Appendix F

Floating support consultation 2016

Report

Lancashire County Council

www.lancashire.gov.uk

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1. Executive summary

This report summarises the responses to Lancashire County Council's floating support consultation 2016.

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were sent to all service users and made available at floating support services. An online version of the questionnaire could also be accessed from www.lancashire.gov.uk. Lancashire County Council currently provides all of the funding which is used to deliver the county wide floating support service. As part of the savings, the county council is proposing to stop funding the floating support service by March 2017.

The fieldwork ran for twelve weeks from 11 April until 10 July 2016. Questionnaires were sent to 1,200 service users. In total, 81 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 7%.

A separate questionnaire was sent to Lancashire's 12 district councils, Calico and stakeholders. We received a response from the provider Calico, two stakeholders and seven district councils.

1.1 Key findings

Provider

Impact on service users:

- Exacerbation of mental health issues with a potential of fewer opportunities to regain/retain independence.
- Increase in homelessness and associated social and health difficulties.
- It will impact on client's abilities to overcome issues that stop them being safe and more productive citizens.
- Without help, the chance to change for individuals and families is restricted.
- Service users with learning disabilities and literacy issues will struggle to maintain benefits, housing and other crucial correspondence without the help to complete forms, attend appointments and engage effectively with other services thus increasing homelessness and need for response from statutory agencies.

Impact on organisation:

- 57 members of staff are at risk of redundancy if no funding is available for floating support.

Impact on the wider community:

- shift the volume and cost of providing support to Lancashire's most vulnerable people to other budget-pressured and in-demand public services (housing, social care, health, mental health teams, Drug & Alcohol Teams, A&E departments, public health, criminal justice, voluntary sector provision)
- increase anti-social behaviour and crime
- reduce access to benefits

Stakeholders and districts

Impact on services users;

- an increase in homelessness/accommodation issues (7),
- vulnerable people will no longer receive support/less support (7); and
- an increase in debt (6).

Impact on their organisation:

- increased demand on districts for housing advice and support (6); and
- increased homelessness (5).

Impact on the wider community:

- increased community safety issues /local crime rates will increase (7); and
- increased pressure /demand on other services (GP's, Acute, Social care, 3rd sector) (7).

Services users

- Respondents were most likely to say that they receive or have received: support to claim the right benefits (62%); support to find, set up and maintain their home (56%); and support to learn to budget properly and pay bills (51%). Respondents were least likely to say that they receive or have received support to get a job (9%) and support to access training and education (12%).
- Respondents were most likely to say that: support to claim the right benefits (75%); support to learn to budget properly and pay bills (70%); support to find, set up and maintain your home (69%); support with managing a short-term personal crisis (66%); and support to improve mental health (60%) are important[1] aspects of the service to them.
- Respondents were most likely to say that if this service ended then they would: seek help from CAB (Citizen Advice Bureau) or another advice agency (58%); seek help about housing from their local district council (57%); stay in unsafe/inappropriate accommodation (53%); seek help from family/friends (48%).
- Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) said that they would struggle/won't cope without support and over a fifth (22%) praised the support that they had previously received.

[1] Very important and fairly important

2. Introduction

Lancashire County Council is required to make savings of £262m by 2020/21. This extremely difficult financial position is the result of continued cuts in Government funding, rising costs and rising demand for our key services.

Lancashire County Council currently provides all of the funding which is used to deliver the county wide floating support service. As part of the savings, the county council is proposing to stop funding the floating support service by March 2017.

Floating support is a free service which provides short-term visiting support to people with problems that are linked to housing.

Although we are not yet clear what this will mean for the floating support service run by Calico, there is a possibility for any or some of the following to take place:

- the service ends;
- the service continues with major changes (eg reduction in number of staff, new types of support services); or
- the service continues with little change as the provider has managed to obtain other funding (eg from charities not Supporting People).

Calico is aware of the proposal to end funding for the floating support service. It is currently looking into how it can continue to deliver valuable services if the funding from Lancashire County Council is withdrawn and it will be consulting with users of the service during 2016 once the funding situation is finalised.

As the floating support service only delivers short-term support this proposal might not affect service users directly. However, it could affect other people who may need to use this service after March 2017. We need to understand what might happen if the funding for the floating support service ends.

3. Methodology

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were sent to all service users and made available at floating support services. An online version of the questionnaire could also be accessed from www.lancashire.gov.uk.

The fieldwork ran for twelve weeks from 11 April until 10 July 2016. Paper copies of the questionnaire, with a reply envelope, were sent to the home addresses of 1,200 service users. In total, 81 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 7% which is very low. This is potentially due to to the very short term nature of the floating support service in many cases.

The questionnaire included an explanation that it should only be completed by people who are currently receiving the floating support service provided by Calico or people who received the floating support service in the past when it was provided by Calico or Disc. This questionnaire was designed to help us understand what support people receive, how important that support is to them and what they think the impact on them will be of the proposal to end funding for the floating support service.

A separate online questionnaire was made available to Lancashire's 12 district councils, Calico and stakeholders. This questionnaire was designed to give district councils, providers and stakeholders an opportunity to outline what they think the impact of the proposal will be on service users, on their respective organisations and on the wider community.

Summary of provider and stakeholder responses have been provided in the main findings section of this report. Further details of their responses are presented in appendix 2 and appendix 3.

3.1 Limitations

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

4. Main consultation findings

4.1 Provider response:

4.1.1 Summary of response

Below is a summary of the response from Calico. The organisation's full response is given in appendix 2.

Calico is currently exploring its options with key stakeholders to establish if it can continue to provide floating support. However, if alternative funding is not secured the service will cease in March.

Impact on service users

- Exacerbation of mental health issues with a potential of fewer opportunities to regain/retain independence.
- Increase in homelessness and associated social and health difficulties.
- It will impact on client's abilities to overcome issues that stop them being safe and more productive citizens.
- Without help, the chance to change for individuals and families is restricted.
- Service users with learning disabilities and literacy issues will struggle to maintain benefits, housing and other crucial correspondence without the help to complete forms, attend appointments and engage effectively with other services thus increasing homelessness and need for response from statutory agencies.

Impact on organisation

57 members of staff are at risk of redundancy if no funding is available for floating support.

Impact on wider community

The withdrawal of supporting people funding will have far reaching consequences for all communities. There is the likelihood that the absence of floating support will:

- shift the volume and cost of providing support to Lancashire's most vulnerable people to other budget-pressured and in-demand public services (housing, social care, health, mental health teams, Drug & Alcohol Teams, A&E departments, public health, criminal justice, voluntary sector provision);
- increase anti-social behaviour and crime;
- reduce access to benefits;
- increase sanctions on benefits; and
- increase the potential for homelessness.

4.2 Stakeholders and district responses

Two stakeholders (Pendle women's refuge and Together Housing) and six district councils (Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Pendle and South Ribble) responded to the consultation. The main issues raised in their responses are summarised below. The top mentions from respondents are presented with the number of stakeholders/districts that they relate to shown in brackets.

Further details of stakeholder and district responses are presented in appendix 3.

4.2.1 Key findings

The top mentions from respondents for the impact on services users were;

- an increase in homelessness/accommodation issues (7),
- vulnerable people will no longer receive support/less support (7); and
- an increase in debt (6).

The top mentions from respondents for the impact on their organisation were:

- increased demand on districts for housing advice and support (6); and
- increased homelessness (5).

The top mentions from respondents for the impact on the wider community were:

- increased community safety issues /local crime rates will increase (7); and
- increased pressure /demand on other services (GP's, Acute, Social care, 3rd sector) (7).

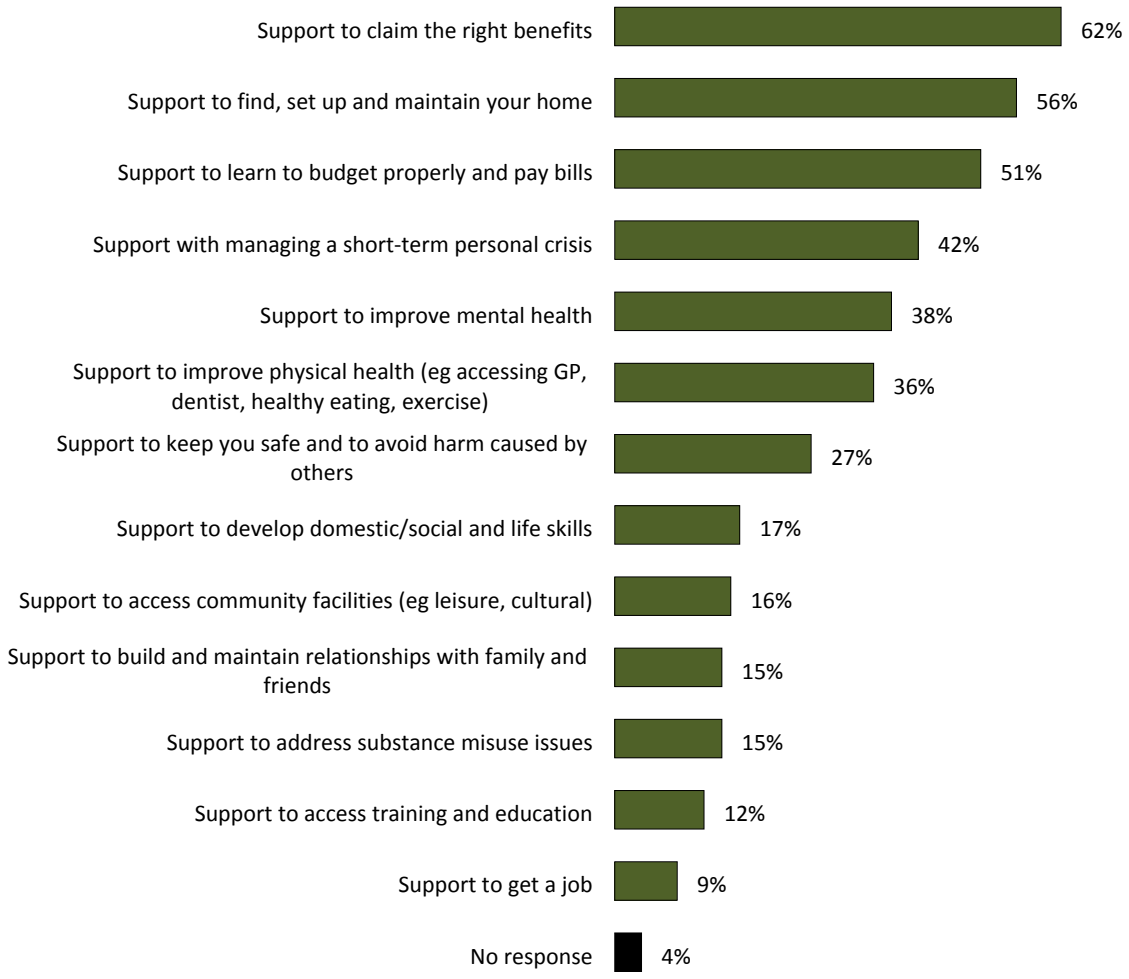
4.3 Service user responses

4.3.1 Use of floating support

First, respondents were asked which of the main types of support offered by the floating support service they receive or have received.

Of the different types of support listed in the question, respondents were most likely to say that they receive or have received: support to claim the right benefits (62%); support to find, set up and maintain their home (56%); and support to learn to budget properly and pay bills (51%). Respondents were least likely to say that they receive or have received support to get a job (9%) and support to access training and education (12%).

Chart 1 - Do you receive or have you received support with the following?

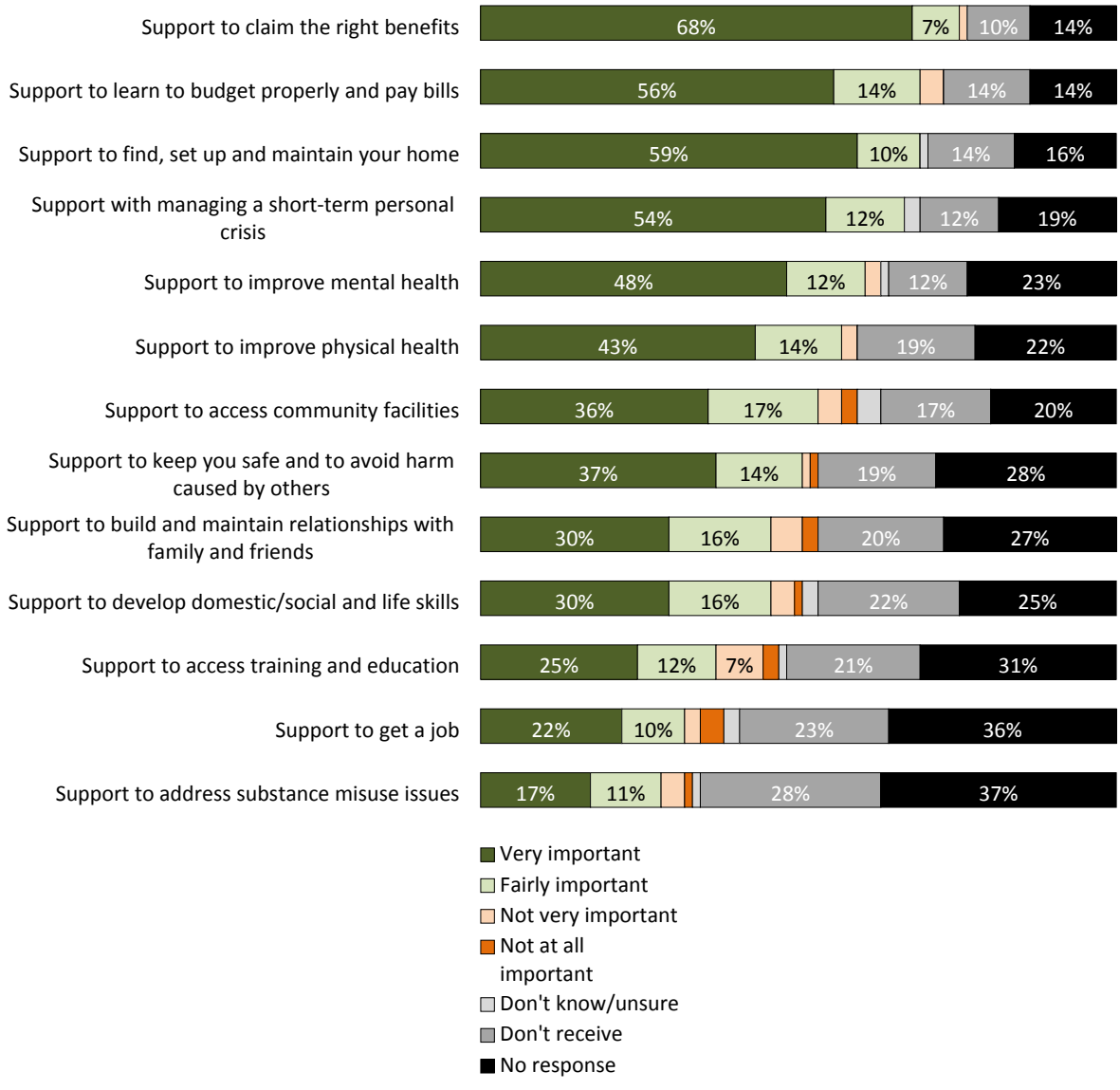


Base: all respondents (81)

Respondents were asked about how important different aspects of the service are to them.

Respondents were most likely to say that: support to claim the right benefits (75%); support to learn to budget properly and pay bills (70%); support to find, set up and maintain your home (69%); support with managing a short-term personal crisis (66%); and support to improve mental health (60%) are important[2] aspects of the service to them.

Chart 2 - How important are the following aspects of the service to you?



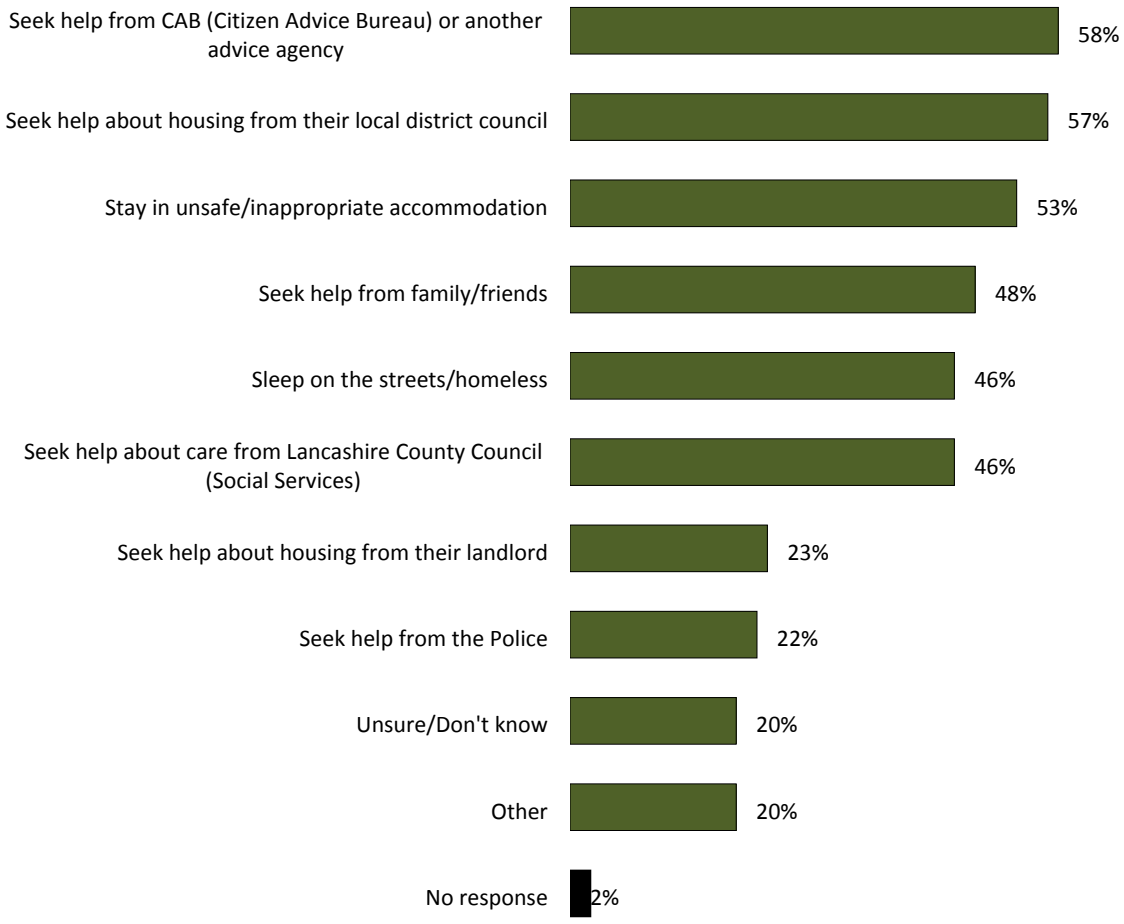
Base: all respondents (81)

[2] Very important and fairly important

Respondents were then asked what they think that people who need this type of service would do in the future, if this service ended.

Respondents were most likely to say that if this service ended then they would: seek help from CAB (Citizen Advice Bureau) or another advice agency (58%); seek help about housing from their local district council (57%); stay in unsafe/inappropriate accommodation (53%); seek help from family/friends (48%).

Chart 3 - If this service ended, what do you think that people who need this type of service would do in the future?

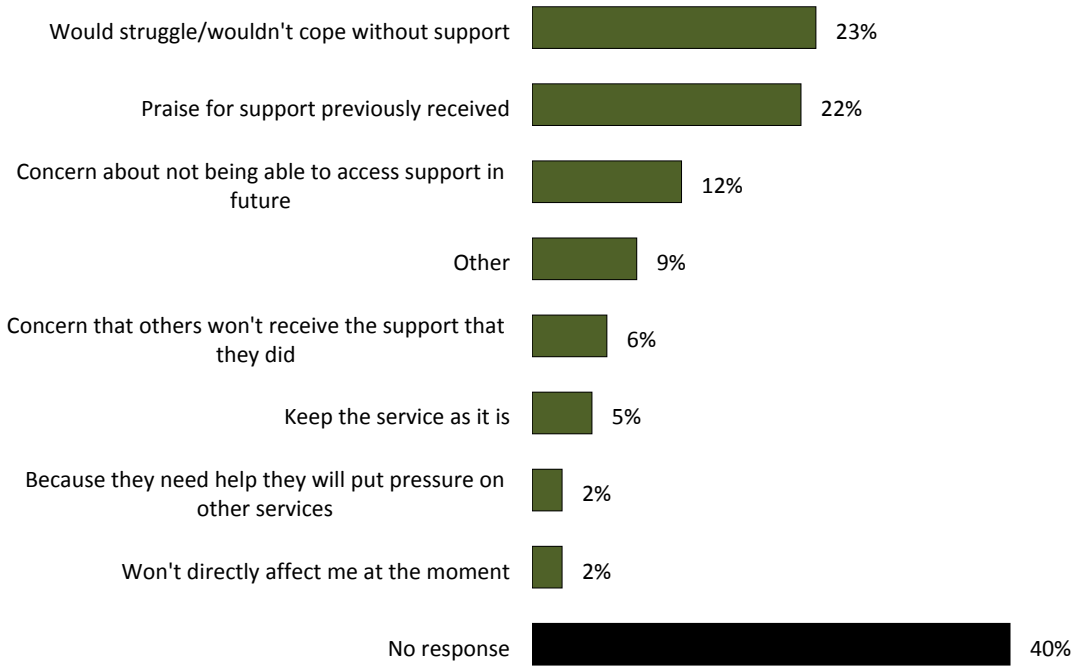


Base: all respondents (81)

Respondents were then asked for their feedback and comments about how this proposal will affect them.

Two-fifths of respondents (40%) chose not to respond to this question. However, nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) said that they would struggle /won't cope without support and over a fifth (22%) praised the support that they had previously received.

Chart 4 - Please provide any further feedback or comments about how the proposal will affect you in the box below.



Base: all respondents (81)

5. Other responses to the proposal

Many people also chose to respond to the consultation in other ways. For example, sending an email, contacting their councillor, or signing a petition.

5.1 Other responses

There were no responses dedicated to floating support; however there was one general response from a provider which significantly addressed issues relating to the Floating Support service namely:

- Impact on homelessness, disengagement with statutory and voluntary services by service users if not receiving support.
- Increase in costs of crisis type services
- Redundancy of staff

Respondents were then asked to name their current floating support provider.

Table 1 - What is the name of your floating support provider?

	Count
Calico	29
Specific person's name	24
Greenvale Homes	1
Don't know	1
Don't have one	4
Other	2
No response	20
Total	**81**

Appendix 1: Demographic breakdown

Table 2- Are you...?

	%	Count
Male	32%	26
Female	62%	50
No response	6%	5
Total		**81**

Table 3- Have you ever identified as transgender?

	%	Count
Yes	2%	2
No	86%	70
Prefer not to say	0%	1
No response	10%	8
Total		**81**

Table 4- What was your age on your last birthday?

	%	Count
18-19	1%	1
20-34	22%	18
35-49	36%	29
50-64	31%	25
65-74	5%	4
75+	2%	2
No response	2%	2
Total		**81**

Table 5 - Are you a deaf person or do you have a disability?

	%	Count
Yes	43%	35
No	56%	45
No response	1%	1
Total		**81**

Table 6- Which best describes your ethnic background?

	%	Count
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	89%	72
No response	4%	3
White and Black Caribbean	2%	2
Eastern European	2%	2
Chinese	1%	1
Indian	1%	1
Total		**81**

Table 7- What is your religion?

	%	Count
No religion	33%	27
Christian (including CofE, Catholic, Protestant and all other denominations)	62%	50
Muslim	2%	2
No response	2%	2
Total		**81**

Table 8- Are you in a marriage or civil partnership?

	%	Count
Marriage	6%	5
Civil partnership	5%	4
Prefer not to say	4%	3
None of these	83%	67
No response	2%	2
Total		**81**

Table 9- How would you describe your sexual orientation?

	%	Count
Straight (heterosexual)	85%	69
Bisexual	1%	1
Gay man	1%	1
Other	1%	1
Prefer not to say	6%	5
No response	5%	4
Total		**81**

Table 10- In which district do you live in Lancashire?

District	%	Count
Burnley	10%	8
Chorley	7%	6
Fylde	6%	5
Hyndburn	11%	9
Lancaster	16%	13
Pendle	6%	5
Preston	12%	10
Ribble Valley	1%	1
Rossendale	9%	7
South Ribble	6%	5
West Lancashire	11%	9
Wyre	4%	3
Total		**81**

Table 11- Are there any children or young people in your household aged under 20?

	%	Count
No children aged under 20	43%	35
Yes, aged under 5	22%	18
No response	20%	16
Yes, aged 5-8	10%	8
Yes, aged 12-16	7%	6
Yes, aged 9-11	6%	5
Yes, aged 17-19	5%	4
No, but expecting	4%	3
Total		**81**

Table 12- Are there any disabled young people in your household aged 20-25?

	%	Count
Yes	6%	5
No	90%	73
No response	4%	3
Total		**81**

Appendix 2: Provider response

Calico is currently exploring a number of options and is talking to key stakeholders and local district councils to establish if we will be able to continue to provide a housing related support service post March 2017, however at this stage there is no clear proposal in place. If alternative funding is not secured the service would cease in March.

Floating Support has historically supported clients that are waiting to/ or are unable to access specialist service provision. We have been the safety net that supports those that do not meet the ever increasing statutory thresholds. Advocacy between the service user and other agencies is often instrumental in achieving more positive outcomes for the clients, thus impacting in a beneficial way to all those affected. Where services have restricted or changed their eligibility criteria and where services are already overstretched to meet the demand in need we have been able to respond. There has steadily been an increase in complex or multiple needs, particularly around substance misuse, mental health, physical health issues and involvement in the criminal justice system or anti-social behaviour. These issues can be problematic to the family units themselves, neighbourhoods, local communities and other statutory services as well as costly on resources, services and time. We have received approximately 2000 referrals since the contract began in May 2015 and we would forecast that these figures would significantly increase over the next few years due to the increasing pressures on households and families in relation to mental health issues, domestic violence, relationship breakdowns, welfare benefit reforms and sanctions which will have far reaching consequences for our more vulnerable and hard to reach client groups. From our data and our response of running drop in's at local venues it is clear that the need for these crisis provisions is ever increasing as is the pressure and demand on voluntary and charitable organisations to meet this need but there are concerns around their ability to sustain their own resources in such uncertain times. Without support services like ours there is an increased risk of people being made homeless through eviction or debt, families will become more disjointed with some even having to resort to living in separate households. There is a potential for an increase in drug abuse and the health and psychological issues and risk of suicide related to the increased stresses on individuals and families without the service there to support them. Our service has always met the shortfall in other services and resources and has seen other services come and go or been rebranded with different aims and objectives. The need for our clients to have support, advice and guidance, particularly around, benefit form filling, attended E.S.A medicals, writing appeals and challenging decisions is needed now more than ever and this is evidenced in our daily work with both clients and the interactions we have with other Agencies. We work with complex needs and often high levels of risk and vulnerabilities that other services may not have the time, skills, knowledge or resources to deal with fully in-house or the expertise to know where to access the provisions externally. Our service takes the pressures off other statutory agencies and we work closely together to achieve outcomes. We have maintained people in their homes that may not have done so without our support. Our interventions have reduced presentation to A&E department, doctor's surgeries, attendance by police, admittance to hospital units and other statutory services. We have addressed crisis issues that could have resulted in death or harm if our service

had not attended their homes and intervened. We protect and safeguard individual, neighbours and reduce the impacts and cost to all communities by the fact our support is here, accessible to all and responsive to the needs of individuals and communities.
We anticipate the main impact on individuals as being:
1. Exacerbation of mental health issues with a potential of fewer opportunities to regain/retain independence.
2. Increase in homelessness and associated social and health difficulties.
3. It will impact on client's abilities to overcome issues that stop them being safe and more productive citizens.
4. Without help, the chance to change for individuals and families is restricted.
5. Service users with learning disabilities and literacy issues will struggle to maintain benefits, housing and other crucial correspondence without the help to complete forms, attend appointments and engage effectively with other services thus increasing homelessness and response from statutory agencies.
6. We work with the 'hidden homeless' and those that often fall below the radar of other statutory services that they may be unwilling to engage with. Our service has great success at linking in clients that have often struggled with or have been unwilling to effectively engage with certain statutory agencies. We are often a protective factor in the engagement of the hardest to reach.

The Floating Support service currently employs 57 members of staff who will be at risk of redundancy if funding is withdrawn. This will have a significant financial impact on the organisation.

Whilst the support provided by the service predominately focusses on housing related issues and reducing homelessness, a holistic approach is undertaken with clients. Often they will require support to reduce risk factors and prevent harm to themselves or others, and the need for mediation with neighbours or extended family members is common.
1. There is the likelihood that the absence of Floating Support will shift the volume and cost of providing support to Lancashire's most vulnerable people to other budget-pressured and in-demand public services (housing, social care, health, mental health teams, Drug & Alcohol Teams, A&E departments, public health, criminal justice, voluntary sector provision).
2. Crime may increase without the support to engage effectively within their communities. Reduction in benefits, social issues and sanctions on benefits and potential homelessness will increase these risk factors.
3. An increase in anti-social behaviour within communities.
4. The proposals for withdrawing Supporting People funding from the majority of support services will restrict the number of suitable vacancies available locally for the 57 staff members affected.
Since 2007 the Floating Support services have prevented homelessness, reduced the impact of social issues on individuals and their families as well as reducing the cost to the community and local services. Our aim has always been to promote inclusion in communities and support other agencies and their work in the locality. We feel that the withdrawal of Supporting People Funding will have far reaching consequences for all communities.

Appendix 3: Stakeholder response

Table 13- Impact on service users

	Vulnerable people will no longer receive support/ less support	Increase in homelessness/ accommodation issues	Increase in debt	Increase number of people in crisis	Increase reliance on private sector	No alternative support	Reduced health and wellbeing	Unsure/ dependent upon provider response	Reduced ability to maintain employment or education	Increased social isolation/ loneliness	Increased self-harm/ MH issues/ complex needs
Stakeholder 1	x	x	x	x							
Stakeholder 2		x	x		x						
District 1	x					x					
District 2	x	x		x	x		x				
District 3		x	x								
District 4	x					x		x			
District 5	x	x	x	x						x	x
District 6	x	x	x	x			x		x		
District 7	x	x	x								
Total	**7**	**7**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**

Table 14- Impact on organisation

	Increased demand to district for housing advice and support	Increased homelessness	Increased requests to temporarily accommodate people	Increased risk of tenancy failure	Blockage to move on from temporary accommodation	Impact on district budgets
Stakeholder 1						
Stakeholder 2				x		
District 1		x		x		
District 2	x		x		x	
District 3	x		x			x
District 4	x	x				
District 5	x	x	x	x	x	
District 6	x	x	x			
District 7	x	x		x		
Total	**6**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**1**

Table 15- Impact on community

	Increased community safety issues /local crime rates will increase	Increased pressure /demand on other services (GP's, Acute, Social care, 3rd sector)	Increase safeguarding issues	Loose an important community service	Support for domestic abuse victims will reduce	Increase in children at risk	Loss of secure housing for large populations	Rural communities impacted	Loss of skilled staff/ Jobs
Stakeholder 1	x			x	x			x	
Stakeholder 2				x					
District 1	x	x					x		
District 2	x	x	x						x
District 3		x							
District 4	x	x							
District 5	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
District 6	x	x	x		x	x			
District 7	x	x	x	x		x			
Total	**7**	**7**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**1**

Table 16- Other comments

	Service user may not have the confidence or ability to access the health and wellbeing service	Council members concerned	Cuts are false economy / "cost shunting"
Stakeholder 1	x		
Stakeholder 2			
District 1			
District 2		x	
District 3			
District 4			
District 5			x
District 6			
District 7			
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**