

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

<p>Health and care system</p>	<p>The service has co-located staff working in statutory services' teams (5 District and Boroughs and Children's Services) which enables frontline workers to undertake close joint working with people and share resources and knowledge to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>Adult Social Care</p> <p>2,230 people were referred to the service by Adult Social Care in the 12 months Oct 23 – Sept 24, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 490 people referred due to Mental Health problems (anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, schizoaffective disorders, personality disorders); • 336 people referred directly from the Dementia Support Team (over 60's); • 132 people referred due to high levels of vulnerability due to frailty (over 60's) – (frailty relates to the adult's mental and physical resilience, or their ability to bounce back and recover from events like illness and injury). <p>Of these, 51% were aged under 60 and 49% aged 60+.</p> <p>55% of those referred were supported to remain in their existing accommodation whilst the remainder were supported to identify and/or move into new accommodation. They were also supported with their finances, access to health services and with their wellbeing and staying safe.</p> <p>Statutory Children's Services</p> <p>603 people were referred to the service by Statutory Children's Services (referrals from Children's Services are when the risk to children in the household is high), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 families at direct risk of homelessness; • 120 families already experiencing homelessness (families living in temporary accommodation, living in unsecure accommodation); • 101 people at risk of domestic violence. <p><i>"At a time when the need to prevent homelessness and ensure children, young people and families have access to stable housing has never been higher, a reduction in the capacity of this service to support individuals and families with housing related support would have a worrying and far-reaching impact across children's services and the outcomes for the families and individuals we work with. It would most certainly have an impact on the opportunity to carry out preventative work with families who are facing eviction and housing issues including rent arrears and housing related debt and would lead to more families and children facing homelessness and the negative outcomes that come with this for both parents and children."</i> (Children's Services Managers)</p> <p>Health</p> <p><i>"Health and mental health services: acute services are reporting delays with discharges relating to housing needs."</i></p> <p><i>Housing colleagues have been supporting the development of Integrated Community Teams and Mental Health Neighbourhood Teams, it had been</i></p>
--------------------------------------	--

	<p><i>envisaged that links to the housing-related floating support service would form a key opportunity to ensure housing is part of the core offer in each area.” (Heds of Housing)</i></p> <p><i>“There is potential for this to have an impact on A&E services, which are already under pressure and at capacity, in the absence of the current support offer.</i></p> <p><i>Key considerations in regard to the support offer from this service include;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Access to safe and secure housing is a key determinant of health.</i> <i>• Across the county there are increasing numbers of people who do not have access to housing or whose housing is temporary.</i> <i>• Housing prices are 11x the average salary in East Sussex (ONS Housing Affordability, 2023 data).</i> <i>• 5% of East Sussex residents are either fairly or very dissatisfied with the quality of their housing, particularly renters, 18-34s and single parents.</i> <i>• 2.7% of households had fewer rooms than needed for the occupants, classified as overcrowded. Census, 2021.</i> <p><i>Noting the above, this proposal has the potential to materially impact the health and safety of a number of future service users across East Sussex and present a greater risk to many becoming homeless. There is also a strong risk that cutting funding will destabilise the system which is not set up nor has the expertise to cope with the influx of people in need of support.</i></p> <p><i>There could be a high risk that the proposals will adversely impact population health and healthcare outcomes and increase health inequalities.” (NHS Sussex)</i></p> <p><i>“The proposal to reduce funding for the Floating Support Service from over £4.3 million to £500,000 a year (88.5%) will have a significant impact on people who are at risk of homelessness. Many of those who use this service have been referred by housing colleagues in Borough and District Councils and may struggle to maintain their tenancies without this support, which may return pressures to Adult Social Care services.” (Healthwatch)</i></p> <p><i>“This is a person-centred service for vulnerable people who are not able to access other similar services. This service is skilled in engaging individuals whose conditions and circumstances make it difficult for them to engage with other services. The older people served by this support tend to have complex and enduring mental health problems, cognitive difficulties, co-morbid health issues and are socially isolated. They often experience problems with debt and are struggling to navigate other systems of support for housing and benefits. Unmanaged debt is known to be a risk factor for suicide. Clinicians believe that the people who tend to use this service would struggle to access alternatives.” (SPFT)</i></p>
Housing system	<p><i>“The Housing-related Floating Support Service is an integral part of local provision and meeting statutory duties in relation to homelessness prevention. Due to the high demand for homelessness services, there will not be capacity for local housing authorities to continue these interventions. Reducing these services will result in increased demand for statutory homelessness and care services, and a further rise in the number of people living in temporary accommodation and the length of time before people can secure move on accommodation.</i></p>

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

The county is an area of high housing costs and shortage of affordable accommodation, so the impacts of increased spending on addressing the issues outlined above are likely to be significant.” (Resident)

Feedback from residents

“I find this proposal to cut funding morally reprehensible. When there’s a tough decision to be made it’s always the vulnerable and the poor who get hit the hardest. Often dealing with council paperwork is bewildering and having help in getting what one is entitled to is invaluable.”

“In my experience this wonderful service is Vital. They literally saved my life. I think one shouldn’t underestimate the importance of their work for people in crisis, like i was. I could not have managed to survive without their expert help and patient advice and support.”

“The Floating Support Service has been a lifeline for us during extremely challenging times. They provided essential support and guidance when we needed it most, helping us navigate difficult situations and access resources that improved our quality of life.”

“There is no other service where a client would be contacted within 24 hours of starting the service and had a support session either over the telephone or face to face within a week of that contact.”

“This service is pivotal to East Sussex as it provides a home visiting service to vulnerable clients in order to prevent homelessness. Many clients do not have access to the internet, especially the elderly, and being able to visit them at home to support them with important paperwork and access the benefits system ensures inclusion, income maximisation and tenancy sustainment.”

“We would never have managed the housing forms without the support of the support worker.”

“They also helped us to fill in very difficult forms to claim what otherwise we may not be able to do by ourselves.”

“ASC require the support of the specialist teams such as the East Sussex Floating Support Service to be able to offer a comprehensive and knowledgeable service to our clients. ASC CANNOT take on this role as well, we are over run and running on empty as it is.”

“Everyone I knew who worked for the service was kind, caring, knowledgeable and just wanted to help people.”

“Many clients will no longer have bespoke, knowledgeable support with their housing and/or financial needs which in turn is likely to increase the disadvantages they are already facing.”

“88.5% might as well be 100%, it won't be indistinguishable. And if anyone thinks that these are 'savings', just wait and see what time bombs you've just set off.”

“If it 88% cut you may as well say it is a closed service as the wait list will be enormous.”

“The proposed cut in funding is far to large! It seems to us that if this goes ahead you may as well do away with this service.”

“I couldn't of coped if I did not have the support of BHT.”

“Without this service I do no know what we would have done!”

“The Floating Support Service brings badly needed professional help that just isn't available elsewhere.”

	<p><i>"BHT are essential to keeping the homeless alive and feeling supported. I cannot express adequately how much BHT have helped me and continue to do so. I would probably be dead to be totally honest without the support and guidance from BHT and them fighting and working for my safety."</i></p> <p><i>"Service works with children as well as parents. Feedback from 10 year old (via staff member as she is at school) was sofa surfing then in temporary accommodation with her mum. Now they have their own accommodation and she has her own bedroom. Mum has been supported into work and is much happier. This has all made her life much better."</i></p>
--	---