

Appendix 4: Consultation results report

East Sussex Floating Support Service

About this consultation

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

Taking part in the consultation

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

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

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

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

Who took part in the consultation

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

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

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

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

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

Key messages

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

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

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

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

Sample quotes

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

Organisation comments:

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

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

Individual comments:

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

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

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

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

Results summary across all methods

Views on the proposal

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

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

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

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

Other common themes are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Potential impacts of the proposal

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

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

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

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

Other common impacts are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Suggestions

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

Survey:

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

Emails etc:

The top suggestions were:

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

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

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

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

Other topics

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

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

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

Service specific questions

We asked additional service-specific questions in this survey.

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

The other top themes were:

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

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

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

The other top themes were:

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

Charts and tables

Survey responses including about you information

1) Are you completing the survey as:

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

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

If you ticked 'other' please provide details here:

There were 65 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

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

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

Not Answered	6	0.44%
--------------	---	-------

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were 890 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There were 880 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 531 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

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

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

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

There were 616 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About you equality questions

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

What age are you?

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

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

What is your gender?

There were 993 responses to this part of the question.

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

Self-described gender:

There were 5 responses to this part of the question:

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

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

There were 990 responses to this part of the question.

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

Gender identity:

There were 8 responses to this part of the question:

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

What is your ethnic group?

There were 986 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

Other:

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

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

There were 972 responses to this part of the question.

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

Self-described sexual orientation:

There were 17 responses to this part of the question.

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

What is your religion or belief?

There were 963 responses to this part of the question.

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

Other religion:

There were 47 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 969 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 818 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 638 responses to this part of the question.

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

Other:

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

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

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

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

There were 954 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 965 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 959 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

Hours of care given a week

There were 308 responses to this part of the question.

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

Who you care for

There were 328 responses to this part of the question.

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

If you answered 'other', please explain here:

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

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

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

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

There were 952 responses to this part of the question.

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

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

There were 970 responses to this part of the question.

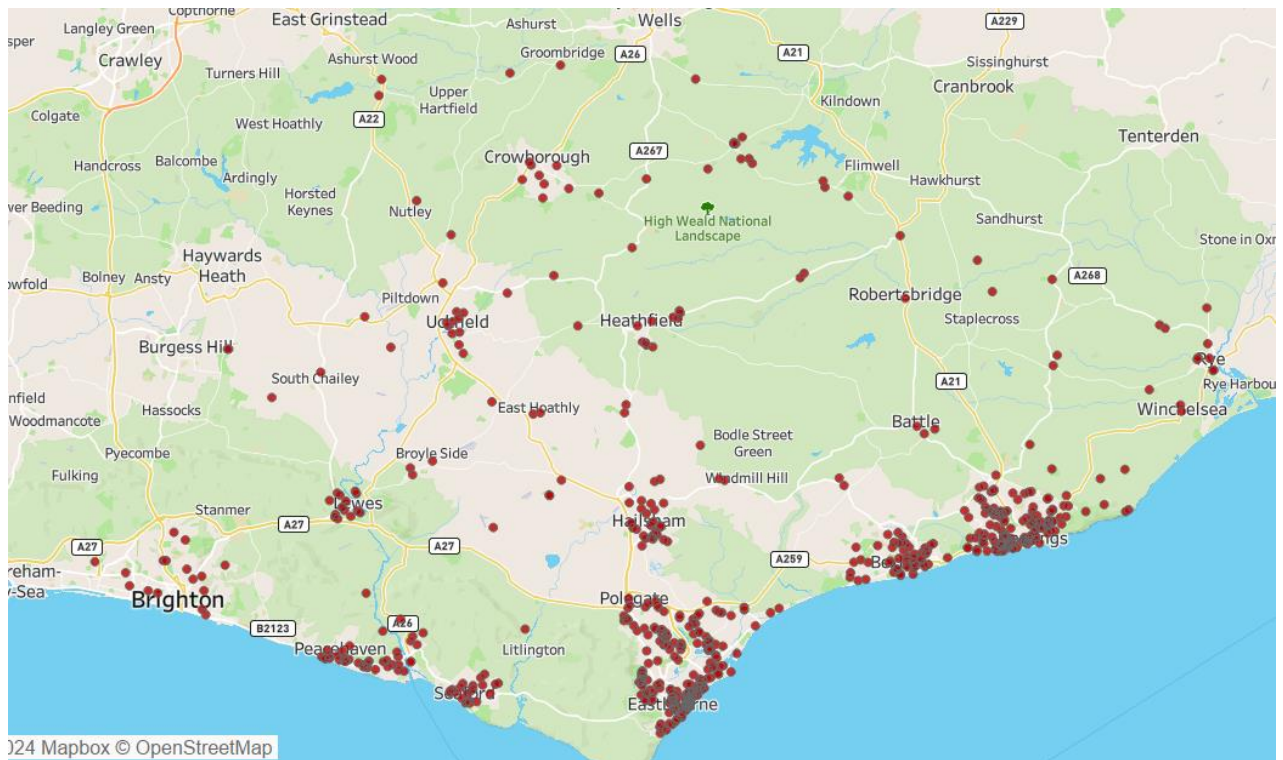
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	56	4.13%
No	904	66.72%
Prefer not to say	10	0.74%
Not Answered	385	28.41%

Please tell us your postcode:

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

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

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



Other feedback by email etc

Floating Support Service consultation responses

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

The organisations who submitted a response are:

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

- Wealden Citizens Advice
- Wealden District Council

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

Views

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

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

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	10

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

Impact

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

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

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

Suggestions

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

Other comments

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

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

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

Overall consultation responses

Responses addressing all 11 consultations combined

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

The organisations who submitted a response are:

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

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

Views

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

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

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	1

Impact

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

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

Suggestions

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

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

Other comments

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

Consultation meetings

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

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

Themes from the Newhaven meeting

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

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

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

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

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

Themes from the St Leonards meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Themes from the Bexhill meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Themes from the Polegate meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Themes from the Eastbourne meeting

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

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

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

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

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

Themes from the online meeting

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

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

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

Most people who use the service are referred by statutory organisations, so if the service is reduced that will increase the pressure on those organisations. People would be homeless without the service and there would be a risk of an increase in suicides as a result.