

# **Summary report of a public consultation on the proposed changes to the homeless support service in Leicestershire**

## **2023**

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and sincere thanks to everyone who has taken the time to provide their views and feedback as part of the consultation process.

## Purpose of this report

This document provides a summary of the findings of a public consultation undertaken between Wednesday 28 June and Sunday 3 September, on the review of the homeless support service commissioned by Leicestershire County Council's Public Health Department. This report reflects the findings of the formal consultation questionnaire, information sessions and additional responses received during the consultation period.

## Background

Leicestershire County Council commissions a service that supports adults who are facing homelessness, or who are homeless, to gain the skills needed to either live independently or live in supported accommodation. The service comprises of:

- A referral hub – to process and assess all referrals received to determine the most appropriate course of action.
- In-reach support – provided within hostel accommodation across Leicestershire.
- Outreach support – provides services such as telephone support, group work, benefits advice surgeries, signposting, and one-to-one support.

The current contract for homelessness support services will end in March 2024.

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) is facing growing financial pressure alongside increasing demand, so there is a need to look at providing services in a different way.

Following a review of the current service, and the financial challenges facing the council, LCC is proposing to change the way support is provided to individuals who are facing homelessness or who are homeless.

The proposal is to stop funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support through the council's existing public health services where a wider number of people are eligible for support.

## Consultation methods

The formal consultation ran from Wednesday 28 June to Sunday 3 September seeking views from residents and stakeholders on the proposed model. The consultation documentation detailed the proposed change and was available through the Leicestershire County Council Have Your Say webpage. This documentation included:

- a webpage introduction (Appendix A),
- a supporting information booklet (Appendix B),
- a questionnaire (Appendix C),
- an Easy Read version of the supporting information (Appendix D).

Additionally, after two information sessions, a set of Frequently Asked Questions were developed and added to the webpage (Appendix E).

A telephone line and email address were provided to enable all residents and stakeholders to ask questions about the consultation if they needed to.

The consultation invited the general public; service users both past and present; people facing homelessness; friends, relatives and carers of people facing or experiencing homelessness, and stakeholders (e.g., providers working directly with homeless individuals, district councils, healthcare providers, county council departments, and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations) to provide their views on the proposed changes and alternative ideas for providing support. This was captured through:

- Discussions at face to face and online information sessions. A total of 5 sessions were held during the consultation period (3 online sessions 2 face to face sessions).
- Responses to the questionnaire (paper copy and online copy)
- Responses received via the consultation email address

A detailed communications plan was developed to support promotion of the consultation. . The consultation was promoted through several routes, including social media, council website, current providers, emails to key stakeholders, and through newsletters. These were repeated throughout the consultation.

The information sessions were spread out over July and August, on different days, at different times of the day, and for different audiences, to provide a suite of options for people to attend at their convenience. The sessions aimed at professionals were held via Microsoft Teams and those aimed at service users were held both online and face to face.

At the face-to-face sessions which took place at Loughborough library, hard copies of the consultation information were made available to attendees. The information packs included: questionnaire with free post return, supporting information, easy read version of supporting information, and a set of Frequently Asked Questions. County council staff were also available to support completion of the questionnaire on-site. Space was also made available at Loughborough library for participants to complete a questionnaire.

Hard copies of the questionnaire were provided to the incumbent providers. Hard copies of the questionnaire were also made available to Local Area Coordinators and Community Recovery Workers to disseminate to their service users.

After it was flagged that there were issues with submitting multiple responses from one computer, a separate inputter link was provided which successfully resolved the issue. 2 responses were received via this route. A request to increase the word limit for the questionnaire response was also made. This was actioned by removing the character limit.

## Overview of responses

The questionnaire asked for people's views on:

- impact/s of the proposal
- access to other sources of homeless support
- awareness of existing county council services
- alternative suggestions to provide support

There was a total of 251 individual responses to the survey (204 were online and 47 were from paper copies).

In addition:

- 114 individuals attended the information sessions
- 2 letters were received from residents
- responses were received via email from Charnwood Borough Council and the Chief Housing Officers Group (CHOG)
- feedback was received from the Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group.

## Survey responses

In total, 251 responses were received (204 online and 47 paper/postal responses).

Results have been reported based on those who provided a valid response, i.e., excluding the 'don't know' responses and no replies from the calculation of the percentages, where applicable.

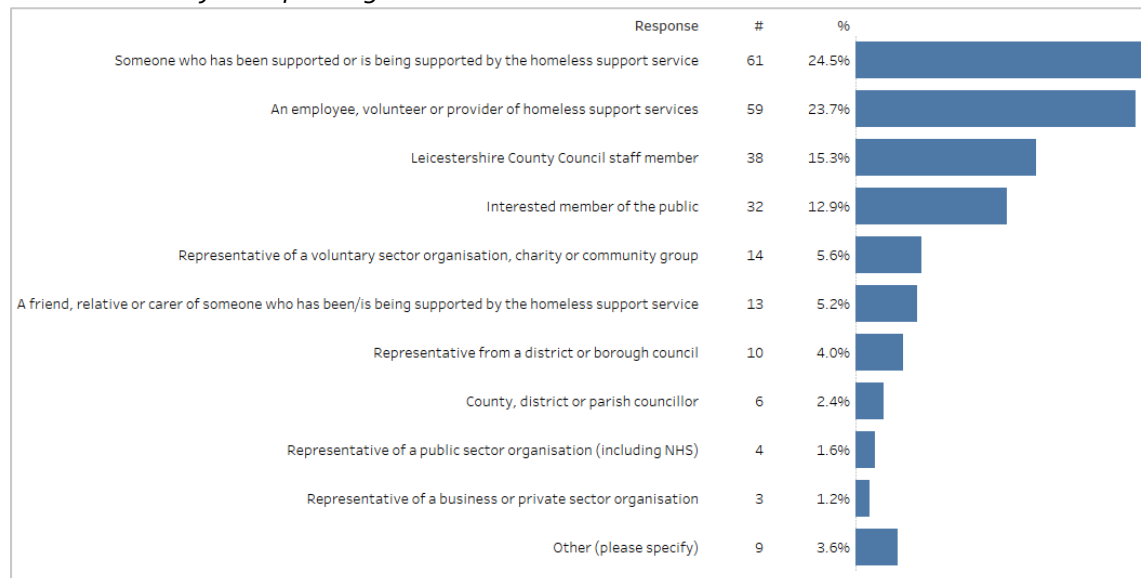
### **About the respondents**

The majority of responses were from someone who has been or is being supported by the homeless support service (25% of responses), followed by an employee, volunteer or provider of support services (24% of responses).

Where respondents chose 'other' the following detail was provided:

- Housing Association
- Previously been homeless
- Previous employee of a homelessness organisation
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Staff member within adult social care
- Partner's ex has received support

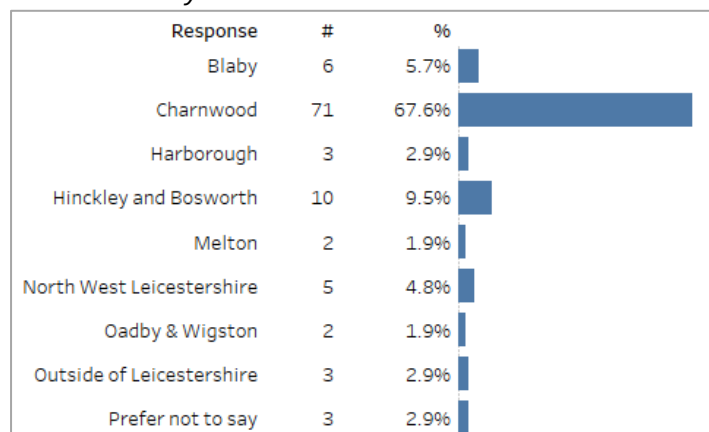
*In what role are you responding to this consultation?*



Respondents who had indicated their role as service users, their family/friends/carers, and interested members of the public were asked a series of demographic questions, of which:

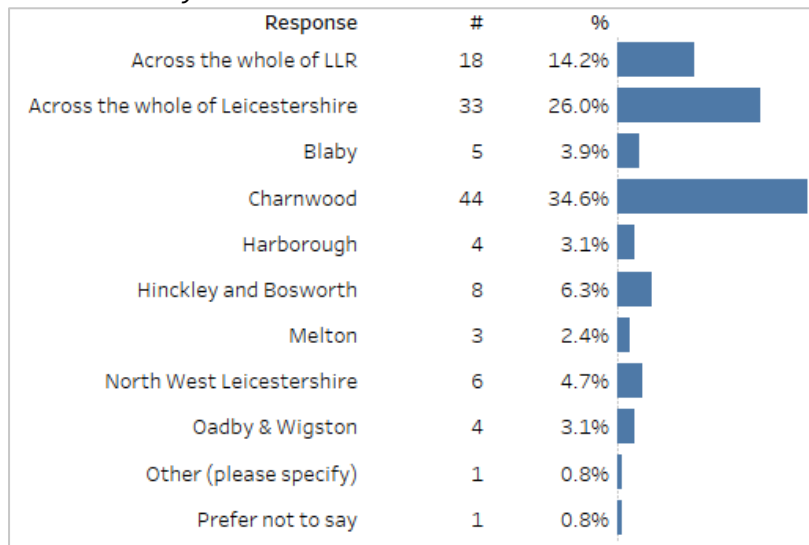
- 56% of these respondents were male and 41% were female
- The highest proportion of these respondents were aged 55-64 (27%)
- Half of these respondents said they had a long-standing illness, disability, or infirmity (50%).
- Most of these respondents identified as white (87%). A tenth of these respondents (10%) identified with a Black and Minority Ethnic group
- Just over two-thirds (68%) of these respondents said they lived in Charnwood

*Which area do you live in?*



Staff of homeless support services, Leicestershire County Council staff and representatives of organisations and businesses were asked which area they worked in. Just over a third of respondents (35%) said they worked in Charnwood. Just over one-fifth of respondents (26%) said they worked across Leicestershire and 14% said they worked across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

*Which area do you work in?*



**Accessing the current homeless support service**

Respondents were asked whether they had used or tried to access the current homeless support service. 43% of respondents said they had used or tried to access this service, and just over half of respondents (52%) said they had never used or tried to access this service.

*Have you used or tried to access the homeless support service?*



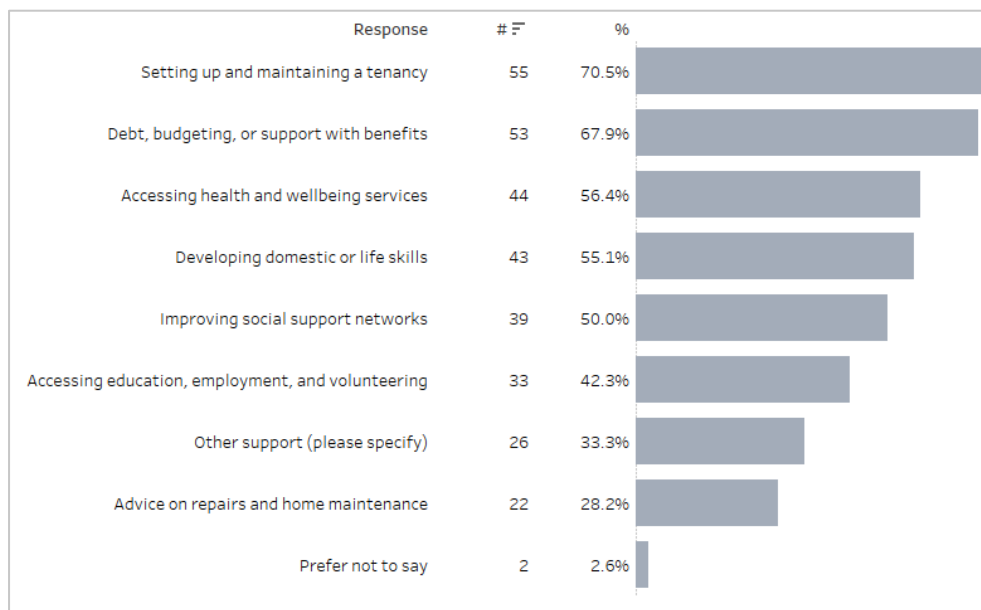
Of those that said they had used or tried to access the service (106 respondents):

- Just over three quarters (76%) said they had used or tried to access the service in the last year and 24% said they had used or tried to access the service over a year ago.
- A notable proportion were from those who had previously indicated that they were employees, volunteers and providers of homeless support services (16%) and representatives of businesses or organisations (9%).
- When asked which support offer/s they had used or tried to access in the last year, the highest proportion of respondents said, 'setting up and maintaining a tenancy' (71%) and 'debt, budgeting or support with benefits' (68%). Over half of respondents said they had accessed health and wellbeing services (56%).

Where respondents chose 'other' the following detail was provided:

- Housing advice including tenancy rights and searching for accommodation
- Employment support
- Working for the service
- Homeless support via accommodation
- Self-esteem assessment & confident building to look for work
- Scanning & copying documents when required
- Duty of care & welfare
- Food parcels
- Signposting to other services
- Make referrals into the service
- Substance misuse support
- One-to-one support
- Access to leisure services
- Mental health support

*Which, if any, of the following support offers did you receive or try to access from the homeless support service?*

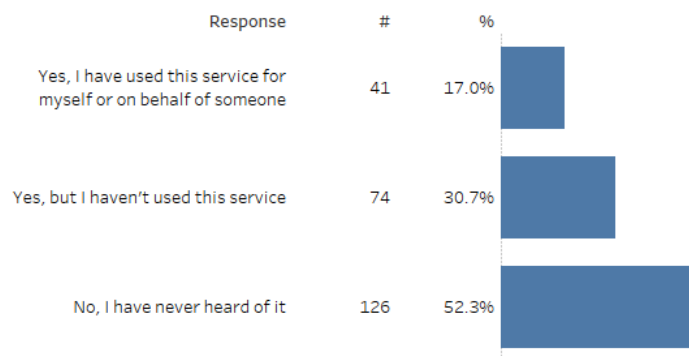


### **Awareness of county council services**

When asked whether they were aware of the county council's First Contact Plus service, 48% of respondents said they were aware of this service, while 52% said they had never heard of this service. Of the 115 respondents that said they were aware of the service, 36% said they had used the First Contact Plus service themselves or on behalf of someone else and 64% said they were aware of the service but had never used it.

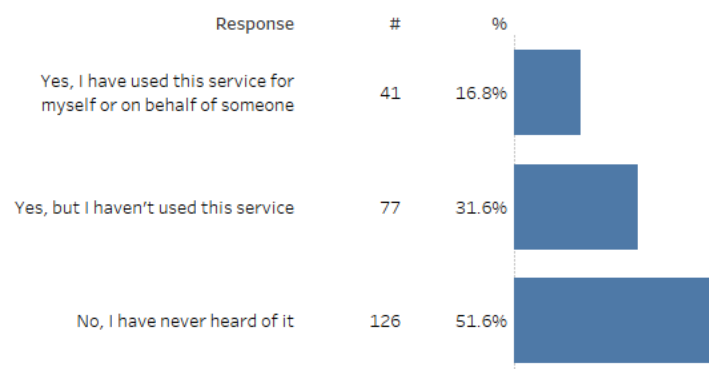


*Are you aware of the county council's First Contact Plus service?*



When asked whether they were aware of the county council's Local Area Coordination service, 48% of respondents said they were aware of this service, while 52% said they had never heard of this service. Of the 118 respondents that said they were aware of the service, 35% said they had used the Local Area Coordination service themselves or on behalf of someone else and 65% said they were aware of the service but had never used it.

*Are you aware of the county council's Local Area Coordination service?*



### Views on the proposals

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the proposal. Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of respondents (74%) said they disagree with the proposal, while 16% of respondents said they agree with the proposal and 11% said they neither agree nor disagree with the proposal. Out of those who disagree with the proposal, the greatest proportion of responses came from an employee, volunteer or provider of homeless support service (29%), followed by someone who has been or is currently being supported by the homeless support service (22%).



Respondents were asked 'Why do you say this?' Key themes of the responses are described below:

- It would make efficiency savings while maintaining support for homeless people.
- It would streamline the process of obtaining/providing support and also enable access to help for other issues that people facing homelessness might be experiencing.
- Positive move forward if homeless people can get the support and help they need to be able to not be homeless
- Current offer is highly valued (with particular reference to Falcon Centre)
  - many respondents referenced their own personal experiences and listed the ways Falcon Centre has helped them, their loved ones, or the people that they supported.
  - proposal is not comparable to existing provision
  - Falcon Centre is well established and working well
  - Falcon Centre provides a safe place
  - why change something that is already working well
  - benefits to society
  - Falcon Support Services is a lifeline to many people
  - easy to access
  - supportive staff
- Impact on levels of homelessness
  - current offer is keeping the local homeless situation under control
- Need for evidence base to support the changes
  - lack of data showing impact of the proposal
  - lack of research showing impact of the proposal
  - lack of evidence and data that the proposal will reduce homelessness
- Accessibility
  - people who are homeless or are facing homelessness often have no reliable access to phones or internet so the service will be difficult to access
  - people who are homeless or are facing homelessness require a consistent worker for trust and regularity
  - lack of 24/7 support
  - lack of face to face support
  - lack of 1-2-1 support
  - lack of out of hours support
  - negative impact on those living in rural areas
  - risk of people falling through the net
  - loss of support within an individual's place of residence
  - unsuitable for those for whom English is not their first language
  - unsuitable for those with poor literacy
  - loss of drop-in services
- Loss of targeted / specialised provision
  - increase in unmet needs among the homeless population
  - loss of practical support
  - not person-centred
  - need for localised support rather than a centralised service
- Absence of a homelessness policy / strategy
- Skills / qualifications / experience / recruitment of staff providing the new service
  - lack of expertise on homeless legislation
- Short-sighted approach

- focus is on savings rather than evidence base or human beings
- need to increase resources/funding rather than withdrawing them
- Impact on acute services e.g., housing need, social services
  - requests for suitable accommodation will increase
  - service users may have to rely on police or ambulance services as local mental health services are not fit for purpose
  - impact on other services not clear
  - impact on healthcare services
- Risk of closure of Falcon Centre
  - loss of 30 beds
  - increased risk of rough sleeping
  - increased risk of anti-social behaviour and crime
  - impact on out of area service users
  - loss of other services provided within the centre e.g., needle exchange, food parcels, laundry service
- Need for multi-agency / partnership approach
  - First Contact Plus should be one of the services but not the only one.
  - would support proposal as long as GP practices are informed of the new service, and it is easily accessible / easy to refer into
- Doesn't address support for individuals with complex needs
  - service will not work for chaotic individuals or those with complex needs.
  - lack of support for individuals with substance misuse issues who are in crisis.
  - lack of support for entrenched rough sleepers
  - lack of flexibility
- Housing should be the priority
  - proposal doesn't address lack of affordable housing
  - proposal doesn't address lack of suitable housing
- Poor quality services provided by district housing teams / confusion of roles and responsibilities of the County Council versus district offer
  - district councils lack resources and engagement
  - lack of connection with district council housing team
  - lack of support from district council
- Lack of awareness of First Contact Plus and Local Area Coordinators
- Lack of awareness of existing homeless support service

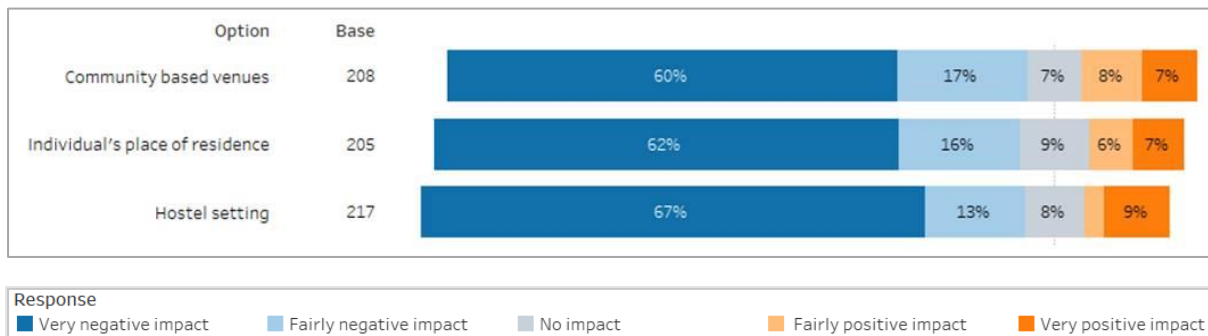
### **Impact of the proposal**

Respondents were asked what impact they think there would be on support within various settings, as a result of the proposal.

- 81% of respondents said they think the proposal would have a negative impact on hostel settings while 12% said there would be a positive impact and 8% said there would be no impact.
- 78% of respondents said they think the proposal would have a negative impact on an individual's place of residence while 13% said there would be a positive impact and 9% said there would be no impact.

- 77% of respondents said they think the proposal would have a negative impact on community-based venues while 15% said there would be a positive impact and 7% said there would be no impact.

*As a result of the proposal, what impact, if any, do you think there would be on support within the following settings?*



Respondents were asked 'Why do you say this?' Responses were similar to that of the previous question. Key themes of the responses are described below:

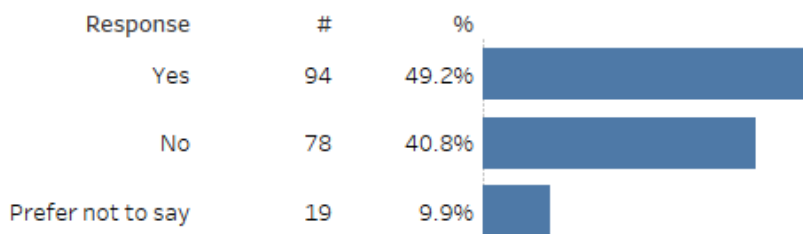
- Current offer is highly valued (with particular reference to Falcon Centre)
  - many respondents referenced their own personal experiences and listed the ways Falcon Centre has helped them, their loved ones, or the people that they supported, with particular reference to the mental and physical support provided
  - Falcon Centre is well established and working well
  - Falcon Centre staff understand the needs of this cohort
- Proposal will add to existing service provision
- Local Area Coordinators are already out in the community which is a benefit
- Need for evidence base to support the changes
- Accessibility
  - People who are homeless or are facing homelessness often have no reliable access to phones or internet so the service will be difficult to access
  - Challenges with rapport building and trust
  - services that signpost are not suitable for this cohort
  - Lack of 24/7 support
  - Loss of face to face support
  - Lack of 1-2-1 support
  - loss of drop-in services will impact on rough sleepers and means loss of support such as opening bank accounts, registering with health services, homeless applications, mental health support etc.
  - Loss of support for single men who are usually deemed low priority
  - risk of long wait times
- Loss of targeted / specialised provision
  - not person-centred
  - need for localised support rather than a centralised service
  - will worsen inequalities
- Skills / qualifications / experience / recruitment of staff providing the new service
- Short-sighted approach

- need to increase resources/funding rather than withdrawing them
- cutting services at a time of increased need is not the way forward
- Impact on acute services e.g., housing need, social services
  - impact on policing services
  - impact on ambulance services
  - impact on healthcare services
- Risk of closure of Falcon Centre due to loss of housing benefit
  - Loss of 30 beds
  - Increased risk of rough sleeping
  - Increased risk of anti-social behaviour and crime
  - Loss of other services provided within the centre e.g., needle exchange, food parcels, laundry service
  - safeguarding issues
  - health and safety issues
  - loss of 24/7 support
  - need more beds / accommodation not less
  - loss of familiarity
- Doesn't address support for individuals with complex needs
  - Service will not work for chaotic individuals or those with complex needs.
  - Lack of support for individuals with substance misuse issues
  - Lack of support for entrenched rough sleepers
  - impact on health and wellbeing / exacerbate health inequalities
- Each district council interprets the homelessness guidance differently
- Lack of awareness of where people can go to for support
- Need to explore how to provide the existing service more cost effectively
- Community based services are rooted in local communities
- No route for individuals to move onto independent living

### **Use of the First Contact Plus service**

When asked whether they have had or anticipate having any difficulties with using the First Contact Plus service, 41% of respondents said no and 49% said yes.

*Do you have (or anticipate having) any difficulties with using the First Contact Plus service?*



Those who answered 'yes' were asked to explain the barriers they have or anticipate having with the First Contact Plus service. Key themes of the responses are described below:

- Digital exclusion, with concerns around access to smart phones, the internet and credit.
- Suitability of services to homeless individuals. For example, vulnerable people trying to access a telephone and website-based service and the need to contact a service at a convenient time due to challenges related to being homeless.
- Access issues due to factors such as older age, hearing loss, literacy, language, poor mental health and disability.
- Anxieties around using the telephone
- Unanswered phone calls and wait times for services provided by First Contact Plus
- Lack of face to face support
- Issues with using the website
- Service users having to make the calls to First Contact Plus without support, difficulty understanding the information provided on the telephone
- The need to retell experiences could result in re-triggering individuals and impact negatively on their mental health
- Lack of awareness and/or familiarity with First Contact Plus processes
- Past negative experience with First Contact Plus and a lack of trust in the services
- Concerns regarding recognition of transgender identities
- The service is not person centred

Respondents were asked whether they were aware of any barriers or difficulties that other people may have with the current or proposed service. Responses focused on issues around accessibility of the proposed service for individuals, the key themes being:

- Proposed services not accessible or appropriate for those experiencing homelessness with complex needs
- Lack of reliable access to a telephone or mobile, internet, or credit to pay for accessing the internet or phone calls
- Digital exclusion and the need for further support e.g., completing online forms.
- Communication barriers, for example, disability including hearing impairment, learning difficulties, literacy and language (including individuals whose first language is not English)
- Challenges related to accessing an online or telephone service for individuals with complex physical and mental health issues
- Lack of awareness and understanding of public health services e.g. First Contact Plus
- Lack of trust, which requires time to develop.
- A lack of confidence may prevent individuals from accessing this service
- Concerns about the need for kind and non-judgmental treatment
- Concerns that retelling experiences may result in re-triggering individuals and impact negatively on their mental health
- Concerns relating to telephone waiting times / staffing capacity
- Concerns that information on the website could be out of date
- Lack of 24/7 support
- Issues with travelling
- Loss of dedicated worker
- Lack of evidence that the service will meet the needs of homeless individuals

Some respondents identified ways to overcome potential barriers. These were:

- Ensuring face-to-face contact was made available for those with complex needs and having a dedicated worker who could provide this type of contact
- Making the First Contact Plus service easy to access
- Ensuring First Contact Plus staff are trained to communicate with this cohort
- Raise awareness of the First Contact Plus service

### **Other sources of support**

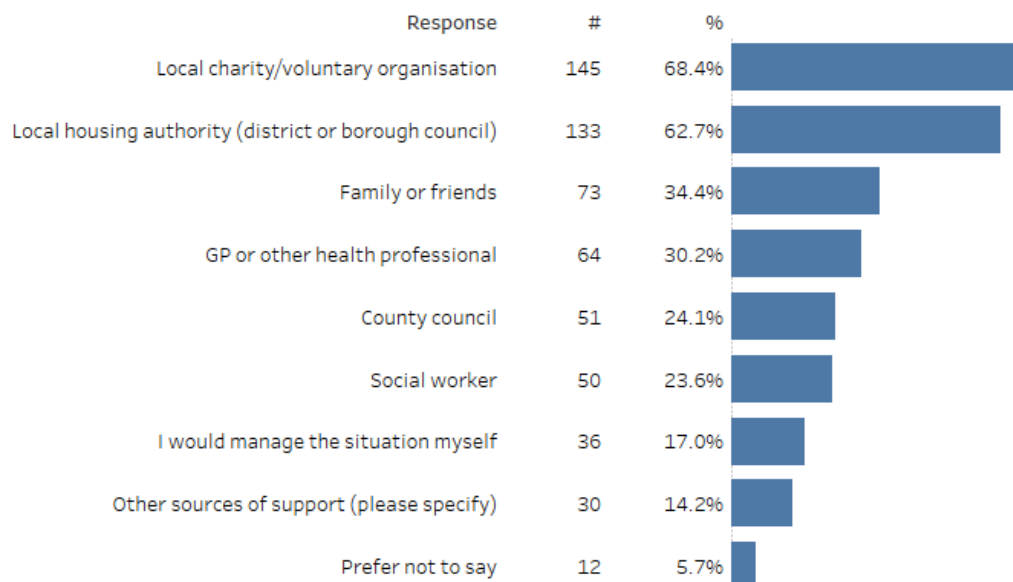
Respondents were asked if the homeless support service commissioned by the county council was not available, which other sources of homeless support would they consider.

The majority of respondents said they would consider support from a local charity/voluntary organisation (69%) or from a local housing authority (63%). This was followed by family/friends (34%) and a health professional (30%).

Where respondents chose 'other' the following detail was provided:

- Public Health
- Falcon Support Services / homeless charity / The Bridge
- Hotel / B&B
- Community centre
- No support would be accessed / be on the streets
- Housing Association

*If the homeless support service commissioned by the county council was not available, what other sources of homeless support would you consider?*



### Alternative suggestions for future support

Respondents were asked whether they had any thoughts about how support could be provided in a different way in the future for individuals facing homelessness or who are homeless. Responses are summarised below:

- Accommodation
  - provision of a direct route into temporary accommodation
  - access to supported accommodation for complex cases
  - more temporary accommodation
  - improve standard of accommodation
  - keep Falcon Centre open
  - converting cargo containers into suitable accommodation
  - an easier system to bid for houses
  - purchase a low budget hotel where homeless people can sleep, have breakfast and use the internet
  - more suitable accommodation e.g., pet friendly
- Preventative services
  - grass roots level interventions
  - libraries to hold education/learning/employability workshops
  - education and support for people before they become homeless
  - promote public health / health improving services
  - more work could be done to prevent homelessness in the first place
  - support groups providing information on education, support with job applications, interview support
  - implement a trauma informed approach
- Awareness raising
  - raise awareness of existing offers, including services provided by local charities
- Collaboration
  - greater join up between district housing departments
  - one stop mobile hub that includes partner agencies from different teams e.g., mental health, police, housing advisors
  - collaboration across partner organisations and pooling of resources with the county council taking the lead
  - need for a long term homeless strategy
- Bespoke services
  - intensive VARM (Vulnerable Adult Risk Management) offer
  - community hubs / a one stop information and support hub
  - better support for people with dual diagnosis (mental health and substance misuse)
  - strengthen mental health services
  - a 24 hour helpline available to community services/places that provides a rapid response to those in danger
  - dedicated teams for each district to support the homelessness demands
  - bespoke provision for those who are not a priority



- more in house support / face to face support
- provision of drop ins away from hostel accommodation
- Workforce development
  - increase the number of trained outreach workers
  - adequate pay for staff providing homeless services
- Other suggestions
  - prioritise homelessness
  - lobby the government for adequate funding
  - more funding for charities that support homeless individuals
  - keep the existing offer as it is
  - speak to those who have experienced homelessness to explore their needs
  - foodbanks that offer food that doesn't need to be cooked
  - social investment for payment by results

### **Any other comments**

The consultation survey also asked for any other comments about the proposal. The majority of responses to this section included content that had been mentioned in response to previous questions, so these have not been repeated. However, there were 2 additional themes. The first was a criticism of the consultation process, particularly in relation to accessibility for those with lived experience. The second theme was on the (perceived) lack of an impact assessment.

## **Additional consultation feedback - Information Sessions**

The purpose of the information sessions was to ensure that all individuals who wished to comment on the consultation were well informed of the proposals. Each session began with the same presentation to talk through the proposal and give information on how individuals could comment on the proposals. After the presentation, LCC listened to the views and comments of individuals and spent time answering questions as best as possible given the complexities of homeless service provision.

The information sessions were spread out over July and August, on different days, at different times of the day, and for different audiences, to provide a suite of options for people to attend at their convenience. The sessions aimed at professionals were held via Microsoft Teams and those aimed at service users were held both online and face to face.

Due to the large numbers who registered, an additional face-to-face session was held. These sessions took place in Charnwood as this is where the highest proportion of services users currently reside. Loughborough Library was chosen as the location as it was deemed to be a neutral space which service users are familiar with and is also accessible to the general public.

*Details of information sessions*

Date	Time	Location	Who this is for
Monday 10 July	2pm to 3pm	Online	Professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness
Wednesday 12 July	1pm to 2pm	Online	People who have or are currently using the service Friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness
Monday 7 August	10am to 10.45am	Loughborough Library, Granby St, Loughborough, LE11 3DZ	People who have or are currently using the service Friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness
Monday 7 August	11am to 11.45am	Loughborough Library, Granby St, Loughborough, LE11 3DZ	People who have or are currently using the service Friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness
Wednesday 9 August	10am to 11am	Online	Professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness

In total 131 individuals attended the sessions. Attendees on 12 July were a mix of both services users and professionals. Only service users attended the sessions on 7 August and only professionals attended on 10 July and 9 August.

At the face-to-face session, 60 paper copies of the survey and all supporting information were offered as a pack to all attendees. Members of LCC staff offered to support individuals to complete the survey. One individual accepted this offer.

Key themes arising from the information sessions are summarised below.

- Accessibility and awareness of consultation
  - concerns regarding accessing the consultation enabling service users to 'have their say' including inputting links and lack of focus groups.
  - service users expressed their confusion over the objective of the face-to-face information sessions. Some individuals reported that they were led to believe the sessions were arranged to 'save the Falcon Centre'.
- Accessibility of proposed service
  - concerns accessing the proposed service digitally and over the phone highlighting that homeless individuals lead chaotic lives, do not have phone credit or access to technology.

- Awareness of provision and roles and responsibilities of commissioning organisations
  - confusion over the responsibility of support for this cohort e.g., LCC, districts/boroughs, NHS, the funding streams available e.g., budgets & grants available etc. and how the funding should be distributed.
  - not understanding the disconnect between the floating support services and the 30-bed hostel, referencing the specification.
  - concerns over lack of detail on the new proposal e.g., how the proposed offer will be accessed and delivered if removed from the Falcon Centre, how the new referral system will work, how signposting and 1:1 support will be offered and whether the new service will be available 24/7.
  - recognition that other parts of the county do not have an equivalent offer to the Falcon Centre.
- Potential impact on Falcon Centre / risk of closure
  - most service users expressed they value the Falcon Centre and commend the support workers, particularly 'harm reduction workers' and 'peer mentors' for their continuity of care/support, describing the Falcon Centre as a 'family'
  - concerns if Falcon Support Services lost exempt housing benefit status that the Falcon Centre would close, beds would reduce or disappear, wraparound support and other services Falcon provide would be lost and staff lose their jobs.
  - risk of an increase in homelessness, street homeless, mental health issues, trauma and crime etc. therefore putting a strain on other services e.g., police, NHS and other public services
  - query regarding whether future plans have been put in place if the Falcon Centre were to close.
  - concerns regarding losing harm reduction workers and the needle disposal service.
  - concerns regarding providing support for those individuals with high needs or are high risk.
- Impact on homelessness
  - concerns that homelessness is increasing and may worsen if funding is cut
  - concerns on whether impact work has been done, data analysis, how many individuals will be impacted, impacts on other services, work with other commissioners and if an EIA had been completed.
- Need for evidence base to support the changes
  - concerns whether the new model is evidence based and if research has been carried out to prove it is effective including cost benefit analysis and what is affordable etc.
- Skills / qualifications / experience / recruitment of staff providing the new service
  - concerns over how LAC support would be delivered, and whether the staff have the knowledge and skills to deal with complex needs, and the capacity to meet demand.
- Need for multi-agency / partnership approach
- Doesn't address support for individuals with complex needs
- Lack of awareness of First Contact Plus and Local Area Coordinators / services

## Additional consultation feedback – Responses via the consultation email address

In addition to the survey, separate submissions were received by email from Charnwood Borough Council and the Chief Housing Officers Group (CHOG). The submissions received by email were identical, however CHOG provided additional detail at the end of their response.

Both groups said they strongly disagreed with the County Council's proposal and provided the following reasons for this response:

- The First Contact Plus does not directly provide housing related support, unlike the existing arrangement
- The First Contact Plus service is based on online systems, which could pose a barrier for many customers
- District housing authorities have a duty to provide individuals with advice and assistance, but do not have a duty to provide individuals with temporary or longer-term accommodation, therefore the onward referral mechanism for practical housing related supports that exists under the current arrangement will be lost
- If the contract ends, rates of homelessness and rough sleeping are likely to increase across the area, which could increase the risk of associated community safety issues, negative public health outcomes and demand on other services (e.g., social care, health, the police and district housing authorities)
- A change in delivery model increases the risk of the Falcon Centre closing with related consequences such as rough sleeping in Loughborough town centre, across the county and across the city.

Both groups responded to the survey question regarding the level of impact there would be on support within various settings. Both groups:

- Thought there would be a very negative impact on 'hostel settings'. Although they understood that the County Council currently provide a relatively low amount of support funding for the Falcon Centre to access housing benefit under the existing arrangement. Both groups felt that if the support funding were to be removed then the risk of hostel closure and closure of community-based services could increase
- Said there was likely to be a fairly negative impact on 'community-based venues' due to demand transfer. They said these venues may not be able to provide support services tailored to the client group and felt that it was unclear how the support will continue to operate under the current proposals
- Felt the proposal would have a very negative impact on an 'individual's place of residence', as less practical direct housing support will be provided which could increase the risk of tenancy failure and increase demand for homelessness services.

When asked about the barriers or difficulties that people may have with the current or proposed service, both groups:

- Re-emphasised that the existing support is not being replaced with a similar service

- Felt that the existing client group will be less able and/or willing to access First Contact Plus due to the online systems acting as a barrier
- Raised that there is no option for telephoning on the First Contact Plus website
- Mentioned that district authorities had trialled a technological solution for accessing housing support in the past, where there were challenges for the client group engaging with it
- Felt a remotely provided service would be less accessible for clients with vulnerabilities, such as learning difficulties
- Were concerned that the floating support element of the current service, which works closely with local authorities and housing providers to agree sustainable arrangements, would be lost

Both the CHOG and Charnwood Borough Council provided thoughts about how support could be provided in a different way in the future, for individuals facing homelessness. The following were mentioned:

- Concerns that the proposals are a reduction in funding to the whole homelessness system, which is already under strain with increasing demand, lack of accommodation options and complexity of customer needs
- At the time that a recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) has recognised homeless people as a vulnerable group, it has been proposed to remove funding from services for this group. The CHOG felt it was difficult to see how a proposal that will remove housing related support and the sole accommodation option for excluded households can support the aim outlined in the JSNA
- The proposed Local Area Coordination service does not provide the accommodation service that the Falcon Centre provides
- District Housing authorities cannot deliver/commission the services that are delivered under the current contract without additional funding
- As service demands / service costs are likely to increase, housing authorities will therefore have a continued need to prioritise services for individuals who are owed a duty under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- It was suggested that the current funding be passed to district housing authorities to enable direct delivery or to enable the commissioning of accommodation-based / floating support services
- A need for a systems approach to the provision of support to homeless customers, with all partners contributing to the different levels of need and support required – maximising the budget available
- Engagement with stakeholders in a structured way, with a view to exploring possible solutions
- Reviewing the service specification and refine expectations to allow a service model that better meets needs and is more closely aligned to commissioners' priority outcomes.

During the consultation period, two letters were received from Falcon Support Services that were written by service users residing at the Falcon Centre. Both individuals included examples of the great support that the Falcon Centre provides and wrote about their own personal experience. One letter explained how the Falcon Centre had helped them gain qualifications, secure permanent housing and a job, and feel like a valued member of the community. The other letter mentioned that the help from the Falcon Centre had enabled them to gain confidence, secure housing, look forward to the future and change their life for the better.

## Additional consultation feedback – Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the new service model as part of the consultation process. In supporting the proposed model, the Committee noted that the draft revised model for the delivery of homeless support be noted, and the proposed use of the Local Area Coordination service be welcomed.

### Thematic summary of the consultation

The information gathered from this consultation will be used to shape the final proposal.

A summary of key themes is described below:

- Efficiency savings can be made while maintaining support for homeless people.
- Process of obtaining/providing support would be streamlined which would enable access to help for other issues that people facing homelessness might be experiencing.
- Proposed model (First Contact Plus and Local Area Coordination service) is in place and working well
- Positive move forward to focus on prevention
- Proposal will add to existing provision
- Potential for a negative impact on levels of homelessness
- Need for evidence base to support the changes
- Concerns regarding accessibility of the proposed service
- Concerns regarding loss of targeted / specialised provision
- Concerns regarding skills / qualifications / experience / recruitment of staff providing the new service
- Concerns that the approach is short-sighted
- Concerns over impact on acute services
- Risk of closure of Falcon Centre
- Need for multi-agency / partnership approach
- Concerns over loss of targeted support for individuals with complex needs
- Concerns over lack of focus on housing needs
- Current offer is highly valued
- Confusion of roles and responsibilities of the County Council versus district offer
- Lack of awareness of First Contact Plus and Local Area Coordinators
- Lack of awareness of existing homeless support services
- Need to explore how to provide the existing service more cost effectively

A summary of suggestions for how support could be provided in a different way is provided below:

- Keep the offer as it is / No change
- Greater focus on accommodation
- Greater focus on preventative services
- Raise awareness of existing offers, including services provided by local charities
- Greater collaboration

- Provision of bespoke / targeted services based on need
- Workforce development
- Increase funding
- Utilise feedback from those with lived experience on a regular basis
- Transfer budget to district councils to enable direct delivery or to enable the commissioning of accommodation-based / floating support services
- Review the service specification and refine expectations to allow a service model that better meets needs and is more closely aligned to commissioners' priority outcomes.

## Appendices

**Appendix A – Webpage introduction**

**Appendix B – Supporting information**

**Appendix C – Questionnaire**

**Appendix D – Easy Read version of supporting information**

**Appendix E – Frequently Asked Questions**



## Appendix A – Webpage introduction

### Homeless support services

*Have your say on proposed changes to homeless support services across Leicestershire*

**This consultation runs from 28 June until midnight on Sunday 3 September 2023**

Leicestershire County Council is committed to helping people, and we have a wide range of support in place for those needing it.

Like councils across the country, we are facing growing financial pressure alongside increasing demand, so we need to look at providing services in a different way.

The current contract for homelessness support services ends in March 2024.

#### About the proposals

Following a review of the current service, and the financial challenges facing the council, we are proposing to change the way we provide support to individuals who are facing homelessness or who are homeless.

The proposal is for the council to stop funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support through the council's existing public health services (mainly First Contact Plus) where a wider number of people are eligible for support.

#### Have your say

A public consultation is taking place from **28 June to 3 September 2023**, seeking views on the proposed changes.

This consultation is open to everyone in Leicestershire. We are particularly keen to hear from:

- people facing homelessness
- people who have or are currently using the homeless support service
- friends, relatives, and carers of people facing or experiencing homelessness
- professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness

Homeless support services – consultation supporting information document

Online survey [link] Please read the supporting document before completing the survey.

This consultation is about the homeless support service paid for by Leicestershire County Council. Any support or services provided by other agencies such as district and borough councils, is not part of this consultation.

#### Information sessions

There will be information events taking place during the consultation. Staff from the council will be available to present the proposal and answer any queries.

To attend, individuals should register their interest by emailing their name and preferred date to [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk) or by calling 0116 305 0705.

**Events for people who have or are currently using the service, or friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness**

- Wednesday 12 July, 1pm – 2pm: Online Microsoft Teams Meeting
- Monday 7 August, 10am – 1pm: Loughborough Library, Granby St, Loughborough, LE11 3DZ

**Events for professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness**

- Monday 10 July, 2pm – 3pm: Online Microsoft Teams Meeting
- Wednesday 9 August, 10am – 11am: Online Microsoft Teams Meeting

**Alternative formats**

If you're able to, please complete this survey online using the link above.

For alternative formats of the survey, including paper copies please email [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk) or call 0116 305 0705

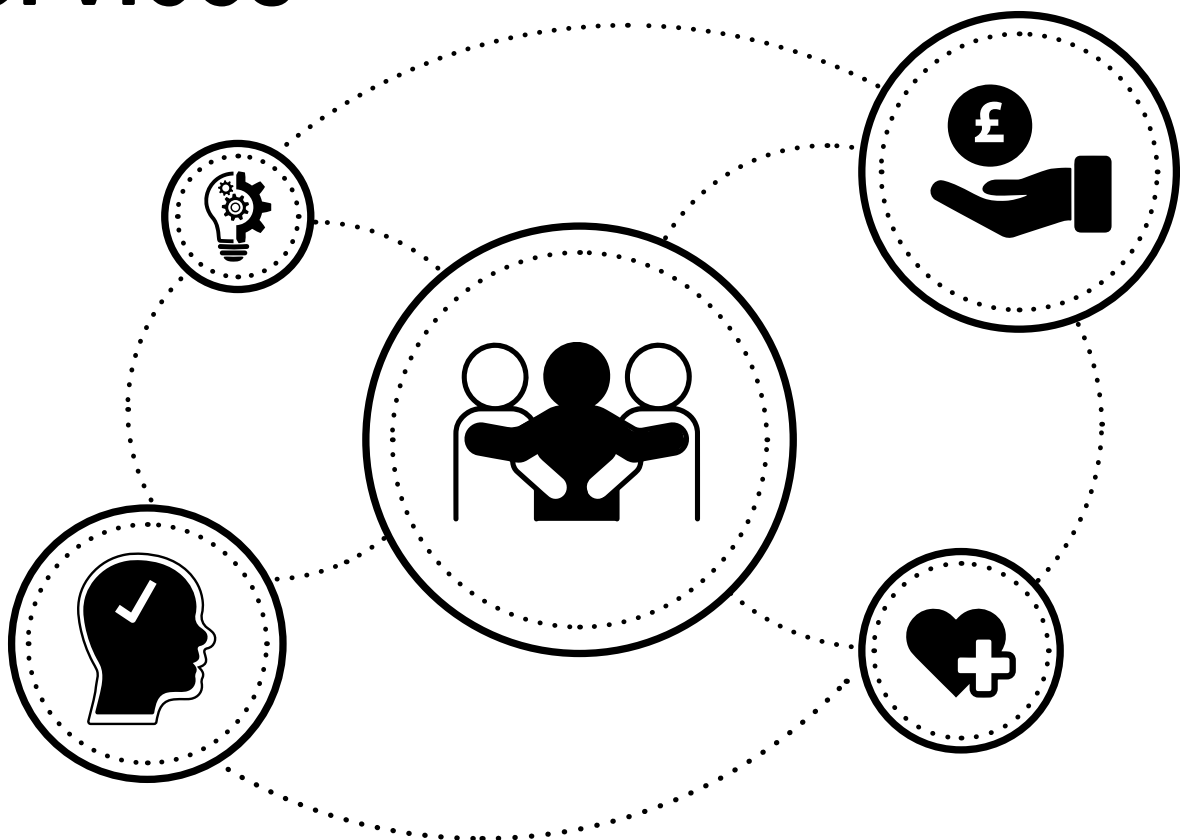
An easy read version of the consultation will also be available on this webpage shortly.

The **closing date** to complete the questionnaire is **midnight on 3 September 2023**.

**What happens next**

After the consultation closes in September, we'll analyse the results, and a report will be presented to the council's cabinet in winter 2023.

# Have your say on proposed changes to homeless support services



## Tell us how this might affect you

Online: [leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation](https://leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation)

For general enquiries or comments about this consultation,  
email [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)

Public consultation: Please submit your views by midnight  
on **3 September 2023**

## Introduction

Leicestershire County Council commissions a service (previously known as Housing Matters) that supports adults who are facing homelessness, or who are homeless, to gain the skills needed to either live independently or live in supported accommodation.

The support is provided within:

- hostels: mainly within Falcon Centre (located in Loughborough)
- community based locations: Syston Community Centre, Hinckley Salvation Army, Blaby Baptist Church, The Symington Building (Market Harborough), Wigston Salvation Army, The Centre - Mary's Place (Melton), George Smith Hub, Holy Trinity Parish Church (Ashby)
- an individual's place of residence

Examples of support include:

- setting up and maintaining a tenancy
- developing domestic or life skills
- debt, budgeting, and benefits
- support to engage with local community resources
- accessing health and wellbeing services
- accessing education, employment, and volunteering
- improving social support networks
- advice on repairs and home maintenance
- safeguarding vulnerable individuals

## Why we are consulting

Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has provided district and borough councils (as the housing authorities) with money, through the homelessness prevention grant, to provide support for individuals who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Leicestershire County Council's current contract for homelessness support services ends on 31 March 2024. Like councils across the country, we are facing growing financial pressure alongside increasing demand, so we need to look at providing services in a different way.

Our support to people who are homeless, or facing homelessness was an area which was identified for review, as part of our budget plans, which we consulted people on last winter.

The county council is committed to helping people, and we have a wide range of support in place for those needing it, as you'll read later on in this document. The end of this contract gives us the chance to review the support we have and make sure it will meet the needs of those who need help, wherever they are in the county.

## Proposal

Following a review of the current service and the financial challenges facing the council, we are proposing to change the way we provide support to individuals who are facing homelessness or who are homeless.

The proposal is for the county council to cease funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support via the council's existing public health services where a wider number of people are eligible for support.

The principles of the proposed approach centre around the following:

- Providing coverage across the whole of Leicestershire.
- Eligibility that includes any adult who is facing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Access to support via a central point of access.
- Support that is tailored to the needs of each individual.
- Greater focus on improving the health and wellbeing of individuals.

The principles will be achieved mainly through the universal offer of First Contact Plus and the Local Area Coordination service as opposed to a bespoke offer specifically for individuals who are homeless.

First Contact Plus is an online tool which helps adults in Leicestershire to access information, advice, help and support on a range of services. Examples include:

- Department for Work and Pensions for support to access the right benefits.
- Citizens Advice for debt management support.
- Community Recovery Team and Local Area Coordination Team for one-to-one support.
- Warm Homes Service for support on housing issues such as damp, mould, draught proofing, and signposting to funding for energy efficiency measures.
- Health and wellbeing services such as smoking cessation, drug and /or alcohol misuse, healthy weight, physical activity, and sexual health services.
- Mental wellbeing services such as Vita Minds (a talking therapies service for low level mental health support).
- Services provided by the Council's Adults and Communities Department, including community support workers and social care.
- Adult Learning and Multiply for support on accessing learning and educational courses, including support on budgeting. Multiply is a programme aimed at helping adults to improve their numeracy skills.

The offer is delivered by the county council in partnership with GPs, the police, voluntary groups, health organisations, social care departments, and district / borough councils to help adults across the county. Referrals can be made by the person needing support, by a friend or family member on the persons behalf or by a professional.

Local Area Coordinators work with individuals who may be vulnerable, or at risk of crisis, by building a supportive community around them thereby reducing social isolation. Where one-to-one support is required, the Local Area Coordination service is well established within communities and so can meet this need through their links with community groups, drop-in sessions and through the direct provision of one-to-one support at a suitable location.

The county council has other contracts where people can get support. For example, we have a service that supports people who are homeless because of domestic abuse. We also have a service that provides substance misuse support.

A key strength of the proposed approach is that links can be made to a broader range of health and wellbeing services.

Further information on First Contact Plus and the Local Area Coordination Service can be found here:



[firstcontactplus.org.uk](http://firstcontactplus.org.uk)

## Local Area Co-ordination



[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-area-co-ordinators](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-area-co-ordinators)

## Who should fill in the questionnaire?

This consultation is open to everyone. We are particularly keen to hear from:

- people facing homelessness
- people who have or are currently using the service
- friends, relatives, and carers of people facing or experiencing homelessness
- professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness

## How will the consultation work?

This consultation is about the homeless support service commissioned by Leicestershire County Council. Any support or services provided by other agencies such as district & borough councils, is not part of this consultation.

The consultation begins on 28 June 2023 and will end at **midnight on 3 September 2023**.

We ask that you complete the online version of the questionnaire if you can. However, we understand that this is not always possible, so a paper copy is available on request by calling 0116 305 0705 or emailing [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)

To submit your views, please fill out the consultation questionnaire and make sure it reaches us by **midnight on 3 September at the latest**.

The survey is available online at [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation)

We advise that you regularly refer to this document when completing the questionnaire.

## Public Engagement

Information sessions have been arranged where staff from the county council will be available to present the proposal and answer any queries you may have. Information on how to respond to the consultation will also be available. Dates, times, and locations of the information sessions are indicated below. If you would like to attend an information session, please register your interest by emailing your contact details and preferred date to [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk) and we will send out an invite to you. Alternatively, you can register your interest by calling 0116 305 0705.

Date	Time	Location	Who this is for
Monday 10 July	2pm to 3pm	Online	Professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness
Wednesday 12 July	1pm to 2pm	Online	People who have or are currently using the service  Friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness
Monday 7 August	10am to 1pm* *This session will begin with a short presentation on the proposal.	Loughborough Library, Granby St, Loughborough, LE11 3DZ	People who have or are currently using the service  Friends, relatives, and carers of people facing homelessness
Wednesday 9 August	10am to 11am	Online	Professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness

## Further Information

Responses will be confidential, and findings shared will not contain any personal identifiable data.

If you have any questions or queries on this consultation, please email [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)

## Glossary of terms

**Contract:** a legal document that states and explains a formal agreement between two or more organisations.

**Commissioned service:** care, support or supervision that has been arranged and paid for on an individual's behalf by a public authority, like a council.

**Statutory duty:** functions that the council has a legal obligation to provide.

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હો તો  
0116 305 0705 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા અવસ્થા કરીશું.

જેકર તુહાનું ઇસ જાણકારી નું સમજાવ દિવસ રુઝ મદદ જાગીદી હૈ તાં કિરપા કરકે  
0116 305 0705 નંબર કે ફોન કરે અતે અસીં તુહાડી મદદ લઈ કિસે દા પૂર્ણ કર દવાંગે।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে  
0116 305 0705 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات سمجھنے میں کچھ مدد درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر کال کریں  
0116 305 0705 اور ہم آپ کی مدد کے لئے کسی کا انتظام کر دیں گے۔

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電  
0116 305 0705，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku,  
zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 0705, a my Ci pomożemy.



# Have your say on proposed changes to homeless support services in Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council commissions a service (previously known as Housing Matters) that supports adults who are facing homelessness or who are homeless, to gain the skills needed to either live independently or live in supported accommodation. The support is provided within hostels, community-based locations and within an individual's place of residence.

Following a review of the current service and the financial challenges facing the county council, we are proposing to change the way we provide support to individuals who are facing homelessness or who are homeless. The proposal is for the county council to cease funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support via the council's existing public health services where a wider number of people are eligible for support.

This consultation is open to everyone. We are particularly keen to hear from:

- people facing homelessness
- people who have or are currently using the service
- friends, relatives, and carers of people facing or experiencing homelessness
- professionals who support people facing or experiencing homelessness

This consultation is about the homeless support service commissioned by Leicestershire County Council. Any support or services provided by other agencies such as district & borough councils is not part of this consultation.

Further information on the proposals can be found here:

**<http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation>**

Please read the supporting information provided before completing the questionnaire. It is also advised that you regularly refer to the supporting information when answering the questions.

For general enquiries or comments about this consultation, please email  
[PHconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:PHconsultations@leics.gov.uk)

Thank you for your assistance. Your views are important to us.

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Please note: Your responses to the main part of the survey (including your comments) may be released to the general public in full under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Any responses to the questions in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire will be held securely and will not be subject to release under Freedom of Information legislation, nor passed on to any third party.

Q1 In what role are you responding to this consultation? Please select the option from the list below that most closely describes your role.

Please select one option only.

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who has been supported or is being supported by the homeless support service                                | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A friend, relative or carer of someone who has been supported or is being supported by the homeless support service | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interested member of the public   | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An employee, volunteer or provider of homeless support services   | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leicestershire County Council staff member  | Continue to Q2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative from a district or borough council   | Go to Q3       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a public sector organisation (including NHS)  | Go to Q3       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a voluntary sector organisation, charity or community group                                       | Go to Q3       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative of a business or private sector organisation   | Go to Q3       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County, district or parish councillor   | Go to Q6       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)  | Go to Q6       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say   | Go to Q6       |

If 'Other', please specify

Q2 Which area do you **live in**?  
Please select one option only.

- ☐ Blaby
- ☐ Charnwood
- ☐ Harborough
- ☐ Hinckley and Bosworth
- ☐ Melton
- ☐ North West Leicestershire
- ☐ Oadby & Wigston
- ☐ Outside of Leicestershire
- ☐ No fixed address
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**Now please go to Q6.**

Q3 Which area(s) do you **work in**?  
Please select one option only.

- ☐ Blaby
- ☐ Charnwood
- ☐ Harborough
- ☐ Hinckley and Bosworth
- ☐ Melton
- ☐ North West Leicestershire
- ☐ Oadby & Wigston
- ☐ Across the whole of Leicestershire
- ☐ Across the whole of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR)
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If 'Other', please specify

**If you are responding on behalf of a business, community group or other organisation, please continue to Q4.**

**Otherwise please go to Q6.**

Q4 Please provide your details

Name:

Role:

Organisation:

This information may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Q5 Are you providing your organisation's official response to the consultation?  
Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Current service

Leicestershire County Council commissions a service (previously known as Housing Matters) that supports adults who are facing homelessness or who are homeless. The support is provided within hostels (mainly within the Falcon Centre located in Loughborough), community based locations (Syston Community Centre, Hinckley Salvation Army, Blaby Baptist Church, The Symington Building, Wigston Salvation Army, The Centre - Mary's Place, George Smith Hub, Holy Trinity Parish Church [Ashby]), and within an individual's place of residence.

Examples of support include: setting up and maintaining a tenancy, developing domestic or life skills, debt & budgeting support, support with accessing benefits, support to engage with local community resources, accessing health and wellbeing services, accessing education, employment & volunteering, improving social support networks and advice on repairs and home maintenance, and safeguarding.

**Q6** Have you used or tried to access the homeless support service?  
Please select one option only.

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, in the last year                                 | <b>Continue</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, over a year ago                                  | <b>Go to Q8</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, I have never used or tried to access this service | <b>Go to Q8</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say                                     | <b>Go to Q8</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know / can't remember                           | <b>Go to Q8</b> |

**Q7** Which, if any, of the following support offers did you receive or try to access from the homeless support service? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Setting up and maintaining a tenancy
- ☐ Developing domestic or life skills
- ☐ Debt, budgeting, or support with benefits
- ☐ Accessing health and wellbeing services
- ☐ Accessing education, employment, and volunteering
- ☐ Improving social support networks
- ☐ Advice on repairs and home maintenance
- ☐ Other support (please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Don't know / can't remember

Please specify the 'other support' you have received from the service

## Our proposal

The county council are proposing to change the way we provide support to individuals who are facing homelessness or who are homeless. The proposal is for the council to cease funding a dedicated homeless support service, and instead to provide support via the council's existing public health services where a wider number of people are eligible for support.

This means support will be mainly provided by First Contact Plus and the Local Area Coordination service. In addition, the council has other contracts where people can continue to get support.

Further details on the proposal are available within the supporting information.

Q8 Are you aware of the county council's First Contact Plus service?

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes, I have used this service for myself or on behalf of someone
- ☐ Yes, but I haven't used this service
- ☐ No, I have never heard of it
- ☐ Don't know

Q9 Are you aware of the county council's Local Area Coordination service?

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes, I have used this service for myself or on behalf of someone
- ☐ Yes, but I haven't used this service
- ☐ No, I have never heard of it
- ☐ Don't know

From 1st April 2024, our proposal is to provide support to individuals who are facing homelessness, or who are homeless, mainly through the existing First Contact Plus service.

Q10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

Please select one option only.

Strongly agree

☐

Tend to agree

☐

Neither agree  
nor disagree

☐

Tend to disagree

☐

Strongly  
disagree

☐

Don't know

☐

Why do you say this?

Q11 As a result of the proposal, what impact, if any, do you think there would be on support within the following settings?

Please select one option per row only.

	Very positive impact	Fairly positive impact	No impact	Fairly negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know
Hostel setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community based venues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual's place of residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please could you provide reasons for your answers above



We want to make sure the services we provide are accessible to all. We want to understand if our current services or proposed changes may present barriers for some people.

Q12 Do you have (or anticipate having) any difficulties with using the First Contact Plus service? This might be for any reason such as (but not limited to) age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief or marriage and civil partnership.

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Don't know

If yes, please explain the barriers (e.g. what services you have (or anticipate having) difficulties with, and what would overcome these)

Q13 Are you aware of any barriers or difficulties that other people may have with our current or proposed service?

Q14 If the homeless support service commissioned by the county council was not available, what other sources of homeless support would you consider?

Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Local housing authority (district or borough council)
- ☐ County council
- ☐ Local charity/voluntary organisation
- ☐ Social worker
- ☐ GP or other health professional
- ☐ Family or friends
- ☐ I would manage the situation myself
- ☐ Other sources of support (please specify)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Don't know / can't remember

If 'Other sources of support', please specify

Q15 Please tell us if you have any thoughts about how support could be provided in a different way in the future for individuals facing homelessness or who are homeless.

Q16 If you have any other comments about the proposal, please tell us below.

**Please continue if you said in Q1 that you are responding as any of the following:**

- Someone who has been supported or is being supported by the homeless support service
- A friend, relative or carer of someone who has been supported or is being supported by the homeless support service
- Interested member of the public

**Otherwise, please skip to the instructions at the end of the survey.**

## About you

Leicestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that its services, policies, and practices are free from discrimination and prejudice, address the needs of all sections of the community and promote and advance equality of opportunity.

Many people face discrimination in society because of their personal circumstances and for this reason we have decided to ask these monitoring questions.

We would therefore be grateful if you would answer the following questions. You are under no obligation to provide the information requested, but it would help us greatly if you did.

Q17 What is your gender?

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ I use another term
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q18 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q19 What was your age on your last birthday? (Please enter your age in numbers not words)

Q20 Do you have a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?

Please select one option only.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q21 What is your ethnic group?  
Please select one option only.

- ☐ White
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Black or Black British
- ☐ Other ethnic group
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Thank you for completing this survey. Your views are important to us.

When the consultation closes on 3 September 2023, we will report the results back to Cabinet in November 2023.

**Please return your completed survey to:**

Homelessness Support Services Consultation  
Room G58, Public Health  
Leicestershire County Council  
Have Your Say  
FREEPOST NAT18685  
Leicester  
LE3 8XR

Data Protection: Personal data supplied on this form will be held on computer and will be used in accordance with current Data Protection Legislation. The information you provide will be used for statistical analysis, management, planning and the provision of services by the county council and its partners. Leicestershire County Council will not share any personal information collected in this survey with its partners. The information will be held in accordance with the council's records management and retention policy. Information which is not in the 'About you' section of the questionnaire may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.



# Changing how we support homeless people

What do you think?



Easy  
Read

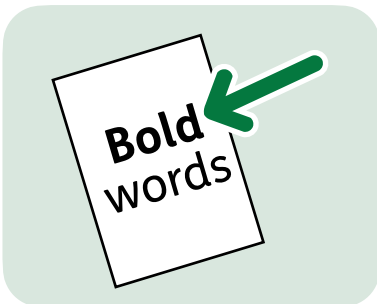
# Easy Read



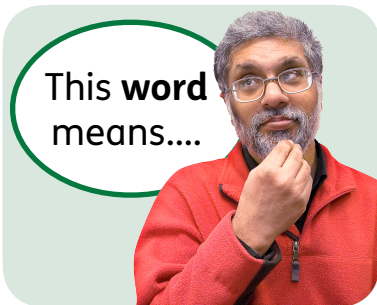
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

# What is in this booklet

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Our idea for change .....	8
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Find out more .....	12



# About this booklet



Leicestershire County Council is looking at ideas to change how we support homeless people, and people who may become homeless.



Before we make our decisions, we want to know what you think.



Please tell us what you think by taking part in our [questionnaire online](#), or by post.



You can ask us to send you a questionnaire by:

- Phoning us: 0116 305 0705



- Emailing us:  
[phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)



We need to have your answers to the questionnaire by midnight on Sunday, 3 September 2023.

# How we help homeless people



At the moment, we pay for a service to help support homeless people, and people who may become homeless.



The service helps homeless people to live independently or live with support.



The service helps people in:

- Hostels.



- Some local community places.



- Their own homes.



The service helps people to:

- Learn how to look after themselves.



- Look after their money.



- Find activities to do in the local area.



- Get the health services they need.



- Get support to find a job or training.



- Look after their home.



- Keep safe.

# Why change?



Leicestershire County Council has to look at the services it offers.



The current homeless support service ends on 31 March 2024.



We want to look at other options to support homeless people, and people who may become homeless, from 1 April 2024.

# Our idea for change



Instead of paying to carry on the current service, we plan to support homeless people, and people who may become homeless, using the public health services we already provide.



This would mean that:

- We would support people all across Leicestershire.



- We would include any adult who is homeless or who might become homeless.



- People would get the support that is right for them.



- The support would focus on improving people's health.



- People would be able to access their support through one main service.



Leicestershire County Council provides First Contact Plus which is a service that is available to all adults in Leicestershire.



First Contact Plus helps people find support with things like:

- Health and wellbeing.



- Money advice.



- Work and training.



- Learning.



# Tell us what you think



Please tell us what you think by either:

- Completing our [online questionnaire](#).



- Asking us to send you a questionnaire by post.



You can ask us to send you a questionnaire by:

- Phoning us: 0116 305 0705



- Emailing us: [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)



We need your answers to the questionnaire by midnight on Sunday, 3 September 2023.



We are also going to have some information sessions where people can speak to us directly about the changes.

## Online



There will be an online information session on Wednesday, 12 July - from 2pm to 3pm.

[Click here to register to take part in the online information session.](#)

## Face-to-face



There will be a face-to-face information session on Monday, 7 August - from 10am to 1pm at:

Loughborough Library  
Granby Street  
Loughborough  
LE11 3DZ

[Click here to register to take part in the face-to-face information session.](#)

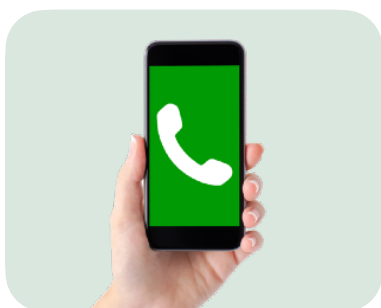


# Find out more



You can look at our website here:

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/homeless-consultation)



You can contact us by:

- Phone: 0116 305 0705



- Email: [phconsultations@leics.gov.uk](mailto:phconsultations@leics.gov.uk)

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# Proposed changes to homeless support services

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q) We are not able to submit multiple responses for people via a public computer. How can we rectify this?**

**A)** If individuals have their own log in details for a public computer then the same computer can be used by each individual to submit a response.

Alternatively, the cache on a computer will save previous answers. If you search 'clearing the cache' on the internet it will give you instructions on how to clear the cache after each submission which will enable different individuals to submit a response from the same computer.

Alternatively, paper copies of the questionnaire can be requested by calling 0116 305 0705.

**Q) Has any impact work been done around the proposal?**

**A)** A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and the impact of a change in service model will be informed by the outcome of consultation. This will be presented to Cabinet after the consultation closes. Initial findings are that the proposal will have a wider reach and be able to offer additional support.

**Q) Is there any evidence about the effectiveness of the model that you're proposing?**

**A)** A report produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) which includes a research report, highlights the importance of focusing on homelessness prevention for example through supporting with financial stability, social connections, opportunities, and good health. The model that we are proposing takes a stronger focus on prevention of homelessness and therefore has a wider reach than the current offer. Further information on the LGA report can be found here [www.local.gov.uk/publications/re-thinking-homelessness-prevention](http://www.local.gov.uk/publications/re-thinking-homelessness-prevention)

**Q) How does the proposal address support for those with higher levels of need?**

**A)** The proposal we have put forward takes a stronger focus on prevention of homelessness. This includes aspects such as supporting with financial stability, social connections, education & training opportunities, and good health. Where individuals require support with housing, this responsibility would fall under district & borough councils, and where individuals require support with complex health issues, this responsibility would fall under health services.

**Q) How do individuals who are going to be street homeless access support?**

**A)** Any person who is rough sleeping can utilise the Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) which is provided by 'The bridge'. The Rough Sleeper Initiative is funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support people who are rough sleeping. Further information can be found here: [www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/services/rapid-rehousing-project](http://www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/services/rapid-rehousing-project)

**Q) How will the proposed service be promoted and advertised?**

**A)** After the consultation closes in September, we will analyse and use the results to develop a final proposal. This will be presented to the council's cabinet in winter 2023. If the proposal is approved, we will commence work to implement the new offer which will include a communications plan to the public and stakeholders to raise awareness and promote the offer.

**Q) How are service users being reached to find out the impact on them?**

**A)** Many different organisations have been contacted regarding the consultation. We have asked for these organisations to disseminate the information to their service users.

Social Media is being used to engage with the public and encourage as many responses as possible.

Paper copies of the questionnaire have been sent to current providers of the service and are available upon request.

Information events have been hosted by Leicestershire County Council to inform service users of the proposal and to encourage all individuals to submit their views.

**Q) The current homeless support service includes provision within a 30-bed hostel. Why isn't the 30 bed provision being considered in your proposal?**

**A)** An element of the current service includes support to individuals residing in hostel accommodation. The support aims to help individuals to live independently and to access local health and wellbeing support.

It should be noted that the funding does not pay for the running of homeless hostel buildings.

The proposal being put forward is to provide support to all adults across Leicestershire rather than limiting the support to those staying in a homeless hostel.

**Q) Is the proposed service available 24 hours a day 365 days a year as homelessness is not between 9-5 Monday to Friday?**

**A)** As before, referrals into the First Contact Plus service for support and advice can be made at any time online at [www.firstcontactplus.org.uk](http://www.firstcontactplus.org.uk)

All referrals aim to be responded to within two working days. If you require emergency assistance, you should contact the relevant emergency service.

**Q) In the proposed offer, who will support those in their own properties?**

**A)** Who or which service supports those in their own home will depend on the individual's needs.

The First Contact Plus service will contact the individual requiring support to assess their needs and provide advice.

If the assessment identifies that one-to-one support is required, this may be provided by the Local Area Coordination Service or an alternative suitable offer if this is available.

**Q) The proposal is to support a homeless person over the phone rather than face to face support. How do you propose providing support over the phone?**

**A)** The First Contact Plus service will contact the person requiring support by phone to assess their needs and provide initial advice. This assessment takes place over the phone to help advisors understand whether ongoing support is required.

If ongoing support is required, First Contact Plus can make the referral directly into the most suitable service/s. For example, if the initial assessment identifies that a person requires support for alcohol misuse, First Contact Plus can refer the person to the substance misuse treatment service where face to face support can be provided.

