

**Review of Services for Vulnerable 16/17 year olds in Copeland.**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Councillor Clements  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Julie Betteridge  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** Debbie Cochrane

**Summary and Recommendation:**

**Cumbria County Council was criticised by OFSTED last year for the quality of their work relating to young people aged 16/17 years. In addition to this, there have been three serious case reviews that also criticised work in this area and the lack of partnership working. Over the coming months every Local Authority in Cumbria will review services available for young people within their district. Officers from Copeland Borough Council, Children’s Services and agencies working with young people are in the process of reviewing the services available in Copeland with particular reference to housing and support needs. It is recommended that progress reports are made regularly to Strategic Housing Panel.**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In terms of statutory duty we are looking at 16/17 year olds but in reality young people do not present as homeless on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday without organisations being aware of them, nor do their issues magically get solved as they turn 18. It has been agreed by Cumbria Housing Executive Group (CHEG) that a successful outcome for a young person will be:

‘A young person who is vulnerable, homeless and 16 -17 years old will receive an efficient and seamless service which results in a successful outcome for them. That successful outcome will be *to be settled in independent and sustainable housing*’.

To achieve this successful outcome, support agencies will adopt a pathways approach which means that they will work collaboratively together to make the process clear and effective.

**2. Existing Provision**

2.1 We know that young people are not a homogenous group and nor do they fit neatly into one category or another however there are three common groups of young people:

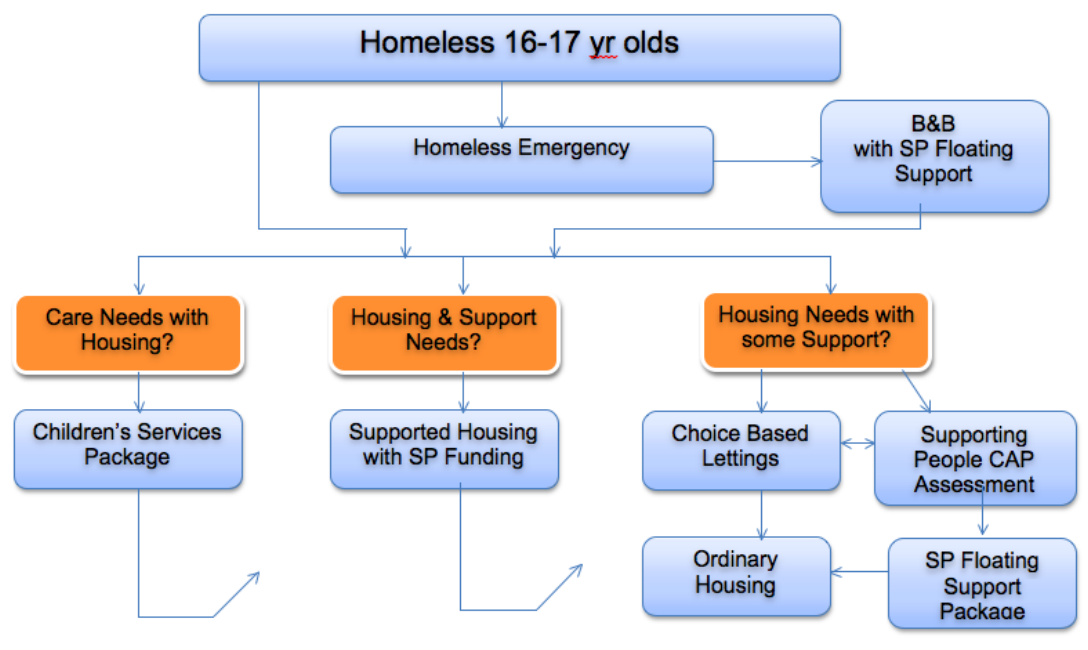
1. Those who have care needs with some housing support
2. Those who have housing and support needs
3. Those who have housing needs with some support

The third group of young people have a degree of existing provision through access to floating support.

The first group are the group which may well have been known or their families may well have been known to various agencies prior to the young person presenting as homeless. This is the group that is most difficult to house or to deal with and which causes the most tensions between Children's Services and other organisations in terms of how their needs are addressed.

This leaves the group identified in the middle, who often present unannounced, who may or may not be known to the agencies and may have low level support needs for a short period of time. It is recognised that if support is provided to this group of young people, they can quickly be moved into group three which will provide a pathway to independent living.

2.2 The following 'Pathways' approach has been agreed, this shows the route a young person will take from their issues having first been identified through to independent living.



### **3. Feedback from the review in Copeland**

#### **3.1 Young People want:**

- A single point of contact, not to be passed from pillar to post
- Clarity about what will happen next, about what they can expect or limitations of what can happen.

#### **General**

- Children's Services have a very low number of foster carers in Cumbria, for the last three high need children coming through the service, one went to foster care in Rochdale, one went to foster care in Preston and one went to a children's home in Manchester.
- Perception that there is some hidden homeless as a number of young people are sofa surfing with no fixed abode

### **4. Next Steps**

4.1 The review group will next clarify the scoping work and look at joint working to establish a clear understanding of what happens to a young person when they present as homeless. This work will then be used to support the development of a protocol between Cumbria County Council and the District Councils.

### **Conclusion**

The approach taken will result in successful outcomes for 16/17 year olds and reports will be brought to Strategic Housing Panel for comment. A Protocol will then be developed and a system of regular monitoring via SHP and CHEG agreed.



# **SUPPORTING PEOPLE CENTRAL ACCESS**

## **REVIEW REPORT**

Louise Elsworth-Barnes  
11/04/2013

## 1. BACKGROUND

Following the introduction of Central Access Point (CAP) in April 2012 Supporting People, agreed to review the CAP after an initial six months. As part of this process all stakeholders (providers and referring organisations) were invited to complete the CAP review questionnaire (see attached)

The review questionnaire focused on the following areas, with the respondents requested to give their feedback and experience:-

Process  
Effective utilisation  
Personalisation

The questionnaire was circulated to 33 stakeholders on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2012 with a covering letter explaining the process and deadline for returns no later than 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012. Following a low return of questionnaires the deadline was extended to allow for those that missed the initial deadline to submit their views

The following providers and organisations were sent a copy of the questionnaire and letter:

Provider	Referring Partner
CASS, Impact Housing, Turning Point, Sanctuary, Creative Support, Oaklea trust, Croftlands Trust Whitehaven Community Trust Stoneham Carlilse City South Lakeland District Council	All District Housing Options Teams All Citizens Advice Bureaus District Leads- Adult Social Care Children's Services and Pathways Probation Service Unity Barndos Carlilse Key Inspira Family/Friend GP Health- mental health teams Health Visitor HMP Home group- RSL IDVA Manna House NACRO Shelter Youth Offending Team Copeland Homes Derwent and Solway
Responses From	Responses From
CASS Sanctuary Croftlands Trust Whitehaven community trust	Carlilse Housing Options team Allerdale Housing options team Copeland housing options team Barrow Housing Options Team

Stoneham Impact housing Carlisle City Turning Point Oaklea Trust Citizens Advice Allerdale Cumbria Probation Trust	Eden housing Association
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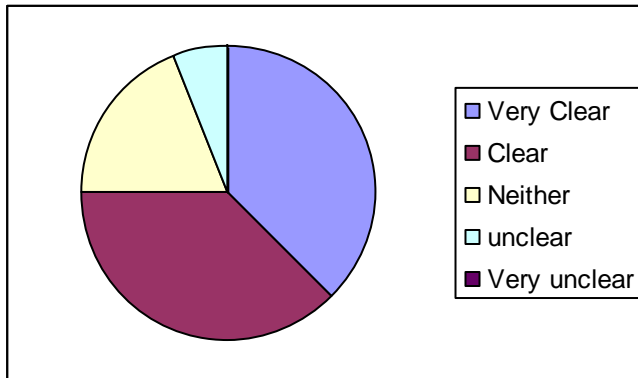
### **1.1 Response to the Questionnaire**

Following the initial deadline in December 2012 eleven completed questionnaires had been returned the deadline was extended and an additional 5 questionnaires were returned. In total there have been 16

## 1.2 Overview of responses:

### Section 1

1. How clear do you feel the referral process is?



#### Participant's responses:

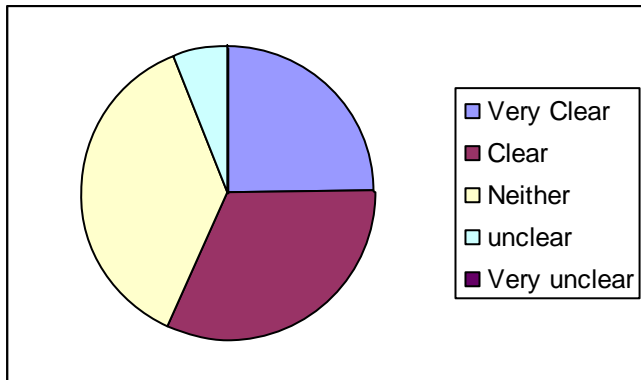
Very clear: 6  
 Clear: 6  
 Neither: 3  
 Unclear: 1

Comments	Action (if appropriate)
It is clear how to refer for support and the process; the information required may be lengthy for emergency homeless assessments / placements – perhaps this could be developed?	
Early referrals were less easy to follow through due to the lack of posts filled but this changed significantly when Sarah money came into post. From Allerdale' perspective having Sarah embedded in the office with the housing options team has been a great advantage in aiding communication and information flow.	For other housing options teams to consider having a Local Area Co-ordinator spending time working with the team.
The process is clear however we are unsure as to how clear it is to external agencies and clients wishing to self refer as we are still receiving phone calls from agencies.	To remarket the CAP with Providers. To develop a new leaflet.
It is unclear as to the time scale for sending appointment letters if contact cannot be made via the telephone.	The Local Area Co-ordinator will contact the referring agency when contact cannot be made either by phone or text informing them an appointment letter has been sent out.
It's clear to us as a provider as to what the process is, it must seem clearer to all agencies who wish to refer and	

<p>particularly easier for those agencies who occasionally come across a person with Housing support needs. Pre-CAP they are likely to have found it difficult to find the most suitable agency that could assist the service user.</p>	
<p>For 16-17 year old referrals there can be a time delay in receiving children's services assessments.</p>	<p>Supporting people have been reviewing this process with Children's Services.</p>
<p>There is a lack of clarity whether each referral is contacted by the CAP within 3 days.</p>	<p>Local Area Co-ordinators aim to contact the customer within 3 days to offer appointment. Referrer will be notified if contact cannot be made.</p>
<p>Customers who do not attend their assessments are given follow up appointments on their voicemail when having no credit to listen.</p>	<p>Upon exploration it would appear that this case has been an isolated example. Practice is to always send out appointment letter and new process with ensure the referrer is notified.</p>
<p>The systems are old fashioned and bureaucratic.</p>	<p>The long term aim is that the CAP will be able to receive referrals using the internet.</p>
<p>The feedback on support is rarely given – an e-mail or phone call would be useful.</p>	<p>All Local Area Co-ordinators will feedback to the referring agent.</p>
<p>We have found that clients usually receive a quick service from the point of referral.</p>	
<p>I do not know if the above process happens as we are not normally contacted by the CAP following referral</p>	
<p>I think From a provider point of view the portal helps to keep the process clear as everyone can see when the information is updated</p>	
<p>The CAP process is clear in terms of referral in but the onward activities are less clear</p>	



### 1.1 How clear is the assessment process?



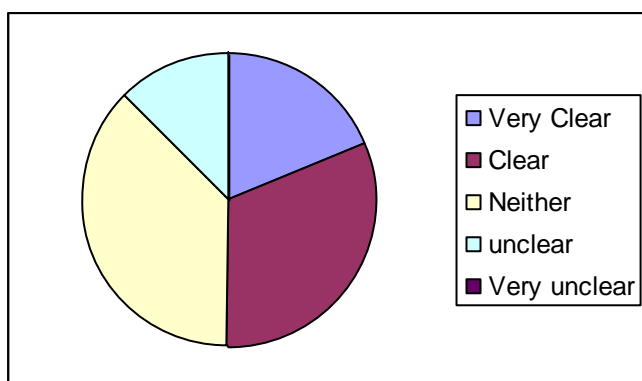
**Participant's responses:**

Very clear: 4  
 Clear: 5  
 Neither: 6  
 Unclear: 1

Comments;	Actions (if appropriate);
We do not get to the outcome of the assessment.	The Local Area Co-ordinator will give feedback when requested to do so.
Inappropriate referrals made to providers.	Referrals will be made to providers when a customer presents with housing support needs.
Additional information is not provided by the Local Area Co-ordinator pertaining to risk.	The new referral form should provide more information relating to risk. The provider needs to determine if they require more information to manage the risk.
The assessment form does not reflect the needs of the customer.	The CAP assessment is to determine that an individual has immediate housing support needs. It is for the provider to determine long term need. When appropriate to do so the Local Area Co-ordinator will conduct joint assessments with providers.
The CAP assessment covers a wide range of issues. We recognise it is an assessment to housing related support services not specific to STA or FS.	
We are unsure of the criteria of STA versus FS. We are unsure of the level of risk deemed to high for STA and FS. For those clients too high risk or too high need what is available for them?	The criterion for STA is the customer is homeless or serious risk of homelessness with housing support needs. For floating support the criteria is that there is a housing support need. The provider will determine if the needs and risks are too high for them to offer a service.
We will welcome joint assessments.	LACs are happy to conduct these when able to do so. It can prove difficult

	sometimes to match LACs and providers diaries
<p>The process itself is clear, however the information gained during the assessment process does not reflect the needs of the customer and this then has a direct impact on the SPO</p> <p>It can appear that customers are experiencing two assessments one to determine eligibility and one to determine need</p>	<p>The CAP assessment is to determine that there is a housing support need. It is acknowledged that once support has commenced with the provider additional needs may be determined</p> <p>As a provider you need to determine with the customer how the housing support needs that have been identified at the CAP assessment can be met.</p>
<p>I believe that joint assessments would assist this process. I was concerned that the number of referrals would drop for STA however this does not appear to be the case and there is a healthy amount of referrals into our service</p>	
<p>We do not receive follow up feedback after the point of referral to comment on how the assessment process works</p>	<p>The LAC will always aim to give feedback, however if this does not occur you can contact the LAC direct to request feedback</p>

## 1.2 Process of allocation for either STA or FS:



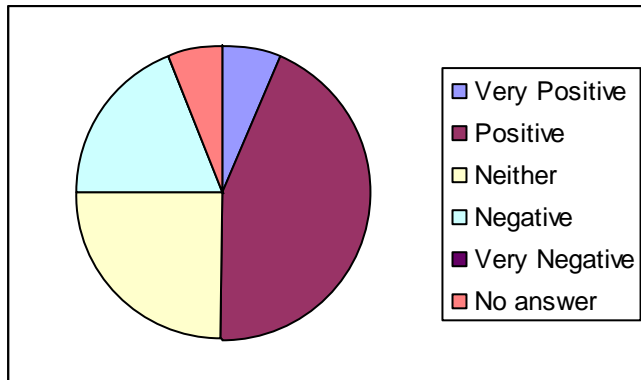
### Participant's responses:

Very clear: 3  
 Clear: 5  
 Neither: 6  
 Unclear: 2

Comments;	Actions (if appropriate);
It would be helpful to know the reasons why providers decline to accommodate if someone meets the criteria and there are vacancies. It would appear that 'cherry-picking' is still in existence.	The provider decline reasons are collated by SP to assist in the future commissioning of services
Access to FS has improved since the introduction of the CAP.	
It is much easier for a provider to support a Service User with a positive move on as FS is much easier to access.	
It would be helpful to be informed of the support provider when a person is leaving STA to ensure a smooth transfer.	The LAC will be able to inform you of this- You can always contact the LAC if you require this information
FS does not always 'kick-in' quickly enough.	FS should be available the following week from assessment
The facility for support to start immediately when there is high need.	Should this be needed we have been able to secure immediate support
The process is clear and more transparent.	
I think there is a resource issue for the CAP. I understood it was envisaged there was a need for liaison, planning and negotiating with agencies.	The CAP process has been reviewed to incorporate liaison and planning
Very little feedback – staff spend time chasing referrals made to the CAP.	The CAP will link in with referring agencies with the outcome of referral
The process feels transparent	
In floating support we sometimes have	We recognise that this occurs and we will

<p>customers allocated when they have been turned down for short-term accommodation as they are either banned or their needs to high. Often these customers are not tenancy ready and it seems that floating support is the only alternative. We do not want to set up anyone to fail and will always work with a customer but would like to think that this is being monitored to inform service development</p>	<p>use this information to assist in future commissioning</p>
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2.1 The impact the CAP has had on the availability of STA:



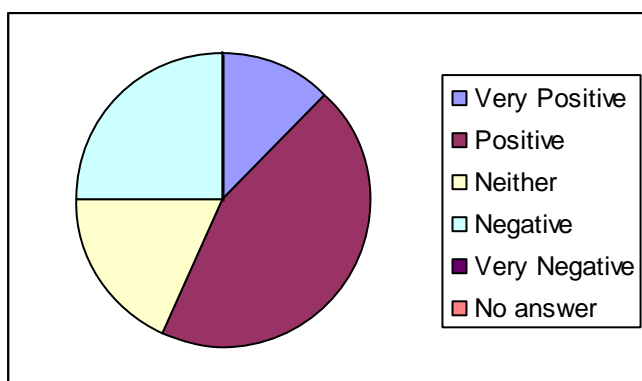
**Participant's responses**

Very Positive: 1  
 Positive: 7  
 Neither: 4  
 Negative: 3  
 Did not answer: 1

Comments;	Actions (if appropriate);
We no longer have direct access into services which can delay the process.	This matter is still under further investigation in relation to delays.
The CAP process can delay access into STA. There can be long periods of time where services can have long terms voids.	Joint assessments should help with this
Positive in the fact there seem to be good waiting lists in the services. It would be useful for providers if they were updated by the LAC when the Service user moves into accommodation.	
There is a general view that access to STA has improved since the CAP	
In some instances the CAP has placed an additional layer of assessment which in terms of homelessness increases stress and anxiety. In some instances working in partnership has been a success in securing positive outcomes.	The CAP assessment only determines if there is a housing support need
There are few positive responses in terms of the CAP improving access to either STA or FS. The initiative appears to be process driven and inflexible. If an offender does not fit into an appropriate pigeon hole then nothing can be done. A few officers noted that they had managed to secure accommodation for their cases after the CAP advised that "nothing could be done"	A meeting has been arranged to discuss these concerns
On the whole it seems positive	
I was concerned that the CAP would add	

another layer of assessments but it has not proven to be an issue	
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## 2.2 What impact has the Process had on the availability of FS?



### Participants Responses

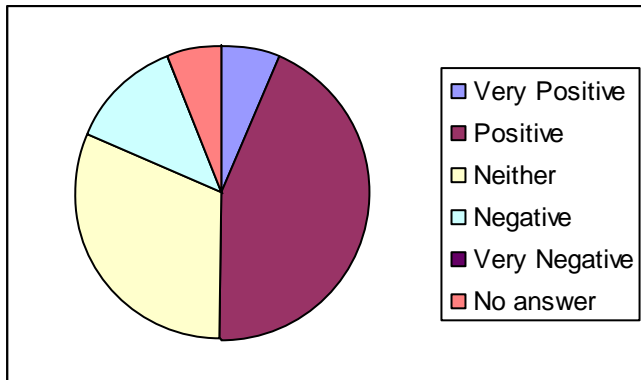
Very Positive: 2  
 Positive: 7  
 Neither: 3  
 Negative: 4  
 Very negative: 0

Comments:	Actions (if applicable);
Access to FS has improved since the CAP	
I feel the CAP process works well and ensures the client receives the level of support they require	
FS is much easier to access	
Positive in the fact that there are specified support times and hours, Negative in the amount of referrals coming through in some areas.	
It feels more difficulty to access as we previously delivered FS. However, I assume more agencies will find it easier to access a service for a service user as was pre-CAP.	This provider will be met with to ensure they are able to access FS in an easier way.
Although we are not providers of floating support, consultation with colleagues in housing options team indicate they are frustrated by the time it takes to access support for a client. There is a strong feeling FS cannot be access quickly leaving tenants vulnerable at risk of failure.	In order to take this forward we need to know which housing options teams as this has not been reported to the CAP direct
I have found we receive contact from FS providers more quickly than the old system and it appears that the referral procedure is now quicker.	
We seem to do less referrals now as we were advised that for debt advice alone clients should be referred to CAB	The citizens advice agency are one of the specialist organisations in relation to debt advise, therefore we always encourage that they are used

<p>The spot purchasing has made staffing services difficult as it is difficult to recruit, train, and retain staff when work is not guaranteed. This obviously has a negative impact upon the availability of floating support</p>	
<p>I have found that we receive contact from floating support providers more quickly than the old system and it appears that the referral procedure is now quicker</p>	



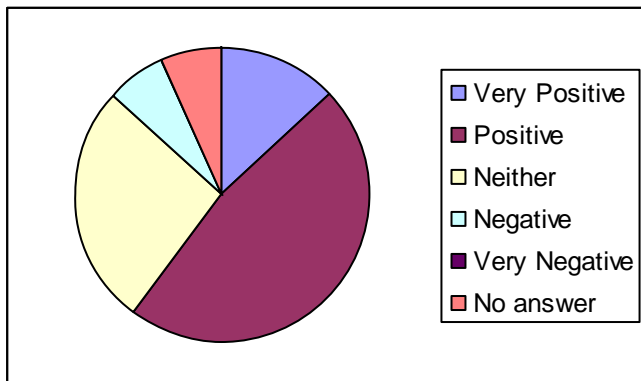
### 2.3 The impact the CAP process has had on waiting lists for STA;



#### Participants Responses

Very Positive: 1  
Positive: 7  
Neither: 5  
Negative: 2  
Very Negative: 0  
Did not answer: 1

### 2.4 The impact the CAP process has had on waiting lists for FS;

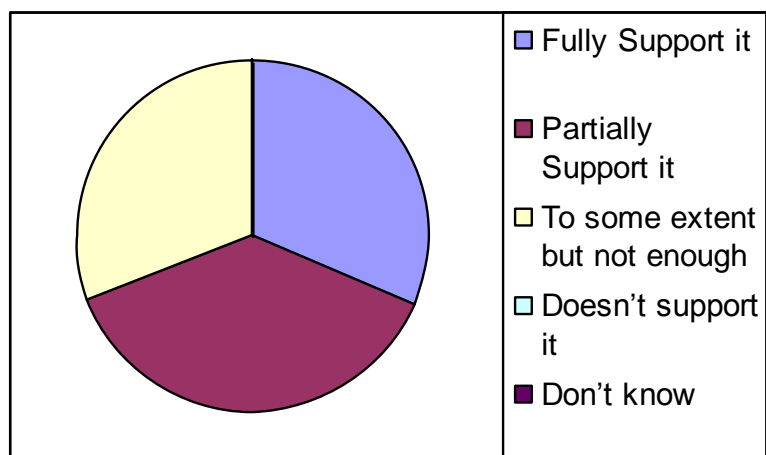


#### Participants Responses

Very positive: 2  
Positive: 7  
Neither: 4  
Negative: 1  
Very negative: 0  
Did not answer: 2

### Section 3

#### 3.1 How the Cap process support a personalised approach to Supporting People Service;



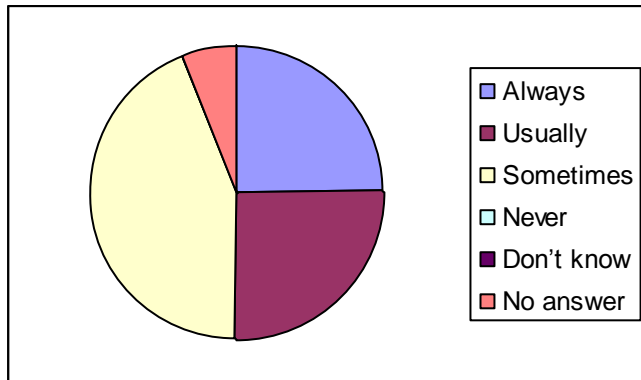
#### Participants Responses

The process fully supports: 5  
 The process partly supports: 6  
 The process does to some extent but not enough: 5  
 The process does not support a personalised approach at all: 0

Comments:	Actions (if appropriate);
Face to face assessments very positive in achieving a personalised approach	
The structure delivers a more personalised approach than pre-CAP	
The process by which the CAP is able to assist an applicant with provider choice is positive.	
The consensus from the manager the assessment form does not have the capacity to assess the personalised needs of the customer. There is agreement as individuals that the LAC's support personalisation as a concept but the process is not flexible enough to support this.	The CAP assessment is used to determine housing support need
The framework existing is set up for Housing related support which incorporate a personalisation approach however in the future SP could use the portal to co-ordinate referrals for personalisation, it could work in the same way as the preferred provider list offering the personalisation facility.	Future meetings have been planned with providers to discuss.
The service is much more personalised as the LAC is able to give a clear picture of what service is beneficial to them.	
We have been very impressed by the	

personalised interaction the LAC has with the clients and this is reflective of the CAP process and methodology.	
The majority of respondents felt that the CAP was not particularly customer focused or supported a personalised approach. Where “difficult to reach cases were concerned there did not appear to be much follow up or advocacy to ensure they knew how to secure accommodation in the future	The CAP assessment is to determine what housing related support issues the customer has and refer into either STA or FS. The CAP does not case manage individuals
The CAP process supports a personalised approach as much as it can. It is positive that CAP assists customers with provider choice and some of the interactions with the customers.	
I do believe that the process supports customer choice	
I have concerns that clients are perhaps not always referred into agencies which historically would have been seen as the most appropriate in terms of their specialism	
Generally yes, there is limited choice and this is further limited dependant upon the where in the county you live	

### 3.2 Are the needs of the customer taken into account during the CAP process?



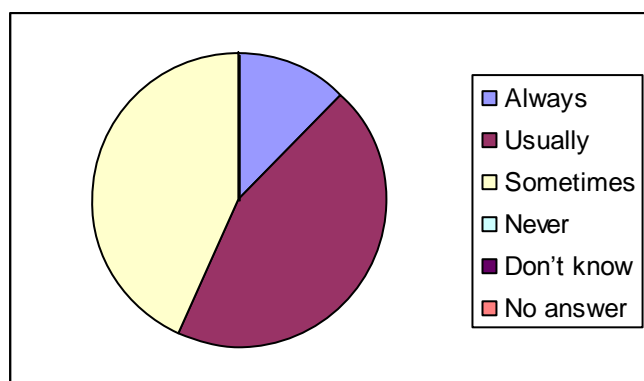
#### Participant's responses

Always: 4  
 Usually: 4  
 Sometimes: 7  
 Never: 0  
 Don't know: 0  
 Did not answer: 1

Comments;	Actions (if appropriate)
The assessment is based on clients needs, although I am not sure whether if the most suitable accommodation provider to meet those needs refuses whether this is challenged when they have a vacancy.	In relation to STA the provider has the right to refuse; this could be based upon risk or need. The customer themselves are able to appeal the decision made by the provider. We do monitor reasons for refusals
Our observations of the process in work that the customer needs are at the forefront of what the customer needs.	
The CAP assessment ensures it captures all areas of the clients support needs.	
The process does take into account clients needs however; sometimes it is not explained clearly to the client's aspects of the support. Some clients think the support provider is going to clean and cook for them instead of explaining that the support is to enable them to build up their skills. Sometimes clients have the impression we can provide a house for them when we tell them we are here to assist them to find accommodation.	Supporting People will develop a leaflet to give to the customer explaining what they can expect
No evidence of customer preference. Customer does sometimes not understand the process.	Leaflet to be produced
I have concerns that's clients are perhaps not always referred to agencies which historically would have been seen	We no longer have specialist floating support providers. All bidders on the framework were able to evidence that

as the most appropriate in terms of their specialism.	they could meet a range of needs
I do not feel the CAP works well with DV accommodation services it can leave people at risk for longer than necessary when they make the decision they want to leave.	Supporting Peoples understanding is that DV services are direct access to prevent this risk
For offenders and other leading chaotic lifestyles requires flexibility and access to services being as easy/simple as possible. Even though it seems clear they would benefit there are often missed appointments providers as well as LAC's have a responsibility to work with this.	The LAC service has reviewed and implemented changes in relation to missed appointments and whenever possible offenders will be met at the Probation office if appropriate.
Generally good however, need consideration of the more diverse needs of some client groups.	

3.3 To what extent does the CAP process give choice and control over support the customer has access to;



**Participant's responses**

Always: 2  
 Unusually: 7  
 Sometimes: 7  
 Never: 0  
 Don't know: 0

Comments;	Actions (if appropriate);
Adequate choice in respect of housing related support. However. We have identified a need for emotional support for domestic abuse victims.	
Minimal choice and control for support housing due to the lack of provision especially for high need / high risk clients.	This is to be discussed further
There is a limited range of schemes and providers and vacancies within STA, so choice may be limited and needs are difficult to meet unless they actively are able to make choices about their own behaviour.	This is to be discussed further.
Working with the LAC's ensures support is tailored to meet individual client need and can be increased if it is felt applicable during safeguarding incidents and reduced when client is ready to move on.	
The CAP proves identifies key area of support however our supporting planning process may identify more detail or further areas of support.	
Dependent on the availability of service/accommodation.	

Actions to date regarding the Central Access Point;

Following on from the receipt of the review questionnaires we have met with respondents to determine and understand some of the issues that have been raised. These meetings have been action planned accordingly.

Supporting People contracts and commissioning team meet with all providers on a quarterly basis to review contract delivery where the CAP is always discussed. Any issues raised at these meetings have been actioned appropriately. We also meet with stakeholders to review the CAP and we have recently met with the probation service as part of stakeholder reviews and have a subsequent meeting planned

## Appendix 1

### Copy of questionnaire: with numbers of responses against the question

#### Section 1: This section will look at your views on the process of the Central Access Point beginning with the referral to outcome of service

To what extent is the overall CAP referral process clear? By process we mean from the point of referral, to the allocation of assessment by the local area coordinator to allocation of support.

1: Please comment on how clear the referral process is **Please tick (✓) one box**

*(when a referral is received by the CAP providing that its competed an attempt will be made to contact the customer that day with an appointment offered within 3 working days when no contact can be made by telephone/text an appointment letter will be sent out)*

Very Clear	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Clear	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Neither	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Unclear	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Very Unclear	<input type="text"/>

Comments

1.1: Please comment how clear the assessment process is **Please tick (✓) one box**

*(When a LAC completes the initial their housing support needs assessment with the customer, together they will identify the most appropriate service based on availability, needs and risk management)*

Very Clear	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Clear	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Neither	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Unclear	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Very Unclear	<input type="text"/>

Comments



1.2: Please comment on how clear you feel the process is with regards to the allocation of support either short-term accommodation/floating support is **Please tick (✓) one box**

*(When a customer is homeless and has housing support needs a referral will be made to the most appropriate short-term accommodation, the provider of this scheme will determine if they are able to support. When floating support is appropriate an individual service order is agreed with the customer)*

Very Clear

Clear

Neither Clear Or Unclear

Unclear

Very Unclear

Comments

1.3 If you feel there are points in the process that work less well please tell us what they are. We would welcome any suggestions on how we could improve the process

Comments

**Section 2 This section will request your views on the effective utilisation of Supporting People service provision** *(the Central Access point was implemented to ensure that supporting people commissioned services offered housing related support to customers in need of housing related support in a timely manner)*

2.1 What impact do you feel the CAP process has had on the availability of short-term accommodation?

Very Positive

Positive

Neither Positive or Negative

Negative

Very Negative

Did Not Answer

Comments
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2.2 What impact do you feel the CAP process has had on the availability of Floating Support.

Very Positive

Positive

Neither Positive or Negative

Negative

Very Negative

Comments
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2.3 What impact do you feel the CAP process has had on waiting lists for short-term accommodation?

Very Positive

Positive	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Neither Positive or Negative	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Negative	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Very Negative	<input type="text"/>
Did not answer	<input type="text" value="1"/>

2.4 What impact do you feel the CAP process has had on the waiting lists for floating support?

Very Positive	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Positive	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Neither Positive or Negative	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Negative	<input type="text" value="1"/>
Very Negative	<input type="text"/>
Did not answer	<input type="text" value="2"/>

**Section 3 This section will request your views on how the CAP process supports a personalised approach to Supporting People services** *(the CAP aims to ensure that the needs of the customer are met in a personalised approach that is important to them)*

2.3 In your view to what extent does the CAP process support a personalised approach to service delivery?

The process fully supports a personalised approach	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The process partly supports a personalised approach	<input type="text" value="6"/>
The process supports a personalised approach to some extent but not enough	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The process doesn't support a personalised approach at all	<input type="text"/>
Don't Know	<input type="text"/>

Comments

2.4 In your view to what extent are the needs of the customer being taken into account during the CAP PROCESS?

Always	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Usually	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Sometimes	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Never	<input type="text"/>
Don't Know	<input type="text"/>
Did not answer	<input type="text" value="1"/>

Comments

2.5 In your view to what extent does the CAP Process give Choice and Control over the support the customer has access to

Always	<input type="text" value="2"/>
Usually	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Sometimes	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Never	<input type="text"/>
Don't Know	<input type="text"/>

Comments