Consultation Report July 2016

Housing Related Support Services

This report summarises the feedback from the consultation on proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services in Poole.

Feedback was analysed from responses to the consultation questions via an online consultation form and through drop-in sessions with current and potential users of services.

Number of responses

- Overall 32 responses were received to the consultation questions.

- 17 responses were received from the public consultation available online.

- 15 responses from 3 drop in sessions / workshops with current and potential users of services (approximately 24 attendees).

Key Findings

- Overall, 15 respondents (50%) agreed with the proposed changes and 6 (20%) disagreed. This varied by stakeholder group;

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Don't Know
Current and potential users	8	3	4	2
Providers of Housing Related Support Services	4	0	0	0
General public and other respondent types	3	3	1	2

- Overall, 13 respondents (45%) felt the proposed changes would meet the needs of client groups and 4 (14%) felt they would not. Twelve (41%) felt they did not know – this varied by stakeholder group.

	Agree	Disagree	Neither	Don't Know
Current and potential users	8	0	0	8
Providers of Housing Related Support Services	3	0	0	0
General public and other respondent types	2	4	0	4

- A breakdown of views by stakeholder groups examined in this report.

1 Background

A number of the Housing Related Support Services that the Council commissions are due to come to the end of their contract term. This has provided the opportunity for the Council to consider how these services should be provided in the future.

The existing support services have been in place for many years but the needs of those using them have increased or changed during this time. This has resulted in some services no longer meeting the needs of the client groups and a gap between what accommodation we have available for people to occupy and / or the support that is required.

The economic climate has also changed with much less private rented accommodation becoming available and affordability being an issue for many in Poole.

2 Consultation Aims

The aims of the consultation were to find out the following:

- Stakeholders views on the proposed changes
- If the proposed changes would meet the needs of the client groups identified in the consultation document.
- Suggestions to increase meaningful engagement from clients who access the proposed services.

3 Target Groups

The consultation targeted the following groups / stakeholders:

- Current users of Housing Related Support Services
- Potential users of Housing Related Support Services
- Providers of Housing Related Support Services
- Organisations providing other related services / support
- Local equalities groups
- General public

4 Methodology

The consultation used two approaches to gather opinions.

4.1 Online document and consultation form

A consultation document and online form were made available on the consultation area of Borough of Poole's website to enable respondents to give their views.

An email linking to the consultation was sent to a list of consultees and local equalities groups. Recipients were encouraged to share the information with anyone else who may be interested in responding to the consultation.

The consultation was also promoted through the Council's corporate communications channel 'Email Me' with advertisements included in the 'News and Events' and 'Health and Wellbeing' newsletters, published during the consultation period.

4.2 Drop-in sessions

A series of drop-in sessions and workshops were held to engage current and potential users of Housing Related Support Services.

A total of 3 sessions were arranged with current service providers. The sessions were attended by approximately 24 individuals and provided the opportunity to gain service users views and opinions on both their current experiences and the proposed services.

Copies of the consultation document and consultation questions were presented at the sessions, with an officer available to explain the consultation proposals and answer any questions.

4.3 Data Capture and Analysis

The online form was designed in SNAP (survey design software). Any paper forms returned were entered and stored securely. Online responses were downloaded from the SNAP web server and analysed.

4.4 Consultation Timescale

The consultation ran from Monday 13th June 2016 – Friday 8th July 2016.

5 Summary of Findings

In total 32 completed responses were received to the consultation questions. The breakdown of respondent type is shown in Table 1 below. Most responses came from current users of housing related support services, and the general public.

Table 1: Respondent Type

	Number	Percent
Someone who is receiving a Housing Support Service in Poole	16	50%
A relative / carer of someone who receives a Housing Support Service in Poole	1	3%
Someone who may use Housing Support Services in the future	0	0%
A provider of a Housing Support Service	1	3%
An organisation who helps people access a Housing Support Service	1	3%
Another organisation / charity	2	6%
A landlord	0	0%
A Poole resident	9	28%
Other	2	6%
Total	32	

5.1 Views on proposals

Of the 30 respondents who answered this question, 15 (50%) answered that they agree with the proposed changes, and 6 (20%) disagreed.

Figure 1: Views on proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services
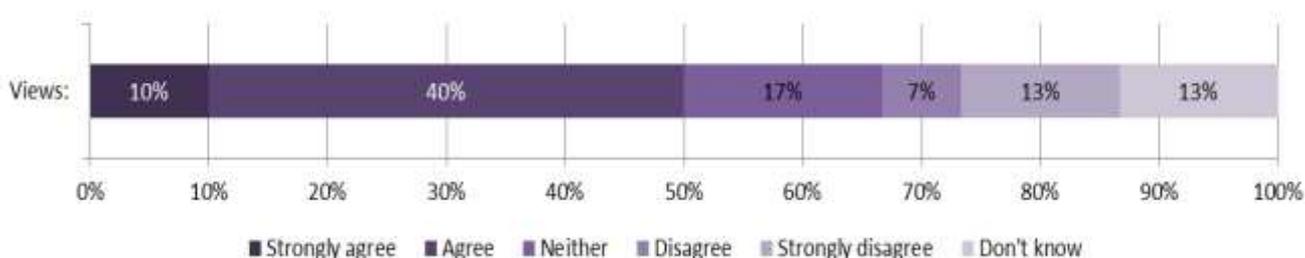
5.2 Views on meeting needs of client groups

Respondents were asked if they felt the proposed changes would meet the needs of the client groups identified in the consultation document. Thirteen (45%) felt that the changes would meet the needs of the identified client groups, and four (14%) felt that they would not. Twelve respondents (41%) did not know if the proposed changes would meet the needs of clients.
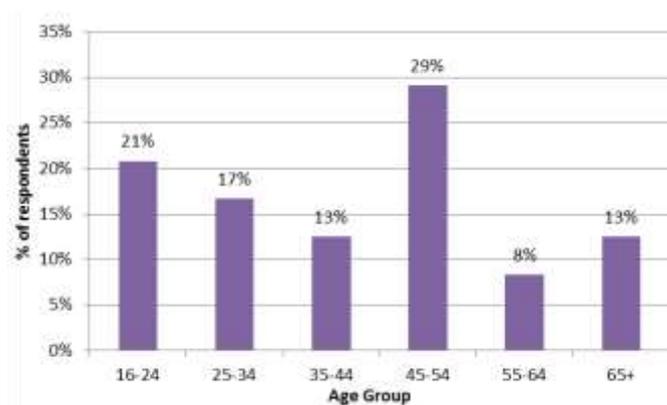
Figure 2: Views on client's needs being met by proposed changes
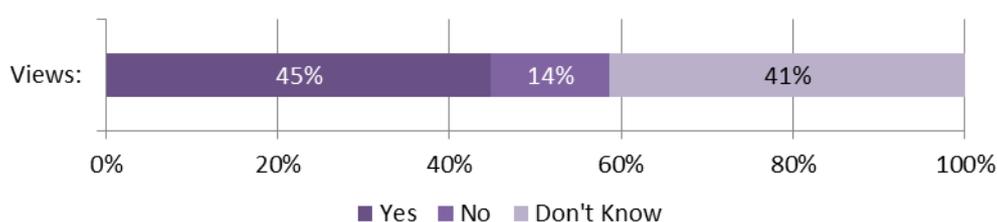
5.3 Demographics*

- 35% of respondents were female and 65% male
- 29% of respondents were aged 45-54, and 21% aged 16-24

Figure 3: Age band of respondents

- 54% of respondents had a long-term limiting illness or a disability
- 96% of respondents were White British

6 Analysis by stakeholder group

The analysis below shows the responses to the consultation questions by 3 key stakeholder groups who responded to the consultation;

- Current and potential users of Housing Related Support Services
- Providers of Housing Related Support Services and other organisations
- General public and other respondent types

6.1 Current users of Housing Related Support Services

6.1.1 Current users experience of current support services

Current users, and relatives/carers of those using services, were asked to rate their current experience. There were 10 responses to this question, of which 9 answered positively (2 'very positive', 7 'fairly positive'). 1 respondent answered 'neither'.

Respondents were asked to give further details about their rating of current support services. There were 10 responses to this question with most comments being positive regarding the services.

Many of the comments focused on support provided with comments around good staff and having a good experience in general. One workshop group mentioned that they were accommodated quickly. Some respondents mentioned the impact that services had made to them, such as being able to cope better, having a roof over their head and being in a better situation.

---

*compiled using individual responses and not inclusive of the demographics of those attending the group sessions

Comments around young people's accommodation in particular mentioned the value of having a mix of people with varying needs and life experience, resulting in the opportunity for peers to support one another.

Other comments related to the accommodation itself with good facilities being mentioned such as having self contained or en-suite. Having communal areas was mentioned as positive.

One negative comment was made regarding the facilities / activities available within the current provision.

6.1.2 Current users suggested improvements to services

Respondents with current experience of services were also asked what improvement they might make, if any, to the current services provided. There were 10 responses to this question, with several suggestions made.

One respondent suggested having a female only secure area or house within supported housing services for clients with complex needs.

Several suggestions referred to the availability of support, such as having flexible appointments to fit around work / college commitments. Some mentioned having 24 hour support (mental health), or improved support at night. One mentioned that a smaller property can help enable better intensity of support. Having support for the transition period to independent accommodation was also suggested.

There were some comments around the availability of accommodation, with the suggestion of having more choice. It was also suggested that there could be flexibility around length of stay as "moving about is hard on people".

Comments around training and skills were also mentioned with suggestions including having more workshops and flexibility around timings to fit other commitments. Specific topics suggested for workshops included confidence building, CV's, budgeting, maintaining a tenancy/tenancy training and work / volunteering opportunities.

In regard to facilities, some suggestions included having en-suite and kitchen facilities, or 24hr communal kitchens. Several comments were made about having access to WIFI, or a computer room.

One suggestion was made for senior staff to visit and meet residents to help understand the people they are supporting.

6.1.3 Current users views on proposed changes to Housing related Support Services

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes set out in the Consultation Document (Figure 4).

Seventeen responses were received to this question; eight (47%) answered that they agreed with the proposed changes, and three (18%) answered disagree.

Figure 4: Views on the proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services
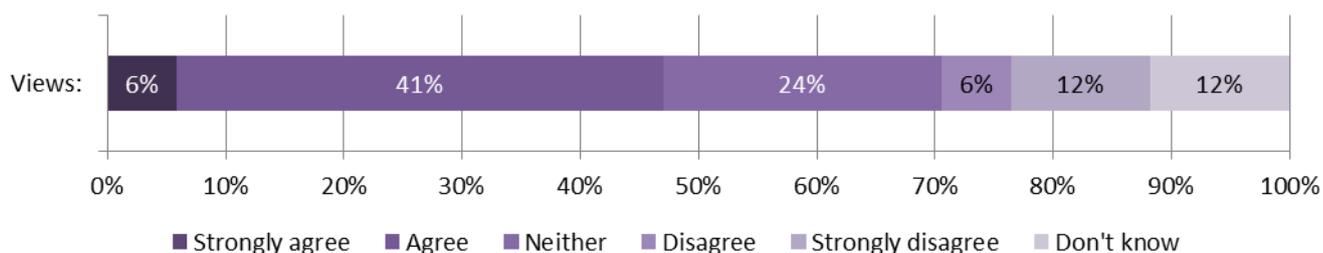
Six responses explained why users agreed with the proposed changes. There were some comments expressing support for the proposed changes. Some mentioned that they felt that the provision is needed / important and has had a positive impact on their situations.

Users responded positively to the proposed outreach service and felt that this would have been beneficial to current users if it was available.

Specific examples included one responder expressing their feeling that they would not have needed supported housing if they could have accessed a service that would have supported them in their independent accommodation.

Likewise, users felt that having a service which assisted them to transition to independent accommodation and having someone who could support them if there was a 'crisis' would help them to maintain their accommodation.

There was also some agreement that it would be good to offer high level support / more specialist support.

One respondent mentioned that it is good to have transitional accommodation for those ready to move on. It was also mentioned that tenancy training is important.

There were three responses to explain disagreement with the proposed changes.

One explained that they were happy with things as they are, and the other comments related to not wanting to lose the support that they currently receive.

There were six responses to explain other views (Neither / Don't know). These included not being aware of the current services offered, concern around services being reduced or no longer being offered, or needing more information

6.1.4 Current users views on meeting client's needs

Respondents were also asked if they felt the proposed changes would meet the needs of the client groups set out in the consultation document.

There were 16 responses to this question, eight (50%) felt that the proposed changes would meet clients needs, and the remaining eight (50%) answered 'don't know'. There were no further comments provided in response to this question.

6.1.5 Current users suggestions to improve engagement with support services

There were 12 responses suggesting ways to improve people's engagement with support services.

Many of the suggestions were based around improving communication or methods of engaging such as increasing awareness of services available, holding house meetings / house groups, and communicating in a less formal way / having more of a conversation. Having flexibility around the structure of meetings / visits was also raised.

Other suggestions focused on relationship building such as trying to different staff members to engage with clients or having opportunities to get to know key workers such as 'coffee and cake'. Having visits / conversations located at the client's accommodation was also raised.

Some comments focused around the type of support available with suggestions including supporting people before they required supported accommodation, having step by step support, or support for young people looking to make their first move away from home.

One respondent suggested having a 'warning' system for non-engagement – but to make clear what counted as an engagement.

6.1.6 Other comment on proposed changes

There were 5 responses making further comments on the proposed changes. Two raised concerns about cutting back on support services. Another raised an issue with the amount of information available. One respondent felt that there should be more support available for those with long term illnesses or disabilities and felt it was focused towards those with homelessness and/or substance misuse issues.

6.1.7 Demographics*

- Ten respondents were male (71%), and four female (29%)
- Five respondents (33%) were aged 16-24, and three (20%) aged 45-54.
- Ten (67%) had a disability or long-term limiting illness
- Thirteen (93%) respondents were White British

6.2 Providers of Housing Related Support Services and other organisations

There were 4 respondents in this stakeholder group that included; 1 current provider and 1 organisation that works with service users, and 2 other organisations.

6.2.1 Providers/organisations experiences of current support services

Providers and organisations that work with services users were asked what improvement they would make to current services, if any. There were 2 responses to this question.

Suggestions included;

- More choice / availability to meet different needs.

*compiled using individual responses and not inclusive of the demographics of those attending the group sessions

- Support to be tailored / flexible to meet individuals fluctuating needs.
- having flexible core hours to fit around those with work / college commitments, or option to have appointments into the evening
- Moving from self – contained accommodation into 'bedsit' style accommodation can be a barrier to moving on.
- Having more staff with specialist mental health skills

6.2.2 Providers / organisations views on proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services

All 4 of the respondents in this group agreed with the proposed changes, with 1 answering 'strongly agree'.

Respondents gave further details on why they agreed with proposed changes. These included;

- More focus needed on 'recovery' and developing skills in step down accommodation
- A need for more housing for young people, with a focus on building independence
- Simplifying the current system and putting better support for young people in place is essential
- The principle of teaching young people the skills to live independently is a great one
- Could low to medium needs be defined – it may leave out young adults who have high needs and are learning disabled
- Outreach would be good in respect of supporting people in the outset
- The ability to maintain contact with key workers during transition to independent living is good
- It would be helpful if key workers could direct refer to outreach

6.2.3 Providers / organisations views on meeting clients' needs

Respondents were asked if they felt the proposed changes would meet the needs of the client group described in the consultation document. Three responded 'yes' the proposed changes would meet needs. One respondent did not answer this question.

There were no further comments made in response to this question.

6.2.4 Providers / organisations suggestions to improve engagement with support services

Respondents were asked for any suggestions to improve people's engagement with Housing Support Services. There were 4 responses to this question.

Several suggestions focused around communication, including;

- Offer more appointments in the community
- Housing staff to communicate more clearly with other professionals and service users
- Use a range of media options

- Share more information so that organisations supporting potential clients can support them with good information
- Open door policy

Other suggestions included;

- Mental health training for staff

6.2.5 Providers / organisations other comments on proposed changes

Two respondents made further comments on the proposed changes. These included;

- Anything that will improve the outcomes for vulnerable people, including young people, is welcomed – the intention of this proposal is to improve the situation and meet needs which is good.
- Hope that this inspires closer working relationships between agencies.
- With transitional moves maintaining a relationship with the key worker is beneficial. Follow up meetings with key workers would be good.
- Set goals / expectations for the service user so they are clear what to expect and how they will be supported.
- Length of time for self referrals (outreach/floating support) should be as quick as possible, GP's should be involved in the consultation.

6.3 General Public and other respondent types

6.3.1 General public views on proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services

Respondents were asked to rate the extent that they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes to support services set out in the consultation document (Figure 5).

Nine responses were received to this question with equal numbers agreeing and disagreeing with the proposed changes.

Figure 5: General public views on proposed changes
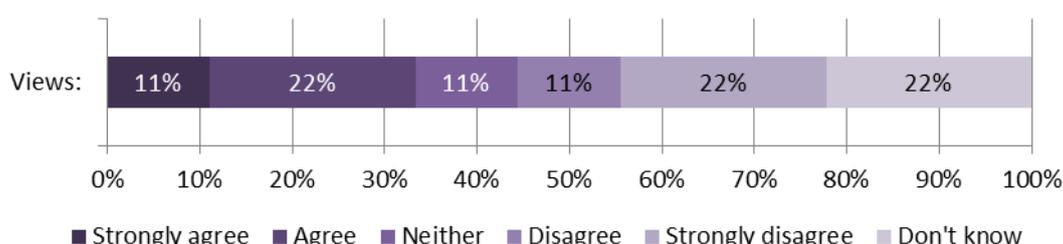
Respondents were asked to further explain their answers above.

Two respondents explained why they agreed with the proposed changes;

- All seems sensible

- The way services are delivered need to be streamlined and more efficient staffing or commissioning arrangements put in place to reduce wastage.

Three respondents who disagreed explained why. One respondent commented on the level of housing development in Poole being too high, another felt that this level of development was no longer required in view of the EU referendum result. Another respondent disagreed with the proposed changes as they felt it was being done to cut budgets.

One respondent who answered 'don't know' felt that a side by side comparison of how existing services would be changed should be shown.

6.3.2 General public views on meeting client's needs

There were 10 responses to the question of meeting clients needs, 2 (20%) agreed the proposed changes would meet clients needs, and 4 (40%) felt they would not. A further 4 (40%) answered 'don't know'.

Two respondents explained why they answered 'no'. One respondent felt that while the aims of meeting the needs of the client group was good, a significant number of clients would still not engage or stay with the support provided in the long-term. Another respondent felt that this level of development was not needed.

6.3.3 General public suggestions to improve engagement with support services

Two respondents made comments with suggestions for improving engagement. These included;

- Have a simple 'what works' approach
- If client groups fail to engage or break their contract they should be removed
- Identify hard to reach groups and engage with isolated people

6.3.4 Other comments on proposed changes

Four respondents made further comments on the proposed changes. These included;

- Feeling that the changes will have limited successful outcome
- Follow best practice guidance
- Provide more information on how existing services will be change
- Prioritise those who are from the UK

6.3.5 Demographics

- Seven (70%) were male and 3 (30%) female.
- Five (63%) were aged between 35-54.
- 100% of respondents were White British

Appendix

Questionnaire

Regarding Housing Related Support Services

We would like your views on proposed changes to Housing Related Support Services in Poole. Please read the consultation document before answering these questions. Please complete this form by **Friday 8th July 2016.** You can also complete this online at www.poole.gov.uk/housingsupportconsultation.

All information you provide is treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information will be used for statistical and monitoring purposes, no individuals will be identified in any published reports.

If you need help filling in this form, or have any questions about the proposals please contact 01202 633447 or email research@poole.gov.uk.

Q1   **Are you responding as:** *(please pick the option that best describes you)*

someone who is receiving a Housing Support Service in Poole.................................. ○   Go to Q2

a relative / carer of someone who receives a Housing Support Service in Poole..... ○   Go to Q2

someone who may use Housing Support Services in the future .... ○   Go to Q4

a provider of a Housing Support Service (please state which provider below)......... ○   Go to Q3

an organisation who helps people access a Housing Support Service (please
state which organisation below) .... ○   Go to Q3

another organisation / charity (please state below) .... ○   Go to Q4

a landlord .... ○   Go to Q3

a Poole resident .... ○   Go to Q4

other (please write in)... ○   Go to Q4

Please write in: [   ]

Q2   **How would you rate your current experiences of Housing Support Services in Poole?**
(Please select one option)

| Very positive | Fairly positive | Neither | Fairly negative | Very negative | Don't know |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Please briefly explain why: *(Please write in)*

[   ]

Q3 If you could make any improvement to current services, what would it be? *(Please write in)*

Proposed changes to Housing Support Services

Before answering the following questions, please read the consultation document.

Q4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed changes to Housing Support Services in Poole? *(Please select one option)*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
○	○	○	○	○	○

Please briefly explain why below: *(Please write in)*

Q5 In your view, would the proposed Housing Support Services meet the needs of the client groups / vulnerable people as described in the consultation document? *(Please select one option)*

○ Yes   ○ No   ○ Don't know

If no, please explain why below: *(Please write in)*

Q6 We want to improve people's engagement with Housing Support Services. Do you have any suggestions on how we could achieve this? *(Please write in)*

Q7 Do you have any other comments? *(Please write in)*

About You

Borough of Poole is committed to continually improving the services we provide and recognises that we need to address the diverse needs of different people in our community. The following questions will help us identify any inequalities and ensure fair access to our services. Please leave any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Q8 Are you: *(Please select one option)*

○ Male   ○ Female   ○ Prefer not to say

Q9 Which of the following age groups do you fall into? *(Please select one option)*

○ 16-24   ○ 25-34   ○ 35-44
○ 45-54   ○ 55-64   ○ 65 or over
○ Prefer not to say

Q10 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or a disability which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months? *(Please select one option)*

○ Yes - limited a lot   ○ Yes - limited a little   ○ No   ○ Prefer not to say

Q11 Which of these groups do you consider you belong to? *(Please select one option)*

○ White British
○ Other White background (please select and write in below)
○ Black or Minority Ethnic background (please select and write in below)
○ Other (please select and write in below)
○ Prefer not to say
Please write in:

[   ]

Q12 What is your postcode? *(Please write in)*

[   ]

Thank you for completing this form. You can return it using the freepost address below:

Corporate Research Team
FREEPOST RTKK-CCEE-CXUA
Borough of Poole
Civic Centre
BH15 2RU

For further details or queries about this report please contact Natasha Miles, 01202 633357 or email research@poole.gov.uk.