



Consultation on the future delivery model of the Generic Floating Support Service

Background

South Gloucestershire Council commissions a number of services that provide support for people to manage their housing and live independently. Most are ongoing, though some are short term, including the 'floating support' service.

The floating support service is currently delivered by an external provider called P3. The Council has a contract with P3 and pays them to deliver the service. This contract is due to end on 31st March 2021 and therefore options for the future of the service are being considered.

In June the Children's Adults and Health cabinet members agreed for options to go forward to full cabinet on how the Floating Support Service is delivered. We are therefore seeking views on these options.

What does the service do?

Floating support is intended to be for households who have a housing problem and need some short term help to resolve this so they can stay, or help to find somewhere else if staying isn't an option and to avoid becoming homeless. If a household is homeless already, the service can help them to find somewhere else to live and provide resettlement support.

Some of things that the support includes are –

- Support with financial management and to be able to pay for housing costs, including addressing any debts or arrears
- Support to be a responsible tenant, particularly for those who have previously lost accommodation or who have never managed their own home
- Support to connect and engage with other professionals and services
- Support to find a new property, for example researching a new area on-line, presenting oneself appropriately to a prospective landlord, and having the financial and other resources in place to cover the costs of moving and to help set up in the new home

The Homelessness Act 2002 sets out a requirement for all authorities to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy to prevent and tackle homelessness. The current Strategy is downloadable from our webpage: <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/advice-about-homelessness/> (or if viewing online click [here](#) to open pdf). Amongst its priorities is having the right support in place for those who are at risk of, or who are, homeless.

The Council has a statutory duty to provide housing advice for anyone in the district and, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to provide homelessness prevention and relief services. Not everyone looking for housing advice will apply as homeless, although when a household makes a homelessness application, a thorough assessment of their housing needs is completed, and the things that may affect this. A Personal Housing Plan is then drawn up with them. This sets out things they should do to prevent their homelessness or to find a new home, including if they are in temporary accommodation and need to move on.

The floating support service supports these statutory duty. The housing advice service refers people to the floating support service where they are allocated a support worker to help them with the things in their Personal Housing Plan. People are not able to self-refer into the service, they must be assessed by the housing advice service first.

When effective, the service can reduce demand for housing and homelessness, and costs for other public services such as health and community safety. It can also help the household establish stronger links to promote training, access to employment and general leisure so they can play a fuller role in their community.

Who can use this service?

The service is available to all residents with housing support needs living in any type of independent accommodation in the South Gloucestershire area. It is intended to be in place for long enough to provide the support needed and then it 'floats off' to help someone else.

Our Proposal

The floating support service has always been delivered by commissioning an external provider, which means introducing the household to a new service. The option being consulted on now is to end this arrangement and to bring the service in-house where it can be directly aligned to the council's housing advice and homelessness service, and thereby be more effective and simplified for the household.

Bringing the service in house so it is delivered by the Council will not change what the service does or who can use the service, but it will mean:

- Support plans will link directly with personal housing plans so people will only have one plan they are working on, and one support worker helping them.

- Reduced admissions of households in temporary and supported accommodation, and reduced lengths of stay.
- Reduced duplication with housing advice where people are involved with both services.
- Improved responses to reports of rough sleepers, and assistance to other single homeless people – additional resources in HomeChoice means an immediate response to any reports of rough sleeping and intensive support can be put in straight away.
- There is one recording system so housing staff have live information and knowledge of their cases, rather than needing to share and gather information from an external service provider. This will benefit registered landlords too in considering pre tenancy preparation.
- It is more cost effective for the council and can achieve savings of c. £101,712 per annum on the current contract price.

How will it be paid for?

Bringing the service in house will require no additional funding to the current contracted price.

The service is currently supporting 120 people through a mix of telephone support, 121 support and ad hoc support.

The current contract price is £378,790 per annum. This includes staffing and premises costs. P3 have confirmed that the following staffing resources are employed to deliver this service:

- 1 x FTE senior housing advisor
- 11 x FTE support workers
- 0.3 FTE management time

It is estimated that an in-house service can be delivered through the following posts:

- 6 x Support Workers
- 1 x Coordinator
- 1 x Senior Support Worker

Total - £269,078

IT equipment £8,000

This represents a saving of £101,712 per annum.

If the council were to continue commissioning an external provider who were to have no premises costs, and staff be either co-located at council offices or work from home, P3 has estimated that the service could be delivered with a similar structure as follows:

- 6 x support workers
- 2 x senior support workers
- Management infrastructure

Total - £265,000 this includes IT equipment

This represents a saving of £113,790 per annum.

Have your say on how the future of the floating support service

The consultation is open from Tuesday 21st July 2020 until **Sunday 11th October 2020**.

We are interested in hearing views on:

- The benefits or drawbacks of bringing the service in-house rather than commissioning an external provider.
- What best supports homelessness prevention and supporting people?
- Which approach to delivering the service would make it easier for the customer?

There are a range of ways to take part:

- Go to our webpage: <https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/FS20> to see more information and complete our online survey, or print out a copy of the paper survey
- Once they re-open you can pick up a paper survey from your local library or One Stop Shop, which can be posted back to us at the address below. Or you can ask the library for a Freepost envelope to return the survey without the need for a stamp.
- Telephone: 01454 868154
- Email: consultation@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to: *South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF*

In addition to the range of stakeholders the council always engages with for public consultations, we will be speaking to:

- People who are currently using the service or who have used it recently.
- Providers of supported housing, whose service users may use the service once they move, will be asked to encourage individuals to submit their views.

What Happens Next?

We will use the consultation feedback to inform the cabinet members in order for them to make a final decision.