihood of carers being able to maintain employment</i> - Changes in service times/days of day service provision are key risks to carers being able to negotiate or maintain flexible working with their employers.</p> <p><i>Reducing carers’ financial wellbeing</i> - Being able to maintain employment is vital to carers’ ability to maintain choices, independence and financial wellbeing. The proposals will jeopardise this.</p> <p>Reducing carers’ health and wellbeing - As described in the consultation information, the proposed changes will be stressful for both service users and their carers, and will</p>	
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			destabilise caring arrangements, impacting on carers' wellbeing.	
<p>Low income</p>	<p>East Sussex is ranked 93 out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLA) on the IMD rank. Hastings is the 13 most deprived Lower Tier Local Authority (LTLA) out of 317 LTLAs in the country, with similar levels of deprivation as Newham, and Blackburn with Darwen.</p> <p>Wealden is the least deprived LTLA in East Sussex, with a rank of 254, which means it has similar levels of deprivation as Sevenoaks and Hambleton.</p> <p>In East Sussex there are 329 LSOAs Lower Super Output Areas. 22 of these are in the most deprived 10% nationally. 16 of these are in Hastings, four in Eastbourne, and two in Rother</p> <p>In 2023 in East Sussex the average (median) house price was £345,000, 10.1 times the average annual earnings of residents, which were £34,028. In comparison the average house price in England was £290,000, 8.3 times average annual earnings, which were £35,100.</p> <p>The cost of private rented housing in East Sussex rose by up to 27%</p>	<p>Feedback received from the survey and consultation events: “They supported me to get pension credit. I felt rich after previously not being able to pay my rent and council tax.”</p> <p>“I find this proposal to cut funding morally reprehensible. When there's a tough decision to be made it's always the vulnerable and the poor who get hit the hardest. Often dealing with council paperwork is bewildering and having help in getting what one is entitled to is invaluable.”</p> <p>“Many clients will no longer have bespoke, knowledgeable support with their housing and/or financial needs which in turn is likely to increase the disadvantages they are already facing.”</p>	<p>Nationally 14% of people in the UK were in absolute low income before housing costs in 2022/23, and 18% were in absolute low income (absolute poverty) after housing costs.</p> <p>Poverty in the UK: statistics - House of Commons Library</p> <p>Rent arrears are a priority debt as landlords can evict tenants from their home if they don't pay. Those on benefits (both in and out of work claimants) are particularly vulnerable to falling into arrears due to benefits not being increased in line with inflation, and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) being frozen at March 2020 levels.</p> <p>This proposal to reduce the service will have a negative impact for people on a low income as it will adversely affect their ability to access the support they are entitled to and resulting in people losing out on funding they are entitled to.</p>	<p>We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>



between 2019 and 2023. Average private rents ranged from £167 to £253 a week across districts

During 2023/24 BHT supported adults with cost-of-living pressures with additional payments via a client's fund.

Client Fund	Budget	Number supported
Cold Weather Goods	£60,000	1151
Emergency Fund	£60,000	302
Digital Inclusion Fund	£60,000	443
Voucher Top-up	£130,00	639
Total	£310,00	2535

People that share this characteristic may be less resilient to unexpected spending needs such as the failure of a boiler or other durable good and are more likely to get behind with payments and fall into debt.

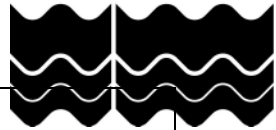
This can impact adversely on their mental health and put them at increased risk of anxiety and depression and increase the risk of suicide.

Low-income families are more likely to go without essentials such as food and heating to cut back on spending.

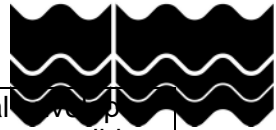
[Not heating, eating or meeting bills: managing a cost of living crisis on a low income | Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)

People's ability to afford healthy food is a major determinant in the nutritional quality of their diets that can cause them to experience poor health outcomes.

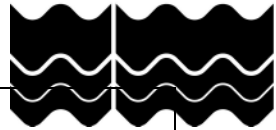
The national picture suggests that amongst the poorest fifth of the population, households with children would have to spend 70% of their disposable income



			on food to afford a diet in line the government recommended healthy diet.	
Digital Exclusion	<p>Digital ExclusionError! Bookmark not defined. The population of insecurely housed/homeless people who have confounding factors (neurodiversity, language issues, lack of basic education, offending history, addiction issues, mental health problems) tend to be much younger (30 – 55) and there is a huge population of these adults who need digital skills/access help to manage their lives.</p> <p>20% of the population in the UK do not possess all the foundation digital skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In socio-economic classes D/E this increases to 36% 	A common theme that emerged from the consultation sessions that people of all ages felt disadvantaged as more services go digital, they are unable to access support, advice and information. This was higher for people older and who work or worked manual work e.g. lorry driver, hospital cleaner.	<p>The national picture tells us that three out of ten people aged 65 to 74 and two-thirds of those aged 75 and over are not online. There is also a link to social disadvantage. For example, while only 15 per cent of people aged 65 to 74 in socio-economic group AB do not use the internet, this rises to 45 per cent in group DE.</p> <p>The Office of National Statistics (ONS) records the proportion of non-internet users as halving between 2011 and 2018, down from 20% of adults to 10%. of those who are classed as non-internet users, 55% come from adults aged over 75, and 24% of those aged 65 to 74.</p> <p>There is a higher risk of digital exclusion, particularly amongst older people and people on low incomes.</p>	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.
Other groups that may be differently affected (including but not only:	<p>Rough Sleeping</p> <p>Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023 - GOV.UK</p>		<p>The average life expectancy for a rough sleeper is 44 years men and 42 years for women.</p> <p>Options for people sleeping rough are limited due to their often</p>	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited



homeless people, substance users, care leavers – see end note)	<p>Number of people sleeping rough in East Sussex on a single night in autumn 2023</p> <p>Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <table><tr><td>Local Authority</td><td>Single night estimate</td></tr><tr><td>Eastbourne</td><td>37</td></tr><tr><td>Hastings</td><td>31</td></tr><tr><td>Lewes</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>Rother</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Wealden</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>85</td></tr></table> <p>71% of adults were/ supported to remain in their existing accommodation.</p> <p>Adults with low literacy</p> <p>1 in 6 (16.4%) adults in England are estimated to have very low literacy, which means they may struggle with longer texts and unfamiliar topics (OECD, 2016)</p> <p>The average worker in the UK with very low literacy will earn approximately 7.1% less than if they had a basic level of literacy. This means that they would need to work an additional 1.5 years over their lifetime to make up for this disparity (Pro Bono economics, 2021).</p>	Local Authority	Single night estimate	Eastbourne	37	Hastings	31	Lewes	6	Rother	5	Wealden	6		85		<p>complex needs limited appropriate accommodation options. This is further exacerbated by several grant funding streams supporting services people with multiple compound needs, including the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative and Changing Futures programme, due to end March 2025.</p> <p>The proposal to reduce funding for Supported Accommodation services may also impact this group.</p>	<p>financial support</p> <p>It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.</p>
Local Authority	Single night estimate																	
Eastbourne	37																	
Hastings	31																	
Lewes	6																	
Rother	5																	
Wealden	6																	
	85																	



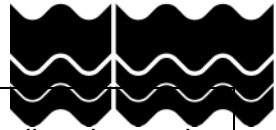
	<p>In England, 43% of working-age adults don't have the literacy skills they need to understand and make use of everyday health information (Public Health England, 2015)</p> <p>Public Health England and UCL Institute of Health Equity (2015), Local action on health inequalities Improving health literacy to reduce health inequalities</p> <p>16.54% of adults supported by the service had a health condition that may impact on their literacy.</p> <p>Seldom-heard voices: Adult literacy in the UK National Literacy Trust</p>			
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Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations- include assessment of cumulative impacts (where a change in one service/policy/project may have an impact on another)

A reduction in funding from £4,372,615 to £500,000 per annum, a reduction of 88.5% in overall funding is likely to require a fundamental service redesign. This reduced level of funding would enable approximately 854 adults per annum to use the service as opposed 5,282 people supported in 2023/24 (based on current model of service delivery). Consideration will need to be given to narrowing the scope of the service to targeted groups only, i.e. older people or Adult Social Care and Health adults only.

There are some services in East Sussex that provide housing advice, but we know these are in high demand and don't necessarily offer the same level or type of support e.g. home visits and face-to-face. The service is heavily used by Adult Social Care and Health, the District and Borough housing authorities, Children's Services as well as other Statutory and VCSE organisations.

This significant service reduction is likely to place an increased burden on these services and could lead to poorer housing outcomes for people. Homelessness and insecure housing are known to have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the individuals affected and consequently can be linked with increased use of healthcare and support services which has a significant impact on other stakeholders.



Key Impacts:

The Floating Support Service supported almost 5,300 residents during 2023/24 to access appropriate support to address their housing needs tailored to each individual situation with face-to-face support as needed.

The proposed significant reduction in funding will have a negative impact on older people, pregnant women, households with children, disabled people, those from ethnic minority communities and those who have experienced multiple disadvantages. This is likely to have a knock-on effect to many areas ranging from Adult Social Care and Health, Children's Services, District and Borough Housing teams, local VCSE services, health and criminal justice services many of which are already facing reduced funding streams alongside an increase in demand.

Risks -

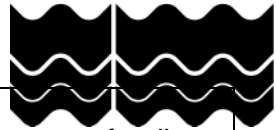
It is highly likely the proposals would result in a significant decrease in provision of support to address risks to adults including:

- loss of / risk of losing accommodation
- ability to manage/move on from temporary/emergency accommodation
- living in unsuitable housing
- lack of resettlement support
- ability to cope with housing
- support to maintain independence or is at risk of losing their independence due to their housing situation
- no support provision to move to accommodation that will better meet their needs
- homelessness

This may lead to:

- street homelessness
- suicides and death on the streets
- people living in unsafe conditions
- people living in conditions that put their health at risk
- use of health services particularly A&E
- demand for mental health services
- safeguarding
- criminal behaviour

This is further exacerbated with the proposal to withdraw funding for the support provided within Supported Accommodation and with several grant funding streams supporting services people with multiple compound needs, including the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative and Changing Futures programme, currently due to end March 2025 leaving uncertainty about the future of these services.



The money advice/welfare benefits provision in the county is under huge pressure with increasing demand and the ending of the Additional Measures funding in March 2025.

Intersectionality

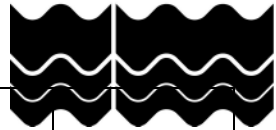
Applying a systemic analysis to the impact of the decision ensures protected characteristics are not considered in isolation from the individuals who embody them. The proposal will impact individuals who have more than one protected characteristic. People in need of housing advice may be disproportionately disadvantaged across multiple areas and have more than one protected characteristic, in particular in terms of race, socio-economic status, sex and disability.

With the potential for additional reductions in funding to other support services within RPPR scope, the cumulative effect on the availability of support options for adults affected by these proposals is significant.

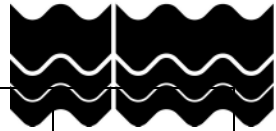
There are 1,360 East Sussex residents known to have multiple and compound needs (usually a combination of three or more of the following: mental health needs, homelessness, drug and alcohol use, survivors of domestic abuse, involvement in the criminal justice system). Many of these are likely to require support from services that can offer a flexible approach with a range of communication options including face-to-face and with flexibility regarding the timescales within which support can be offered. Without this flexible support, and the cumulative impact of the reduction in other services, the impact for residents who have multiple and compound needs is likely to be increased risk of homelessness, worsened mental health, reduced access to drug and alcohol services, increased harmful behaviours and increased involvement in the criminal justice system.

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqIA

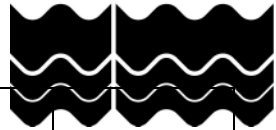
Source and type of data (e.g. research, or direct engagement (interviews), responses to questionnaires, etc.)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
<p>Research</p> <p>Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 - Health and Housing </p> <p>The-value-of-justice-for-all-a-report-for-the-Access-to-Justice-Foundation-and-the-Bar-Council-from-Pragmatix-Advisory.pdf (atjf.org.uk)</p> <p>Health - county East Sussex Report Builder for ArcGIS (eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)</p> <p>One million households will miss out due to the Winter Fuel Payment changes - Policy in Practice</p> <p>Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK</p> <p>https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/exploring-system-wide-costs-falls-older-people-torbay</p> <p>LR Age UK ID202857 Digital Report.pdf</p> <p>Housing costs and Universal Credit: Renting from a private landlord - GOV.UK</p> <p>Homelessness Monitor Crisis UK Together we will end homelessness</p>			



Equalities considerations for housing, homelessness, health and care (ihub.scot) The Unhealthy State of Homelessness Homeless Link East Sussex 2021 Census Briefing: Disability (eastsussexinfigures.org.uk) Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 - Health and Housing LGBT in Britain - Trans Report (2018) Stonewall 'Dispatches and RCM find that 99.7% of midwives have seen mothers who were homeless over the past six months' (Housing instability and adverse perinatal outcomes: a systematic review - PMC (nih.gov)). Pregnancy and Maternity-Related Discrimination and Disadvantage (publishing.service.gov.uk) Homelessness and domestic abuse spotlight - SafeLives In-her-shoes-young-womens-experiences-of-homelessness.pdf lgbt in britain home and communities.pdf (stonewall.org.uk) Home - Armed Forces Covenant Homelessness among armed forces veterans in England rises by 14% Ministry of Defence The Guardian Homelessness in the Countryside Carers UK State of Caring 2023 (carersuk.org) Poverty in the UK: statistics - House of Commons Library			
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<p>Not heating, eating or meeting bills: managing a cost-of-living crisis on a low income Joseph Rowntree Foundation</p> <p>Seldom-heard voices: Adult literacy in the UK National Literacy Trust</p> <p>Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2023 - GOV.UK</p> <p>Tables on homelessness - GOV.UK</p> <p>East Sussex in Figures – Data Observatory – Welcome to East Sussex in Figures state-of-the-county-2024.pdf</p> <p>UK Parliament Post: Consumer Debt and Mental Health October 24 POST-PN-0732.pdf</p>			
<p>Consultation meetings held with stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heads of Service- Operational Management Team Meeting Homelessness Health and Support Group Mental Health and Supported Living Accommodation Board East Sussex Mental Health Oversight Board Mini East Sussex Housing Officers Groups Financial Inclusion Steering Group- Changing Futures Citizens' Panel East Sussex Housing Partnership Board Disability Rights Representation Group East Sussex Inclusion Advisory Group Harm to Hope Partnership East Sussex Seniors Association 	<p>20/09/2024</p> <p>24/09/2024 26/09/2024</p> <p>27/09/2024 03/10/2024 07/10/2024 10/10/2024 11/10/2024 15/11/2024 18/10/2024 22/10/2024 07/11/2024 08/11/2024</p>		



<p>Strategic Referral Partners including:</p> <p>Adult Social Care and Health Children's Services District and Borough Housing Authorities NHS services including Primary Care; Acute and Community hospitals; Mental Health; Community teams, Rehabilitation services; Maternity and Health Visiting; Social housing providers Advice Agencies VCSE services including Carers' organisations; Age UK; hospices; Stroke Association; housing and homelessness agencies; drug and alcohol services; MARAC (domestic abuse services) Police Probation Jobcentre Plus Schools Care agencies Private letting agencies Family/friends</p>			
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4. Prioritised Action Plan

NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
Negative impacts identified in the EqIA above	We will engage with our Strategic Partner and key stakeholders to redesign services within the limited financial envelope. It may be possible to identify some mitigations once this work has been undertaken.	Some of the negative impacts are expected to be mitigated through this action.		April – September 2025

Housing-Related Floating Support Service - Appendix 6 - Profile of Service

12 months Oct 2023/Sept 2024: 5,064 people directly supported (443 re-referrals =5,497 cases).

- Total number of people in these households was 10,399 (parents, children, grandparents etc)
- 1,287 of these households had children (estimate from household data is 2,721 children)
- 1,116 people were 75+ years old
- 3,055 people reported having a long-standing illness

84% of referrals came directly from statutory partners. Referrals were assessed within 2 days and an Floating Support Officer (FSO) assigned to the case within 7 working days. Efficient referral process for statutory partners means that peoples needs are assessed rapidly, reducing the need for statutory intervention.

Local Housing Authorities: 1,416 referrals from the Local Housing Authorities (the 5 District and Boroughs- Hastings, Rother, Wealden, Eastbourne, Lewes):

- 282 single people referred who were homeless (208) or at risk of homelessness (74)
- 299 families referred that were homeless (175) or at risk of homelessness (124)
- 243 people referred due to Mental Health problems
- 101 older people referred with support needs (access to extra care housing, support with benefit applications, referrals for ASC care packages, mobility issues, physical health issues)
- 98 people referred at risk of domestic violence

Prevention of Homelessness: 1,856 people / households were facing imminent homelessness (i.e. they were losing their accommodation or at risk of losing their accommodation):

- 1,342 cases were prevented from becoming homeless, including:
- 877 cases – were supported to be able to remain in their current accommodation
- 412 cases - were supported to find new accommodation

Of the remaining 514 cases:

- 269 cases were supported to be ready to move once accommodation is identified (housing register forms completed, bidding on properties on Home Move, engagement with letting agents)
- 245 cases - support was not completed due to the person disengaging with the service.

Statutory Children's Services: 603 people were referred by Statutory Children's Services (referrals from Children's Services are when the risk to children in the household is high), including:

- 80 families at direct risk of homelessness
- 120 families already experiencing homelessness (families living in temporary accommodation, living in insecure accommodation)
- 101 people at risk of domestic violence

Adult Social Care: 2,230 people were referred by Adult Social Care, including:

- 490 people referred due to Mental Health problems (anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, schizoaffective disorders, personality disorders)
- 336 people referred directly from the Dementia Support Team (over 60's)
- 132 people referred due to high levels of vulnerability due to frailty (over 60's) – (frailty relates to the adult's mental and physical resilience, or their ability to bounce back and recover from events like illness and injury).

Mental Health Conditions and/or Long-Term Health Conditions (Oct 23 - Sept 24)

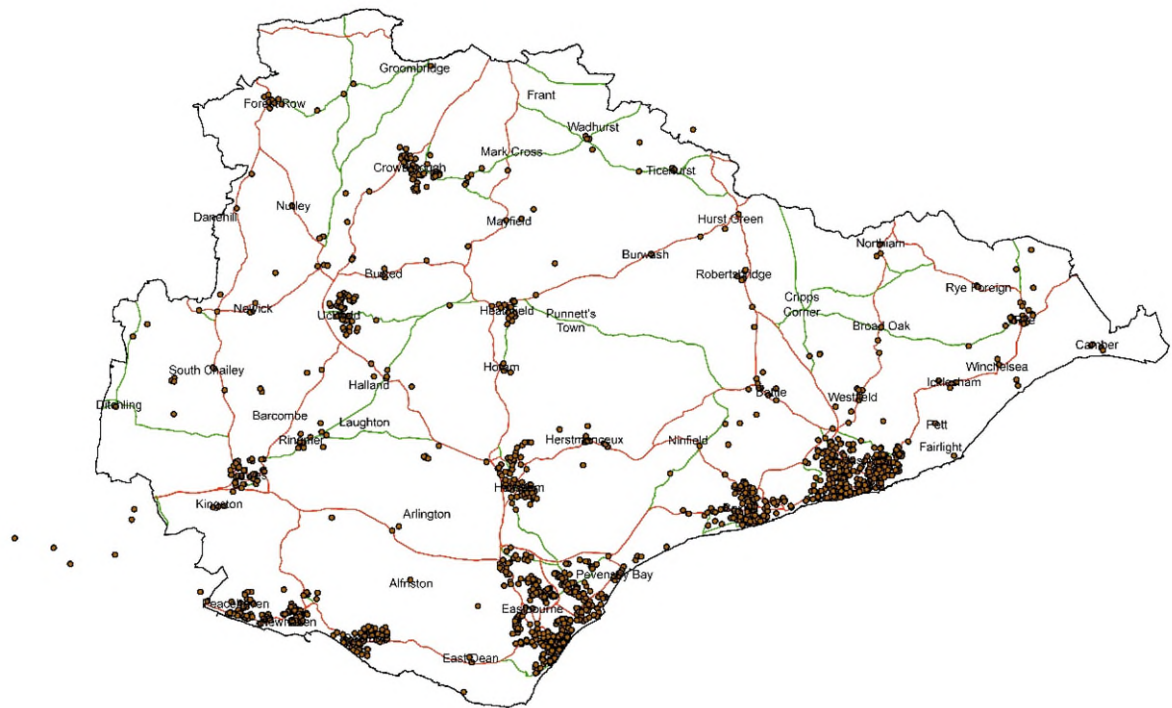
	<i>July - Sept 2024</i>	<i>April- June 2024</i>	<i>January - March 2024</i>	<i>October - December 2024</i>
Yes	1765	1657	1631	1575
No	517	512	501	474
Prefer not to say	1	3	1	1
<i>Mental Health Condition</i>	929	855	929	883
<i>Long-standing Illness</i>	867	732	750	706
<i>Mobility issue</i>	526	436	467	466
<i>Physical Impairment</i>	441	377	378	339
<i>Sensory Impairment</i>	140	112	128	116
<i>Learning Disability / Difficulty</i>	113	107	108	114
<i>Autistic Spectrum</i>	135	100	103	87
<i>Acquired Brain Injury</i>	52	49	42	40
<i>Other</i>	70	56	66	60

Adults accessing the service have severe complex health needs which are exacerbated by their housing situation. There is a clear link between housing and health inequalities.

Adults accessing the service live in insecure tenancies, live under the threat of eviction, have high housing costs, live in temporary accommodation for prolonged periods, live in housing that is in disrepair, damp, and in poor condition or overcrowded - all have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health.

Accommodation is often unsuitable for people who are accessing the services health needs.

The map below shows the location of adults who used the service in 2023/24.



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Appendix 9 - Information provided by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

1. Call-in

1.1 The call-in relates to two areas of concern and how these were taken into account in the decision making process:

- Whether the impact of the proposal on District and Borough Councils was sufficiently considered; and
- Whether the interests of a future unitary authority were explicitly considered in the context of the agreement that has been made in principle between the District, Borough and County Council leaders in preparation for unitarisation processes, which includes: '...Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day [when the Unitary Authority takes control] will have the interests of future unitary council as an explicit consideration.'

2. Impact on District and Borough Councils

2.1 It is acknowledged that reducing funding for the Housing Related Floating Support Service may impact other organisations including District and Borough Councils. As part of the consultation process, representatives from ASCH's Housing & Support Solutions team attended the following meetings to ensure colleagues from the District and Borough Housing Authorities were fully briefed. Feedback from these meetings was gathered and their views were included in the papers for Cabinet:

- 24/09/2024 - Homelessness, Health and Support Group – includes housing managers from each of the local Housing Authorities, plus colleagues from health, adult social care, children's services, mental health, criminal justice and the voluntary and community sector.
- 27/09/2024 - Housing Managers Group – includes the housing managers from each local housing authority.
- 11/10/2024 - Housing Partnership Board – includes the strategic housing leads (Heads of Housing) for each area, as well as housing providers and partners from across health, care, criminal justice, mental health, housing developers, voluntary and community sector and government agencies.

2.2 The Council continues to engage with these organisations, as well as other relevant stakeholders, to ensure that, if the proposal to reduce funding goes ahead, the impacts are mitigated as far as is possible.

2.3 The potential impact on District and Borough Councils was well understood by officers and Cabinet members, fully articulated in the Cabinet papers and discussed by members at length prior to Cabinet making its decision, as evidenced by the information contained within:

- **Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet 25 February 2025**
- **Appendix 3 – Minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 25 February 2025.** Including, in para 62.6, *“the potentially significant additional costs and pressures that will be placed on other parts of the system if the proposed funding reduction for these services is agreed”*.
- **Appendix 4 – People Scrutiny Pre-decision Board comments to Cabinet.** Including:
“The Board discussed plans for local government reorganisation and commented that some savings proposals would have significant impacts on District and Borough Council services, which would become the responsibility of any new unitary authority.”

“The Board felt that the proposal would shift additional pressures onto District and Borough Councils which had a statutory responsibility to provide support. The Board also expressed concern that this was a short-term solution and that housing support could be the responsibility of a new unitary authority in 3 years’ time. However, the Board recognised that this service was not a statutory responsibility of the County Council and had therefore not been prioritised as an area to protect. In light of this, the Board reluctantly accepted the proposal.”

“The Board welcomed that the Department would continue to work with partners, including Districts and Boroughs to redesign and co-produce a targeted service around homelessness prevention.”

2.4 All written references to the impact of the funding reduction to the Housing Related Floating Support Service, from across the process are attached in Appendix 6.

2.5 All verbal references to the impact on other organisations, including District and Borough Authorities, drawn from the Cabinet meeting on 25 February 2025 are attached at Appendix 7.

2.6 The impact upon District and Borough Councils, as well as the fact that the Council would potentially be moving to a unitary system in the near future was raised by numerous Councillors and discussed at length in the Cabinet meeting.

2.7 As set out above, the impact of the proposals on District and Borough Councils was addressed explicitly in the paperwork provided to Cabinet, was discussed at length in the meeting and was a relevant consideration taken into account by Cabinet in reaching its decision (as shown in the reasons for the decision set

out in the Cabinet minutes). The weight to be given to this particular consideration in reaching their decision is a matter for Cabinet to determine.

3. Impact on a future unitary authority

- 3.1 As part of the Government's Devolution White Paper, all two-tier authorities were invited on 5 February 2025 to submit proposals for local government reorganisation. An interim plan for working up the proposal for East Sussex is being considered by Full Council and Cabinet on 20 March. Part of the proposal is to establish principles about how the Councils will work together and this includes the principle that *'Decisions made by all sovereign bodies until vesting day will have the interests of the future unitary Council as an explicit consideration'*. These principles will be considered as part of the plan, and a decision made on how to proceed.
- 3.2 Therefore, whilst working principles have been drafted with District and Borough Councils, these are yet to be considered through the County Council's formal decision-making process and therefore do not form part of the Council's policy framework. Notwithstanding, the Council continues to work with District and Borough Councils and the impacts of decisions on partners, including District and Borough Councils and any potential unitary authority have where relevant been considered as one of a number of factors within the decision making process, as noted above.
- 3.3 In discussions with the Boroughs and Districts it has also been recognised that each council remains sovereign and has legal responsibility to balance its budget until vesting day for a new unitary. Whilst all councils are committed to strong partnership working to consider fully impacts on other councils and/or the new unitary, the principle cannot be the only factor considered.
- 3.4 The potential to form a unitary was raised by a number of members at the Cabinet meeting specifically in respect of this agenda item, and it was also expressly referred to in the comments from the pre-Cabinet Scrutiny Board which formed part of the Cabinet papers. This was therefore considered by Cabinet as one of the factors that was relevant to the decision. The weight to be given to this particular consideration in reaching their decision is a matter for Cabinet to determine.
- 3.5 In the context of the requirement for ESCC to make savings to deliver a balanced budget for 2025/26, in making decisions on specific proposals the Cabinet considered all material considerations relevant to that proposal. When making the decision, It is evident that Cabinet did have regard to the impact on any potential new unitary authority, and put such weight as they considered appropriate on this consideration bearing in mind it relates to a future organisation, which as yet, has no worked up proposal in place, no government decision, and if agreed will not come into being for a number of years; this was balanced against all the other relevant and more immediate considerations.

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Complaints considered by the Standards Committee 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Reference	Date Received	Type and Date of Committee	Summary of Complaint	Outcome	Resolved
SC.001.25	23 January 2025	Assessment Sub-Committee 19 March 2025	Breach of General Principles of Code of Conduct (Paragraphs 3(1) and 2(b) and 5)	No action to be taken	Yes
SC.002.25	12 February 2025	Assessment Sub-Committee 19 March 2025	Breach of General Principles of Code of Conduct (Paragraph 4)	No action to be taken	Yes

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Code of Conduct for Members

On their election or co-option to the East Sussex County Council, members are required to sign an undertaking to comply with the authority's Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct, adopted by the authority on 20 July 2012, is set out below. It is made under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and includes, as standing orders made under Chapter 7 of that Act and Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, provisions which require members to leave meetings in appropriate circumstances, while matters in which they have a personal interest are being considered.

Part 1 – General provisions

Introduction and interpretation

1. —(1) This Code applies to **you** as a member of the authority, when acting in that capacity.

(2) This Code is based upon seven principles fundamental to public service, which are set out in **Appendix 1**. You should have regard to these principles as they will help you to comply with the Code.

(3) If you need guidance on any matter under this Code you should seek it from the authority's monitoring officer or your own legal adviser – but it is entirely your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

(4) It is a criminal offence to fail to notify the authority's monitoring officer of a disclosable pecuniary interest, to take part in discussions or votes at meetings, or to take a decision where you have disclosable pecuniary interest, without reasonable excuse. It is also an offence to knowingly or recklessly to provide false or misleading information to the authority's monitoring officer.

(5) Any written allegation received by the authority that you have failed to comply with this Code will be dealt with by the authority under the arrangements which it has adopted for such purposes. If it is found that you have failed to comply with the Code, the authority has the right to have regard to this failure in deciding -

(a) whether to take action in relation to you and

(b) what action to take.

(6) Councillors are required to comply with any request regarding the provision of information in relation to a complaint alleging a breach of the Code of Conduct and must comply with any formal standards investigation.

(7) Councillors should not seek to misuse the standards process, for example, by making trivial or malicious allegations against another councillor for the purposes of political gain.

(8) In this Code—

“authority” means East Sussex County Council

“Code” means this Code of Conduct

“co-opted member” means a person who is not a member of the authority but who-

(a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or

(b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority,

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

"meeting" means any meeting of—

(a) the authority;

(b) the executive of the authority

(c) any of the authority's or its executive's committees, sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees, or area committees;

"member" includes a co-opted member.

“register of members’ interests” means the authority's register of members' pecuniary and other interests established and maintained by the authority's monitoring officer under section 29 of the Localism Act 2011.

Scope

2. —(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), you must comply with this Code whenever you—

(a) conduct the business of your authority (which, in this Code, includes the business of the office to which you are elected or appointed); or

(b) act, claim to act or give the impression you are acting as a representative of your authority,

and references to your official capacity are construed accordingly.

(2) This Code does not have effect in relation to your conduct other than where it is in your official capacity.

(3) Where you act as a representative of your authority—

(a) on another relevant authority, you must, when acting for that other authority, comply with that other authority's code of conduct; or

(b) on any other body, you must, when acting for that other body, comply with your authority's code of conduct, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other body may be subject.

General obligations

3. —(1) You must treat others with respect.

(2) You must not—

(a) do anything which may cause your authority to breach any of its equality duties (in particular as set out in the Equality Act 2010);

(b) bully or harass any person; Note: Bullying may be characterised as: offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Harassment may be characterised as unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual.

(c) intimidate or improperly influence or attempt to intimidate or improperly influence any person who is or is likely to be—

(i) a complainant,

(ii) a witness, or

(iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a member (including yourself) has failed to comply with his or her authority's code of conduct; or

(d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, your authority.

4. You must not—

(a) disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where—

(i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;

- (ii) you are required by law to do so;
- (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
- (iv) the disclosure is—
 - (a) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the authority; or

(b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

5. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.

6. You—

(a) must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage;

(b) must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority—

- (i) act in accordance with your authority's reasonable requirements;
- (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and

(c) must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

7. —(1) When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by—

- (a) your authority's chief finance officer; or
- (b) your authority's monitoring officer,

where that officer is acting pursuant to his or her statutory duties.

(2) You must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by your authority.

Part 2 – Interests

Personal interests

8. – (1) The interests described in paragraphs 8(3) and 8(5) are your personal interests and the interests in paragraph 8(5) are your pecuniary interests which are disclosable pecuniary interests as defined by section 30 of the Localism Act 2011.

(2) If you fail to observe Parts 2 and 3 of the Code in relation to your personal interests-

(a) the authority may deal with the matter as mentioned in paragraph 1(5) and

(b) if the failure relates to a disclosable pecuniary interest, you may also become subject to criminal proceedings as mentioned in paragraph 1(4).

(3) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either—

(a) it relates to or is likely to affect—

(i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;

(ii) any body—

(a) exercising functions of a public nature;

(b) directed to charitable purposes; or

(c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

(iii) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50;

(b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of (in the case of authorities with electoral divisions or wards) other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;

(4) In sub-paragraph (3)(b), a relevant person is—

(a) a member of your family or a close friend; or

(b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;

(c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or

(d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (3)(a)(i) or (ii).

(5) Subject to sub-paragraphs (6) and (7), you have a personal interest which is also a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by section 30 of the Localism Act 2011 in any business of your authority where (i) you or (ii) your partner have an interest within the following descriptions:

Interest	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and

Securities	<p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p> <p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
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These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

'body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest' means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

'land' includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

'M' means the person M referred to in section 30 of the Localism Act 2011;

'member' includes a co-opted member;

'relevant authority' means the authority of which M is a member;

'relevant period' means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Localism Act 2011;

'relevant person' means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Localism Act 2011;

'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

(6) In sub-paragraph (5), your partner means—

(a) your spouse or civil partner,

(b) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or

(c) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners,

(7) In sub-paragraph (5), any interest which your partner may have is only treated as your interest if you are aware that that your partner has the interest.

Disclosure of personal interests (See also Part 3)

9. —(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (6), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which any matter relating to the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

(2) If the personal interest is entered on the authority's register there is no requirement for you to disclose the interest to that meeting, but you should do so if you wish a disclosure to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

(3) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

(4) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest and, if also applicable, that it is a disclosable pecuniary interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

(5) Subject to paragraph 12(1)(b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision on any matter in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

(6) In this paragraph, "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Prejudicial interest generally

10. —(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where either-

(a) the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest as described in paragraph 8(5), or

(b) the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b), you do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business—

(a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8;

(b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8; or

(c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of—

- (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
- (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
- (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
- (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
- (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
- (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Interests arising in relation to overview and scrutiny committees

11. You also have a personal interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—

(a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and

(b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

Effect of prejudicial interests on participation

12. —(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) and (3), where you have a prejudicial interest in any matter in relation to the business of your authority—

(a) you must not participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at any meeting, or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting and must withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting considering the matter is being held—

- (i) in a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
- (ii) in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the matter is being considered at that meeting;

unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's monitoring officer or standards committee;

(b) you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that matter; and

(c) you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that matter.

(2) Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority which is not a disclosable pecuniary interest as described in paragraph 8(5), you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

(3) Where you have a prejudicial interest which is not a disclosable pecuniary interest as described in paragraph 8(5), arising solely from membership of any body described 8(3)(a)(i) or 8(3)(a)(ii)(a) then you do not have to withdraw from the room or chamber and may make representations to the committee but may not participate in the vote.

Part 3 – Registration of Interests

Registration of members' interests

13. —(1) Subject to paragraph 14, you must, within 28 days of—

(a) this Code being adopted by the authority; or

(b) your election or appointment to office (where that is later),
register in the register of members' interests details of-

- (i) your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 8(3)(a) and
- (ii) your personal interests which are also disclosable pecuniary interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 8(5)

by providing written notification to your authority's monitoring officer.

(2) Subject to paragraph 14, you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new personal interest falling within sub-paragraphs (1)(b)(i) or (1)(b)(ii) or any change to any personal interest registered under sub-paragraphs (1)(b)(i) or (1)(b)(ii), register details of that new personal interest or change by providing written notification to your authority's monitoring officer.

Sensitive information

14. —(1) Where you consider that the information relating to any of your personal interests is sensitive information, and your authority's monitoring officer agrees, the monitoring officer shall not include details of the interest on any copies of the register of members' interests which are made available for inspection or any published version of the register, but may include a statement that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld under this paragraph.

(2) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph (1) is no longer sensitive information, notify your authority's monitoring officer asking that the information be included in the register of members' interests.

(3) In this Code, "sensitive information" means information, the details of which, if disclosed, could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation.

Dispensations

15 - (1) The standards committee, or any sub-committee of the standards committee or the monitoring officer may, on a written request made to the monitoring officer of the authority by a member, grant a dispensation relieving the member from either or both of the restrictions in paragraph 12(1)(a) (restrictions on participating in discussions and in voting), in cases described in the dispensation.

(2) A dispensation may be granted only if, after having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the standards committee, its sub-committee or the monitoring officer.—

(a) considers that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by paragraph 12 from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business,

(b) considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business,

(c) considers that granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area,

(d) if it is an authority to which Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 applies and is operating executive arrangements, considers that without the dispensation each member of the authority's executive would be prohibited by paragraph 12 from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority's executive, or

(e) considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

(3) A dispensation must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed four years.

(4) Paragraph 12 does not apply in relation to anything done for the purpose of deciding whether to grant a dispensation under this paragraph.

APPENDIX 1

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies, and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also have application to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

Selflessness

1. Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

2. Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

3. Holder of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

4. Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

5. Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty

6. Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

7. Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Submitted to Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England
Submitted on 2025-02-25 10:38:37

Scope of this consultation

Ministerial foreword

Background: Standards and Conduct framework and sanctions arrangements

Who we would like to hear from

Personal data

About you

1 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

A council body

Local authority type

Please indicate the local authority type:

County Council

If other, please specify:

Strengthening the Standards and Conduct framework

2 Do you think the government should prescribe a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England?

Yes

If no, why not?:

3 If yes, do you agree there should be scope for local authorities to add to a mandatory minimum code of conduct to reflect specific local challenges?

Yes – it is important that local authorities have flexibility to add to a prescribed code

4 Do you think the government should set out a code of conduct requirement for members to cooperate with investigations into code breaches?

Yes

5 Does your local authority currently maintain a standards committee?

Yes

Add any further comments:

6 Should all principal authorities be required to form a standards committee?

Yes

Add any further comments:

7 In most principal authorities, code of conduct complaints are typically submitted in the first instance to the local authority Monitoring Officer to triage, before referring a case for full investigation. Should all alleged code of conduct breaches which are referred for investigation be heard by the relevant principal authority's standards committee?

Yes, decisions should only be heard by standards committees

8 Do you agree that the Independent Person and co-opted members should be given voting rights?

No – only elected members of the council in question should have voting rights

9 Should standards committees be chaired by the Independent Person?

No

10 If you have further views on ensuring fairness and objectivity and reducing incidences of vexatious complaints, please use the free text box below.

Add your comments:

11 Should local authorities be required to publish annually a list of allegations of code of conduct breaches, and any investigation outcomes?

No - only cases in which a member is found guilty of wrongdoing should be published

Other views (add your comments):

12 Should investigations into the conduct of members who stand down before a decision continue to their conclusion, and the findings be published?

Yes

13 If responding as a local authority, what is the average number of complaints against elected members that you receive over a 12-month period?

Number of complaints:

2

13a For the above, where possible, please provide a breakdown for complaints made by officers, other elected members, the public, or any other source:

Complaints made by officers:

0

Complaints made by other elected members:

1

Complaints made by the public:

1

Complaints made by any other source:

0

14 If you currently work, or have worked, within a local authority, have you ever been the victim of (or witnessed) an instance of misconduct by an elected member and felt that you could not come forward?

Not Answered

Please give reasons if you feel comfortable doing so.:

15 If you are an elected member, have you ever been subject to a code of conduct complaint?

Not Answered

If so, did you feel you received appropriate support to engage with the investigation?:

16 If you did come forward as a victim or witness, what support did you receive, and from whom? Is there additional support you would have liked to receive?

Add your comments:

17 In your view, what measures would help to ensure that people who are victims of, or witness, serious councillor misconduct feel comfortable coming forward and raising a complaint?

Add your comments:

Complainants should be able to request that they remain anonymous. The name of the complainant would not then become known to the subject councillor. As things stand the Council's policy is that the complaint could remain anonymous, but only where it is the sub-committee's or Monitoring Officer's view that it would be in the public interest to maintain confidentiality.

Introducing the power of suspension with related safeguards

18 Do you think local authorities should be given the power to suspend elected members for serious code of conduct breaches?

Yes – authorities should be given the power to suspend members

19 Do you think that it is appropriate for a standards committee to have the power to suspend members, or should this be the role of an independent body?

Yes - the decision to suspend for serious code of conduct breaches should be for the standards committee

Add your comments:

The Full Council delegates powers to the Standards Committee to deal with alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct. It is therefore appropriate that the Committee oversees the whole process in relation to a complaint including the matter of sanctions.

20 Where it is deemed that suspension is an appropriate response to a code of conduct breach, should local authorities be required to nominate an alternative point of contact for constituents during their absence?

Yes – councils should be required to ensure that constituents have an alternative point of contact during a councillor's suspension

21 If the government reintroduced the power of suspension do you think there should be a maximum length of suspension?

Yes – the government should set a maximum length of suspension of 6 months

If you think the government should set a different maximum length, what should this be, in months? :

22 If yes, how frequently do you consider councils would be likely to make use of the maximum length of suspension?

Infrequently – likely to be applied only to the most egregious code of conduct breaches

23 Should local authorities have the power to withhold allowances from suspended councillors in cases where they deem it appropriate?

Yes – councils should have the option to withhold allowances from suspended councillors

24 Do you think it should be put beyond doubt that local authorities have the power to ban suspended councillors from council premises and to withdraw the use of council facilities in cases where they deem it appropriate?

Yes – premises and facilities bans are an important tool in tackling serious conduct issues

25 Do you agree that the power to withhold members' allowances and to implement premises and facilities bans should also be standalone sanctions in their own right?

Yes

26 Do you think the power to suspend councillors on an interim basis pending the outcome of an investigation would be an appropriate measure?

Yes, powers to suspend on an interim basis would be necessary

Any further comments:

But only in exceptional circumstances and relating to serious misconduct.

27 Do you agree that local authorities should have the power to impose premises and facilities bans on councillors who are suspended on an interim basis?

Yes - the option to institute premises and facilities bans whilst serious misconduct cases are investigated is important

28 Do you think councils should be able to impose an interim suspension for any period of time they deem fit?

No

Any further comments:

This should be time-limited to reflect the seriousness of such a step.

29 Do you agree that an interim suspension should initially be for up to a maximum of 3 months, and then subject to review?

Yes

Any further comments:

30 If following a 3-month review of an interim suspension, a standards committee decided to extend, do you think there should be safeguards to ensure a period of interim extension is not allowed to run on unchecked?

Yes – there should be safeguards

30a If you answered yes to above question, what safeguards do you think might be needed to ensure that unlimited suspension is not misused?

Add your comments:

The Standards committee would have to consider a report setting out all relevant factors such as why investigation has not been completed, likely time scale before it is completed, any initial findings of investigator, whether the subject councillor has fully engaged in the process.

31 Do you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once?

No - the power to suspend members whenever they breach codes of conduct is sufficient

If you think councillors should be disqualified if subject to suspension more than once over a period different to 5 years, what should this be, in years? :

If you think the government should set a different disqualification period, what should this be, in years? :

Any other comments:

32 Is there a case for immediate disqualification for gross misconduct, for example in instances of theft or physical violence impacting the safety of other members and/or officers, provided there has been an investigation of the incident and the member has had a chance to respond before a decision is made?

Yes

Any other comments:

There would be a need for clear parameters as to the offences that could lead to immediate disqualification and there should be a right of appeal to an external body.

33 Should members have the right to appeal a decision to suspend them?

Yes - it is right that any member issued with a sanction of suspension can appeal the decision

34 Should suspended members have to make their appeal within a set timeframe?

Yes – but within a different length of time (please specify)

If you think the government should set a different appeals timeframe, what should this be, in days?:

21

35 Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when a decision is taken not to investigate their complaint? No

36 Do you consider that a complainant should have a right of appeal when an allegation of misconduct is not upheld? No

37 If you answered yes to either of the previous two questions, please use the free text box below to share views on what you think is the most suitable route of appeal for either or both situations.

Add your comments:

38 Do you think there is a need for an external national body to hear appeals?

Yes – an external appeals body would help to uphold impartiality

Any further comments:

Where there is a decision to disqualify a councillor.

39 If you think there is a need for an external national appeals body, do you think it should:

Be limited to hearing elected member appeals

Please explain your answer:

Public Sector Equality Duty

40 In your view, would the proposed reforms to the local government standards and conduct framework particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

Neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question:

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