

Appendix A

Consultation on proposed changes to
Lancashire County Council's Home
Improvement Services – public consultation

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1. Executive summary

Home Improvement Services are a range of supports to help vulnerable people to live safely in their own homes for as long as possible. Lancashire County Council is proposing to make changes to the structure and delivery of the Home Improvement Services currently provided.

Consultations were carried out with the public, in particular previous service users, and with stakeholders on the proposed changes to Home Improvement Services. This report covers the findings of the public consultation.

The consultation ran from 24 March to 12 June 2014. A questionnaire including details of the proposed changes was sent to 898 people who had previously used the current Home Improvement Service and was also made available online for any other interested parties. In total, 250 questionnaires were returned.

1.1 Key findings

Respondents were given details of a number of proposed changes to Home Improvement Services and asked how strongly they agree or disagree with each proposal. The key findings of the consultation with the public are:

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) agree with the county council proposal to introduce a self-assessment form for small items of equipment.
- Four-fifths of respondents (80%) agree with the proposal to provide free handyman services to people who are being discharged from hospital or who are at risk of not being able to stay in their home.
- Over nine out of ten respondents (94%) agree with the proposal to introduce a standard home based risk assessment across Lancashire that all providers will undertake when completing a visit to make sure that people get the same potential improvement offers wherever they live.
- Almost all respondents (97%) agree with the county council's proposal to provide additional small items of equipment and small repairs for free at the time of the home based risk assessment wherever possible.
- Over four-fifths of respondents (85%) agree with the proposal that the new Home Improvement Service will focus only on identifying risks around the home and providing immediate practical solutions.
- Four-fifths of respondents (80%) agree with the proposal that the new Home Improvement Service will signpost those who can't afford essential home repairs to charitable sources of funding so they can apply for

funding themselves but will continue to provide extra assistance if someone's disability or vulnerability prevented them from doing this themselves.

1.2 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the public response to the proposals was positive with at least three-quarters of respondents agreeing with each of the proposals.

While the proposals were clear about what would change between the current service and the proposed service, it was not possible at the time of the consultation to clarify the criteria for eligibility to receive the service. Respondents can therefore be considered to be positive about the proposals for the service but it should be taken into account that they have not had the opportunity to comment on the eligibility criteria for the service.

2. Introduction

Home Improvement Services are a range of supports to help vulnerable people to live safely in their own homes for as long as possible. The services offer advice and guidance regarding home maintenance, improvement and adaptation, as well as practical support to adapt homes to meet people's needs.

Lancashire County Council is proposing to make changes to the structure and delivery of the Home Improvement Services currently provided.

Lancashire is made up of 12 districts each currently with its own Home Improvement Services delivered by a wide range of providers including Home Improvement Agencies, small building firms, equipment providers and handyperson services. Currently there is no consistent offer for people across Lancashire.

Availability of Home Improvement Services, including charges to people and delivery times, differ across the county. People who require a number of services will often receive multiple visits as services are provided from a range of different sources.

The county council faces the challenge of a reducing budget that will continue to decrease over the coming years. For this reason, it needs to make sure that it is making the best use of the resources that are available to maintain quality services which address the needs of communities.

Consultations were carried out with the public, in particular service users, and with stakeholders on the proposed changes to Home Improvement Services. This report covers the findings of the public consultation.

3. Methodology

The consultation ran from 24 March to 12 June 2014. A questionnaire including details of the proposed changes and a cover letter were sent to 898 people who had used the current Home Improvement Service between December 2013 and February 2014. People use the Home Improvement Service for one off services, for example providing a piece of equipment, it is not a continuous service provided over an extended period of time.

The consultation was also available online for any interested party to respond through the Lancashire County Council 'Have your say' website:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/haveyoursay

In total, 250 questionnaires were returned: 242 paper copies and 8 online copies.

Responses were analysed by sub-groups of respondents (eg gender, district) to look for differences of opinion between sub-groups. No statistically significant differences were found.

2.1 Limitations

Although the survey was available for anyone to respond to, the aim of the consultation was to gain the views of those who will be affected by the changes and so the responses should not be seen as the view of the overall Lancashire population.

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

4. Main research findings

3.1 Preventing falls through providing equipment identified under self-assessment

Falls are the cause of the vast majority of accidents in the home involving people over the age of 65 years. They are the most common reason for A&E attendance and hospital admission in older people.

Under the current system, people are required to have an assessment by a health or social care professional to receive social care funded small items of equipment, for example grab rails.

The county council proposes to introduce a self-assessment form for small items of equipment. Most people who complete the assessment will be directed to equipment providers who will offer advice and enable them to buy their own equipment for which there will be a charge. People who are at high risk of falls or who need further assessment will be directed to the Occupational Therapy Service and will be provided with equipment free of charge.

Respondents to the consultation were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this proposal. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 1 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (238)

3.2 Handyperson services

At the moment, handyperson services vary across the county in terms of charges, range of jobs carried out and who can use them. Lancashire County Council currently subsidise handyperson services for vulnerable people over the age of 55.

To provide a fairer and more consistent approach for people across Lancashire, all handyperson services provided by the county council will offer the same range of jobs.

The county council proposes to provide free handyperson services to people who are being discharged from hospital or who are at risk of not being able to stay in their home. People who do not meet the criteria for the service will be directed to alternative options, such as voluntary sector handyperson services, which may charge a small fee.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this proposal. Four-fifths of respondents (80%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 2 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (242)

3.3 Offering home based risk assessments

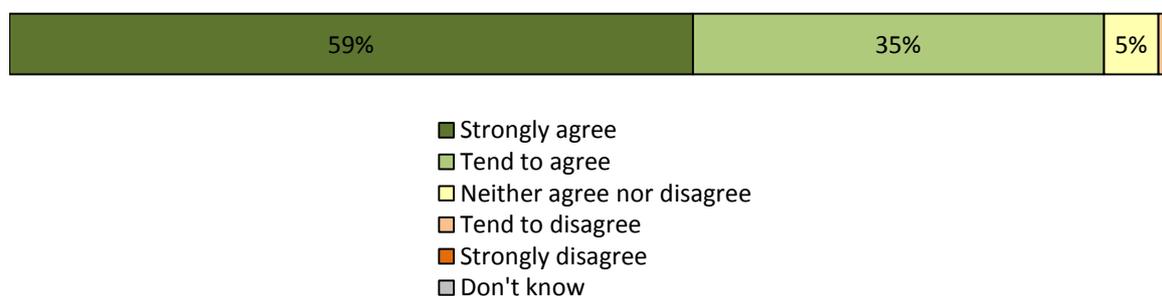
The county council uses risk assessments to identify people's needs within their own homes. This includes identifying changes needed in people's homes that can help prevent issues before they happen, allowing people to stay safe and well in their own home.

Currently, people across the county are offered different levels of home based risk assessment by different providers. This means that people get different types of home improvement as a result.

The county council proposes to introduce a standard home based risk assessment across Lancashire that all providers will undertake when completing a visit to make sure that people get the same potential improvement offers wherever they live.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this proposal. Over nine out of ten respondents (94%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 3 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



Base: all respondents (235)

Currently any additional improvements that are identified during a risk assessment require a further visit.

The county council proposes to provide additional small items of equipment and small repairs for free at the time of the home based risk assessment wherever possible.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal. Almost all respondents (97%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 4 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (236)

3.4 Other changes to existing Home Improvement Services

The existing Home Improvement Services currently offer additional support to people to help them make the best use of their income. This is through welfare checks, finding approved traders and offering general information and advice.

The county council proposes that the new Home Improvement Service will focus only on identifying risks around the home and providing immediate practical solutions and will therefore direct people to existing services for additional support, for example the County Benefits Service, Safe Trader list, Help Direct.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this proposal. Over four-fifths of respondents (85%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 5 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (240)

Currently, Home Improvement Services help people to source and apply for charitable funding for private works. At the moment this is done for all service users who require it. The county council proposes that, in future, this would only be provided for the most vulnerable.

The county council proposes that the new Home Improvement Service will signpost those who can't afford essential home repairs to charitable sources of funding so they can apply for funding themselves. However, the Home Improvement Service would continue to provide extra assistance if someone's disability or vulnerability prevented them from doing this themselves.

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with this proposal. Four-fifths of respondents (80%) agree with this proposal.

Chart 6 - How strongly to you agree or disagree with this proposal?



- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Base: all respondents (241)

3.5 Comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments on the proposals and were given space to write their comments. 64 respondents chose to comment on the proposals. Responses to this question were categorised and the table shows the number of responses for each category.

Comments	Count
The proposals are fair and agreeable	20
Provide as much help as possible to as many people in need as possible	15
Give out booklets or other methods with clear information on how to contact people regarding services, financial support and other matters.	8
The current services have no faults and make people happy to use	7
Consider disabled people's restrictions with form filling and lack of computer access.	7
Use council approved/related companies to ease trust and assure job value	3
Increase check up rates without causing more problems to meet patient needs	2
The waiting time for the completion of processes needs to be reduced	2
I neither agree nor disagree with Q6. Your question is ambiguous (ie you wrongly assume that all people you direct to the providers can afford to pay).	1
Allow family members to give permission on the disabled persons behalf	1
Introduce a buddy system so disabled people don't feel isolated	1
Families have more pressure unless help is given	1
Should be tried and tested	1
Disagree with proposals as they are negative	1
Double check self assessment forms to ensure information is correct	1
One risk assessor for process or clear communication between multiple assessors	1
Total	64

5. Profile of respondents

Respondents were asked to select from a number of options in what capacity they were responding to the consultation. Respondents could select more than one group. The table shows the distribution of respondents.

Group	Percentage	Count
A person who has previously used/currently uses Home Improvement Services	77%	185
A person who may require Home Improvement Services in the future	47%	113
A carer of a person who has previously used/currently uses/may require Home Improvement Services	21%	50
A member of a professional group eg occupational therapist, district nurse, physiotherapist	8%	20
Other interested party	3%	8
A representative of an organisation which provides Home Improvement Services	3%	7
Other	3%	7
Total		250

Respondents were asked to give their post code so that responses could be analysed by district. The table shows the distribution of respondents across districts.

District	Percentage	Count
Burnley	4%	11
Chorley	4%	11
Fylde	12%	30
Hyndburn	5%	12
Lancaster	14%	36
Pendle	5%	13
Preston	11%	28
Ribble Valley	2%	4
Rossendale	4%	9
South Ribble	8%	21
West Lancashire	6%	15
Wyre	19%	47
Not provided	5%	13
Total		250

Demographic	Percentage	Count
Gender		
Male	32%	81
Female	64%	160
No response	4%	9
Age		
<41	1%	3
41-50	6%	15
51-60	12%	30
61-70	17%	42
71-80	23%	58
81-90	31%	78
91+	7%	17
No response	3%	7
Disabled or deaf		
Yes	68%	171
No	26%	65
No response	6%	14
Ethnicity		
White	93%	232
Asian or Asian British	3%	7
Black or Black British	0%	0
Mixed eg White and Asian	0%	1
Other	0%	1
No response	4%	9