

Report to: **Cabinet**
Date: **26 June 2018**
By: **Director of Adult Social Care and Health**
Title of Report: **Discretionary East Sussex Support Service (DESSS)**
Purpose of Report: **To consider proposals for the Discretionary East Sussex Support Service (DESSS)**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- **agree to proceed with the changes in service delivery through remodelling the service as set out in the report; and**
 - **delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the implementation of the above recommendations**
-

1. Background

1.1 The DESSS provides a welfare support grant to assist people in temporary financial hardship within East Sussex. It is not means tested or governed by Care Act Eligibility and so is a flexible resource that is deployed to assist people who may not have eligible social care needs.

1.2 The vast majority of people that have used DESSS are not Adult Social Care clients. The main reasons that people apply to DESSS is for food and utilities support when they are experiencing welfare benefit issues rather than social care issues (over 77%). The nature of the support that DESSS provides tends to be one-off and not ongoing.

1.3 The DESSS budget covers the provision of food vouchers, utility vouchers, and assistance with the provision of white goods and household furniture. DESSS also provides some discretionary funding to the Districts and Borough Councils to provide deposits and rent in advance payments.

1.4 In respect of the above provisions the grant is partially allocated via service contracts with Hastings Furniture Service & Charity Now (previously Furniture Now). There are also service contracts in place with the district and borough councils in respect of the rent in advance payments.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 Council agreed to reduce the DESSS budget of £557,000 by £390,000 leaving a net budget of £167,000. This residual budget will continue to be used for supporting East Sussex residents at times of temporary financial hardship.

2.2 The proposal is to deliver the saving by significantly reducing the staffing for DESSS, which currently accounts for approximately £110,000 of the total budget. Appendix 1 sets out the proposed reductions in the DESSS budget including the changes to staffing posts.

2.3 DESSS was originally established using a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) welfare grant to the local authority. The ring-fenced grant ended in 2014/15. From 2015/16, funding was subsumed within the general funding from central government to local authorities. Within East Sussex it was decided to continue the provision of DESSS on a discretionary basis and the service was consequently funded as part of core County Council budgets, with a staff team of 2.8 W.T.E's to administer the budget. Any underspends year-on-year within DESSS have been carried forward, but the DESSS savings relate directly to core County Council funding. Therefore residual funds that are

carried forward are done so at the discretion of the County Council and are not formally ring-fenced to DESSS.

2.4 The proposed reductions in the budget for DESSS have necessitated a review of the staffing resource that will be required to administer the remaining funds. In summary these proposals are to:

- Remove the role of Business Manager from DESSS
- Remove the role of Team Leader from DESSS
- Retain the role of Customer Access Advisor post within the Access Hub in Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC), where the remainder of the DESSS funding will be administered.

3. Consultation Summary

3.1 Within DESSS, two distinct consultation processes have run concurrently:

- A ten week public consultation period from 15th February to 25th April 2018, whereby members of the public and other key stakeholders have had the opportunity to submit their views and comments on the savings proposals to the council.
- Staff consultation which was launched on 19th March and will conclude on 30th July 2018. Consultation meetings and opportunities have been arranged for staff within DESSS. The staff expressed the view that funding for the service should continue, or if there were reductions, they should not be so extensive. This reflects their view that significant funding reductions would have a detrimental impact on people that may access the service in the future.

3.2 There were many complimentary and positive comments about the service provided by DESSS. Concerns were raised in particular by the District and Borough councils regarding the potential impact of the savings on the provision of rent deposits and rent in advance payments and the impact this may have on street homelessness in the county. Key themes from the consultation include:

- Organisations disagree with, or are concerned about, the proposal to cut funding
- They said that the most vulnerable people in society use the scheme at a time of crisis and there aren't any real alternatives to it
- Any cuts would increase demand on the voluntary and charity sector, which is already struggling to cope and wouldn't have the capacity to fill the gaps
- Reducing the funding and the support the scheme can offer could put people at risk and affect their health and wellbeing
- People would be left to sleep on the floor if the scheme stops supplying furniture.
- People said they wouldn't have been able to afford furniture without it and would have had to do without the basics such as cookers and fridges
- People and organisations said that for people fleeing domestic violence or who have been homeless the service provides invaluable support when they have nothing

3.3 A report summarising the responses to the consultation is provided at Appendix 2. All of the responses to the public consultation are in the Members' and Cabinet Room for Members consideration.

4. Changes to Service Provision

4.1 If the proposals are agreed, the criteria for those people who are able to access support from the remaining DESSS funds will need to be reviewed and targeted at those most in need of immediate short-term support. The wider eligibility currently in place will be reduced.

4.2 It is proposed that the provision of food vouchers, furniture and white goods is ceased from DESSS as these items can be provided via food banks and low-cost furniture stores without the need for specific service contracts.

4.3 It is proposed that the focus of the revised DESSS scheme will be on the provision of rent deposits or rent in advance payments for people who are at higher risk such as people leaving a refuge or supported accommodation. Expenditure for 2017/18 shows that the vast majority of non-staff spend within DESSS was allocated against rent deposits or rent in advance payments (£111,000). Therefore it is proposed the residual budget of £167,000 for DESSS is allocated against the Customer Access Advisor post (£27,000), the rent deposit scheme and the remainder administered on a discretionary basis.

4.4 A more rigorous approach to recouping rent in advance payments made to tenants will also be required. Rent in advance payment arrangements were intended to be front-loaded and reduced, in line with the time-lag for Universal Credit and other new benefits commencing. However, recouping advance payments from tenants once the tenancy has been secured and the Housing and other welfare benefits have commenced has proved challenging in practice. This area of work will require further scoping and consultation and forms part of the service agreements DESSS has in place with the District and Borough councils.

5. Impact of delivering the proposed service changes

5.1 In considering the proposals in this report, Cabinet Members are required to have 'due regard' to the duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Public Sector Equality Duty). Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are carried out to identify any adverse impacts that may arise as a result of the proposals for those with protected characteristics and to identify appropriate mitigations. A summary of the key impacts from the EqIA are attached at Appendix 3. The full version of relevant completed EqIAs have been placed in the Members' and Cabinet Room and are available on the [Cabinet](#) pages of the County Council's website. They can be inspected upon request at County Hall. Members must read the full EqIAs and take their findings into consideration when determining these proposals.

5.2 Although a reduction to the DESSS budget would mean less funds available to eligible applicants, it is expected that the proposals will have a neutral impact across the protected characteristics. However, it is acknowledged that people on low-incomes and potentially carers may have additional need to access DESSS, and a reduction to the budget would impact on the provision available to assist people in hardship.

5.3 Equally, incorporating the scheme into Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) would mean it would remain in its current location and be more accessible as this service is open 7 days per week and has extended opening hours, which could improve access to support for those in crisis.

6. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

6.1 The recommendation therefore is to implement the proposals as set out in Appendix 1 of this report. This recommendation will reduce the overall cost of DESSS whilst maintaining quality in the remaining service provision.

KEITH HINKLEY

Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Contact Officer: Steve Hook, Head of Assessment and Care Management

Lead Member: Councillor Maynard

Local Member(s): Countywide service

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Appendix 1: The Savings Proposals and Changes to Posts for DESSS
- Appendix 2: Consultation Report
- Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment Summary

2018-19 RPPR: DESSS Proposed Savings and Changes to Posts:

Team	Saving Required:	Full time equivalent (fte)	£'000	Fte reduction	£'000 saving
DESSS	Base Budget 2018/19		557,000		
	Budget Reduction:		308,326		308,326
	Business Manager:	1.0	50,880	1	50,880
	Team Leader:	0.8	30,794	0.8	30,794
Total:				1.8	390,000
	Residual Budget:		167,000		

ASC savings consultation 2018

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme



Date: June 2018

Document summary

Results from the ASC savings consultation carried out between February and April 2018, focusing on the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

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About this document:

<p>Enquiries: Author: Community Relations Team Telephone: 01273 481 242 Email: consultationASC@eastsussex.gov.uk</p> <p>Download this document From: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/ascsavings</p>	<p>Version number: 1 Related information</p>
<p>Accessibility help Zoom in or out by holding down the Control key and turning the mouse wheel. CTRL and click on the table of contents to navigate. Press CTRL and Home key to return to the top of the document Press Alt-left arrow to return to your previous location.</p>	

Background

The Council agreed its budget for 2018/19 at its meeting on 6 February. It will see the Council make savings of £17 million. This includes a budget reduction for Adult Social Care and Health of nearly £10 million.

We used the consultation to ask for people's views on how we are proposing to make the savings. Shortly before the consultation launched, the Government announced some extra funding for social care provision. No decisions have been made yet on how the Council will spend the £1.6 million it will receive.

This report is about the savings proposal for the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS). We are proposing to reduce the amount of money we spend on the DESSS by over two thirds.

The Council's Cabinet will consider recommendations, the consultation results and Equality Impact Assessments at its meeting on 26 June. All responses received in the consultation will be presented in Members Papers.

Summary

This section provides a summary of the key themes and activity from the consultation. You can find the full results in the appendices.

We consulted on our savings proposals for the DESSS between 15 February and 25 April 2018.

Respondent numbers and response methods

The table below shows the different ways that respondents shared their views. Some people may have taken part more than once.

Method	Volume
Survey for people who use the service and organisations who signpost to it (Paper and online)	38
General survey about the savings (Paper and online)	21
Other feedback (Email, letter, call, video, feedback form)	Indiv:15 Org or group: 9
Total responses	83

Key messages

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

- Organisations disagree with, or are concerned about, the proposal to cut funding.
- They said that the most vulnerable people in society use the scheme at a time of crisis and there aren't any real alternatives to it.
- Any cuts would increase demand on the voluntary and charity sector, which is already struggling to cope and wouldn't have the capacity to fill the gaps.
- Reducing the funding and the support the scheme can offer could put people at risk and affect their health and wellbeing.
- People said they would have been left to sleep on the floor if the scheme hadn't been available.
- People said they wouldn't have been able to afford furniture without it and would have had to do without the basics such as cookers and fridges.
- People and organisations said that for people fleeing domestic violence or who have been homeless the service provides invaluable support when they have nothing.
- People said that beds and appliances are essential and that money vouchers should be cut instead.
- It's important that the underspend from last year is spent on the scheme.
- Districts and Boroughs say that there is already increasing need for their rent in advance schemes and this funding should be maintained.
- Organisations suggested tapering the cuts, working with the charity sector to grow its infrastructure and asking people to pay back some of the funding they receive.

Summary of themes by response method

Client and provider surveys

Client survey

Most people who responded used the scheme to get help with household items.

What they would have done without the scheme: People said they wouldn't have been able to afford furniture without it and would have had to do without the basics such as a bed, cooker or fridge.

Other comments: People said the scheme provides practical support that makes a difference and is vital for vulnerable people.

Provider survey

The majority of respondents often signpost people to the scheme.

Views on the proposals: The most vulnerable people in society use the scheme at a time of crisis and there aren't any alternatives to it if funding is cut. There is an increasing need for this service and reducing funding would particularly impact on the homeless and those who have suffered from domestic abuse.

Other comments: People said that beds and appliances are essential and that money vouchers should be cut instead.

General survey

Views on the proposal

- The most vulnerable people would be affected by any reductions in the funding of the service.

The impact of the proposal

- Reducing the service would impact on people's health and lead to the use of more expensive services.
- Financial support would be harder to access.

Suggestions

- Do things differently and innovate and reduce management and support staff.

Other feedback via letter, email etc

Organisations

Views on the proposal

- Organisations disagree with, or are concerned about the proposals.
- There aren't many alternative options so cutting funding would increase demand for statutory services across the board.
- That the previous underspend should be spent on this service.
- The funding shouldn't be cut when the roll-out of universal credit is starting to affect people in the county.
- They are concerned about the level of funding that districts and boroughs would receive for rent in advance schemes, as the need for these schemes are already increasing.

The impact of the proposal

- More people would remain homeless or become homeless if they couldn't access rent in advance schemes or similar loans and support.
- Any cuts would place increased demand on the voluntary sector and charities which wouldn't have capacity and are already struggling to cope with demand.
- People would struggle and would have to do without essentials like beds, fridges and cookers.

Suggestions

- Taper or don't cut funding and work with the charity sector to grow the infrastructure to replace the scheme.
- Require households to pay back the money at an affordable level, although there would be costs associated and it would take time to reclaim it from people.

Individuals

Views on the proposal

- People disagree with the cut and say it is a bad idea.
- Any previous underspend must be spent on the service.

Impact of the proposal

- People would be left to sleep on the floor.
- It would impact disproportionately on the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Sample quotes

These comments are a small selection of the comments we received during the consultation. They have been chosen as they either reflect the key themes or offer a specific suggestion.

Organisation comments

"You will in effect be leaving many vulnerable people to fend for themselves, because service providers such as ourselves can't take on all the fall-out from the cuts you are proposing."

"If there is a requirement to reduce the scheme, we would suggest doing this on a tapered basis, while putting in place money / posts to grow infrastructures to replace it in time."

"A large number of those who become homeless do not have the savings required to meet the demands for rent in advance and deposits and are completely reliant on the loan schemes supported by the DESSS."

"Other ways the budget spend on DESSS could be reduced would be to require households to pay back any assistance provided at an affordable level. The disadvantage of doing this is the administrative costs of recovering the money, level of debt written off and the period of time taken to recover any assistance."

Individual comments including clients, carers, staff and the public

"Being disabled money's so tight. I had to move to an adapted property and without the help and support from this scheme I would not have a cooker fridge or help with carpets. Since the government took away community care grants this scheme has helped thousands; please don't let it go or cut it."

"Gone without a fridge or bed for months until I could save up for them. I left under domestic abuse and couldn't take my things with me I weren't allowed to. Without this my life would have been so much harder I barely had anything."

"Without this scheme I would have nothing to sleep on or cook etc. This scheme is brilliant

after being homeless for 6 months.”

“Panicked – would not have been able to have my 2 girls.”

“Please don't stop this. It was essential for me, stopped me and my child sleeping on the floor and we could have food that we could keep.”

“The scheme is the only place to get help. Without it a lot of people will suffer.”

Appendix 1: Client and provider surveys

Client survey

25 people filled in the survey for people who have used the scheme.

When did you use the scheme? (25 answered)

Answer option	Number
Used this year	22
Used in 2017	1
Used before 2017	2

How did you use the scheme? (25 answered)

- 25 used it to get help with household items.
- 3 used it to get help with food and utilities.

What would you have done if you weren't able to get household items through the scheme? (24 answered)

Top theme: People said they wouldn't have been able to afford furniture without it.

The other key themes were:

- People said they would have had to do without the basics, like a bed, cooker and fridge.
- They don't know what they would have done without the scheme.
- Without the scheme there would have been a negative impact on their children's lives.
- People praised the scheme and said they would have struggled without it.

Do you have any other comments about these proposals? (24 answered)

9 people ticked 'No', while 12 ticked 'Yes'.

Top theme: People praised the service.

The other key themes were:

- The scheme provides practical support that makes a difference.
- This is a vital service for vulnerable people.
- The Council shouldn't stop funding this scheme, which provides essential help.

Provider survey

13 people filled in the survey for organisations who signpost to the scheme.

What type of organisation do you work for? (13 answered)

Type	Number
Statutory	1
Provider of services	2
Voluntary or community sector	0
Charity	10

If you are providing an official organisation or group response, please tell us your:

The following organisations and groups provided a response through the survey:

- Counselling Plus
- Eastbourne foodbank
- Education Futures Trust
- FSN
- Hastings Area Community Trust
- Now Charity Group Ltd

Do you or your organisation signpost people to the scheme? (13 answered)

- 9 of the respondents often signpost people.
- 4 sometimes signpost people.
- 0 rarely signpost people.

What do you think of our proposals to make changes to the scheme? (11 answered)

Top theme: The most vulnerable use the scheme at a time of crisis.

The other key themes were:

- There aren't any alternative services for people to turn to.
- The scheme is essential to people's wellbeing and survival.
- Reducing the funding for the scheme would particularly impact on people who have been homeless or have suffered from domestic abuse.
- There is an increasing need for this service.

Do you have any suggestions for other ways we could make the savings? (13 answered)

10 people ticked 'No', while 3 ticked 'Yes'.

Top theme: People said that beds and appliances are essential and that money vouchers should be cut instead.

Do you have any other comments about the proposals?

10 ticked 'No', while 1 ticked 'Yes'. There weren't any key themes.

About you questions

Gender

	Respondents		Census
Male	10	26%	48%
Female	24	63%	52%
Prefer not to say	0	0%	N/A
Not answered	4	11%	N/A

Transgender

No one identified as transgender, while 31 (82%) answered 'no' and 1 chose prefer not to say. The rest (6) did not answer the question.

Age

	Respondents		Census
under 18	0	0%	19.8%
18-24	2	5%	7.3%
25-34	7	18%	9.6%
35-44	8	21%	12.5%
45-54	8	21%	14.2%
55-59	3	8%	6.3%
60-64	1	3%	7.5%
65-74	0	0%	11.2%
75+	1	3%	11.6%
Not answered	8	21%	N/A

Ethnicity

	Respondents		Census
White British	29	76%	98%
White Irish	0	0%	
White Gypsy/Roma	2	5%	
White Irish Traveller	0	0%	
White other	2	5%	
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0%	0.5%
Mixed White and Black African	0	0%	
Mixed White and Asian	0	0%	
Mixed other	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0%	0.6%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British other	0	0%	
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0%	0.3%
Black or Black British African	0	0%	
Black or Black British other	0	0%	
Arab	0	0%	0.3%
Chinese	0	0%	
Other ethnic group	0	0%	
Prefer not to say	0	0%	N/A
Not Answered	5	13%	N/A

Disability

9 (24%) respondents consider themselves to be disabled, while 19 (50%) don't and 3 chose prefer not to say. The rest (7) did not answer the question.

Impairment type

Please note that this is a multiple choice question.

	Respondents	
Physical impairment	2	5%
Sensory impairment (hearing and sight)	1	3%
Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy	5	13%
Mental health condition	10	26%
Learning disability	3	8%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	1	3%

Religion

9 (24%) respondents consider themselves to have a religion or belief, while 20 (53%) do not, and 2 chose prefer not to say. The rest (7) did not answer the question.

Stated religion or belief

	Respondents		Census
Christian	10	26%	60%
Buddhist	0	0%	0.4%
Hindu	0	0%	0.3%
Jewish	0	0%	0.2%
Muslim	0	0%	0.8%
Sikh	0	0%	0%
Other	1	3%	0.7%
Not answered	27	71%	

Sexuality

	Respondents	
Bi/Bisexual	1	3%
Heterosexual/Straight	26	68%
Gay woman/Lesbian	0	0%
Gay Man	0	0%
Other	1	3%
Prefer not to say	1	3%
Not answered	9	24%

Marriage or civil partnership

6 (16%) respondents are married or in a civil partnership, while 22 (58%) are not and 3 chose prefer not to say. The rest (7) did not answer the question.

Appendix 2: General survey

All the data in this section shows responses for people who ticked to say that they were providing a comment about this savings area (21 people) and not everyone who filled in the general survey (over 700 people).

Are you completing the survey as: (21 answered)

Please note that this was a multiple choice question.

Answer option	Number
A family member or friend of someone who uses social care services	5
An employee of a health or social care organisation	8
A member of the public	7
A group or forum (providing an official response)	0
An organisation (providing an official response)	1
Other (please explain below)	2
Not Answered	1

If you are providing an official organisation or group response, please tell us your:

The following organisations and groups provided a response through the survey:

- Sussex Community Development Association

What do you think about our savings proposals? (20 answered)

Top theme: The most vulnerable people would be affected by any reductions in the funding of the service.

The other key themes were:

- The benefits people get from using the service.

How would people and organisations be affected by the proposals? (20 answered)

Top theme: Reducing the service would impact on people's health and lead to the use of more expensive services.

The other key themes were:

- Financial support would be harder to access.

Do you have any suggestions for alternative ways of making the savings? (19 answered)

Top theme: Do things differently and innovate and reduce management and support staff.

The other key themes were:

- Comment about councillors' recent allowance increase.

Do you have any other comments about the proposals? (8 answered)

13 people ticked 'No', while 7 ticked 'Yes'. There weren't any key themes.

About you questions

Gender

	Respondents		Census
Male	8	38%	48%
Female	12	57%	52%
Prefer not to say	1	5%	N/A
Not answered	0	0%	N/A

Transgender

One person identified as transgender, while 19 (90%) answered 'no' and 1 chose prefer not to say.

Age

Some couples had completed the survey and both provided their age.

	Respondents		Census
under 18	0	0%	19.8%
18-24	0	0%	7.3%
25-34	3	12%	9.6%
35-44	5	20%	12.5%
45-54	8	32%	14.2%
55-59	2	8%	6.3%
60-64	2	8%	7.5%
65-74	0	0%	11.2%
75+	0	0%	11.6%
Not answered	5	20%	N/A

Ethnicity

	Respondents		Census
White British	18	86%	98%
White Irish	0	0%	
White Gypsy/Roma	0	0%	
White Irish Traveller	0	0%	
White other	2	10%	
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0%	0.5%
Mixed White and Black African	0	0%	
Mixed White and Asian	0	0%	
Mixed other	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0%	0.6%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%	
Asian or Asian British other	0	0%	
Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0%	
Black or Black British African	0	0%	
Black or Black British other	0	0%	
Arab	0	0%	0.3%
Chinese	0	0%	
Other ethnic group	0	0%	
Prefer not to say	1	5%	N/A
Not Answered	0	0%	

Disability

2 respondents consider themselves to be disabled, while 18 (86%) don't and 1 chose prefer not to say.

Impairment type

Please note that this is a multiple choice question.

	Respondents	
Physical impairment	1	5%
Sensory impairment (hearing and sight)	0	0%
Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy	0	0%
Mental health condition	2	10%
Learning disability	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Religion

9 (43%) respondents consider themselves to have a religion or belief, while 11 (52%) do not, and 1 chose prefer not to say.

Stated religion or belief

	Respondents		Census
Christian	8	38%	60%
Buddhist	0	0%	0.4%
Hindu	0	0%	0.3%
Jewish	0	0%	0.2%
Muslim	0	0%	0.8%
Sikh	0	0%	0%
Other	1	5%	0.7%
Not answered	12	57%	

Sexuality

	Respondents	
Bi/Bisexual	1	5%
Heterosexual/Straight	16	76%
Gay woman/Lesbian	0	0%
Gay Man	1	5%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	10%
Not answered	1	5%

Marriage or civil partnership

10 (48%) respondents are married or in a civil partnership, while 7 (33%) are not and 3 chose prefer not to say. The rest (1) did not answer the question.

Appendix 3: Location of respondents

The map shows the location of respondents who provided their post code on one of the surveys (client, provider and general survey). Of the 51 people who shared their views about these proposals and provided their post code, a total of 38 were mappable.

DESSS



30/05/2018

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Note: points may represent multiple addresses at the same postcode

Appendix 4: Other feedback

Organisation and group feedback

The following organisations provided feedback about the accommodation based housing services proposals:

- 1) DESSS Clients
- 2) Eastbourne Borough Council
- 3) Fitzjohn Foodbank Volunteers
- 4) Hastings Advice and Representation Centre
- 5) Hastings & Rother Furniture Service
- 6) Hastings & St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership
- 7) Lewes District Churches HOMELINK
- 8) Lewes District Council
- 9) Wealden Borough Council

Key themes

The overall themes were:

- The majority of the respondents disagree with, or are concerned about, the proposals. Some recognised the Council's need to make savings.
- It is counterproductive to spend less on preventative services and would lead to an increase in demand for statutory services.
- The scheme is often a last option and there aren't many or any alternatives for aspects of it.
- It is often used by disabled people, families and people who are moving on after being homeless.

The key concerns were:

- The level of saving being proposed and whether the commitment to invest the underspend on the service would be kept.
- Reducing funding for this scheme at a time when the roll-out of universal credit is already affecting people.
- The level of funding that districts and boroughs would receive for rent in advance schemes, as need for these schemes is already increasing.
- The disproportionate impact on urban areas of the county due to the impact on homeless people.
- People turning to loan sharks instead.

The key impacts were:

- More people would remain homeless or become homeless if they couldn't access rent in advance schemes or similar loans and support.
- Any cuts would place increased demand on the voluntary sector and charities which wouldn't have capacity and are already struggling to cope with demand.
- Would affect food banks at a time when they are already under pressure from increasing demand.
- Would increase demand and costs for statutory services across the board (social care, health and Police).
- Cause or worse physical or mental health problems for vulnerable people.
- People would struggle and would have to do without essentials like beds, fridges and cookers.

Suggestions:

- Taper or don't cut funding and work with the charity sector to grow the infrastructure to replace the scheme.
- Require households to pay back the money at an affordable level, although there would be costs associated and it would take time.

Responses

Please note that the summaries cover all topics that the organisations have provided feedback on and not just the ones directly relevant to this report.

Code: Org0006	Before consultation started	Email	Hastings & Rother Furniture Service
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)
			LD dps & residential
			Stroke Recovery Service
Summary			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is not spending the recommended amount of local welfare and has not honoured the commitment to use the current underspend on the service. • The scheme helps when no other service can. Between April-Dec 2017, over 650 families benefitted from the scheme. The most common reason for using the scheme was to support resettlement after being homeless. • One third of the households that used the scheme included at least one disabled person. Over 550 children live in the households that were supported by the scheme. • The Council should think again about cutting DESSS, honour the commitment to spend the underspend on the scheme, and work with the charity sector to figure out a replacement for future years. 			
Code: Org0009	March	Letter	Hastings Advice and Representation Centre
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)
			LD dps & residential
			Stroke Recovery Service
Summary			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe your proposed cuts would place an increased demand on our service which we would not be able to meet either through our face-to-face, email or telephone services. • Their services are already stretched because of supporting people with Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment issues. There will be an increase in people taking up UC from 2019 onwards. • Many of the people and places who deliver the services you provide also support their clients with ancillary issues such as helping with benefit matters 			

or signposting them to other services such as HARC.

- If people can't access the services you are proposing to cut, the choices they have about where to seek help would be diminished.
- Services from organisations in the "Third Sector" would not be able to meet the increased demand and people who are disabled, unwell and vulnerable would be left to their own devices. This would cause a detrimental impact on their wellbeing and impact on service providers such as GPs and the NHS.
- We accept it was for the Council to decide what it offered and to whom, but the government never said things like DESSS were only for people with "an eligible care need under the Care Act".
- In our experience many people approach us for help with food vouchers and emergency payments because the DESSS scheme is limited in what help it provides, to whom, and has an inflexible and too rigid eligibility criteria.
- Reducing the help available through DESSS would place an increased demand on services such as ours and foodbanks at a time when there has already been and would be an unprecedented demand because of welfare reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit.
- Instead of cutting the service, the Council should be looking how it can maintain and ensure help is more readily available to people who need it no matter whether or not that comes under the Care Act.

Code: Org0014	April	Group discussion	Fitzjohn Food Volunteers	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- There aren't services to take up the slack if DESSS is reduced.
- Instead, could the service be reduced on a tapered basis and invest in putting infrastructures in place to replace it over time.
- The speed of DESSS is important at a time of crisis.
- Demand on the food bank is already increasing.
- People would be left to turn to loan sharks.
- The reduction would bring increased cost for social care and increase crime and affect community safety.

Code: Org0013	March	Email	Eastbourne Borough Council	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- They recognise the extreme financial pressures and the limited options for making savings, although they have concerns about the impact of the proposals in the medium and longer term.

Accommodation-based housing services

- The proposed level of reduction for accommodation-based services is likely to make the existing services unsustainable.
- This would reduce the services available to the most vulnerable and have a significant impact on other services (health, housing, children's and adult services).
- The young people are referred by the County Council and EBC. They are those who are not able to stay in the family home and would be at significant risk without the support offered.
- These services contribute to key government and local aims, ensuring all young people are supported to develop the skills they need to move into mainstream education, training or employment.
- Very concerned by the proposal to reduce funding to refuges. Properly funded and supported refuge accommodation is a lynchpin of services to people experiencing domestic abuse.
- The current level of provision already falls short of what is needed and of minimum European standards. Any savings which put our current level of provision at risk should be avoided at all costs.
- They also oppose the proposed reductions in funding to supported housing supporting single homeless people and those with mental health needs.
- Spaces are already extremely limited and the support provided is essential to those accommodated, who are amongst the most vulnerable in our society. The majority have significant mental health needs and need support to settle and prevent further hospital admissions. Many have drug and/or alcohol addictions, and many have multiple and complex needs.
- Putting essential support to these people at risk by making 40% cuts in funding would again have wider impacts on health, social care, and community safety.

Community-based housing support services

- The proposed level of reduction for community housing support services is likely to make the existing services unsustainable. The organisation strongly opposes this level of saving.
- A significant proportion of the people who use these services are at crisis point when referred.
- Both services, STEPS and Home Works, are designed to meet the needs of people who depend on urgent support to live independently and reduce the risk of admission to hospital and/or care services.
- They provide essential support, helping people to cope with major changes in their lives which threaten their independence, building their resilience and capacity to deal with illness, homelessness and other crises.
- Without this support many would turn to higher-cost services in the health and social care sectors, including both adult social care and children's services.

Older people's day services

- Whilst we appreciate the need to secure some savings, and ensure best use is made of the resources available, we are concerned that savings are proposed to day services designed to meet the needs of older people with dementia and increasing frailty.
- There is an increasing need for services of this kind with the increasing age of people in the county and the numbers of people living with dementia.
- They are particularly keen that any options considered by the Council make best use of Warwick House, given the huge investment of resources in its development.

DESSS

- They are extremely concerned at the proposed level of savings to DESSS and the impact it would have on the amount given to district and borough councils for rent in advance.
- The amount given has steadily reduced, whilst the need for this funding has increased. They urge the Council to continue contributing at the current level.
- The main cause of homelessness is the termination of private tenancies with most people becoming homeless through no fault of their own.
- A large number of those who become homeless do not have the savings required to meet the demands for rent in advance and deposits and are completely reliant on the loan schemes supported by the DESSS.
- At a time when more people across the county are being affected by the roll-out of Universal Credit full service, the proposed 70% saving is a major cause for concern and makes a nonsense of the efforts of the county council-led Financial Inclusion Group which focuses on the need to support people facing extreme financial difficulties.

Code: Org0019	April	Letter	Lewes District Churches HOMELINK	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- They recognise the funding pressures facing the Council, but are concerned about the impact of the savings proposals on services to the local homeless population.
- It seems counterproductive to spend less money on preventative services.
- They are concerned too about the impact on Home Works who do valuable work with the clients they also support.
- They receive a grant from DESSS to assist vulnerable clients and are currently able to recoup the majority of their loans and therefore assist a new group of clients.
- Last year applications for loans increased significantly. As a result any loss in the DESSS grant would greatly limit the tenancies they can facilitate.
- Provision of more social and affordable housing would help in the longer term.

- The savings would have other cost implications for local authorities as more local people would remain homeless and require more health and welfare provision.
- Home Works supports the homeless to find and sustain tenancies. The cuts to provision would mean little chance of starting again for people.
- It is crucial that the Council makes the case to central government that cuts on the scale already suffered will increase local government costs in the long term.

Code: Org0016	April	Letter	Hastings & St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- Continued funding reductions make partnership working even more important.
- They are therefore concerned about the proposed savings and the disproportionate effect they would have on urban areas with the highest levels of deprivation.
- Focusing the savings on preventative services is short-sighted and would undoubtedly lead to increased demand for acute services.
- To fully understand the impact, more detailed analysis needs to be undertaken and the information provided should also reflect the ongoing cuts to services.
- Hastings has a higher proportion of people living with long-term conditions.
- The proposed reduction in funding for carers support is likely to increase their support needs and may mean they can't continue to work.
- Reductions in funding for accommodation, housing support, and DESSS would affect services which are all vital in tackling homelessness.
- Hastings has seen bigger increases in homelessness than the rest of the county over the past years as services have reduced.
- Reducing homelessness is a national priority, so reducing funding for these preventative services is not in keeping with that policy direction or the likely increases in need for these services.
- Both community housing support services have extensive experience of working with vulnerable people who would struggle to engage with statutory services.
- Accommodation-based services are essential in helping people to develop tenancy readiness skills.
- Reductions in these accommodation services would put people at risk of repeat homelessness, impact on the community, and put vulnerable young people at risk of 'cuckooing'.
- Closer partnership working across statutory services is needed to maximise efficiency in service provision. This should include sharing data and joint commissioning.

- The areas with the highest demand should be prioritised when funding decisions are made.
- There is an opportunity to devolve commissioning for these services to the local level so they can be better targeted.
- The voluntary sector needs to be fully involved in the process given the big contribution they make to community resilience.

Code: Org0017	April	Email	Wealden District Council	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- Recognise the fact that the Council is facing budget cuts and has difficult decisions to make.
- They are concerned that the proposed cuts would impact on some of the most vulnerable people.
- They represent a false economy as they simply pass on increased costs to other statutory organisations and would impact on an increasingly pressured voluntary sector.
- The cuts would have an impact on the health and wellbeing of their residents, particularly their mental health. Reducing preventative services is short-sighted and means the intervention ends up being more expensive.
- Decisions about reducing services should be made based on outcomes and the financial impact on other services.

Community-based housing support

- The proposed level of cuts is too high.
- They agree that those with the highest need should be prioritised, but if there is less early intervention then the needs of individuals are likely to escalate.
- This would increase the costs for primary care services and possibly increase the need for Children's Services interventions.
- Households could be at risk of their home without this early intervention service, meaning that the districts and boroughs would see an increase in their workload.
- Service provision is already limited and there are no alternative services if these ones are reduced or cut.
- The Council should work with districts and boroughs to redesign these services.
- For example, a generic service rather than two services could save money.
- The aim of redesigned services need to focus on those with the most urgent housing situations and those to whom local authorities have statutory homelessness duties.
- It is essential that any revised services deliver life skills so people can manage their tenancy following intervention and prevent the need for repeat support.

DESSS

- They sometimes refer people to the scheme.
- They understand why cuts are being explored given it is not a statutory service and there are other services that can provide some of the services free or at a lower cost, such as food banks and low cost furniture.
- However, there are no alternative services that can provide assistance with utilities bills and rent in advance.
- They suggest requiring households to pay back any assistance at an affordable level, although note that the problem with this would be the costs of doing so and the time it would take.
- They are concerned that the proposal to reduce the amount of money given to district and boroughs for rent in advance would affect non-priority and intentionally homeless households which are not owed a duty by the districts and boroughs.
- The direct result of this would be an increase in rough sleeping which locally is already on the increase and they would not like to see further increase for many reasons including the impact on the individual/household as well as on other public services including the police.

Accommodation-based housing support

- The proposed level of cut is too high, particularly since they are providing services to some of those most in need.
- They are concerned about the impact on Wealden, as the area only has two services and no provision for young mums, single homeless and those with mental health needs.
- Similar areas in Rother and Lewes already have greater provision.
- It is already difficult to house those with support and any reduction in provision would be unfair and disproportionate.
- Care needs to be taken in remodelling refuges as changes or reductions in staff could be life-threatening for residents.
- Not having enough provision for services would impact on other public sector services and risks more children being taken into care.
- The proposed cuts would impact on other Council services, such as Children's Services and leaving care services.
- Cuts are also being planned in community-based housing.
- They suggest that in making the cuts the Council should look at fair access to accommodation-based housing support across the county based on demographics and needs data.
- The viability of units would be at risk if the cuts went ahead.
- Many of the services will be owned by Housing Associations which will have outstanding debts on the building.
- The shortage of accommodation means the county cannot afford to lose any social properties.

Code: Org0018	April	Email	Lewes District Council
<input type="checkbox"/> HIV support service	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DESSS	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)
			<input type="checkbox"/> LD dps & residential

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service

Summary

- They recognise the financial pressures and limited choices facing the Council, particularly with the need to meet statutory duty.
- That said, they are concerned about the impact in the medium and long term on individuals and the demand for services if preventative spending is reduced.

Accommodation-based housing support

- The level of saving proposed is likely to make the existing services unsustainable and reduces services provided to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.
- The proposed reductions are likely to have a significant impact on health services, housing, Children's Services and Adult Social Care.
- Young people are referred because of their level of vulnerability and because they are not able to stay in the family home and would be at significant risk without these services.
- Due to the challenges they have faced they need support to settle and develop the skills they need to live independently.
- These services also contribute to key government aims to ensure people are supported to move into mainstream education, training or employment.
- They are very concerned by the proposal to reduce funding for refuges, as these services are a lynchpin for people experiencing domestic abuse.
- The Council works hard with partners to promote awareness of domestic abuse and increase reporting, so it would seem perverse to limit services for those who make the decision to escape.
- Refuges provide a safe space for women escaping violence and many have closed in recent years, exposing those who are no longer able to find a space to the many risks of abuse which arise from homelessness.
- The current level of provision already falls short of what is needed and of minimum European standards. Any savings which put our current level of provision at risk should be avoided at all costs.
- They oppose the proposed reduction in single homeless and mental health services.
- Spaces are already limited and these essential services support some of the most vulnerable in society.
- These clients often have significant mental health needs, drug or alcohol addictions and complex needs.
- Putting this support at risk would impact on health and social care services and community safety.
- The proposed savings conflict with the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding the most vulnerable people in our communities and the effort and energy put in by other teams within the council itself.
- From their point of view as a housing authority, the proposals could also limit key housing options for people who are unable to live independently and pose major risks to mental health and hospital services, increasing the revolving door.

DESSS

- They are concerned at the level of savings proposed.
- It is not clear from the consultation how much funding there would be for each element of the current service if they went ahead.
- The amount given to district and borough councils for rent in advance has been reducing steadily over a number of years, whilst the need for this funding has increased and housing options have shrunk.
- The level of rent in advance and deposits demanded by private landlords and their agents put housing beyond the reach of most people.
- The main cause of homelessness is the termination of private tenancies and people not having the savings to meet the demands for rent in advance and deposits.
- People are therefore completely reliant on the loan schemes supported by DESSS.
- At a time when the roll-out of Universal Credit is affecting people, the proposed cuts make a nonsense of the Council-led Financial Inclusion Group.
- They urge the Council to restrict any savings to those which reflect under-use and to maintain the current funding level for rent in advance schemes.

Community-based housing support

- These provide essential services, helping them to cope with major life changes which threaten their independence.
- They build resilience and reduce the risk that people would become dependent on more costly hospital and care services.
- They are strongly opposed to the level of savings proposed, which is likely to make the existing services unsustainable and ignores the fact that many people are at crisis point when the referrals are made.

Home Works

- They are concerned about the reduction for this service and the likely rise in demand it would cause for care services.
- The majority of people who use the service are referred directly by statutory organisations and most are already in crisis.
- This is a vital service for people with a variety of needs and plays a key role in delivering the Council's duties under the Care Act.
- Nationally there is increasing recognition of the gap in provision for people experiencing poor mental health.
- Community-based services play a key role working with some of the most vulnerable people, many of whom have multiple and complex needs.

STEPS

- The service plays a key role in reducing demand for care services and allowing people to continue to live independently despite significant health problems.
- The proposed savings would translate into a significant reduction in the number of clients who could be supported.
- This is likely to increase demand on health and care services, particularly as the majority of clients have at least one long-term health condition.
- There are significant financial benefits from people being able to continue living independently and the additional income the service helps to secure for

clients.				
Code: Org0038	April	Feedback form	DESSS clients	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIV support service	Carers support	DESSS	Intermediate care and day services (Milton and Firwood)	LD dps & residential
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall	Older people's day centres	Supporting people (accommodation)	Supporting People (Community)	Stroke Recovery Service
Summary				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A provider created their own survey for responses from DESSS clients and submitted responses from 23 individuals. • People said if the scheme didn't exist they would have struggled, saying they would have had to sleep on the floor, not had the basics like a fridge or a cooker, and not been able to wash their clothes. • They say they wouldn't have been able to find the money for the items themselves and would have had to do without. • People are disgusted by the proposals and say that they are wrong or awful. • People and families would suffer and struggle if the scheme was cut and be left with no options. 				

Individual feedback

About the feedback	
Number of respondents:	15
When it was received:	March: 4 April: 11
How it was received:	Email: 1 Feedback form: 11 Letter: 3
Who it was from:	Client: 12 Councillor: 2 Employee: 1

Key themes

The overall themes were:

- People disagree with the proposals to cut funding for the service and say it is a bad idea.
- Those who have used it say that without it they would have had to sleep on the floor and wouldn't have been able to get white goods.
- Funding should be kept as it is, as this service is needed by people.

The key concerns were:

- What has happened to the previous underspend on the service and whether it would still be spent on DESSS.
- What alternatives would there be for people?

The key impacts were:

- Any cuts to the service would impact disproportionately on the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Equality impact assessment update – summary report for RPPR proposals to the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS)

The results of equality impact assessments must be published. Please complete this summary, which will be used to publish the results of your impact assessment on the County Council's website.

Date of assessment update: May 2018

Manager(s) name: Alison O'Shea **Role:** Operations Manager

Impact assessment:

The aim of the proposal is to reduce the budget for DESSS from £557,000 by £390,000 leaving a net budget of £167,000. In order for this residual budget to continue to be used for supporting East Sussex residents at times of temporary financial hardship, there will need to be significant reductions in the staffing for DESSS, which currently accounts for around £110,000 of the total budget.

Summary of findings:

- Although a reduction to the DESSS budget would mean less funds available to eligible applicants, it is expected that the proposals will have a neutral impact across the protected characteristics.
- However, it is acknowledged that people on low-incomes and potentially carers may have additional need to access DESSS, and a reduction to the budget would impact on the provision available to assist people in hardship.
- Equally, incorporating the scheme into Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) would mean it would remain in its current location and be more accessible as this service is open 7 days per week and has extended opening hours, which could improve access to support for those in crisis.

Summary of recommendations and key points of action plan:

- Update and publish scheme information and criteria on the East Sussex County Council website.
- Inform partners of any changes to the scheme.
- Scope and signpost to alternative services.
- Eligibility criteria should continue to include receipt of relevant benefit so as not to negatively impact people with a disability.
- Appropriate training for staff should DESSS be incorporated into HSCC.
- The continued availability of information provided in alternative languages and formats upon request.

Groups that this project or service will impact upon

	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Age			
Disability			
Ethnicity			
Gender/Transgender			
Marriage or Civil partnership			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
Religion/Belief			
Sexual Orientation			
Other (inc. carers/rurality etc)			
All			X

