



Appendix H
Short term supported
accommodation –
Refuges
Consultation 2016

Report



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August 2016

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1. Executive summary

Lancashire County Council needs to make savings of £262m by 2020/21. Throughout 2016/17, service users, the general public, partners and stakeholders are being consulted with about how the county council proposes to make these savings.

This report summarises the responses to Lancashire County Council's consultation on the proposal for refuges. The proposal is to stop funding for the support within refuges from 31 March 2017.

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were given to all service users and made available at refuges. 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 17 July 2016. In total, 64 completed questionnaires were returned from service users in refuges services.

A separate questionnaire was sent to Lancashire's 12 district councils, providers and stakeholders. We received a response from all five providers, one stakeholder and seven district councils.

1.1 Key findings

1.1.1 Providers

The top mentions from respondents are presented with the number of providers that they relate to shown in brackets.

- The top mentions from responding providers for what their plans are for their schemes in light of the proposal were: cease services (6), services at risk (5), and reduction in staffing and services (5).
- The top mentions from responding providers for the impact on services users were: more suicide/murders of women and children (5) and on-going risk of serious harm to more women and children victims/survivors (4).
- The top mentions from responding providers for the impact on their organisation were: loss of specialist knowledge and expertise (4), and unable to support most vulnerable women and children (no recourse to public funds) (3).
- The top mentions from responding providers for the impact on the community were: demand on public services (more ill health and greater access to health services, criminal justice systems, CSC, A& E) (5), increase in domestic violence and abuse (repeat incidents) (4) and no specialist domestic abuse support services (4).

1.1.2 Districts and stakeholders

The top mentions from respondents are presented with the number of districts and stakeholders that they relate to shown in brackets.

- The top mentions from responding districts and stakeholders for the impact on services users were; living in unsuitable accommodation without support (6), increase in demand on other public services (police, NHS, CSC, LA) (5), staying with violent partner in abusive situation (4), dependant on refuge provider response (3) and lifeline a safe place (often nowhere else to go)(3).
- The top mentions from responding districts and stakeholders for the impact on their organisation were: increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA) (6), increase in homelessness presentations to LA (5), living in unsuitable accommodation without support(unsafe) (4) and increase in issues of community safety (3).
- The top mentions from responding districts and stakeholders for the impact on the wider community were: issues of community safety (4); and increase in demand on other public services (police, NHS, CSC, LA) (4).

1.1.3 Service users

- Of the different types of support listed in the question, respondents were most likely to say that they receive or have received: support to keep you safe and to avoid harm caused by others (61); support to claim the right benefits (57) and support to improve physical health (55).
- Respondents were most likely to say that: accommodation (63); support to keep you safe and to avoid harm caused by others (61); support to claim right benefits (61); dedicated support team within the accommodation/project (60) are important¹ aspects of the service to them.
- Respondents were most likely to say that if this service ended then they would; stay in unsafe/inappropriate accommodation (51), sleep on the streets/homeless (37), seek help from Lancashire County Council (social services) (29) and seek help from the police (28).
- When asked for their feedback and comments about how this proposal will affect them. Respondents were most likely to say; without this service would they suffer abuse (26); without service they would be homeless/nowhere to live (11); a general positive comments about the service received (9); and general comment about removal of service being bad (9).

¹ Very important and fairly important

2. Introduction

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

As part of the savings, the county council is proposing to stop funding for the support within the 9 refuges in Lancashire from 31 March 2017,

Although we don't know what this will mean for each service, there is a possibility for any or some of the following to take place:

- the service closes;
- the service continues with major changes (eg reduction in number of staff); or
- the service continues with little change as your provider has managed to obtain other funding (eg from charities not Supporting People)

People usually stay in refuges for a matter of months. Consequently this proposal would be unlikely to directly affect the current service users. However, it could impact on other people who may use this service after March 2017.

This consultation was designed to help us understand: more about how important the service is to service users; and their thoughts about how the proposals could affect people who need services in the future.

3. Methodology

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were given to all service users and made available at refuges. 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 17 July 2016. Paper copies of the questionnaire, with a reply envelope, were given to service users. In total, 64 completed questionnaires were returned from service users in refuges. As the number of service user responses to this consultation is well below 100, the numbers in charts and tables are the actual number of respondents not the percentage of respondents.

Separate online questionnaires were made available to Lancashire's 12 district councils, providers and stakeholders. This questionnaires were designed to give district councils, providers and stakeholders the 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.

Where districts, providers and stakeholders have sent more than one response, these responses have been merged and are presented in the findings.

A summary of providers and stakeholders responses have been provided in the main findings.

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 responses

All five providers who responded to the short term supported accommodation for the refuge consultation were Borough of Pendle, The Liberty Centre, Safenet, Progress Care and FCWA. The main issues raised in their responses are summarised below. The top mentions from respondents are presented with the number of providers that they relate to shown in brackets.

Further details of provider responses are presented in appendix 2.

4.1.1 Key findings

The top mentions from respondents for what changes they are considering for their schemes were;

- cease services (6);
- services at risk (5); and
- reduction in staffing and services (5).

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

- more suicide/murders of women and children (5); and
- on-going risk of serious harm to more women and children victims/survivors (4).

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

- loss of specialist knowledge and expertise (4); and
- unable to support most vulnerable women and children (no recourse to public funds) (3).

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

- demand on public services (more ill health and greater access to health services, criminal justice systems, CSC, A& E) (5);
- increase in domestic violence and abuse (repeat incidents) (4); and
- no specialist domestic abuse support services (4).

4.2 Districts and stakeholders responses

There were a total of seven districts and one provider that responded to the refuge consultation. They were Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Chorley, Preston, South Ribble, Wyre and the Foxton Centre. The main issues raised in their responses are summarised below. The top mentions from respondents are presented with the number of stakeholders and districts that they relate to shown in brackets.

Further details of district council responses are presented in appendix 3.

4.2.1 Key findings

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

- living in unsuitable accommodation without support (6);
- increase in demand on other public services (police, NHS, CSC, LA) (5);
- staying with violent partner in abusive situation (4);
- dependant on refuge provider response (3); and
- lifeline a safe place (often nowhere else to go)(3).

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

- increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA) (6);
- increase in homelessness presentations to LA (5);
- living in unsuitable accommodation without support(unsafe) (4); and
- increase in issues of community safety (3).

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

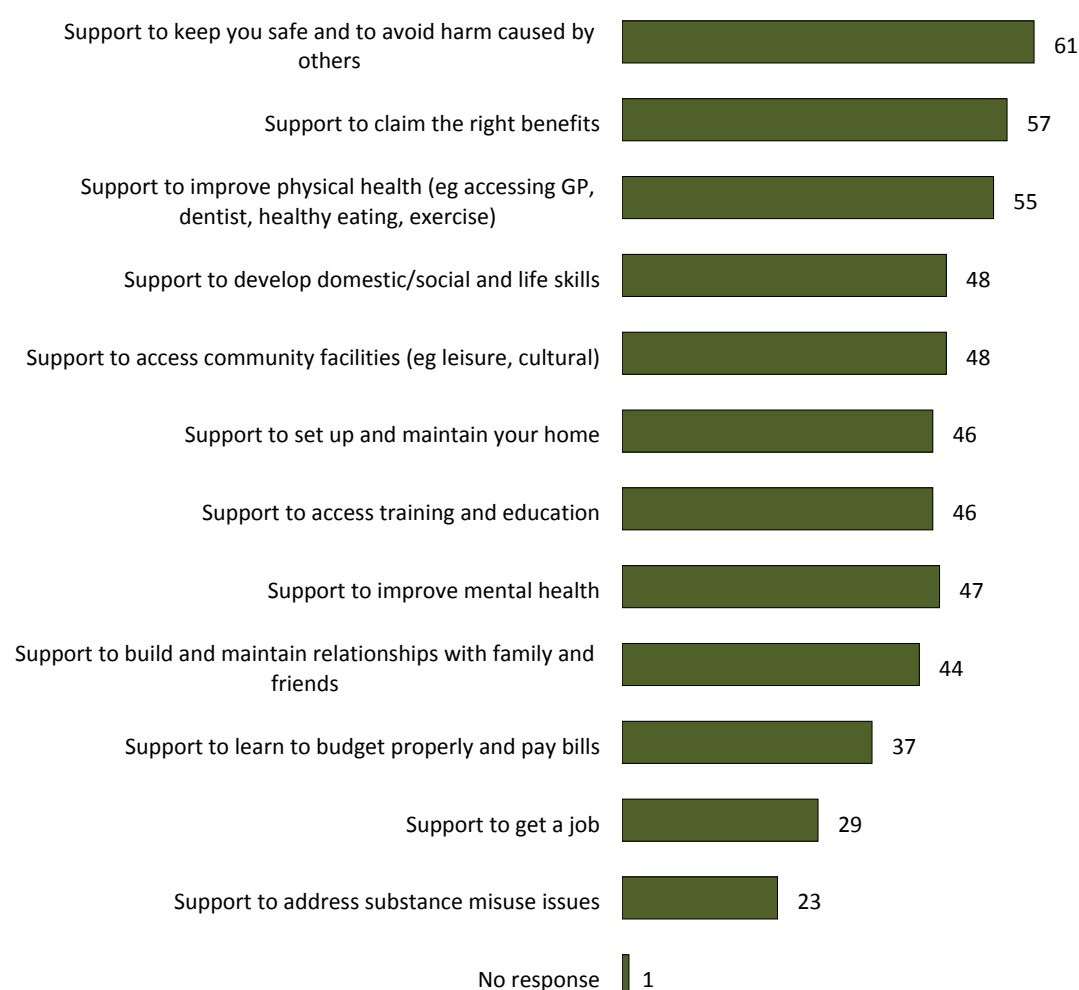
- issues of community safety (4); and
- increase in demand on other public services (police, NHS, CSC, LA) (4).
- increased risks to vulnerable groups (increase visibility of homelessness) (3)
- increase in rough sleepers (3)

4.3 Service user responses

First, respondents were asked which of the main types of support offered by the 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 keep you safe and to avoid harm caused by others (61); support to claim the right benefits (57) and support to improve physical health (55). Respondents were least likely to say that they have received; support to address substance misuse issue (23) and support to get a job (29).

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

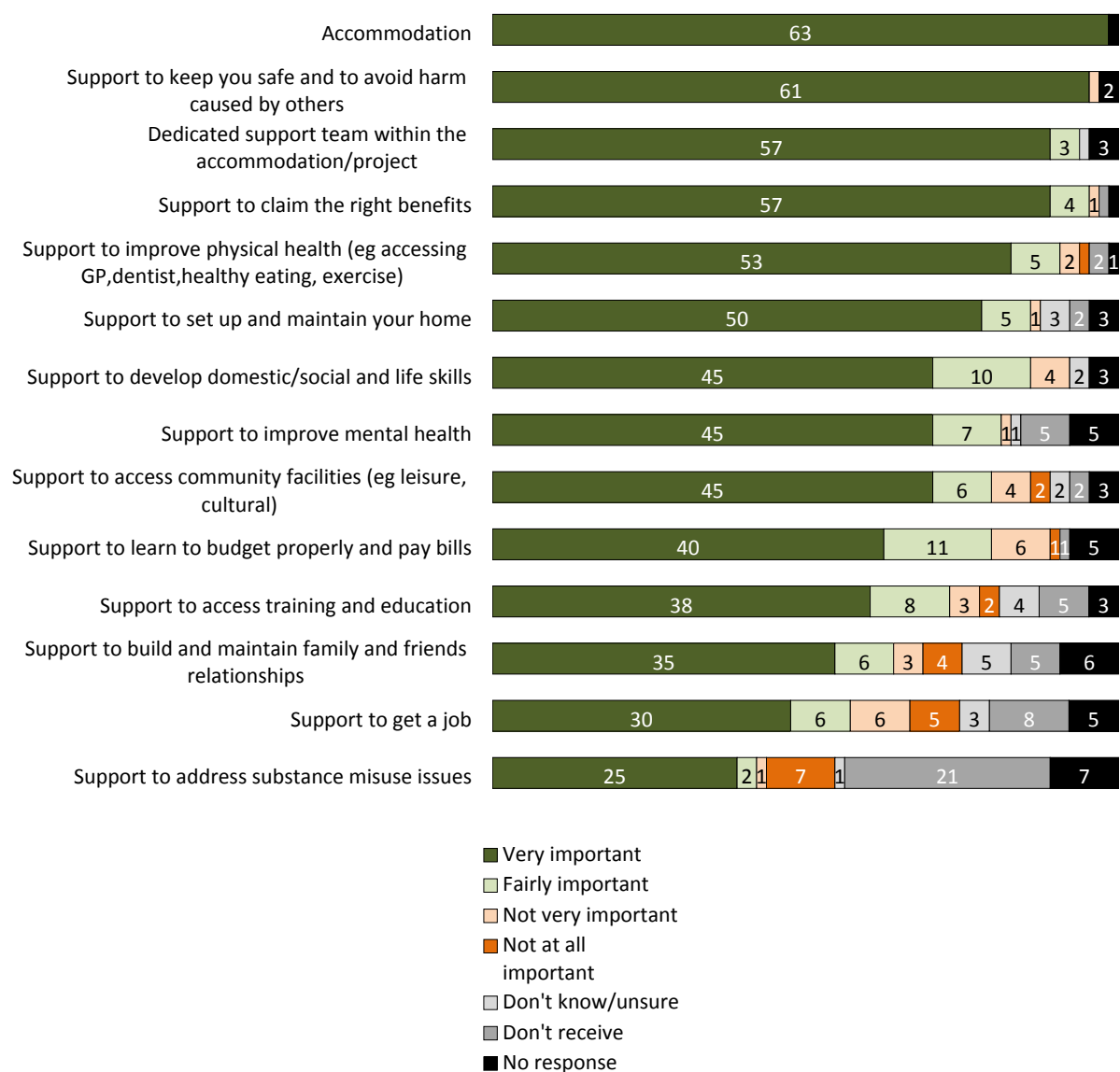


Base: all respondents (64)

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

Respondents were most likely to say that: accommodation (63); support to keep you safe and to avoid harm caused by others (61); support to claim right benefits (61); dedicated support team within the accommodation/project (60) are important² aspects of the service to them.

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



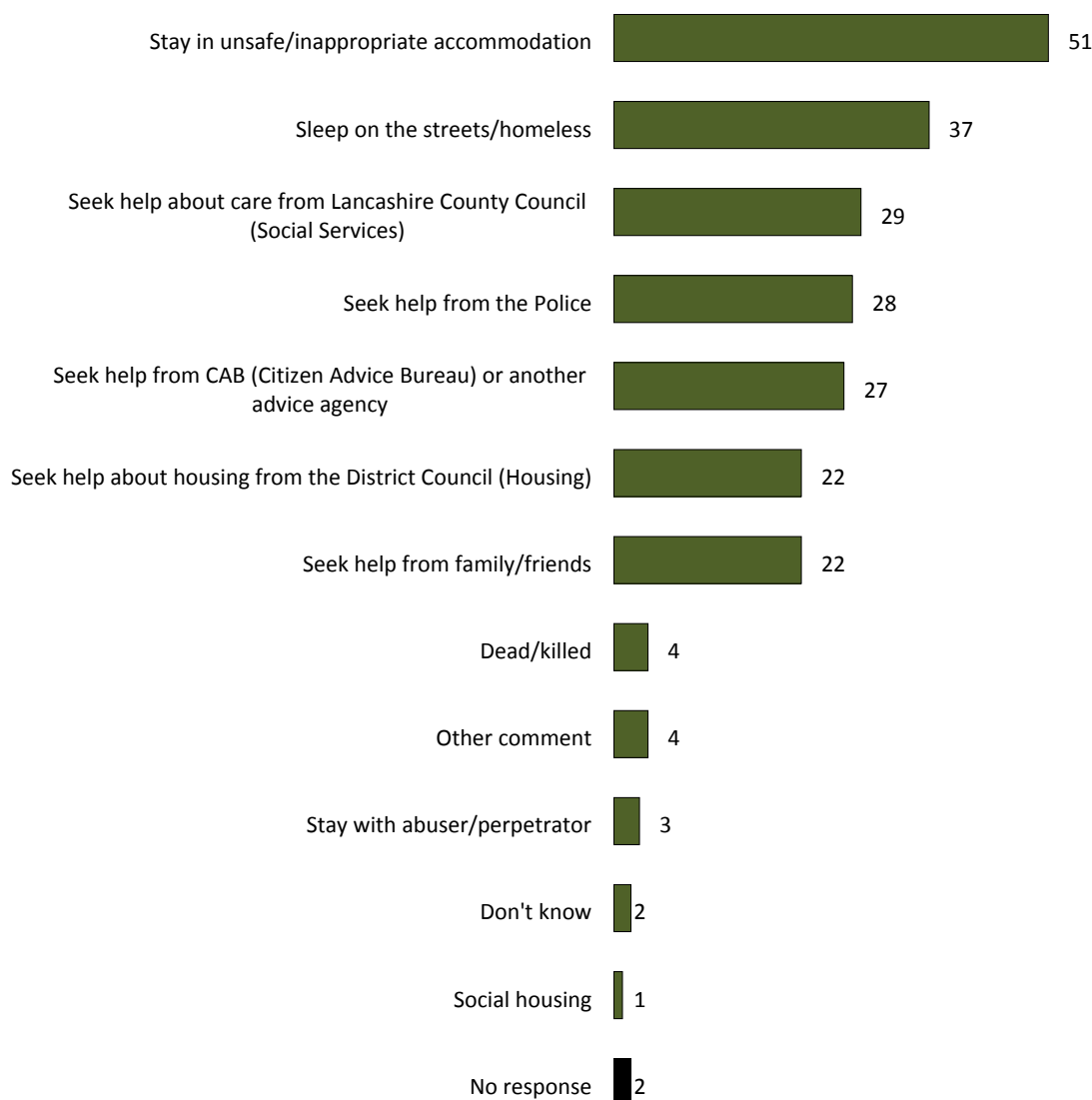
Base: all respondents (64)

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; stay in unsafe/inappropriate accommodation (51), sleep on the streets/homeless (37), seek help from Lancashire County Council (social services) (29) and seek help from the police (28).

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

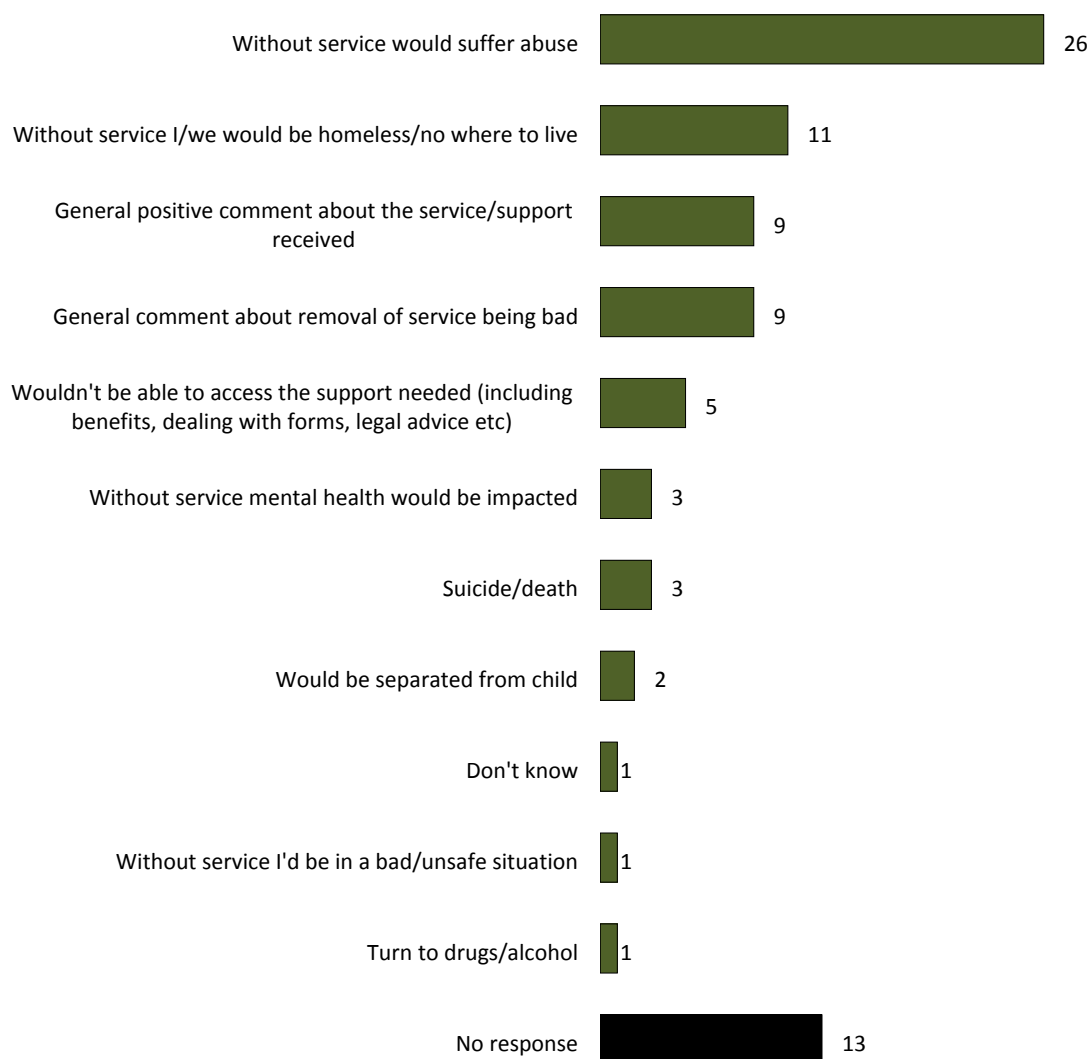


Base: all respondents (64)

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

Respondents were most likely to say; without this service would they suffer abuse (26); without service they would be homeless/nowhere to live (11); a general positive comments about the service received (9); and general comment about removal of service being bad (9).

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



Base: all respondents (63)

5.0 Other Responses

Other responses to the proposal

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

5.1 Other responses

A number of other comments specific to domestic violence were received as part of the wider general consultation held prior to Full Council. These included 12 responses from a range of Lancashire residents including one from Voluntary organisations; 5 from employees of providers and 6 from members of voluntary and community organisations. Among the total of 12 responses 6 were anonymous comments.

A high proportion of the comments received concerned the Fylde and Wyre refuges. The combined comments from all respondent have been summarised below.

In all responses there was a real concern about the potential loss of funding for refuges (closures) which provide a key role in delivering a co-ordinated community response to tackling specialist domestic abuse alongside all statutory and voluntary agencies. The refuges provide women and children with a positive experience and offer a stable environment at a time which is often traumatic and confusing for the women and children. The impact of the closures would mean there will be nowhere for women and children to flee safely in emergency, more children will be affected by the abuse and the cycle of abuse will continue. There is a serious risk of homicide as women and children will stay in violent abusive relationships, leading to an increase in the demand for statutory provision (children and young people services, Housing departments, A&E etc.) A respondent also commented that the cuts did not mirror the Central Government policy on Preventing Violence around Women and Girls.

A few respondents (employees) commented on the potential job losses that would result from any proposed reduction in funding or closure of services.

There have also been approximately 12 letters sent to the County Council regarding the proposals including 5 from MPs, 3 from members of the public and 1 from a District. All respondents were concerned about the potential loss of refuges.

Petition

John and Penny Clough's daughter Jane was murdered by her ex-partner in 2010. They have recently lead a campaign to save all refuge services in Lancashire. To date 8,831 people have signed the on-line petition, see the link below: <https://www.change.org/p/lancashire-county-council-stop-funding-cuts-to-lancashire-refuges> .

There are approximately 16 comments on the petition and also support from MP Rosemary Elizabeth Cooper from West Lancashire.

Appendix 1: Demographic breakdown

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

Name of Provider	Count
Audrey Wise House	1
Clare House	6
Pendle Women's Refuge	5
Refuge	44
West Lancashire Women's Refuge	6
No response	2
Total	64

Table 2- Are you...?

	Count
Male	2
Female	60
No response	2
Total	64

Table 3- Have you ever identified as transgender?

	Count
Yes	-
No	61
Prefer not to say	2
No response	1
Total	64

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

	Count
18-21	8
22-25	9
26-34	27
35-49	18
50-64	1
65-74	-
No response	1
Total	64

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

	Count
Yes	5
No	58
No response	1
Total	64

Table 6- Which best describes your ethnic background?

	Count
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	40
Pakistani	15
African	2
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1
No response	2
Eastern European	1
Indian	1
Bangladeshi	1
White and Black Caribbean	1
Other	1
Total	64

Table 7- What is your religion?

	Count
No religion	28
Christian (including CofE, Catholic, Protestant and all other denominations)	16
Muslim	16
No response	2
Sikh	1
Any other religion	1
Total	64

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

	Count
Marriage	16
Civil partnership	-
Prefer not to say	3
None of these	42
No response	3
Total	64

Table 9- How would you describe your sexual orientation?

	Count
Straight (heterosexual)	55
Bisexual	4
Lesbian/gay woman	2
Other	-
Prefer not to say	1
No response	2
Total	64

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

District	Count
Burnley	22
Chorley	2
Fylde	5
Hyndburn	-
Lancaster	7
Pendle	5
Preston	14
Ribble Valley	-
Rossendale	-
South Ribble	4
West Lancashire	4
Wyre	-
No response	1
Total	64

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

	Count
No children aged under 20	7
Yes, aged under 5	30
No response	8
Yes, aged 5-8	18
Yes, aged 12-16	8
Yes, aged 9-11	10
Yes, aged 17-19	3
No, but expecting	6
Total no of children	75

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

	Count
Yes	2
No	59
No response	3
Total	64

Appendix 2: Providers' response

Table 13 - changes to services

	No of Units	Service Ceases	Service at risk	Reduction in staffing and services	Examining options for alternative funding
Provider A	9	x			
Provider B	9	x			
Provider C (multiple)	41		x	x	
Provider D (multiple)	11	x		x	
Provider E (multiple)	7	x	x		x
Total (9 Services)	77	4	2	2	1

Table 14 - impact on service users

	More suicide/murders of women and children	On-going risk of serious harm to more women and children victims/survivors	Women and children not living safe lives (DA not given priority)	Severely reduced services at a time when demand is high	Cost of homicide reviews	Closure of Refuges	Less refuge spaces means more victims/survivors	Housing management tasks only (no support)	Children affected by witnessing domestic abuse	No specialist or alternative support services	Increase in the demand on Public services	Lancashire has a track record to keeping women and children safe and has low number of murders	Increase in Community safety issues	Rising Domestic Abuse	Stay in abusive relationships	Risk of losing lives and the lives of children	Vulnerable people not given help
Provider A	x	x				x			x					x	x	x	x
Provider B	x		x	x	x		x										
Provider C (multiple)	x	x	x	x			x	x									
Provider D (multiple)	x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x						
Provider E (multiple)	x	x	x		x				x	x	x	x	x				
Total	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 15 - impact on organisation

	Loss of specialist knowledge and expertise	Unable to support most vulnerable women and children (no re-course to public funds)	Reduction in staffing - Very limited support service	Seek alternative source of funding (Increasingly difficult)	Refuge Service Ceases - No Where safe to go (loss of SP funding)	Current services is below the Council of Europe minimum standard of refuge provision	Under threat from the proposed withdrawal of supported housing benefit	Cease of DA Community services	Reduced capacity for multi-agency working (infrastructure, training etc)	Increase demand in housing unable to provide support	Impact on community safety (ASB etc)	Increase in evictions	Women and children are at high level of risk (serious harm/murder)	Loss of other services and other funding (wrap around service)	Damaging impact on the morale of organisations delivering life and death service
Provider A					X			X							
Provider B	X	X													
Provider C (multiple)	X	X	X	X					X						
Provider D (multiple)	X	X	X							X	X	X			
Provider E (multiple)	X			X	X	X	X						X	X	X
Total	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 16 - impact on the wider community

	Demand on Public services (More ill health and greater access to health services, Criminal justice systems, CSC, A&E)	Increase in domestic violence and abuse (repeat incidents)	No specialist domestic abuse support services	Loss of expertise in the community	Increase in deaths in Lancashire	Greater poverty (more debt, unemployment, exclusion from the community)	Increase in Community safety issues	Increase in unemployment	Refuge provision is part of national service	Children and families suffering from DA	Increased risk to staff in generic housing	Will be easier to locate the victim (safety of victims)	Increased assault on public	Impact on homicide reviews (costs)	Stay in abusive relationships	Unsuitable accommodation without support	Deaths and injury	Low education attainment in Children & young people	Short term view resulting in expenditure in other parts of LCC
Provider A	X	X			X				X						X	X		X	X
Provider B	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X									
Provider C (multiple)	X	X	X	X		X													
Provider D (multiple)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									X		
Provider E (multiple)	X	X	X				X				X	X	X	X					
Total	5	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 17 - other comments

	Deaths	Short term view of LCC	Refuges safes lives (cost effective service)	Matter of life and deaths (women have already been killed in Lancashire)	Refuges increases health and wellbeing, educational and economic factors	Visit the petition by John and Penny Clough	Case study	Denying victims of domestic abuse the option of a safe, supported route to safety is denying a basic human right
Provider A								
Provider B	x		x	x	x			
Provider C (multiple)	x	x	x			x		
Provider D (multiple)		x						
Provider E (multiple)							x	x
Total	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1

Appendix 3: Districts and stakeholders responses

Table 18 - impact on service users

	Living in unsuitable accommodation without support	Increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA)	Staying with violent partner abusive situation	Dependant on Refuge Provider response	Lifeline a safe place (often nowhere else to go)	Will reach crisis point with women and children (lack of safe space)	Closure of service	Significant remodelling of the service	Increase in level of violence witnessed by children and young people	Deterioration in mental health	Living on street	death or serious injury	Threat to public high risk offenders re-offending	Increase in self-harm, suicide attempts	Increase in level of debt	Inability to maintain education, training and job
Stakeholder A		x	x		x											
District A	x	x	x	x	x	x					x					
District B	x	x			x											
District C	x		x	x			x	x								
District D	x	x					x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
District E	x								x			x				
District F	x	x	x	x		x				x						
District G																
Total	6	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 19 - impact on organisation

	Increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA)	Increase in homelessness presentations to LA	Living in unsuitable accommodation without support (unsafe)	Increase in issues of community safety	Dependant on Refuge Provider response	Increase in level of violence witnessed by children and young people	Cost implications on the closure of service	Deterioration in mental health	Closure of services	Significant remodelling of the service	Staying with violent partner abusive situation	death or serious injury	Threat to public high risk offenders re-offending	Increase in self-harm, suicide attempts	Increase in level of debt	Inability to maintain education, training and job	Increases in street homelessness amongst all age groups
Stakeholder A									x								x
District A	x			x	x												
District B	x	x															
District C	x	x		x	x		x			x							
District D	x	x	x	x		x		x					x	x	x	x	
District E			x			x						x					
District F	x	x	x					x			x						
District G	x	x	x				x										
Total	6	5	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 20 - impact on the wider community

	Issues of Community Safety	Increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA)	Increased risks to vulnerable groups(increase visibility of homelessness)	Increase in rough sleepers	Prevention is better than cure (Supported Accommodation is a cheaper alternative)	Empty buildings leading to neighbourhood issues
Stakeholder A						
District A	x					
District B						x
District C	x			x		
District D		x	x			
District E		x				
District F	x	x	x	x	x	
District G	x	x	x	x	x	
Total	4	4	3	3	2	1

Table 21 - other comments

	Provision part of national service	Stay in abusive relationships	Increase in the demand on other public services (Police, NHS, CSC, LA)	Committed to working with LCC to ensure vulnerable groups do not suffer the detriment	Decision makers need to understand what the impact is going to be of the cuts	Condemnation of many vulnerable people into homelessness	Will be more costly to deal with chaotic people who have complex and multiple problems
Stakeholder A						x	x
District A							
District B							
District C	x	x					
District D				x			
District E			x				
District F					x		
District G							
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1