



# Support with Confidence

## Consultation results report

January 2024

Consultation and Insight Team



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# Background

Our Support with Confidence scheme was a directory of accredited providers offering care and support services in the local area. The scheme had 349 accredited members and 55 applications in progress when it was paused in July 2023 following the publication of a national report on self-employment of personal assistants. Self-employed personal assistants made up 85% of the membership and most of the new applications were in this category. The remaining 15% of members offered business services.

We were proposing to stop running the scheme and offer support to residents and providers in a different way. The consultation explained why we were proposing to make this change and gave people the opportunity to shape what we do next. We had originally intended to keep the Support with Confidence directory available online until a final decision was made about the scheme in March. However, following the decision by the licence owner of the scheme, Action for People, to withdraw the brand, we had to close the directory as of 31 December 2023. Despite this decision, we continued with the consultation, as we still wanted to understand what sort of support people would like to see in future.

The consultation started on 27 September and closed on 5 December 2023. The survey was available on our website at [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/swcfuture](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/swcfuture) and the questions we asked can be found in appendix 1.

The consultation was widely promoted, with a particular focus on scheme members, social care clients who receive a direct payment, and residents who use the directory.

# Summary of the results

This section provides a summary of the main findings from the consultation across the different response methods. More detailed information can be found in the following appendices:

- 1) The survey questions.
- 2) Detailed charts and comment theme tables for the survey.
- 3) About you equalities data for the survey.
- 4) Feedback received through other methods.
- 5) Feedback from engagement meetings.

## Who took part?

314 consultation surveys were completed, and 26 responses were received through other methods. Over 150 people attended the events we arranged and the meetings we visited to talk about the proposal. This is nearly 500 responses overall, although some people may have taken part through multiple methods.

We had responses to the consultation from a good range of those who are likely to be affected by the proposal, including personal assistant and business members of the scheme. The top respondent group, making up a third of the total, was people who have used the scheme to find services for themselves or another person. A quarter of respondents were personal assistants who are members of the scheme, while workers who refer people to the directory accounted for 14%.

We had responses from across the county, although it should be noted that over a third chose not to give their post code. The Eastbourne area had the most respondents, with 22%. The Hastings, Lewes and Wealden areas saw similar response totals, with 10% for Hastings and 11% for the other two. The Rother area was the lowest, accounting for 7% of respondents.

The majority of respondents are aged 35 and over (78%), female (72%), White British (84%), and Heterosexual/straight (80%). Just over a third have a physical or mental health condition or illness that they expect to last for more than 12 months. The majority of these people say their condition reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 'a lot' or 'a little'. The most common conditions are

physical impairments (52%), longstanding illnesses (49%) and mental health conditions (40%). Nearly half of the respondents (46%) care for someone who couldn't cope without their help. They are most likely to care for a parent (16%).

## Results for the survey

**Views on the proposal:** Two thirds of the survey respondents 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the proposal, with over half choosing 'strongly disagree'. There is some support for the proposal, but this only accounts for 13% of respondents, as the remaining 21% didn't share a view either way.

Personal assistants have the highest levels of disagreement with the proposal (80%), but those who have used the scheme and workers/organisations weren't far behind. Residents who haven't used the scheme, or who weren't aware of it, are less likely to disagree with the proposal (39%) and were the group that had the highest level of agreement with it (26%). Business members of the scheme were the only group where no one agreed with the proposal.

**Comment themes on people's views:** When asked to explain their views, the top concerns for those who disagreed with the proposal were the impact on clients (81 comments), the loss of a valuable resource (40 comments), the efficiency of the current process (31 comments), and the impact on personal assistants (25 comments).

For those who didn't give a view on the proposal, the top reason was that this is because the alternative isn't clear yet (19 comments). As with those who disagreed with the proposal, those who didn't give a view were concerned about the loss of a valuable resource (8 comments) and the impact on clients (5 comments).

Those who agreed with the proposal cited the potential legal sanctions as being the force for change (7 comments), although they were also concerned about the impact on clients if it went ahead (4 comments).

**Awareness of the scheme:** Most respondents felt that their awareness of the scheme was good. For residents, workers, and organisations, 75% felt they had

good awareness. As would be expected, this was higher for members and applicants to the scheme, with 87% rating their awareness as good.

**How helpful they've found the scheme:** Most respondents were positive about how the scheme has helped them in the past. 85% of residents, workers and organisations rated it as 'very helpful' or 'helpful' in finding support they can trust, while 95% of members and applicants rated it as 'very helpful' or 'helpful' in building their business or service.

**Comment themes for why they've found the scheme helpful:** For residents, workers and organisations, the scheme has helped by providing access to accredited and competent support (23 comments), allowing them to find flexible care suited to their needs and preferences (12 comments), and helped them to find a personal assistant (8 comments). For members and applicants, the scheme has helped them to find clients (22 comments), provided a sense of community (17 comments), and allowed them to access training (13 comments).

**How they've been affected by the pause:** Some residents, workers and organisations aren't currently affected by the scheme pause (36 comments). Of those who are affected, the top comments for residents, workers and organisations related to the negative emotional impact it's had (17 comments) and being unable to recommend a trusted source of personal assistants without the scheme (16 comments).

The scheme pause has already led to less work for some members (28 comments), although a similar number said they hadn't been affected (25 comments). Members and applicants also said the decision has created uncertainty (24 comments).

**How they would be affected by the scheme stopping:** Some residents, workers and organisations felt unable to comment on how they would be affected if the proposal went ahead due to the lack of clarity on what might replace it (32 comments). For those who did offer a comment, the top concern was that it would be more difficult to find accredited and competent support (24 comments), while staff said it would affect their ability to recommend a trusted source of support to clients (13 comments).

For members and applicants, the top concern if the proposal went ahead is that they would get less, or no work, from adult social care as a result (26 comments). A similar number of people were uncertain about how they would be affected (25 comments).

**What would be important with any new support:** The aspects of a future offer that residents, workers, and organisations rated as ‘most important’ were (please note that respondents could rank more than one topic as most important):

- Finding personal assistants (86%)
- Accreditation of services (77%)
- Having a single online directory (58%)

The other aspects we asked people to rate had a more mixed response. Help with complaints was the next best supported option, although it only reached 58% when ‘most important’ votes were combined with those who rated it ‘important’. Having a helpline had the highest total of ‘least important’ votes (19%), with finding business services close behind (17%).

For those who ticked ‘other’, the top theme was that access to the new offer should be simple, inclusive, and accessible for all (5 comments).

The aspects of a future offer that members and applicants rated as most important were (please note that respondents could rank more than one topic as most important):

- Allowing residents to find out about my personal assistant services (81%)
- Accreditation of services (80%)
- Directory entry (in how to create/maintain entries) (79%)
- Care worker training (73%)
- Allowing residents to find out about my business (72%)

Seven of the 10 categories were rated as most important by over two thirds of members and applicants. The ones that had a more mixed response were business support, help to deal with complaints, and wellbeing support, but these were still

rated as 'most important' or 'important' by at least 70% of members and applicants.

For those who ticked 'other', the top theme was support with Disclosure and Barring Checks.

**Comment themes on what is important with any new support:** The top comment theme for residents, workers and organisations relates to the importance of accreditation for any future offer (35 comments). Offering a directory of trusted and competent professionals (31 comments) and safe, easy access to support (23 comments) are also popular themes.

For members and applicants, the top comment relates to the importance of training for any future offer (29 comments). Providing peace of mind and support to residents (25 comments), supporting personal assistants (22 comments) and support/advice more generally (22 comments) are also popular themes.

**Helping people manage the transition:** Across all respondent groups, the top request is that clear information and guidance should be provided on the new offer (72 comments). People want to be kept informed (18 comments from residents, workers, and organisations) and offered support to transition (18 comments from members and applicants).

**Any other comments:** This question gave people the opportunity to add any final comments or suggestions. Many people used it to raise their concerns about the impact, ask us to think again or share their feelings about the proposal, with the following top themes:

- Clients will be worse off or need support (61 comments)
- Don't alter the scheme (45 comments)
- Personal assistant work should not be in jeopardy (41 comments)
- Surprise/disappointment at the decision (34 comments)
- Criticism of care agency/agencies - general or specific (25 comments)



## Results for feedback through other methods

Feedback was provided through other methods, such as letter, email, and telephone, 26 times. The majority of responses were either from personal assistant members of the scheme or previous members (11 people), or residents who have used the scheme (6 people).

The main themes were:

- Prefer to keep the service, as it has benefited clients and self-employed personal assistants (11 comments)
- Concern about the lack of ongoing support for clients (11 comments)
- Believe personal assistants are preferable to care agencies, or are critical of the care providers which would replace scheme members (9 comments)

## Results for engagement meetings

Over 150 people shared their views through attendance at 14 different events and meetings. The main themes identified through the meetings tend to be different in focus to the feedback gathered through the survey and other methods. Most of the attendees were scheme members and mainly those offering personal assistant services, so discussions were understandably more focused on what the proposal means for their services going forward.

The main themes from the meetings can be found in the table on the next page.

**Table 1: Themes from engagement meetings**

Topic	Themes
Impact on clients:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern regarding clients becoming employers, especially those who do not wish to, or who are not capable of being one.</li> <li>• Personal assistants unsure if they should be doing anything or adjusting how they work with current clients.</li> <li>• Concern for vulnerable clients who need competent care with one consistent personal assistant.</li> </ul>
Loss of the Support with Confidence scheme:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal assistants who are members of Support with Confidence feel let down and that the effort invested in joining the scheme was a waste of time.</li> <li>• Personal assistants value the accreditation and contingency planning provided by Support with Confidence.</li> </ul>
Working as an employed personal assistant:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about personal assistants refusing employed work and changing career paths, impacting on the availability of care for clients.</li> <li>• Employed personal assistant work does not pay enough and concern about the financial impact on self-employed personal assistants of the scheme closing.</li> </ul>
Employment status:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More clarity is needed on the implications raised in the report regarding employment status.</li> </ul>
Direct Payment Support Services:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These services are unhelpful and are often delayed in sourcing care for clients.</li> </ul>

## What have we learnt from the consultation?

- The majority of respondents disagree with the proposal and some specifically said the scheme should be kept and not altered.
- Members feel let down by the proposal and that the effort they have invested in joining the scheme has been wasted.
- Although the scheme pause has not affected all members and applicants, it has led to less work for a greater number of them. The pause has also had an emotional impact on those who use the directory to find support.
- People are most concerned about the impact on those who receive social care support if the proposal goes ahead, with many saying clients will be worse off as a result and need support.
- There are good levels of awareness of the scheme and people are concerned about losing a valuable resource, while the lack of clarity on what might replace it has created uncertainty.
- Being able to find personal assistants, offer accreditation of services and have people find out about their service/business are the most important things that people want from any future offer.
- Members value the scheme's sense of community, which prevents them feeling isolated and reassures them that support is available.
- Scheme users are happy with the care they have now and are worried any changes could lead to them losing their personal assistant.
- Members are concerned too that the changes could lead to personal assistants leaving the sector, affecting people's ability to find the care they need.
- Directory users are concerned about other local people's ability to find trusted and competent support if the proposal goes ahead.
- Members are concerned that they will get less, or no, work from adult social care if the proposal goes ahead and their ability to make a living will be compromised.
- Members want more clarity on their employment status and whether they should be making changes to how they work with their clients.
- People want to be kept informed and for clear information and support to be provided to help them transition to any new offer.

## **What happens next?**

This report summarises what people told us in the consultation. The information has also been used to inform the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). An EqIA is a tool we use to understand how particular groups and communities would be affected by a proposed change.

A recommendations paper on our proposal to offer support in a different way will be considered by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health on 6 March 2024. The paper will include learning from the consultation and the EqIA and set out what we plan to do next.

# Appendix 1: The survey questions

## Section 1: Questions for everyone

Q1) Are you completing the survey as: (please tick one answer)

- Someone who has used the scheme to find services for yourself or a family member/friend
- A resident of East Sussex who has heard of the scheme but not used it
- A resident of East Sussex who hasn't heard of the scheme before today
- An accredited personal assistant member of the scheme
- An accredited business member of the scheme
- A personal assistant who wants to join the scheme
- A business who wants to join the scheme
- A health and/or social care worker who has referred people to the scheme (please say where you work and your role in the box below)
- A health and social care organisation (please name your organisation and what your role is in the box below)
- Other (please explain below)

If you ticked 'other', please explain:

If you are taking part as a worker or organisation, please tell us where you work and what your role is:

Q2) How much do you agree or disagree with our proposal to stop offering the Support with Confidence scheme and offer support in a different way instead?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

If you wish, please use the box below to explain your answer:

*Note: The survey included routing depending on how people answered Q1:*

- *Residents, workers, organisations, and anyone else who has used the scheme to help find care and support for themselves or someone else can continue on to section 2.*
- *Members and applicants of the scheme can go straight to section 3.*
- *People who have heard of the scheme but not used it, or haven't heard of the scheme before today can go straight to section 4.*

## **Section 2: Questions for residents, workers, and organisations**

Q3) How would you rate your awareness of the Support with Confidence scheme and what it offers to residents?

- Good awareness
- Some awareness
- Limited awareness

Q4) How helpful have you found the scheme in finding support you can trust?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful
- N/A

If you wish, please use the box below to explain your answer:

Q5) Have you been affected by the decision to pause the Support with Confidence scheme? If you have, please tell us how below:

Q6) How would you be affected if we stopped offering the Support with Confidence scheme and offered support in a different way instead?

This would not include offering a referral service or contingency support.

Q7) What aspects of any new support would be most important to you?

Please rate the options on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most important and 1 being the least important. You can also tell us about any suggestions we haven't included using the 'other' box below.

- Being able to call a helpline
- Finding personal assistants who can provide social care support
- Finding business services such as home maintenance and gardening
- Having all the information in one online directory
- Knowing the services have been through an accreditation process
- Support to deal with a complaint about service
- Other (please explain below)

If you ticked 'other', please explain here:

Q8) Your comments about what would be important to you in future:

Q9) What could we do to help people manage the transition to a new way of working?

### **Section 3: Questions for scheme members and applicants**

Q3) How would you rate your awareness of the Support with Confidence scheme and what it offers to residents?

- Good awareness
- Some awareness
- Limited awareness

Q4) How helpful have you found the scheme in building your business or service?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful
- N/A

If you wish, please use the box below to explain your answer:

Q5) Have you been affected by the decision to pause the Support with Confidence scheme? If you have, please tell us how below:

Q6) How would you be affected if we stopped offering the Support with Confidence scheme and offered support in a different way instead?

This would not include offering a referral service or contingency support.

Q7) What aspects of any new support would be most important to you?

Please rate the options on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most important and 1 being the least important. You can also tell us about any suggestions we haven't included using the 'other' box below. As we will no longer be offering the referral service or support with contingency planning these options aren't included in the list.

- Accreditation
- Allowing residents to find out about my personal assistant services
- Allowing residents to find out about my business
- Business support
- Care worker training
- Directory entry
- Support and guidance
- Support to deal with a complaint about your service
- Training specifically for personal assistants
- Wellbeing support
- Other (please explain below)

If you ticked 'other', please explain here:

Q8) Your comments about what would be important to you in future:

Q9) What could we do to help people manage the transition to a new way of working?

#### **Section 4: Questions for everyone**

Q10) If there is anything else you want to say about our proposal to stop offering the Support with Confidence scheme and offer support in a different way, please use the box below:



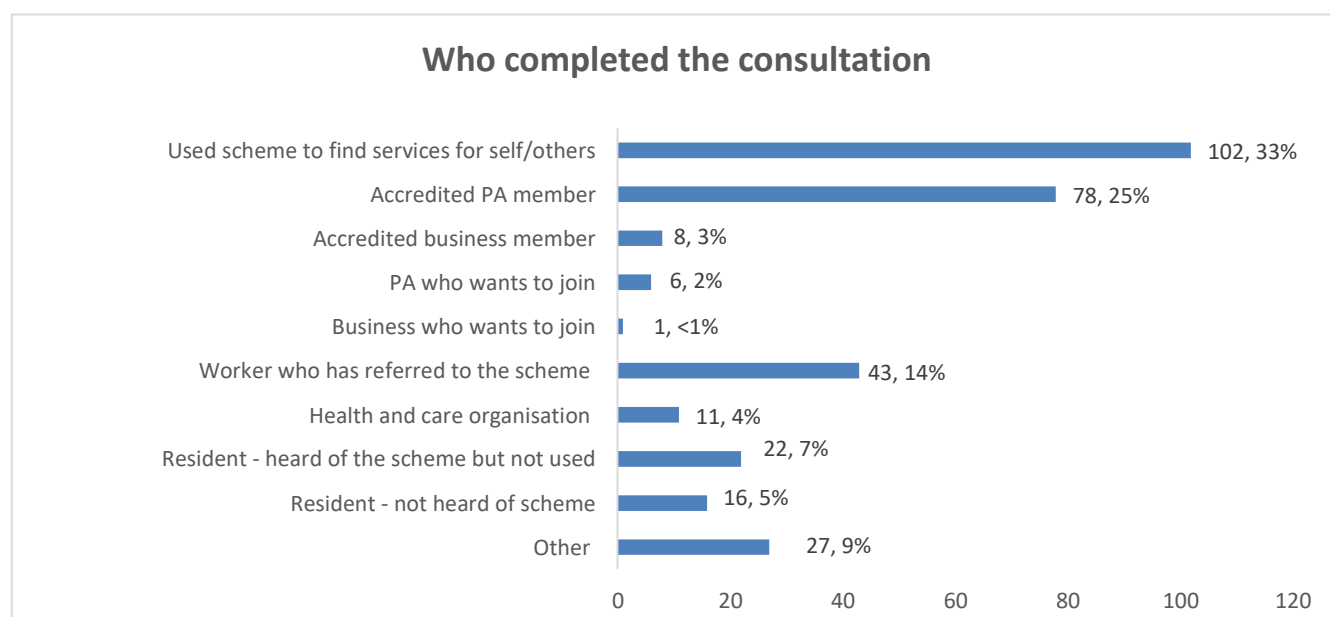
## Appendix 2: The survey results

Everyone who took part in the survey was asked who they were completing the survey as, for their views on the proposal, and given an option to provide any other comments. If they had experience of using the directory as a resident, worker, organisation, or were scheme members or applicants, they were routed to dedicated sections with targeted questions about their experiences and how they would be affected by the proposal.

314 people took part in the survey, with 157 being routed through to the resident, worker, and organisation questions and 93 to the member and applicant questions.

### Chart 1: Who took part in the survey

All 314 respondents answered this question.

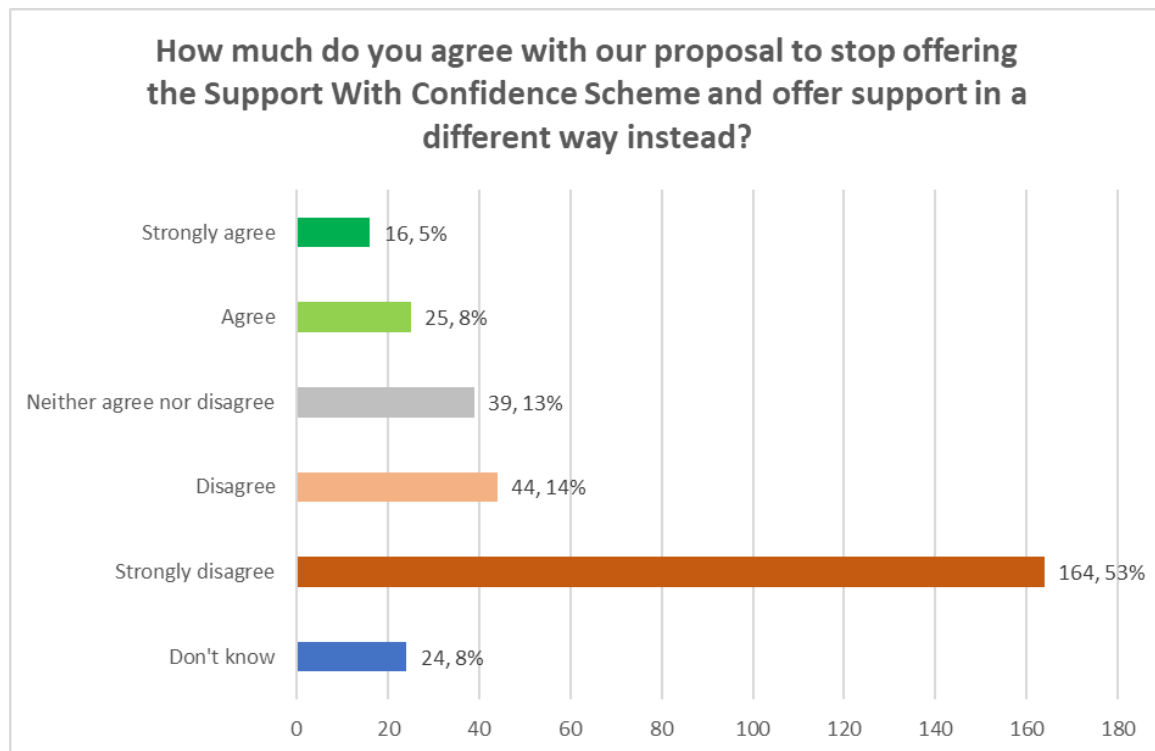


The 27 who ticked 'other' fell into the following categories:

- User or prospective user of the scheme, or their loved one (14 people)
- Care sector worker/business (10)
- Personal assistant or their friend or relative (2)
- Unclear (1)

## Chart 2: Overall views on the proposal

312 people answered the question and 2 did not.



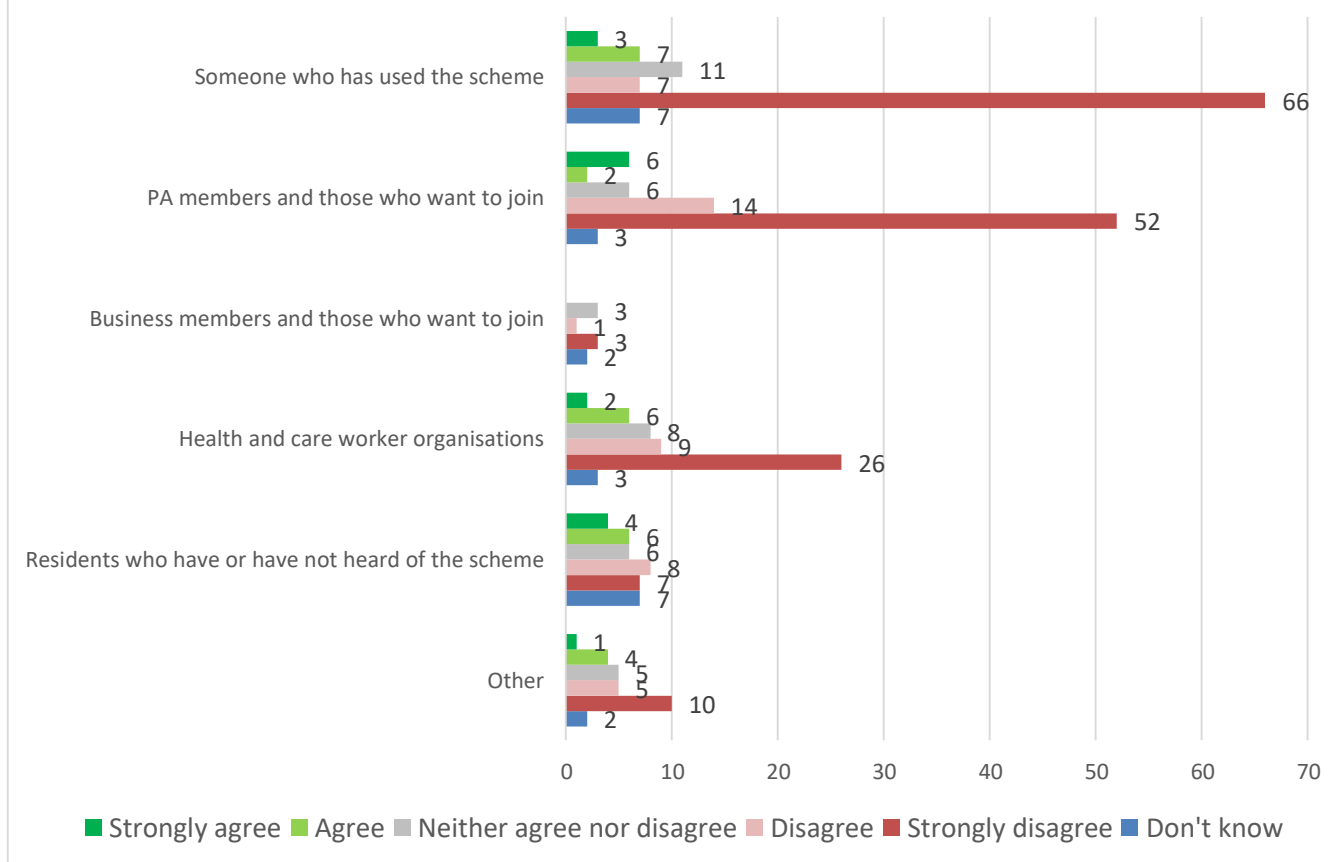
## Chart 3: Views on the proposal by respondent type

312 people answered the question and 2 did not (one was a PA member and one had used the directory). Due to the small numbers for some respondent groups only whole numbers are included in the chart, although we have used percentages to explore the difference in views between the respondent groups below.

Disagreement with the proposal has the highest total for all respondent groups when the 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' answers are combined. Personal assistants have the highest levels of disagreement (80%), although those who have used the scheme (72%) and workers/organisations (65%) weren't far behind.

Residents who haven't used the scheme, or who weren't aware of it, are less likely to disagree with the proposal (39%) and were the group that had the highest level of agreement with it (26%). No business members agreed with the proposal, although only 9 took part in the consultation, and more were unsure of their views than disagreed (55% chose 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' and 44% chose 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree').

### How much do you agree with our proposal to stop offering the Support with Confidence scheme and offer support in a different way instead - by respondent type



### Comment themes on views on the proposal

222 people added a comment to explain their views on the proposal. The bullet points below show the top comment themes, and these are organised based on people’s views on the proposal. The following tables list all the comment themes.

The top comment themes for the 67% who disagreed with the proposal were:

- Effect on clients (81 comments)
- Loss of a valuable resource (40 comments)
- Current process is efficient (31 comments)
- Effect on personal assistants (25 comments)

The top comment themes, combined, for the 21% who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal, did not know, or did not answer the initial rating

question but still made a comment, were:

- Cannot take a view about the proposal until the alternative is clear (19 comments)
- Loss of a valuable resource (8 comments)
- Effect on clients (5 comments)
- Crucial not to end scheme with nothing equally valuable in place (4 comments)
- Legal sanctions force change (4 comments)

The top comment themes for the 13% who agreed with the proposal were:

- Legal sanctions force change (7 comments)
- Effect on clients (4 comments)
- Dissatisfied with current scheme (3 comments)

**Table 2: Comment themes on their views on the proposal**

Comment themes for those who agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal	Number of comments
Legal sanctions force change	7
Effect on clients	4
Dissatisfied with current scheme	3
Current arrangement means clients miss out on other advice	2
Expense of current charges by PAs under the scheme	2
No better alternative	2
Safeguarding concerns	2
Care companies can't deliver same level or continuity of service	1
Current arrangement doesn't offer anything PAs can't get by other means	1

Current availability lists not always up to date	1
Current Council arrangement digitally excludes	1
Current scheme prioritised cheaper costs of PAs over CQC-registered providers	1
Loss of valuable resource	1
No reason offered	1
Retaining some type of vetting is vital	1
<b>Comment themes for those who neither agreed nor disagreed</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Can't say until alternative is clear	9
Loss of valuable resource	5
Effect on clients	4
Crucial not to end scheme with nothing equally valuable in place	3
Effect on PAs	3
Legal sanctions force change	3
Current process is efficient	2
No reason offered	2
Retaining some type of vetting is vital	2
Care companies can't deliver same level or continuity of service	1
Critical of central government	1
Critical of local government	1
Current availability lists not always up to date	1
Dissatisfied with current scheme	1
High demand/need for service	1
Supportive of changes if they make the scheme more	1

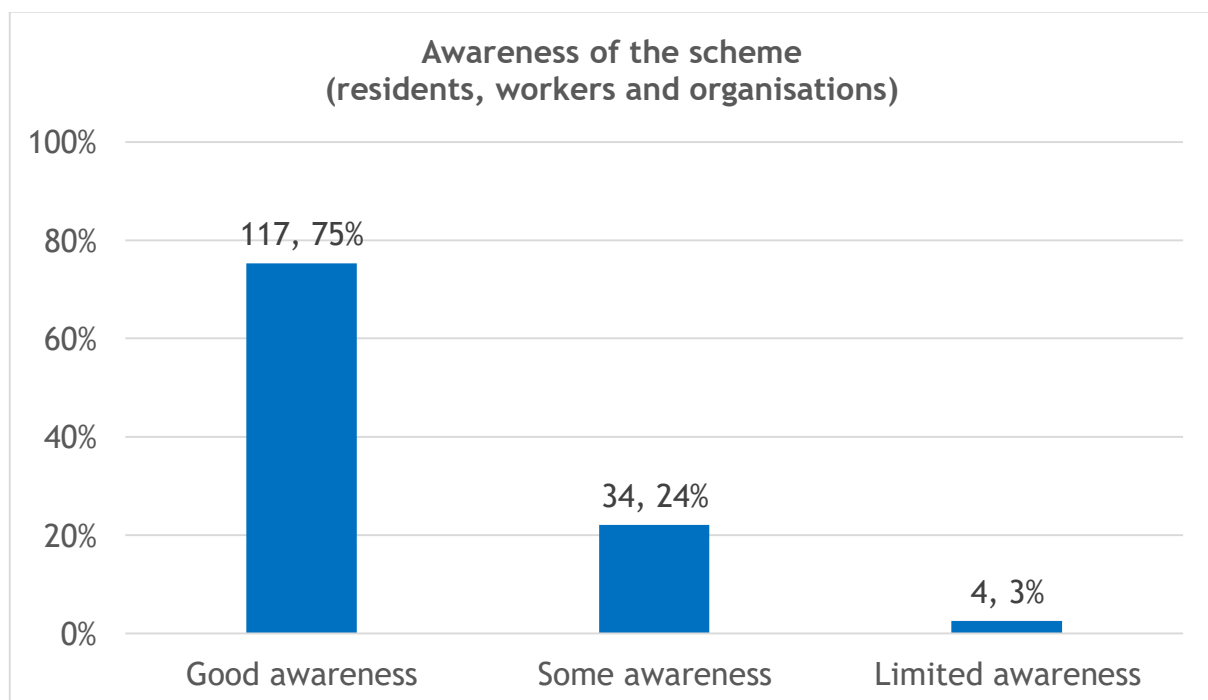
efficient/effective	
<b>Comment themes for those who disagreed or strongly disagreed</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Effect on clients	81
Loss of valuable resource	40
Current process is efficient	31
Effect on PAs	25
Retaining some type of vetting is vital	22
Care companies can't deliver same level or continuity of service	20
Can't say until alternative is clear	9
Critical of local government	9
Critical of proposal presentation/reasons behind it	9
Effect on ASC and other care organisations	9
Crucial not to end scheme with nothing equally valuable in place	8
Critical of central government	4
High demand/need for service	3
Issue requires local government discussion/action	2
Legal sanctions force change	1
No better alternative	1
Safeguarding concerns	1
Sourcing PAs is hard even with the scheme	1
<b>Comment themes for those who said they did not know</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Can't say until alternative is clear	9
Loss of valuable resource	3

Not aware of the scheme	2
Crucial not to end scheme with nothing equally valuable in place	1
Effect on clients	1
Legal sanctions force change	1
Retaining some type of vetting is vital	1
Supportive of changes if they make the scheme more efficient/effective	1
<b>Comment themes for those who did not answer to say whether they agreed or disagreed</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Can't say until alternative is clear	1

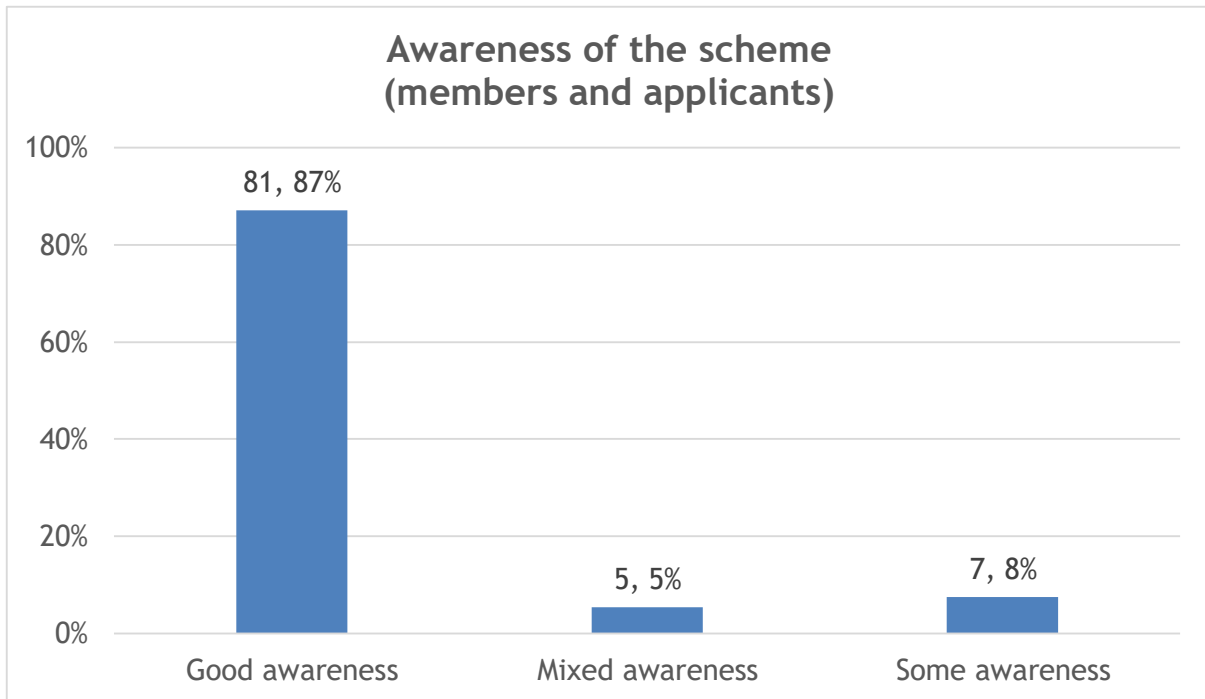
### Charts 4 and 5: Awareness of the scheme

Note: The response scales for the two groups weren't quite the same due to an error. The mid-point for one was 'some awareness', while for the other it was 'mixed awareness'. These are similar enough not to materially affect the results.

155 residents, workers and organisations answered this question and 2 did not.

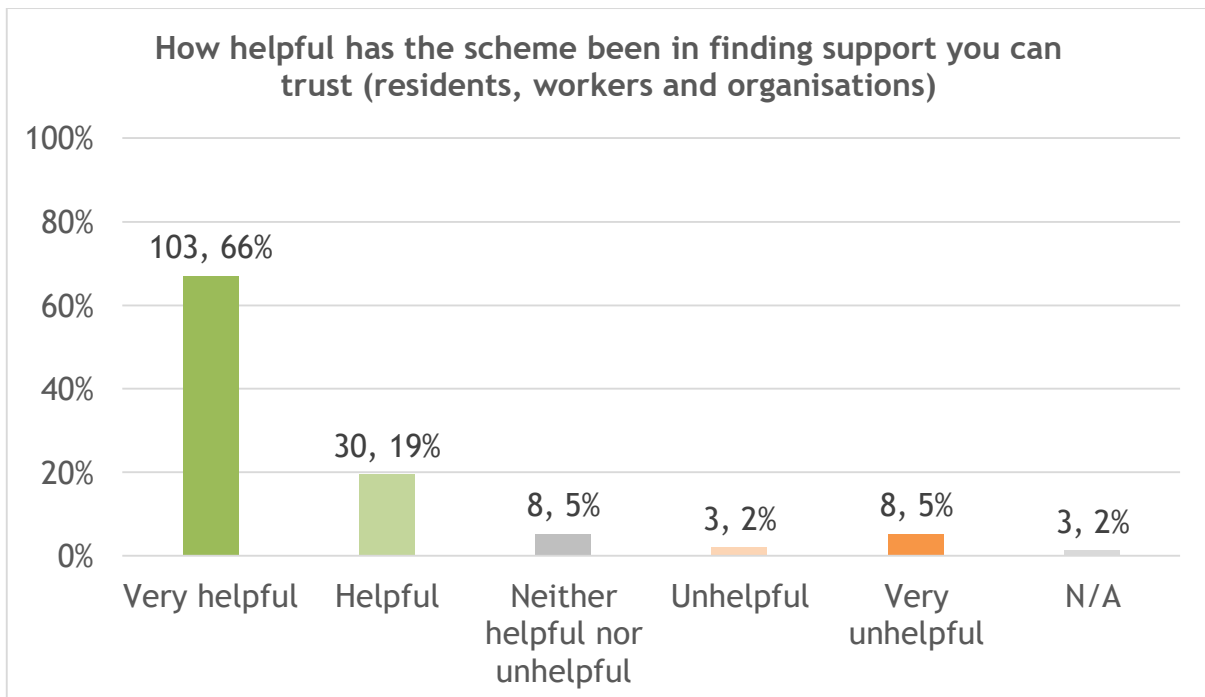


All 93 members and applicants answered this question.



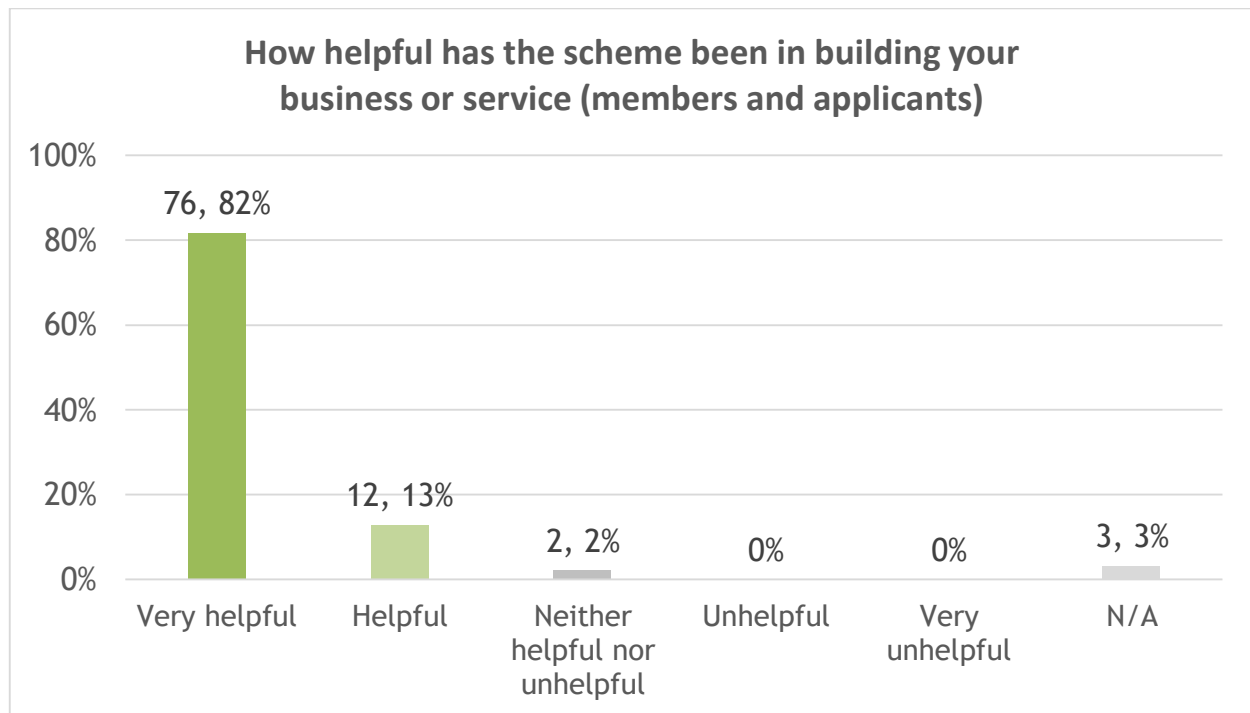
### Charts 6 and 7: How helpful they've found the scheme

155 residents, workers and organisations answered this question and 2 did not.





All 93 members and applicants answered this question.



### Comment themes on how helpful they've found the scheme

68 residents, workers and organisations offered a comment, while 43 members and applicants did. This means that 139 didn't answer the question.

The top comment themes on how helpful residents, workers and organisations have found the scheme are:

- Access to accredited and competent support (23 comments)
- Flexible care suited to clients' needs and preferences (12 comments)
- Helped me find a personal assistant (8 comments)

The top comment themes for members and applicants are:

- Client numbers via the scheme (22 comments)
- Sense of community/not isolated (17 comments)
- Training (13 comments)

**Table 3: Comment themes on how helpful they've found the scheme (residents, workers, and organisations)**

Comment theme	Number of comments
Access to accredited and competent support	23
Flexible care suited to clients' needs and preferences	12
Helped me find a personal assistant	8
Difficult to find personal assistant with suitable availability	7
Can confidently signpost clients to support services	7
Unresponsive service	6
Responsive service	4
Good service	4
High standard of care	3
Personal assistants are too expensive	3
Wouldn't be able to find a personal assistant without the scheme	3
Hassle free	3
Lack of trust in care agencies	2
Popular service	2
Critical of the proposal and the motivations behind it	2
User friendly website	2
Details about personal assistants inaccurate	2
Ability to have one consistent personal assistant	2
Personal assistants have appropriate training and support	2
Vital for finding personal assistants	2

Ability to choose from a range of personal assistants	2
Lack of support for those affected by pausing the scheme	1
Personal assistants value the scheme	1
Unable to find a suitable personal assistant	1
Care agencies not competent	1
Direct payments for clients using a personal assistant from the scheme efficient	1
The scheme was adequate	1
Not enough personal assistants available	1
Ability to raise concerns regarding personal assistants	1
Scheme was not fit for purpose	1
Pausing the scheme is a safeguarding concern	1
Personal assistant prices are not proportionate to the services provided	1
Support with Confidence processes caused issues for other teams	1
Personal assistants are vital for client wellbeing	1
Unable to find any personal assistants	1
Personal assistants from the scheme not adhering to legal obligations	1
Employed a personal assistant from another source	1
Care agencies too expensive	1
Negative comment on their personal situation	1
Negative comment about their personal assistant's attitude	1
New support offer will force clients to agency care and lower standard of care	1

No personal assistants locally	1
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**Table 4: Comment themes on how helpful they've found the scheme (members and applicants)**

Comment themes	Number of comments
Client numbers via the scheme	22
Sense of community/not feeling isolated	17
Training offer	13
Advice offer	10
Accreditation	9
Own sense of worth	7
More freedom than through care companies	4
Comment on their personal situation	3
Reassurance for clients	3
Negative comment on the national report that led to the pausing of the scheme and its conclusions	1
They have lost confidence in the Council	1
There will be reduced choice for clients	1

### **Comment themes on how they've been affected by scheme pause**

116 residents, workers and organisations offered a comment, while 88 members and applicants did. This means that 46 didn't answer the question.

The top comment themes on how residents, workers and organisations have been affected are:

- Not currently affected (36 comments)
- Negative emotional impact (17 comments)
- Unable to recommend a trusted source of personal assistants (16 comments)

The top themes for members and applicants are:

- Negatively affected, as getting less work (28 comments)
- Not been affected (25 comments)
- Negatively affected, as it had created more uncertainty (24 comments)

**Table 5: How they've been affected by the scheme pause (residents, workers, and organisations)**

Comment themes	Number of comments
Not currently affected	36
Negative emotional impact	17
Unable to recommend a trusted source of personal assistants	16
Delay in provision of care	11
Uncertainty about the future	10
Negatively affected [unspecific]	9
Concern about losing their current personal assistant	9
Difficulty finding accredited and competent support	8
Unable to find any personal assistants	6
Comment on their personal situation	6
Loss of an easy-to-use service	5
Lack of communication regarding the scheme pausing	5
Difficult to find a suitable personal assistant	5
Don't know how to find support without the scheme	5
Comment is unspecific/unclear	5
Relied on Support with Confidence to find support services	4
Client cannot find flexible care based on their needs and	4

preferences	
Confusion on how it affects them	3
Clients unable to source care on their own	3
Agencies struggling to employ personal assistants	3
Clients not confident at or willing to be an employer	2
Lack of client autonomy	2
Unsure where to signpost clients to without the scheme	2
Financial difficulty for personal assistants	2
Loss of work for personal assistants	2
Lack of trust in agencies	2
The Direct Payment Support Services provide a better experience for clients seeking support	1
Pausing the scheme is a safeguarding concern	1
Clients hesitant to source care via other routes	1
Ending the scheme will result in a higher standard of care for clients	1
Pressure on care agencies	1
It was a mistake to pause the scheme	1
Financial impact	1
No alternative scheme to turn to	1
Agencies are unhelpful	1
Better equality for care worker employment rights	1
The Direct Payment Support Services are unhelpful	1
Intended to join the scheme before the pause	1
Lack of capacity to support self-funders	1

Delays in arranging direct payments	1
Concern that any support clients source independently won't be safe	1
Negative impact on community support needs	1
Care agencies lack care availability	1
Lack of support for scheme members since it was paused	1
Personal assistants are approaching organisations for advice	1
Less care available for clients	1
Referred to the Direct Payment Support Services	1
Less choice in support services	1
The Direct Payment Support Services delayed in sourcing support	1
Fewer personal assistants attending training	1
Care agencies are too expensive	1
Clients are checking employment status of their personal assistant	1
Increased burden on carers	1
Independently sourcing support via personal network of contacts	1

**Table 6: How they've been affected by the scheme pause (members and applicants)**

Comment themes	Number of comments
Less work	28
No, not affected	25
More uncertainty	24

Concerned for clients	20
Feel less supported	19
Stress/pressure/concern	15
May, or will, change job	7
Still awaiting accreditation/application result/other outcome	6
Concerned about care system generally	2
Can't yet say how they are affected	1

### **Comment theme on how they would be affected if the proposal went ahead**

The top comment themes for residents, workers and organisations are:

- Unable to comment on the alternative support offer due to lack of information and clarity (32 comments)
- Difficulty finding accredited and competent support (24 comments)
- Unable to recommend a trusted source of support to clients (13 comments)

The top themes for members and applicants are:

- Less work or no work (26 comments)
- Uncertain (25 comments)
- Less or no support for PA work/business (18 comments)

**Table 7: How they would be affected if the proposal went ahead (residents, workers, and organisations)**

<b>Comment themes</b>	<b>Number of comments</b>
Unable to comment on the alternative support offer due to lack of information and clarity	32
Difficulty finding accredited and competent support	24



Unable to recommend a trusted source of support to clients	13
Concern about losing their current personal assistant	11
Will struggle to find flexible care suited to clients' needs and preferences	12
Would not affect me personally	11
Negatively affected [unspecific]	10
Concern about how clients will find support	8
Negative emotional impact	7
Will struggle without referral support	7
Delay in provision of care	5
Less choice in support	5
Care agencies are too expensive	4
Lose ability to find support via the scheme	4
Negative impact on client health and wellbeing	4
Greater negative impact on vulnerable clients specifically	4
Lack of trust in agency workers	7
Care agencies unhelpful	3
Retain the original scheme	3
Lack of autonomy for clients	3
Critical of the reasoning for pausing the scheme	3
Comment unspecific/unclear	3
Experienced issues with the scheme previously	3
Comment on their personal situation	3
Significant impact [unspecific]	3

Less support available	3
Care agencies unsuitable for vulnerable clients	3
Critical of the proposal	3
Concern about feeling safe with future support	3
Concerned new support offer is not sufficient	2
Uncertainty about the future	2
Retain as many processes from the Support with Confidence scheme as possible	2
Will struggle without contingency support	2
Unsure	2
Care agencies struggling to employ personal assistants	2
Unable to ensure safety of clients receiving care in their own home	2
Increased workload for East Sussex County Council (the Council) staff	2
Lack of support for unpaid carers	2
Councils should ensure all care providers are subject to Care Quality Commission regulations	1
Would struggle to be an employer	1
Need a way of raising concerns about personal assistants	1
Clients need the support of the service	1
Increased burden on other services	1
Unable to support clients to find support	1
Negative impact on organisations' business models	1
Would likely start employing care	1
Increased reliance on care agencies	1

Need to retain contingency planning	1
Clients would have better access to support	1
Clear information and guidance on new scheme would be needed	1
Feels a decision has already been made regardless of consultation	1
New support offer should meet member and user needs	1
Financial burden on clients	1
Not having one consistent personal assistant	1
Need for a better complaints system	1
Opportunity to improve the referral process	1
Need to learn how the alternative support offer would work	1
Reduced respite for clients' unpaid carers	1
Independently sourcing support via personal network of contacts	1
An alternative scheme for sourcing support is welcome	1

**Table 8: How they would be affected if the proposal went ahead (members and applicants)**

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Less or no work	26
Uncertain	25
Less or no support	18
Would need training	15
Would need advice/support	13
Would need directory entry	9

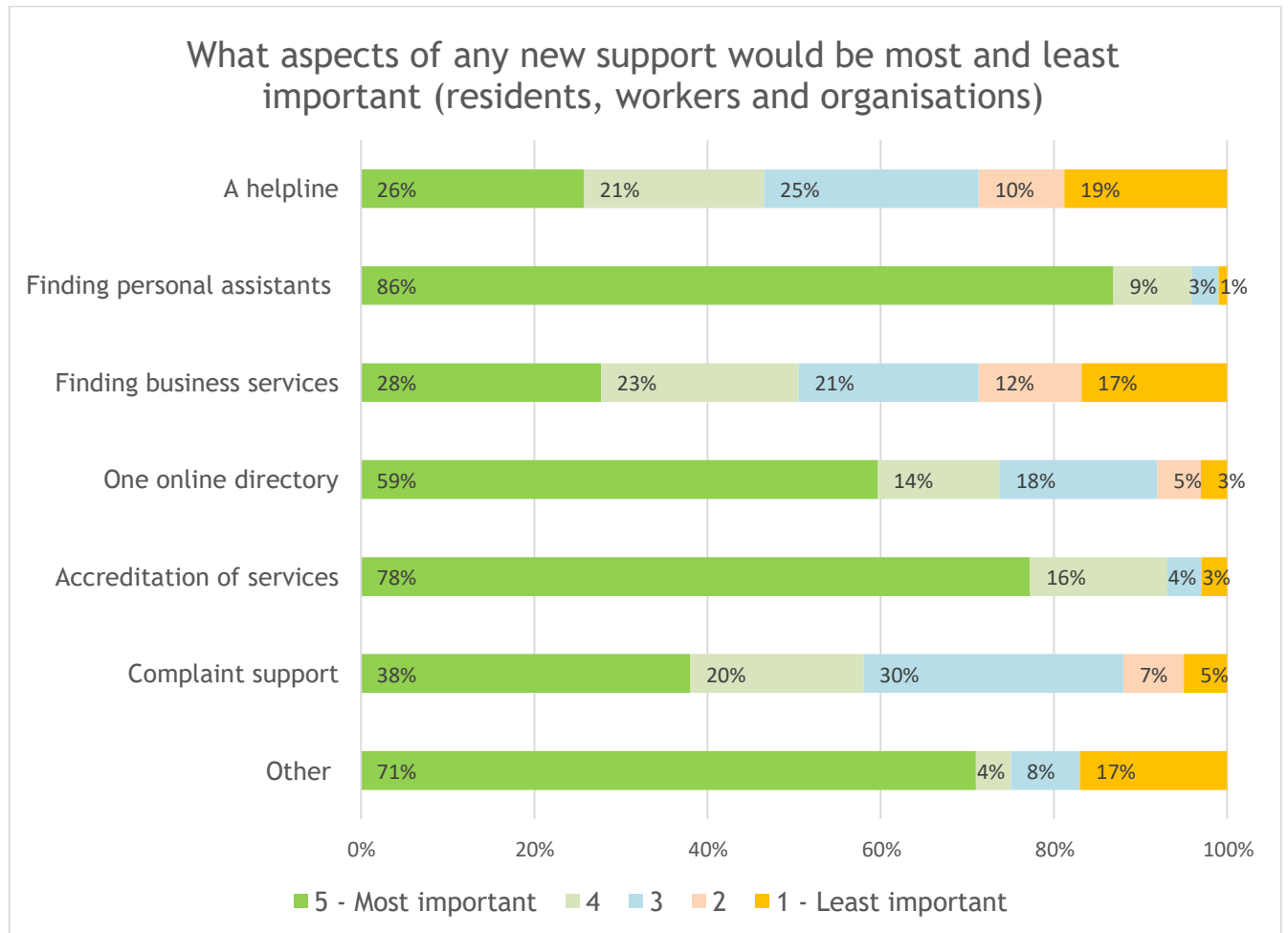
Change their career	8
Unaffected	6
Critical of/querying the motivations behind the proposal	4
Emotional impact	4
Unwilling to become an employee	4
Critical of the question asked	3
Would look for clients elsewhere	3
Would need accreditation	3
Critical of the proposals and how they have been shared	2
Critical of what might replace the scheme	2
Comment unclear	2
Concerned about the proposal's impact on clients	1
Notes examples of where scheme has been valuable	1
Suggests a new approach prioritising client and the personal assistance over brokerage and the local authority	1

## Charts 8 and 9: What aspects of any new support would be important (residents, workers, and organisations)

154 people answered this question and 3 did not. This first chart shows how many people ranked each category as 'most important'.



This second chart shows the percentage ratings from 5 ‘most important’ through to 1 ‘least important’. Multiple options could be given the same level of importance. The percentages for each row in the chart reflect the number of respondents who answered for that category.



**Table 9: What aspects of any new support would be important (residents, workers, and organisations)**

The table shows the number of people who provided an answer for each category.

	5 - Most important	4	3	2	1 - Least important	Total
A helpline	39	31	37	15	28	150
Finding a personal assistant	133	14	5	0	2	154
Finding business services	42	34	31	18	26	11
One online directory	90	22	27	8	5	152
Accreditation of services	119	24	6	0	4	153
Complaint support	56	30	44	11	7	148
Other	17	1	2	0	4	24

**Comment themes for those who ticked ‘other’**

The 24 residents, workers and organisations who ticked ‘other’ provided the following comments which are grouped by rating:

The themes for those who rated their ‘other’ suggestion as 5 ‘most important’ are:

- Access to the new offer should be simple, inclusive, and accessible for all (4 comments)
- Adult Social Care being able to access personal assistants (1 comment)
- Ability to refer clients or signpost clients to a source of personal assistants (1 comment)
- Signposting for personal assistants needing support and training (1 comment)
- Personal assistants with specialist care skills (1 comment)
- Support that clients don’t need to employ (1 comment)
- Increased recruitment of, and more robust policies for personal assistants (1 comment)

comment)

- Comprehensive details about the individuals offering support (1 comment)
- Plenty of time is needed to adjust to any change (1 comment)
- Retain the old scheme staff (1 comment)
- The Direct Payment Support Services being responsible for all admin (1 comment)
- Prioritise safety of personal assistants and clients (1 comment)
- Access to one consistent carer (1 comment)
- Transparency (1 comment)
- A service that delivers support as designed (1 comment)

The themes for those who rated their 'other' suggestion as 3 for importance are:

- A focus on vulnerable clients and a broad care approach (1 comment)

The themes for those who rated their 'other' suggestion as 1 'least important' are:

- Don't duplicate what the private sector already provides (1 comment)

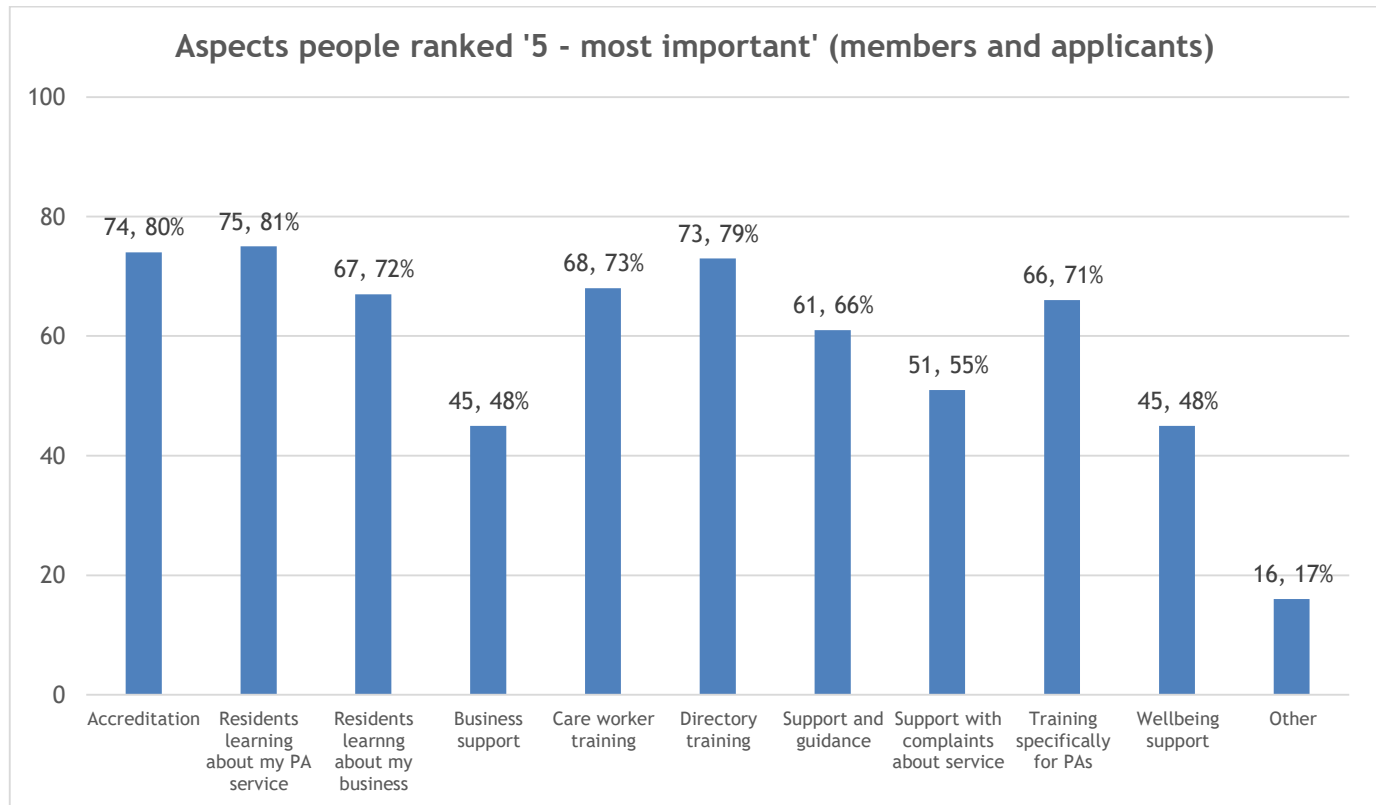
Where no rating was given for their comment, the themes are:

- More robust supervision of personal assistants (1 comment)
- Ability to contact multiple personal assistants at once (1 comment)
- Give special focus to the value and work of personal assistants over other support offer types (1 comment)
- Access to self-employed support and not having to be an employer (1 comment)
- Access to the new offer should be simple, inclusive, and accessible for all (1 comment)

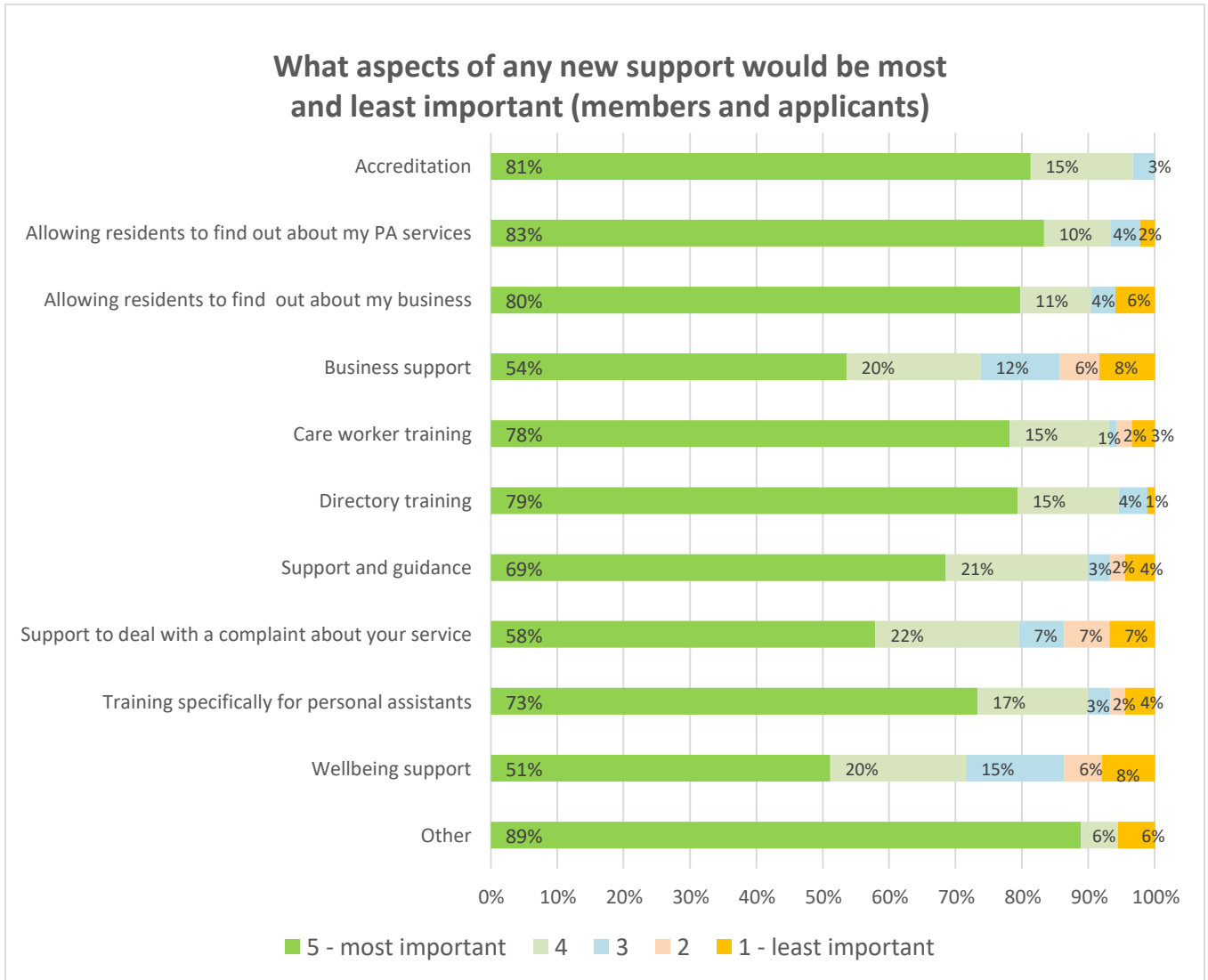


## Charts 10 and 11: What aspects of any new support would be important (members and applicants)

93 people answered this question. This first chart shows how many people ranked each category as 'most important'.



This second chart shows the percentage ratings from 5 ‘most important’ through to 1 ‘least important’. Multiple options could be given the same level of importance. The percentages for each row in the chart reflect the number of respondents who answered for that category.



**Table 10: What aspects of any new support would be important (members and applicants)**

The table shows the number of people who provided an answer for each category.

	5 - Most important	4	3	2	1 - Least important	Total
Accreditation	74	14	3	0	0	91
Allowing people to find out about my PA service	75	9	4	0	2	90
Allowing people to find out about my business	67	9	3	0	5	84
Business support	45	17	10	5	7	84
Care worker training	68	13	1	2	3	87
Directory entry	73	14	4	0	1	92
Support and guidance	61	19	3	2	4	89
Support to deal with a complaint about your service	51	19	6	6	6	88
Training specifically for personal assistants	66	15	3	2	4	90
Wellbeing support	45	18	13	5	7	88
Other	16	1	0	0	1	18

**Comment themes for those who ticked ‘other’**

The 27 members and applicants who ticked ‘other’ provided the following 18 comments. All the respondents who included a comment either ticked 5 ‘most important’ or didn’t offer a rating for their comment.

The themes from the comments were:

- Support with DBS checks (7 comments)
- Client referrals (3 comments)
- Contact with ASC staff/social workers (3 comments)
- Training (3 comments)
- Assessment of/guidance on self-employment status (2 comments)
- Financial support/planning (2 comments)
- Awareness of value of PAs (1 comment)
- Gather client feedback (1 comment)
- Improved database (1 comment)
- PA mutual support networks (1 comment)

### **Comment themes on what would be important for a future offer**

103 residents, workers and organisations offered a comment, while 81 members and applicants did. This means that 52 didn't answer the question.

The top comment themes for residents, workers and organisations are:

- Accreditation of scheme members (35 comments)
- Directory of trusted and competent professionals (31 comments)
- Safe and easy access to support (23 comments)

The top themes for members and applicants are:

- Training (29 comments)
- Client/resident peace of mind/support (25 comments)
- PA support, including peer-to-peer (22 comments)
- Support/advice (22 comments)

**Table 11: What aspects of any new support would be important (residents, workers, and organisations)**

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Accreditation of scheme members	35
Directory of trusted and competent professionals	31
Safe and easy access to support	23
Flexibility to choose a personal assistant based on preference	12
Support and training for personal assistants	10
Keeping my current personal assistant	9
Continuity of care	8
Consideration for the safety of vulnerable clients	7
Continue with the Support with Confidence scheme as it was	7
Comment on their personal situation	6
Accessible and inclusive information for all	5
Costs needs to be proportionate to service offer	5
All aspects in previous question are important	5
Staff to contact for support	4
Retain as many processes from the Support with Confidence scheme as possible	4
Check employment status of scheme members	4
Maintain client's independence	4
Include availability of each personal assistant in a directory	3
Show locality of personal assistants	3
A referral service	3

Ensure sufficient numbers of personal assistants are available	3
Ability to support clients sourcing their own care	3
A user-friendly website	2
Clear signposting to services	2
A service that delivers what it promises to	2
Stricter monitoring of personal assistants	2
Contingency planning support	2
Support to use the new system	2
Better pay for personal assistants	2
Clear information and guidance on new scheme	1
Comment about the importance of personal assistants	1
Comment about the complexity of direct payments	1
Ensure self-employed work is still viable	1
No additional effort to find support	1
Make all care providers subject to Care Quality Commission regulation	1
Care agencies are unhelpful	1
Ability to find care quickly	1
Feels a decision has been made regardless of the consultation	1
Multiple contact methods to access the service	1
All care workers treated as employees	1
Positive comment about named training staff	1
Function to leave reviews of personal assistants	1
Good management	1

Service proactively engages with clients sourcing support	1
Support funded and privately funded residents differently	1
Stability for clients	1
It is unclear why the scheme must stop	1
Positive comment regarding previous scheme	1
Incentives for highly skilled providers to offer services	1
Mitigate delays to provision of care	1
Allow clients to advertise their need for help	1
Ensure access is not subject to a referral	1

**Table 12: What aspects of any new support would be important (members and applicants)**

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Training	29
Client/resident peace of mind/support	25
PA support, including peer-to-peer	22
Support/advice	22
Keep scheme as it is	20
Accreditation	18
Directory	14
Sourcing new clients	13
DBS checks	10
Maintaining independence	9
Wellbeing assistance	6

Simple processes	5
Critical of question asked	1
Co-production of a robust local social care network for all	1

### Comment themes on how we can help people transition

113 residents, workers and organisations offered a comment, while 83 members and applicants did. This means that 54 didn't answer the question.

The top comment themes for residents, workers and organisations are:

- Clear information and guidance on the new scheme (37 comments)
- Keep me informed (18 comments)
- Comprehensive promotion of the new scheme (16 comments)

The top themes for members and applicants are:

- Provide clear information (35 comments)
- Offer support (18 comments)
- Keep the scheme as it is (12 comments)
- Ensure PAs are trained (11 comments)

### Table 13: How we could help people transition (residents, workers, and organisations)

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Clear information and guidance on the new scheme	37
Keep me informed	18
Comprehensive promotion of the new scheme	16
Unable to comment on the alternative support offer due to lack of information and clarity	15
Accessible and inclusive information for all	14



Keep relevant services and healthcare providers informed	10
Co-produce the new scheme with stakeholders	10
Continue with the Support with Confidence scheme as it was	9
Keeping my current personal assistant	7
Training and support for personal assistants	6
Retain as many processes from the Support with Confidence scheme as possible	6
A short and timely transition	6
Ensure no delay in provision of care	5
Offer training on the new way of working	4
Continuity of care	4
Critical of the proposal and the motivations behind it	3
Interim support	3
A simple transition	3
Accreditation of scheme members	3
Comment on personal situation	2
Comment on the lack of communication regarding the scheme pausing	2
Provide legal advice for self-employed personal assistants	2
Contactable and responsive scheme staff	2
Not sure	2
Ability to have one consistent personal assistant	2
Feels a decision has been made regardless of consultation	2
Care agencies are unsuitable for vulnerable clients	2
Flexible and person-centred approach	2

Legal implications of the paused scheme are not clear	2
Option to access micro-providers	1
Review pay rate for personal assistants	1
Questioning the benefit of the Direct Payment Support Services	1
All carers treated as employees	1
Cannot understand the question	1
Ability to filter details on a personal assistant directory	1
Query regarding other local authorities' approach to the legal implications	1
Care agencies are too expensive	1
Comment unspecific/unclear	1
Signposting to alternative support during transition	1
Care agencies are too slow at providing support	1
Direct contact between client and provider	1
All care providers subject to Care Quality Commission regulation	1
Promote the benefits of employment to personal assistants	1
Lack of trust in care agencies	1
Query about the need for a new support offer	1
Appropriate disciplinary process for personal assistants	1
Quick access to personal assistants	1
Minimal admin for personal assistants	1
Mitigate additional work for staff	1
Safe and easy access to support	1
Support personal assistants with understanding their employment status	1

Concern for client safety with unregulated care	1
Ensure support is available	1
Better communication between departments/services	1
Advice on selecting trustworthy support	1

**Table 14: How we could help people transition (members and applicants)**

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Provide clear information	35
Offer support	18
Keep the scheme as it is	12
Ensure PAs are trained	11
No suggestion - comment on their own intentions/view	7
Appreciate PAs/their motivations	7
Discussion - involve all parties	6
Provide honest communication	6
Supervise/ensure vetting	5
Don't know	4
Discussion - face to face	3
Encourage providers to support PAs	2
Swift decision making	2
Avoid a named provider	1
Avoid provider	1
Offer something similar	1

## Comment themes for any other comments

197 people answered this question and 117 did not.

The top comment themes are:

- Clients will be worse off and/or need support (61 comments)
- Don't alter the scheme (45 comments)
- Personal assistant work should not be in jeopardy (41 comments)
- Surprise/disappointment at decision (34 comments)
- Criticism of care agency/agencies - general or specific (25 comments)

**Table 15: Any other comments and suggestions (all respondents)**

Comment theme topic	Number of comments
Clients will be worse off and/or need support	61
Don't alter the scheme	45
Personal assistant work should not be in jeopardy	41
Surprise/disappointment at decision	34
Criticism of care agency/agencies - general or specific	25
Accreditations should stay	18
More clarity needed on options	18
Criticism of communication of the change	14
Ongoing discussion/research is important	10
Training should stay	10
Criticism of motivations behind the change	9
Directory should stay	9
Negative impact on care system more widely	9
Suggestion for promotion/publicising vacancies	7

Comment on their personal situation	6
Replacement needs legal rigour	6
Agrees with proposal	5
Only replace with something better	5
Willingness to change	5
Criticism of system complexity	3
Ongoing trust is important	3
Keep more basic version running (option 1)	2
Positive unelaborated comment on the scheme	2
Build a new version (option 2)	1
Conclusions of the national report on employment status have been misrepresented	1
Criticism of local government	1
Model outlined for personal assistant work as members of the Personal Assistants at Home Network	1
Notes different levels/nature of personal assistant activity	1
Replacement needs clarity around costs	1
Replacement needs clarity around scope	1

## Appendix 3: Survey equalities data

People had the option of answering the ‘about you’ equality questions in the survey. For each question we have said how many chose not to answer.

**Table 16: Age**

	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	3	1%
25-34	15	5%
35-44	36	11%
45-54	63	20%
55-59	45	14%
60-64	37	12%
65+	66	21%
Prefer not to say	35	11%
Not answered	14	4%

**Table 17: Gender**

	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Male	56	18%
Female	226	72%
Non-binary	1	0.5%
Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to say	18	6%
Not answered	13	4%

## Gender identity

278 (89%) identify with the sex they were registered with at birth, while 1 person (0.5%) does not and consider themselves non-binary. 19 (6%) preferred not to say and 16 people (5%) did not answer.

**Table 18: Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
White British	262	84%
White Irish	1	0.5%
White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	1	0.5%
White Roma	0	0%
White other	10	3%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1	0.5%
Mixed White and Black African	0	0%
Mixed White and Asian	1	0.5%
Mixed other	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%
Asian or Asian British Chinese	1	0.5%
Asian other	0	0%
Caribbean	0	0%
African background	0	0%
Black, Black British, or Caribbean other	0	0%
Arab	0	0%
Other	1	0.5%
Prefer not to say	22	7%
Not answered	14	4%

Of those that said 'other', two said 'European', one said 'White European', one said 'British/European', one said 'White English European', and one said 'Dutch'.

**Table 19: Sexual orientation**

Sexuality	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Heterosexual/Straight	251	80%
Gay or Lesbian	6	2%
Bi/Bisexual	5	2%
Prefer to self-describe	2	1%
Prefer not to say	32	10%
Not answered	18	6%

Of those who answered, 'Prefer to self-describe', two people said 'Pansexual'.

**Table 20: Religion or belief**

Religion	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Christian	130	41%
Buddhist	6	2%
Hindu	0	0%
Jewish	3	1%
Muslim	0	0%
Sikh	0	0%
Other	3	1%
Philosophical belief	3	1%
No religion	120	38%
Prefer not to say	31	10%
Not answered	18	6%

11 people provided further details, with one for each of the following: Humanist, Jehovah's Witness, reincarnation, spiritual, Quaker/Buddhist, Pagan and New Age.

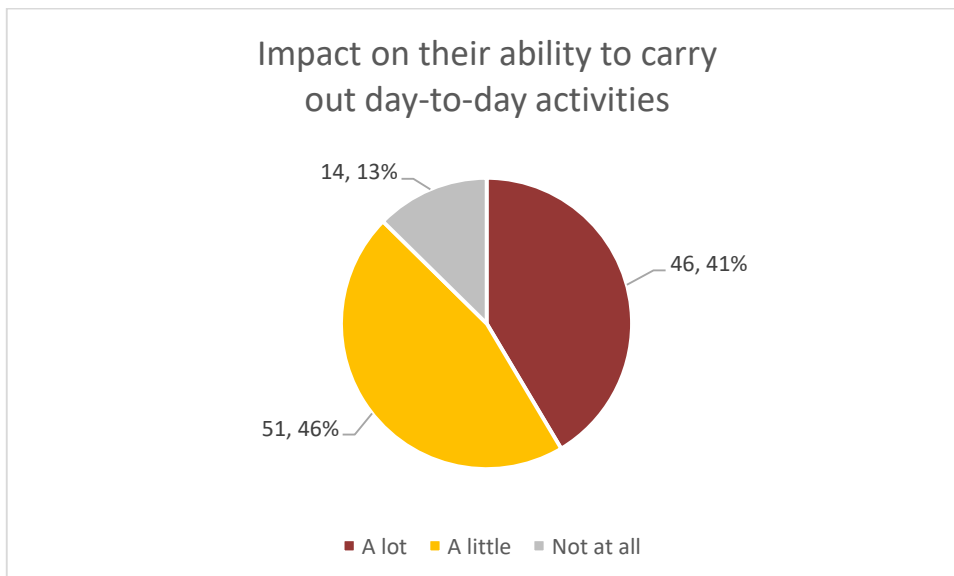


**Table 21: Physical or mental health condition**

Whether their condition is expected to last 12+ months	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Yes	111	35%
No	154	49%
Prefer not to say	32	10%
Not answered	17	5%

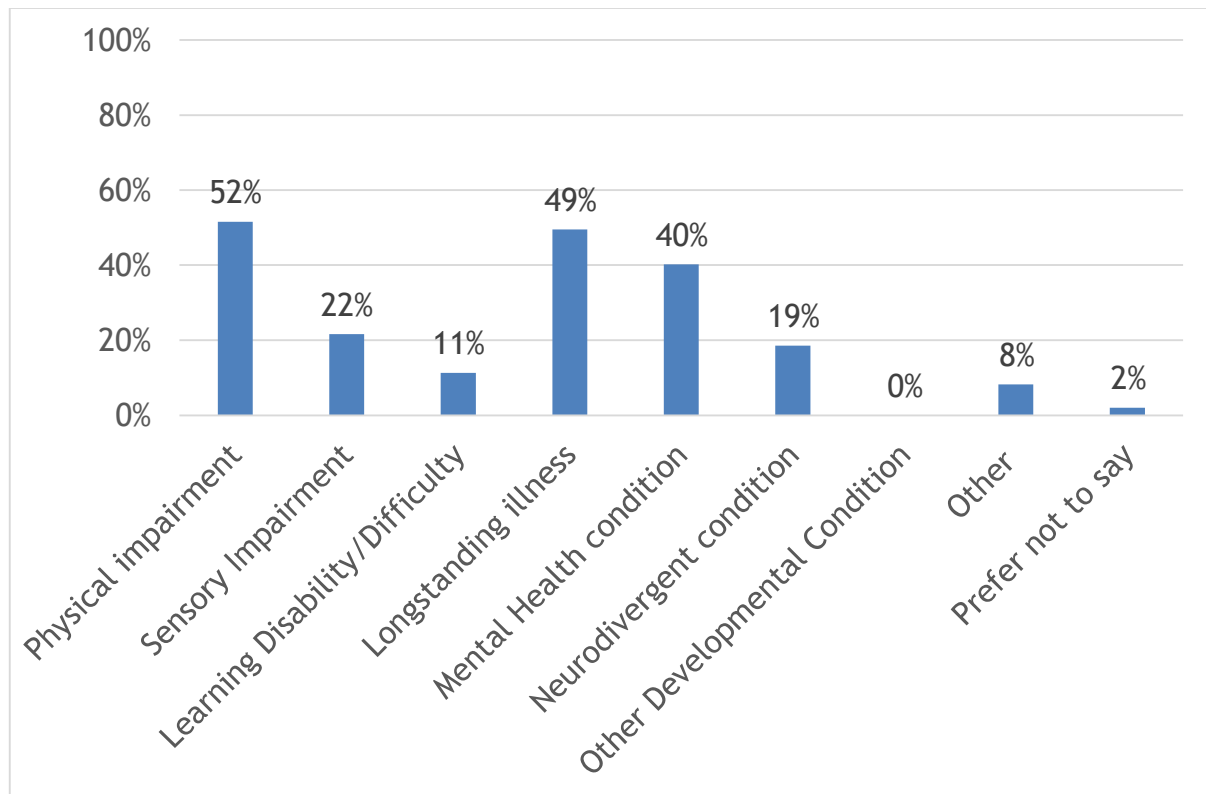
**Chart 12: Impact on their ability to carry day-to-day activities**

Those who have a physical or mental health condition expected to last more than 12 months were asked how it affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. 111 people answered the question, which was everyone who was eligible based on their answer to the previous question. No one chose 'prefer not to say'.



### Chart 13: Impairment type

The 97 respondents (31%) who said that their condition affects their ability to carry out day-to-day activities a little or a lot were asked what impairment types they had. The chart below shows the percentage for each impairment type, for those 97 respondents. Please note that respondents may have multiple impairments.



Of those who answered ‘Other’, the following comments were given:

- Sight impairment (2 people)
- Multiple Sclerosis (2 people)
- Cancer (2 people)
- Women’s health (1 person)
- Exhaustion (1 person)
- Anxiety and occasional back pain (1 person)
- Type 1 Diabetes (1 person)
- ANCA vasculitis (1 person)
- Hashimoto’s disease (1 person)
- Fibromyalgia, PTSD, and inability to walk (1 person)
- Epilepsy (1 person)

- Brain tumour (non-malignant) (1 person)
- Dementia (1 person)
- Old age (1 person)
- Migraine (1 person)

## Caring responsibilities

125 respondents (40%) do not provide care or support to family or friends, while 24 (8%) preferred not to say and 20 (6%) did not answer. 145 respondents (46%) look after someone, or give help or support to them, because of their long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age.

The tables below show the hours spent providing care and who they care for.

### Table 22: Hours of care or support provided

27 people who do not identify as carers have also answered this question.

Hours of care or support provided	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
9 or less a week	46	15%
10 to 19 a week	25	8%
20 to 34 a week	17	5%
35 to 49 a week	16	5%
50 or more a week	36	11%
Prefer not to say	30	10%
Not answered	2	1%

### Table 23: Type of person care or support provided to

22 people who did not identify as carers have also answered this question.

Type of person	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Child with special needs	25	8%
Friend	9	3%
Parent	49	16%
Partner/spouse	28	9%
Other family member	23	7%
Other	24	8%
Prefer not to say	23	7%
Not answered	2	1%

#### Armed forces service

6 respondents (2%) currently serve, or have previously served, in the UK armed forces, while 267 (85%) do not, 16 (5%) preferred not to say and 25 (8%) did not answer.

23 respondents (7%) are in a family or household with someone who currently serves, or has previously served, in the UK armed forces, while 248 (79%) are not, 13 (4%) preferred not to say and 30 (10%) did not answer.

## Table 24 - Postcode area

Eight people provided postcodes outside of East Sussex.

Area	Respondent number	Respondent percentage
Lewes	35	11%
Rother	22	7%
Hastings	31	10%
Eastbourne	70	22%
Wealden	35	11%
No postcode provided	109	35%

# Appendix 4: Feedback through other methods

26 pieces of feedback were provided through other methods, such as email, letters and over the phone. These were from:

- Personal assistant members of the scheme (9 responses)
- Residents who have used the scheme (6 responses)
- Residents who have not used the scheme (3 responses)
- Previous personal assistant members of the scheme (2 responses)
- Previous licence holders (2 responses)
- Personal assistant who has not applied to the scheme (1 response)
- Local Member of Parliament (1 response)
- Adult social care member of staff (1 response)
- Care organisation (1 response)

The top themes from these other forms of feedback are:

- Prefer to keep the scheme, as it has benefited clients and self-employed personal assistants (11 comments)
- Concern about lack of ongoing support for clients (11 comments)
- Believe personal assistants are preferable to care agencies, or are critical of the care providers which would replace the scheme (9 comments)
- Emphasise the need for legal rigour or precise definitions of self-employment in any replacement scheme (6 comments)

## Summary of other feedback

Where we spoke to people, we asked them some of the key questions from the consultation. The following questions summarise those results.

**Have you been affected by the decision to pause the Support with Confidence scheme?**

- No (1 person)
- Negatively, feeling less supported (1 person)

**How would you be affected if we stopped offering the Support with Confidence**

### **scheme and offered support in a different way instead?**

- Would need advice/support (2 people)
- Suggests Council offers a different form of support (1 person)
- Stresses value of PA support (1 person)
- Uncertain (1 person)

### **What would be important to you in the future?**

- Retain something similar (6 people)
- Support for clients (1 person)
- Support for personal assistants (1 person)
- Sufficient personal assistants (1 person)
- Advice/support for personal assistants (1 person)
- States does not know about the scheme 1 person)

### **What could we do to help people manage the transition to a new way of working?**

- Suggests Council runs a new service which has legal rigour (1 person)

The following comment themes are taken from feedback across phone calls, emails, and letters:

- Clients' welfare is important/will suffer (10 comments)
- Keep service as it benefits clients (9 comments)
- Personal assistants preferable to care agency (6 comments)
- Personal assistants' welfare/livelihood is important and/or will suffer (5 comments)
- Care system as a whole will worsen (4 comments)
- Poorly handled communication of proposal and consultation (4 comments)
- Critical of particular provider (3 comments)
- Focus should be on precisely defining self-employment (3 comments)
- New scheme with legal rigour (3 comments)

- Clients could easily access this scheme (2 comments)
- Keep service as it benefits personal assistants (2 comments)
- The national report on self-employment has been misinterpreted (2 comments)
- Personal assistants' preference is to maintain independence/self-employment (2 comments)
- Positive about Council staff in the current scheme (2 comments)
- Accreditation and checks are vital (1 comment)
- Can learn from initiatives outside East Sussex (1 comment)
- Critical of proposal to charge personal assistants in future (1 comment)
- Insufficient attention paid to impact on personal assistants (1 comment)
- Suggests establishing registry to maintain client confidence (1 comment)



# Appendix 5: Feedback from engagement meetings

The consultation was shared and discussed at dedicated discussion groups, at relevant engagement groups and with relevant teams. Approximately 151 people took part this way. The table on the next page summarises the activity and the views that we gathered. The main themes identified from the meetings are:

- Personal assistants who are members of Support with Confidence feel let down and that the effort invested in joining the scheme was a waste of time.
- Personal assistants value the accreditation and contingency planning provided by Support with Confidence.
- Personal assistants are unsure if they should be doing anything or adjusting how they work with current clients.
- More clarity is needed on the implications raised in the report regarding employment status.
- Employed personal assistant work does not pay enough and concern about the financial impact on self-employed personal assistants of the scheme closing.
- Concern about personal assistants refusing employed work and changing career paths, impacting on the availability of care for clients.
- Concern regarding clients becoming employers, especially those who do not wish to or are not capable of being one.
- Concern for vulnerable clients who need competent care with one consistent personal assistant.
- The Direct Payment Support Services are unhelpful and are often delayed in sourcing care for clients.

**Table 25: Summary of feedback from engagement meetings**

Date	Engagement group and attendee's	Agenda	Summary of feedback
02/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Senior Practitioners Forum</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Adult Social Care Senior Practitioners</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Unknown</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>No feedback was received during the meeting. Details about how to take part in the consultation were provided to all attendees.</p>
09/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG)</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> various IAG members</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b></p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p>	<p>Members were concerned about having access to the directory in the future.</p> <p>Members provided their thoughts on which groups would wish to hear about the scheme. These groups included: Groundwork South, Refugee Buddy Project, Diversity Resource International, Tech Resort, Black Butterfly, and Just Friends (these groups were contacted following this event).</p> <p>Members were concerned about how certain underrepresented groups will find good quality care and support services in the future.</p>

	Approximately 15	<p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	
10/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> East Sussex Personal Assistants Network - Rother</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Personal assistant members of Support with Confidence, Personal assistants who applied to Support with</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or</p>	<p>Personal assistants value doing the ‘right’ thing for their clients. This included concerns around if they needed to inform their clients about the responsibilities of being an employer, as well as concern about clients who would not want to become an employer.</p> <p>Personal assistants wanted clarity regarding the issues their employment status were causing, leading to the pause of the scheme. Clarification was given using information on and examples of unfettered substitution from the low-income tax reform website. Attendees were confused by the National Direct Payment Forum report, wanting guidance on how they can legally deliver services as a self-employed personal assistant.</p> <p>Two members had received confirmation from the Direct Payment Support Services that they could deliver their services to particular clients on a self-employed basis. Some personal assistants needed clarification about who the Direct Payment Support Services were and their role.</p> <p>Personal assistants shared what they valued most about the scheme,</p>

	<p>Confidence, and Support with Confidence Business members.</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately 20</p>	<p>feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training, DBS check support,</li> <li>• general advice/support from Support with Confidence staff,</li> <li>• conflict resolution support,</li> <li>• business support,</li> <li>• templates for contracts and,</li> <li>• finding work via the directory,</li> </ul> <p>all of which they would like to see offered in the new support.</p> <p>It was suggested that some social workers are still approaching personal assistants directly to arrange support for clients.</p> <p>Attendees asked for clarification on how other local authorities use the Support with Confidence scheme, as well as how they are approaching the issues raised in the consultation. It was explained to attendees that the Council pays for a licence to use the scheme framework and that the Council's scheme was developed to additionally include the referral service and contingency support (one attendee suggested the service should simply return to the original scheme before the referral and contingency elements were added). Furthermore, the group was informed that the Council will be approaching other local authorities to understand how they are approaching the issue, but ultimately the final decision will be down to the Council alone. Attendees understood it would be a councillor's decision, but it was highlighted that the consultation will inform the recommendations made to the councillor.</p>
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			<p>Other questions were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What members should do now, e.g., making changes to arrangements with their current clients (to which they were advised to not make any changes yet and that there is a need for more guidance on this area).</li> <li>• What will change and how direct payments work.</li> <li>• How it would work if they needed to be employed by multiple clients.</li> <li>• How direct payments are calculated and if this includes holiday pay (after explaining which, attendees appeared surprised that it is calculated using the minimum wage).</li> <li>• If client reviews will apply to clients who are asked to become an employer or self-employed personal assistants being asked to end their support.</li> </ul>
11/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Practice Managers Forum</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Adult Social Care Practice Managers</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p>	<p>Minimal feedback received during this session - some questions were raised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a client using direct payments increases their hours, can this be done with their existing self-employed personal assistant (we explained that clients can increase hours with existing self-employed personal assistants, but any arrangements with a new personal assistant or support regarding employment status would require a referral to the Direct Payment Support Services).</li> <li>• If a client using direct payments needs an additional personal assistant to cover increased hours that their current support cannot</li> </ul>

	24	<p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>accommodate, should the client be referred to Direct Payment Support Services to source a new personal assistant (we explained that yes, they would need to do so, as it is a new arrangement with a new personal assistant).</p>
13/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Direct Payment Champions</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Direct payment staff, Direct Payment Champions within Adult Social Care, and Adult Social Care staff who support direct payment work.</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>Staff within Adult Social Care are concerned about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-employed personal assistants not taking up employed work,</li> <li>• there not being enough work for self-employed personal assistants in the future, and</li> <li>• the pay rate for employed personal assistants not being enough to attract self-employed personal assistants.</li> </ul> <p>This could then lead to a shortage of personal assistants being available to support clients.</p> <p>Employment status was a common theme raised within the group, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need for personal assistants to receive training and support with understanding their employment status,</li> <li>• the HMRC Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST) tool is not sufficient to determine employment status, and</li> <li>• whether employment status of existing clients' personal assistants needs to be reviewed (we explained that the risk of destabilising</li> </ul>

	21.		<p>clients' current support arrangements is far greater than the risk of their personal assistants' employment status being correct, so this will not be considered at this time).</p> <p>Adult Social Care workers questioned whether they could refer clients to personal assistants they have worked with previously. They were advised that all personal assistant recruitment must be done by the Direct Payment Support Services. However, workers can suggest suitable personal assistants that the Direct Payment Support Services could contact. It was also highlighted that personal assistants can register with the Direct Payment Support Services to access client work.</p>
16/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> East Sussex Personal Assistants Network - Eastbourne</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Personal assistant members of Support with Confidence, personal assistants who applied to Support with Confidence, and</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or</p>	<p>The group felt strongly regarding their feelings towards the consultation and pausing of the scheme, expressing how much they valued the scheme's support.</p> <p>Personal assistants felt let down by the scheme's referral service stopping without any consultation and that the communication on this decision was delayed. Many felt that the decision to stop the entire scheme had already been made regardless of the consultation, and therefore some personal assistants are not completing the consultation survey for this reason.</p> <p>Some personal assistants were applicants to the scheme, who had given up work to become a self-employed personal assistant and gained little to no clients due to not reaching approval before the scheme paused. Many explained they don't want to be an employed personal assistant and asked if they should be looking for alternative employment. Employment rates would not be affordable, impacting their finances and the quality of their work would likely decline, as they will need to work more hours for the</p>

	<p>Support with Confidence business members.</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately 24</p>	<p>feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>role to be financially viable.</p> <p>It was felt that the issues raised for self-employed personal assistants in the National Direct Payment Forum report were not clear and better guidance and training is urgently needed on this. They were curious about what action other local authorities running the scheme, HMRC, the Care Quality Commission and the Employment Agency Standards are taking as a result of the report.</p> <p>Further questions were raised about whether someone can be employed both by a personal assistant business and an individual, and how they would receive referrals from the Direct Payment Support Services.</p> <p>It was questioned how certain organisations are supporting clients and personal assistants in a similar way to the paused Support with Confidence scheme, without being registered as an agency. People asked how the Direct Payment Support Services support differs from when the County Council ran the ‘matching service’ as part of the Support with Confidence scheme, considering the report highlighted you should be registered and meet requirements of the Care Quality Commission and Employment Agency Standards. Personal assistants asked to meet with the Direct Payment Support Services to learn more about how they support clients to find support.</p> <p>The following concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was the National Direct Payment Forum report sponsored by those who could gain from the implications raised about payroll and insurance,</li> <li>• will there be a future for self-employed personal assistance work,</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how they will afford their mortgages, outgoing costs of living, travel expenses etc., in an employed personal assistant role,</li> <li>• whether arrangements with their current clients will change at their next review and if they can get written confirmation that their current arrangements will not change (the Council will need to consider whether this is possible),</li> <li>• how self-funded clients will be informed about the report, consultation, and guidance on if they need to make changes to how their support is delivered, and</li> <li>• most clients will not want to, or be capable of being, an employer, forcing them to turn to care agencies instead. This will result in the loss of personalised support and consistency, due to agency support including multiple different workers.</li> </ul>
18/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Operations Managers Forum</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Adult Social Care Operations Managers</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Unknown</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>No feedback was gathered from this session. Details about how to take part in the consultation were provided to all attendees.</p>

23/10/2023	<p>Group: East Sussex Personal Assistants Network - Havens</p> <p>Attendees: Personal assistant members of Support with Confidence, personal assistants who applied to Support with Confidence, and Support with Confidence business members.</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately 15</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>Attendees felt the personal assistant contingency planning service in the scheme was pushed by the department and the use of this service was not their fault. There was a lot of discussion regarding who is in the wrong regarding the current support being delivered to clients by self-employed personal assistants, including who would be liable if an employment status case went to court. Attendees requested to see details of previous tribunal cases that have gone to court regarding personal assistant support.</p> <p>How employment status is assessed by the Direct Payment Support Services was discussed, including if personal assistants and clients had input on this to decide the best arrangement, as well as how the direct payments are set up. It was also asked if current direct payment clients' support arrangements will be reviewed alongside personal assistants' employment status (attendees assured no changes for client arrangements are currently planned). Discussed that private and self-funded client arrangements do not need to be changed as the Council is not involved with them.</p> <p>A clear theme emerged regarding the value of the accreditation process to personal assistants on the scheme and the importance of having this in the future. Whatever support replaces the paused scheme needs to be robust, not vulnerable to legal implications and provide assurance of good quality and safe personal assistants.</p> <p>It was felt by some individuals that the Council should have consulted about the decision to pause the scheme following the report.</p> <p>The following concerns were raised:</p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Care Quality Commission will not want to regulate personal assistants,</li><li>• should personal assistants be doing anything differently regarding contingency arrangements in place with their current clients (we advised they do not need to make any changes at the moment),</li><li>• do Independent Lives offer home care services and if so, this could take work away from personal assistants (attendees were informed that the Council does not contract Independent Lives to provide home care),</li><li>• if the training for personal assistants would still be on offer (attendees were informed that all courses apart from those delivered by Support with Confidence will remain on offer),</li><li>• how they manage being employed by multiple clients (one personal assistant mentioned that HMRC had advised it would not be appropriate to be employed by all of her current clients),</li><li>• the council are stopping the scheme to save money and because personal assistant rates are too high (attendees were assured this was not the case and the legal implications from the report were highlighted),</li><li>• what implications there are for personal assistants who are both employed and self-employed,</li><li>• a significant number of clients will be at risk if self-employed personal assistants stop delivering their services as many personal assistants will not take employed work. In addition, self-employed personal assistants offer a more flexible service such as additional</li></ul>
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			<p>hours at an agreed rate to cover the costs in order to meet the client's need, which is not possible from an employed personal assistant,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Council lack understanding of what personal assistants do, and</li> <li>• the loss of work personal assistants have experienced since the scheme paused and the impact of no support from the scheme to find clients over the entire consultation period.</li> </ul>
30/10/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Support with Confidence Governance Board</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Support with Confidence Governance Board members from across Adult Social Care and East Sussex County Council teams</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b></p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or</p>	<p>The pausing of the scheme resulted in delays putting direct payments in place. In addition, people are now choosing not to use direct payments because of the process involved.</p> <p>It has been taking months for the Direct Payment Support Services to source personal assistants. It is felt they are not equipped to work with the system and don't have the network resulting in more work for practitioners in the Council.</p> <p>Training provided for Support with Confidence personal assistants has had poor attendance since the pause of the scheme, despite being fully booked which has had a negative impact on the training team running them. In addition, some personal assistants have been approaching the training team staff with questions about the scheme pausing, which is not their responsibility to be answering. It was explained to attendees that the communications for the pausing of the scheme do state that training can continue.</p> <p>The Council's Support with Confidence team has been reduced in size,</p>

8	feedback regarding the consultation.	<p>with some staff being redeployed to other roles.</p> <p>There is concern regarding what amount of direct payments will be needed to pay for personal assistants and what personal assistant availability will be like, with the hourly rate for personal assistants increasing. It was discussed that a workshop will be run to explore and model how the Council ends up paying for care.</p> <p>It was also mentioned that there has been a long-standing issue with pay, particularly for clients with complex needs who end up paying more to keep a personal assistant.</p> <p>There have been several complaints come through about the pausing of the scheme.</p> <p>There is concern for clients who depend on forming strong relationships and trust with one or more consistent personal assistants. Therefore, the vulnerability of these clients must be considered in any future support offer and how to mitigate the impact on those who over time lose the personal assistants they have sourced from the scheme. There was concern about how many direct payment clients are currently using self-employed personal assistants incorrectly. There is a need to ensure their care packages/arrangements are not destabilised.</p> <p>Lots of referrals have been recirculated as personal assistants are at capacity and there are not enough to fill the current number of referrals, in particular referrals for clients with more complex needs. Many personal assistants are being offered employed work which they do not wish to take on.</p> <p>Personal assistants chosen by family members based on cultural or</p>
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			<p>language preferences was discussed, including if the Direct Payment Support Services will lead these people through HMRC's rules and regulations.</p> <p>There was concern regarding the impact of being cited in the National Direct Payments Forum report as endorsing incorrect employment status and if this will affect any future accreditation offer. It was discussed that research is being done into other companies supporting personal assistants' processes and policies. Could there be potential for an external body to accredit businesses and be associated with a local authority.</p> <p>A new support offer will need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be co-produced with stakeholders,</li><li>• quickly find specialist care for people with specialist needs,</li><li>• be able to match the skills of the personal assistants to the needs of the client,</li><li>• be responsible for getting the process of matching personal assistants to clients mobilised,</li><li>• acknowledge that although the Care Act states that by taking a direct payment you are in control of your care and therefore an employer, this does not resolve the issues for people who cannot manage being an employer,</li><li>• provide business support for personal assistants,</li><li>• have a directory to choose support from,</li></ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use an accreditation process to ensure support is safe and competent, and</li> <li>• ensure that personal assistants are provided with training and development.</li> </ul> <p>It was mentioned that several support workers and organisations want to be kept up to date and informed on what the new support offer will look like.</p> <p>Questions were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the implications identified from the report regarding employment status and wider scheme activities that led to pausing the scheme?</li> <li>• What other local authorities use the scheme and how they are responding to the report?</li> <li>• Do the Direct Payment Support Services have a timescale for processing cases?</li> </ul>
N/A	<p><b>Group:</b> Involvement Matters Team</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Number of Attendees:</b> N/A</p>	Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.	<p>Following an offer to attend their meeting to talk about the consultation, members of the Involvement Matters Team did not feel they could share views on the consultation, as they have no awareness or experience of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>It was asked however if there was Easy Read information about the Support with Confidence service available.</p>

		<p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	
06/11/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> Support with Confidence virtual engagement session</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Support with Confidence members &amp; applicants</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> 4</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or</p>	<p>The group was informed of the recent update from Action for People that the Support with Confidence brand is being withdrawn. There was significant concern about what will happen if the Support with Confidence scheme ceases. Both applicants and members have given time and effort to go through the process of joining the scheme already. Concerns included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• would they have to rely on the Direct Payment Support Services to find work,</li> <li>• will applicants who finished their training but did not get onto the scheme directory before it paused be penalised,</li> <li>• difficulty in competing with care agencies as a self-employed personal assistant due to the lower rates,</li> <li>• how will vulnerable clients find self-employed personal assistants based on their preferences without the scheme,</li> </ul>



		<p>feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the scheme provided confidence and assurance for personal assistants caring for someone with complex needs, as they have the support and training from the scheme’s staff,</li> <li>• using the Direct Payment Support Services will take away personal assistants’ control over which clients they see and the rate that they are paid (it was explained how the Direct Payment Support Services work, including how they will support clients to source a personal assistant of their choice legally, whether this be agency or self-employed staff, who have had their employment status checked),</li> <li>• there will be a financial burden and pressure as a self-employed personal assistant if we can’t find work, which has a knock-on effect on our wellbeing, and</li> <li>• personal assistants will struggle to develop their skills and provide a high standard of care without access to training (it was explained that retaining training will be part of the proposed alternative support offer).</li> </ul> <p>Other questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will happen to their current direct payment clients?</li> <li>• Who made the decision to close the scheme?</li> <li>• What are the specific implications of supporting personal assistants who are self-employed?</li> <li>• Could the Council run a similar scheme? (It was explained the Support with Confidence scheme is now being closed nationally.)</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could the Council become a regulated agency themselves?</li> <li>• Can the existing directory continue? (It was explained that the directory will remain until the scheme has closed at the end of December.)</li> <li>• Why has it only now been identified that there are issues with employment status if the scheme has been running since 2010? (It was explained that the report only recently highlighted the issue with employment status.)</li> </ul>
14/11/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> 1:1 session with Adult Social Care operations staff member</p> <p><b>Attendee:</b> Resource Officer for Older People's Mental health team</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or</p>	<p>Adult Social Care staff are expressing the difficulty they are having with the Direct Payment Support Services referral process for clients, including how long it takes. The new process ultimately results in delays in provision of care or finding no care at all for clients.</p> <p>Incidents are occurring where staff at the Direct Payment Support Services are not fully competent about assessing employment status, resulting in delays. If it is advised that a client should take on a self-employed worker, it is not always appropriate for the client to take on the role of an employer, yet the only alternative is agency care which itself is not felt to be appropriate for the client either.</p> <p>People Plus are difficult for social workers to engage with, as they have stated they have no role to play with self-employed personal assistants and will not accept recommendations from social workers.</p> <p>There is concern that the Adult Social Care market will become overwhelmed if there are not enough personal assistants. It was suggested that several personal assistants are leaving the sector for a different</p>

		feedback regarding the consultation.	career. It is important for adult social care staff to be aware of how employment status is assessed. This could mitigate clients being referred to the Direct Payment Support Services if they are likely to be told they should be an employer, but they do not want to, or are not able to, be one.
22/11/2023	<p><b>Group:</b> East Sussex Personal Assistants Network - Havens</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Personal Assistant members of Support with Confidence, personal assistants who applied to Support with Confidence, and Support with Confidence business</p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p> <p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>Members expressed the value of the training that the Support with Confidence scheme offered. The training offer for the new support was discussed, including what training from the old scheme would remain and what would need to be reviewed, e.g., personal assistant specific training. It was explained that business and paperwork support as well as DBS checks will also be reviewed.</p> <p>Personal assistants were unsure on what they should do, in order to continue getting new clients and work. It was explained they should start with approaching the Direct Payment Support Services providers, People Plus and Independent Lives, to register themselves on their list of personal assistants. Some personal assistants had not heard of the Direct Payment Support Services until this meeting, expressing that they are not well advertised and that they did not understand the referral process.</p> <p>Members wanted clarification around the tax implications the report raised. They did not understand why HMRC trusted other workers, such as builders, to declare costs but not personal assistants. It was explained that the implication is around employment status and that there is a call for more clarity on this nationally. At the core of the issue is making sure that employment status with a personal assistant's client is correct. Furthermore, employment status needs to be checked on a case-by-case basis. HMRC and the Care Quality Commission are aware of the Support</p>

	<p>members.</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b> Approximately 12</p>		<p>with Confidence scheme and the issues raised.</p> <p>Attendees felt frustrated about the significant mistakes that have been made, which were highlighted by the report. Self-employed personal assistants feel let down having built their business around the scheme and that this consultation will not benefit them.</p> <p>Other questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the Council be bidding for the ‘Accelerating Reform Fund’?</li> <li>• Do self-funding referrals go to the Direct Payment Support Services? (It was explained that any eligible needs referrals will go to them.)</li> <li>• Will clients be encouraged to hire an employed personal assistant? (It was explained that employment status checks determine whether a contract is an employed or self-employed role, but the client has the final say on if, and who, they employ.)</li> <li>• Will Direct Payment Support Services determine the pay rate? (It was explained that if you are self-employed, you will determine the hourly rate.)</li> </ul>
28/11/2023	<p><b>Attendees:</b> Personal assistant members of Support with Confidence</p> <p><b>Number of attendees:</b></p>	<p>Provide an overview of the National Direct Payment Forum report and resulting pause of the Support with Confidence scheme.</p>	<p>Members questioned why the Support with Confidence scheme could not drop the parts of the scheme causing issues (referrals and contingency planning), reverting back to the original support offer. This point was acknowledged as a reasonable question but with the withdrawal of the brand by Action for People, a new way of working is needed.</p> <p>Members of the scheme felt let down after the time and effort taken to join the scheme and go through the accreditation process. Had they not been part of the scheme, they would not be affected by the National</p>

	Approximately 7	<p>Provide an overview of the consultation to close the scheme.</p> <p>Explore what support could be provided moving forward.</p> <p>Address any questions or feedback regarding the consultation.</p>	<p>Direct Payment Forum report.</p> <p>Members felt frustrated that they are the ones who did not know about the report but are the ones dealing with the consequences, despite being ‘honest and straight’. However, one member mentioned that the issue raised in the report is one they have been aware of since the 1990s. It was also mentioned by a member that the sponsors of the report benefit more from employed personal assistants over self-employed, therefore questioning the motivations behind the report itself.</p> <p>Some members expressed concerns about the political motivations of those councillors making the final decision. In addition, some were concerned the motivations behind making changes were driven by saving money.</p> <p>Going forward, personal assistants felt strongly about being involved in the design of the new support offer, expressing they felt mistreated. They felt the new offer will need to include training, accreditation, and DBS checks.</p> <p>The pay rate as an employed personal assistant, and the financial burden this would have, was a clear concern among members. As a self-employed personal assistant, Direct Payment Support Services would need to support expenses when travelling between jobs.</p> <p>There is concern about the backlog of referrals sitting with the Direct Payment Support Services and the speed at which the Support with Confidence scheme was stopped, with a lack of interim support. In addition, although personal assistants are being told not to change their current arrangements, they are worried how long this will be the case.</p> <p>Other local authorities were discussed, including:</p>
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