

### APPENDIX 3

#### Flintshire Service User responses to Housing Support Grant Strategy Consultation Questionnaire.

Regionally each local authority across North Wales has agreed to work on consulting across the six authorities collectively to gather input from both service users and providers to inform and shape their HSG strategy.

Two questionnaires were designed; one for service users receiving housing support grant funded services and another to Providers that receive housing support grant funds to deliver support. Both questionnaires had the option to state which authority they are sharing their response(s) with, which ensured a breakdown of analysis could be completed for each local authority.

The questionnaires were sent out at the same time, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and closing date of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 for responses, a four week consultation period.

The service user questionnaire has the option to be completed online or paper copy, the provider questionnaire was online only.

Across the board 428 responses were received from service users and 111 provider responses were received.

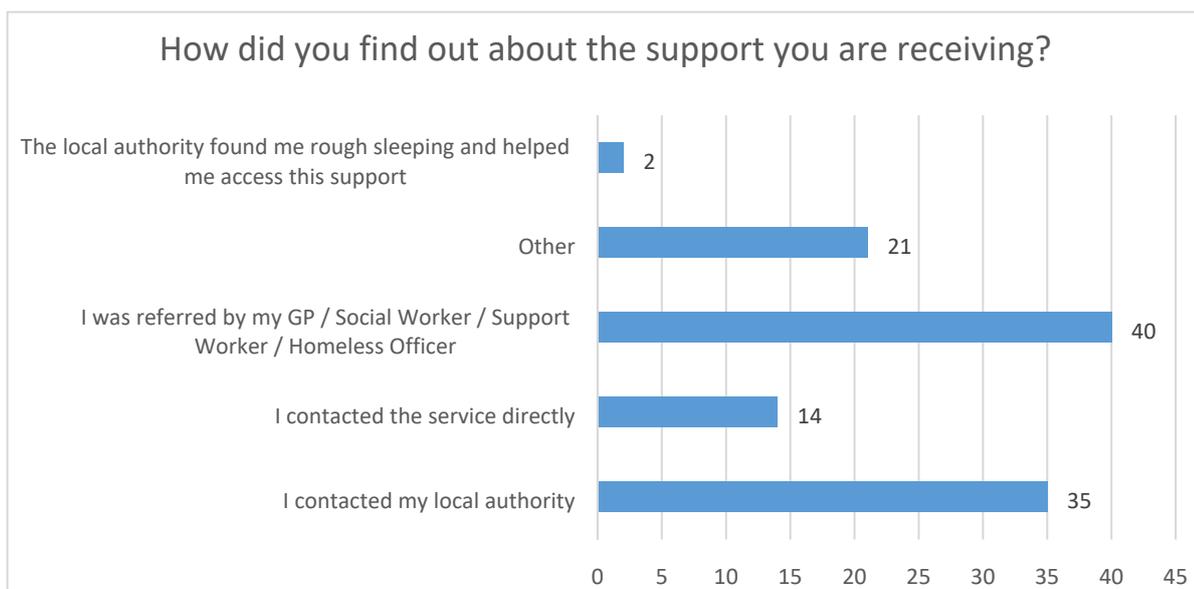
Flintshire received 112 responses from service users, note not all responses will equate back to 112, the only mandatory question was which authority you receive support in.

#### Analysis:

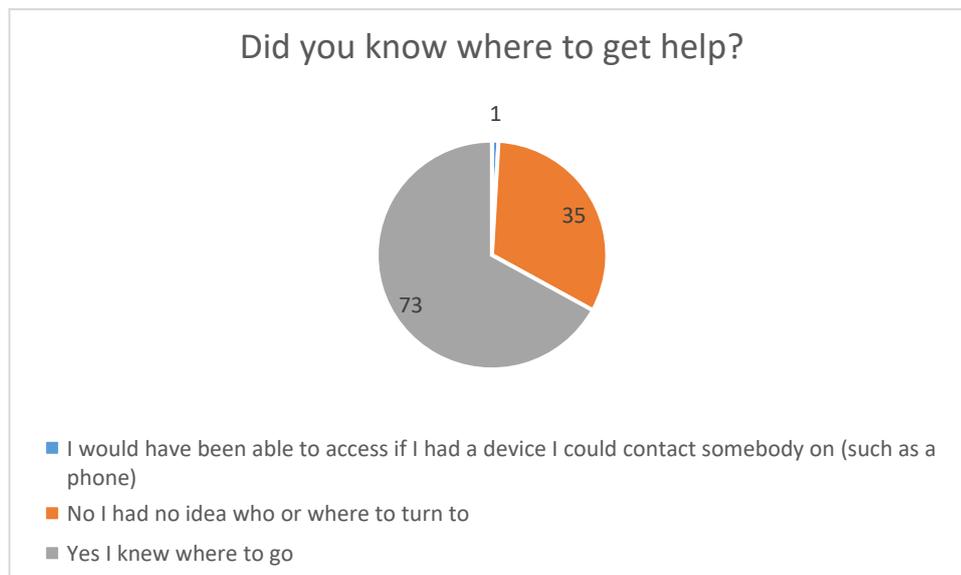
Out of the 103 service users that returned a response to this question, 73 were receiving floating support style service, and 30 service users were receiving support in a supported housing accommodation.

The questionnaire asks how they found out about the support they are receiving. Regionally at the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group (RHSCG) it has been discussed whether we need to market ourselves more across North Wales and the responses to this question will help inform how widely known the HSG programme is.

For Flintshire:



Other responses included; already living in sheltered accommodation, local MP signposted me, prison officer, probation officer, police signposted and through a friend and word of mouth. We then asked whether they knew where to turn to; to receive this support or who to contact and they said;



We asked in the questionnaire how we can improve and where we should publicise the HSG programme, the responses received included: Having a directory was a popular answer for FCC.

- Advertise
- Citizens Advice
- GP surgeries
- Having some sort of central list of what services are available and telling you how to get in touch with them, with phone numbers and waiting times etc.
- hostel and police told me where to go
- I have had a social worker for about 7 years and I would not have known how to get the help if it wasn't for the social worker
- I was at my local connects who helped
- I was referred by accommodation support. I wouldn't have known myself who could help in certain areas. I am just grateful they knew who could help me.
- I was referred to ACNEW by someone else who knew they could help me. Services seem to know who to refer to and who can help, but we as community residences don't have access to a specific place to go to find out who we need to deal with issues. Not everyone has access to internet. Directory or some sort is needed.
- I had moved back to the area and did not know where to go or what local support was available here. I am not sure what the best way would be but there should be some support to see what there is available, possibly from the council and lists of what services and how to get on their lists.
- posters / advertisement
- School
- Social media, internet, connects
- there needs to be more information online which is accessible easier

Some service users did state in this question:

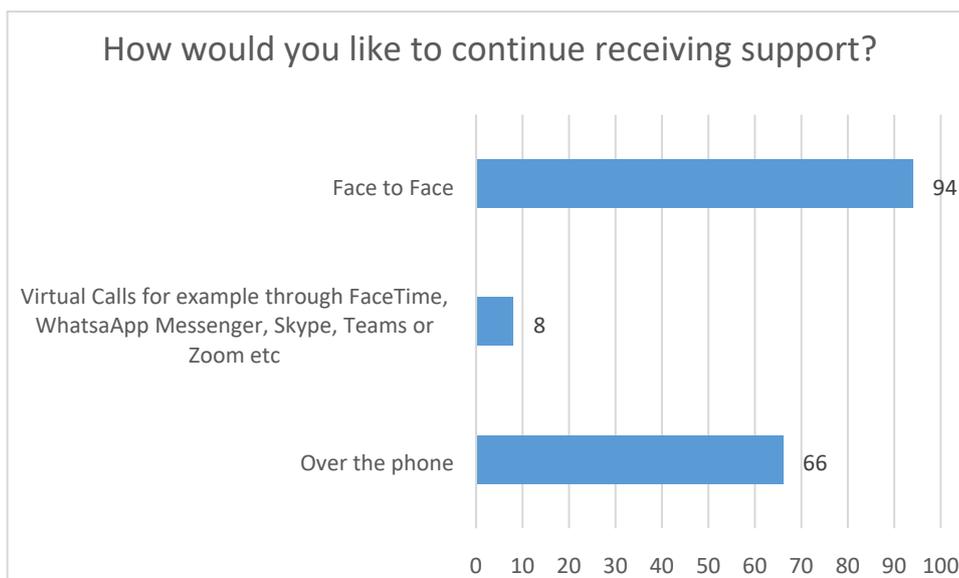
- I didn't understand what was going on around me, someone had to tell me I was being mentally abused. My health visitor referred me to DASU
- I had moved back to the area and did not know where to go or what local support was available here. I am not sure what the best way would be but there should be some support to see what there is available, possibly from the council and lists of what services and how to get on their lists.

Just short of 200 service users across the region did not know where to access support, this was not solely an issue for Flintshire, however Flintshire's responses boast better compared to other authorities that people in Flintshire were more aware where to get support, but still work to be done promoting the service.

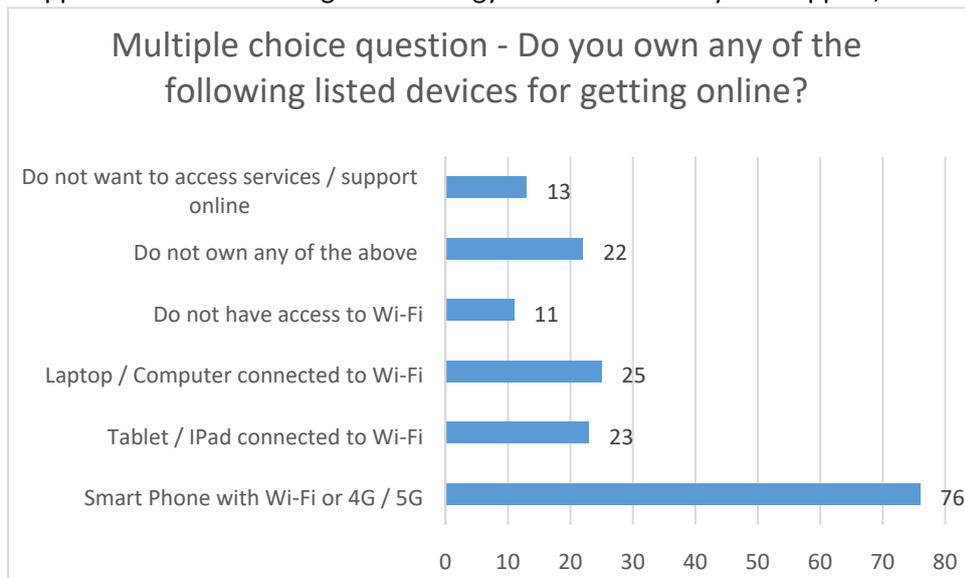
### **Covid-19 and Technology**

Covid-19 has seen us all adapt to technologies to ensure we can stay in touch and continue to have a form of communication. The RHSCG was conscious of the affect technology had on support and commissioned Laura Patterson Ltd regionally to consult with local authority colleagues, providers of housing related support, and service users on the impact of Covid-19.

Providers had to adapt over night, and for some people as Laura's research showed preferred over the phone contact rather than face to face, or video call to reduce time in day getting to support meetings. So the questionnaire asked how they would like to continue receiving support.

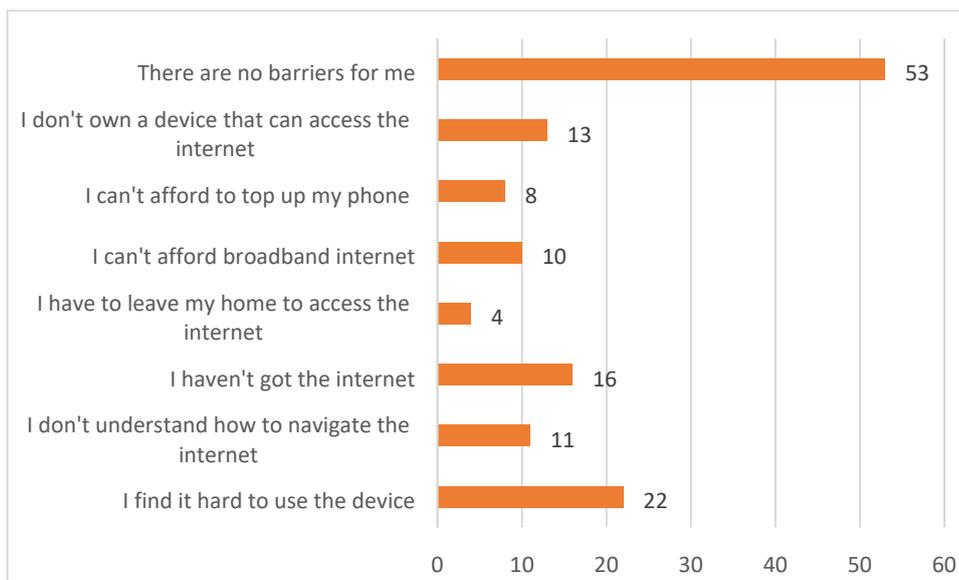


90 people stated their support worker has the right technology to be able to carry out support, 14 were



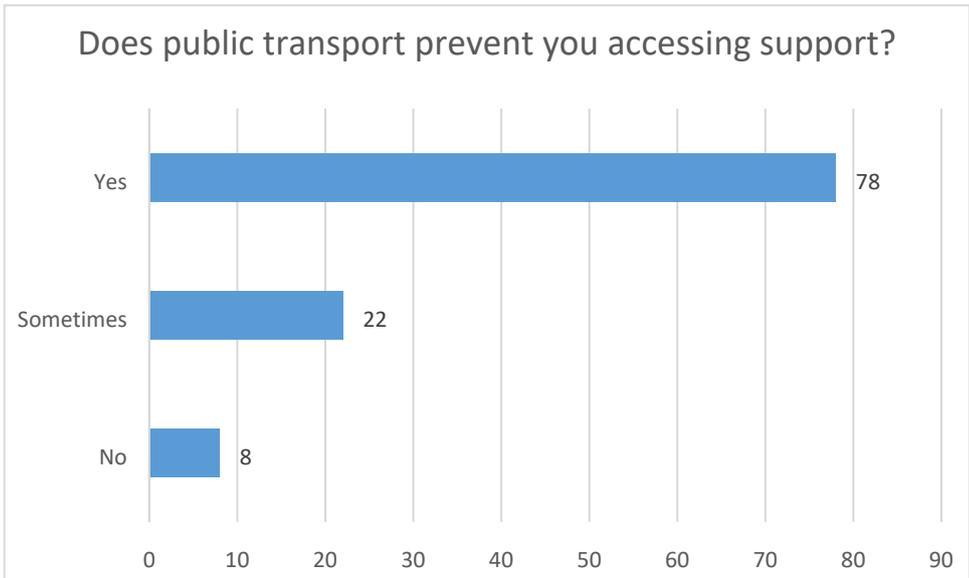
unsure and 4 said no.

53 people on the following table stated that there were no barriers for them accessing the internet or accessing support and support networks online. However that meant for the other half:



Responses covered in other in the above table were, not interested in accessing support online and really slow Wi-Fi being a hindrance.

99% of responses said they are able to receive support in the language of their choice.



**Accommodation:**



Flinshire’s response to this are a lot better than other authorities.

We then asked if they feel safe in their accommodation. Out of 110 answering this question, 11 said no, 19 said sometimes and 80 felt safe in their accommodation.

We then asked if they feel isolated in their accommodation and area they live? Out of the 111 that answered this question, 65 said no, 22 said sometimes and 24 felt isolated. The majority said living away from family and friends made them feel lonely and isolated, but they also shared that:

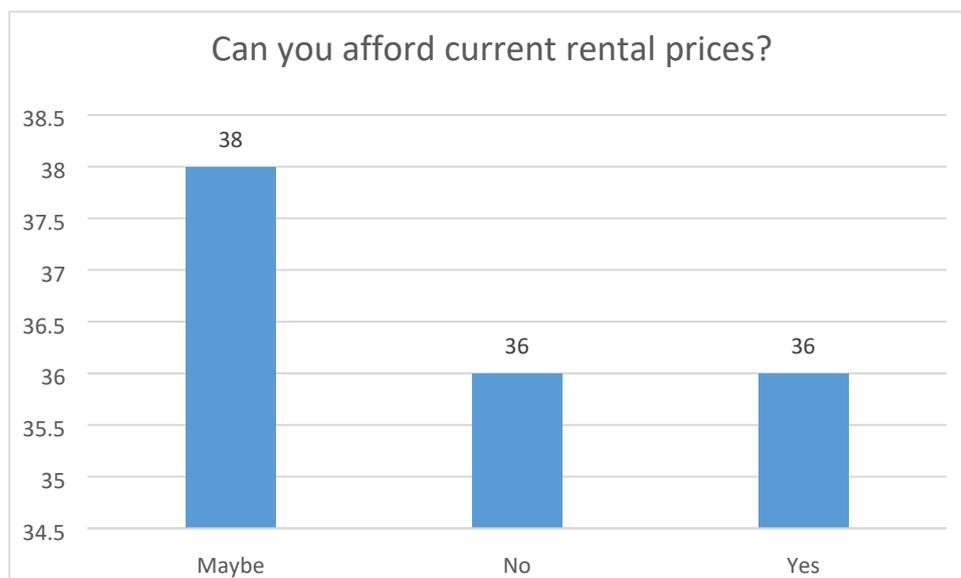
- All my friends are in another area
- Because I suffer with anxiety and depression I’ve got no family to support me where I am so I need to be by my family and my children so they can give me more support
- Because of the volatile situation with the neighbours who have used foul and abusive language towards me
- Condition of release cannot go back to family home
- Difficult to get to family due to travel, one bus stop, not reliable

- I feel lonely and isolated as I'm in safe accommodation so due to obvious reasons I can't have visitors, and my eldest daughter has issues with being around people in general and going out which means I spend a lot more time indoors alone too
- I feel lonely, isolated from friends and family and because they are so far away I am unable to do anything with them and they are not able to help me with my children. I cannot spend any time on my own, or doing anything that I want to do and do not see how living here, that could ever change. There are no regular bus routes, and it is a 30 minute walk to a major bus route that would get me to anywhere and with 4 children I do not feel that I am able to do this. I regularly left my door unlocked where I used to live but here I am checking my door 20 times a night and am scared to sleep without making sure all of the doors and windows are locked.
- I have moved in with my brother after living abroad for years. Relationship has become very strained and no longer happy living here. ACNEW are supporting with helping me move.
- I live with my partner and at times she is alone and the street appears to have a high level of crime and emergency response from the police
- I needed to be housed in a new area due to past situations so my support network was lost
- I think I should be fine as long as I do not socialise very much with the neighbourhood. However, the neighbours from above most times smoke cannabis in the building corridors at night and the smell comes into the flat, and when it bothers me most is when my daughter comes over the weekend to spend time with me.
- living in high rise flats I have always lived in a village surrounded by people
- lockdown has been hard
- My children do not currently live with me and they live 40 miles away.
- My husband passed away in 2018, I signed my home over to my daughter and she sold it and now wants to downsize. We don't have a good relationship anymore and I suffer with mental health. My anxiety and nerves are through the roof.
- My mobility is poor, currently reside in a top floor flat. Working towards a ground floor accommodation with my support worker - ACNEW
- my mum is going to evict me
- We do not have friendly relationships with any of our neighbours. We fear the house could be repossessed any given time by the landlord or the lock changed.

We then asked if they feel they are listened to by their support worker. 99 said yes, 10 said sometimes and 2 felt they were not listened to. Comments received were:

- I keep referring myself to mental health services but never gets anywhere. Council are being difficult over my bedroom tax questions.
- **Every person I have come in contact with has been excellent.**
- I had an excellent support worker but he moved.
- **In my case every person I have come in contact with have been so helpful and provided me with an excellent service.**
- It was just the time it took was so long and I never expected it would be so hard
- **Katrina has been such a great support in a very difficult time in my life. Nothing has been too much trouble and she deserves recognition. I have fought for an adapted house for five years and now my little boy has his dignity and privacy.**
- **So far the support network has been brilliant, they cannot do enough for me and my needs. I would feel better if they kept in contact with me more so I feel that I can reach out for support if and when needed**
- yes listened and remembers conversations

We asked looking forward to the future would you be able to afford a property in the area of your choice at current rental prices.



How does this affect their motivation to move on?

- Council housing would be affordable however if I was to rent privately the house prices are too high and not secure housing.
- Current private rental houses are too expensive. And there is no incentive to work whilst in supported accommodation due to rent being so high!
- Feel depressed, lonely and no hope of having a place of my own, because I am on benefits and will struggle to find landlords that accept benefits other than council or social housing. I am going on courses to help improve my CV to get a good job.
- Get just £180 every fortnight
- I am a single mother working part time currently. I don't think I would be able to afford the current rental prices in my area with the money I receive at the moment.
- I am currently on the sick and we are struggling to maintain home and our bills.
- I can't afford rental prices in the area, my mental health is poor because of lack of accommodation
- I do not feel that I have a great deal of motivation to move on. I was evicted in the middle of the first lockdown and got this house then and do not feel that I am happy here and that this is a healthy environment for either myself or my children. I am far away from family and friends and do not enjoy living here.
- I live on my own in my own home, I don't rent but if I had to I think cost would be an issue as I have very little savings and money from my pension is tight. Support worker is looking at ways I could increase my finances due to my deteriorating health.
- I plan to go to university and get a better paid job
- I would happily try to find private rent , but it's not affordable I think the council need to be looking at the price of renting and what they award in housing benefits because there is quite a lot on the rental market but there just not affordable for people who receive housing benefits, 3 bedroom houses are priced from £750pcm to £1000 pcm and housing benefits covers around £580 so the top up is not affordable
- it is affecting my MH, I live with my parents it is overcrowded, I just can't see a way forward
- Lack of affordable properties means I will be in refuge for longer due to waiting for council accommodation.
- Private rental for a house with my son's needs would be astronomical. He is severely disabled.
- rent in my area is dearer than social housing

- Renting is too expensive and I find local authority housing affordable and stable
- Rents are very high at the moment and I would be struggling to afford rent somewhere I wanted to live. Also there is a difference between private and council, with the security that each of these represent. A difficult question to answer accurately.
- the area of my choice is really expensive and the cost of living is expensive too, I would still try and do it but I would really struggle
- Whether I would be able to afford to live where I wanted to would depend on what support was available and I would also need to see what the landlord was allowed to charge. At present the rent charged is far in excess of the rent element paid and I am paying a lot of the benefit I am supposed to be living on topping up the excessive rent which should not be allowed to be charged.

We finished the questionnaire on asking if they had any other comments to add, our service users shared:

- currently in a cabin accommodation, would be better if had free Wi-Fi, own keys (although understand why not), do feel safe, cooking facilities or a kitchen we could use, thanks to all the staff here they all made me feel so welcome
- I am 90 yrs. old and live with my wife in our own home, we are accessing support as we want to remain at home and independent and not be separated.
- I am confident to ask my support officer for support when needed, in between weekly support checks already in place
- I am in a HMO and do not understand the bills and do not feel that this is very good value for money. I feel that there is a feeling that they can charge what they want and I am having to pay this and do not feel that this is sustainable. I am looking to get out into a 1 bed flat for the sake of my mental health. There should be a realistic rent that is charged, the current rent for my room is far too much for what it is but nothing seems to be being done about that.
- I am pleased someone is helping me and taking the time to get to know my situation and ways to help me stay in my own home. I would be upset if I had to leave as I have lived here for over 40+ years with my late wife.
- I don't know where I would be without support worker, she has helped me fill in forms, got me grants, talked with me and stayed on the phone when I have been worried.
- I feel from my personal opinion on how my application has gone etc. , that things that are out of my control i.e. your mistakes or when people have gone of sick and their caseloads having been picked up then it's only fair the waiting times should be back dated , for example I'm 6 months down the line on a band 4 when it clearly states on Flintshire website anyone fleeing domestic violence doesn't need a local connection and there for will be on band one , also when I was allocated a support homeless officer I was waiting weeks for her to except duty, calling an emailing her with no response she was off sick and didn't return to work so when someone else finally took her caseloads they excepting duty but it only went from that date and I feel this is very unfair
- I find the support I get from everyone excellent nothing is too much trouble for anyone
- I have known my support worker for several years and feel that he knows me better than most other people. I do feel that he listens to me but also feel that there are only so many options for me to explore and feel trapped by Covid, the lack of suitable housing, and the lack of childcare provision and do not feel hopeful about the future.
- I think there needs to be more support for children who don't qualify for flying start, it's really difficult to live in an area that offers no support for children.
- I would just like to say thank you to everyone involved that made our lives better. That also includes ray who has been wonderful and all of the council lads who have helped with other jobs they didn't have to do.
- Refuge has been massive help, I'm just waiting on been housed, hopefully soon, so can get back to normal, but wouldn't of done it without your help
- Service is marvellous! Delighted with the service and support I receive

- sleeping at friends sofa, I have health issues which affect my mobility so going up the stairs to use the bathroom is difficult and I struggle to get in and out of the bath and have to ask my friend to help me which is embarrassing
- Still waiting for a replacement support worker.
- Still waiting for some repairs from when I moved in 3 months ago, they would improve the housing if they were done.
- Thank you - I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for you this place has saved my life!
- the support I get is good I feel I am listened too
- There are some repairs that need doing, and the garden needs clearing but otherwise the house is OK, I need floor coverings and this needs to be addressed before I will be happy with the house. Also there is very little storage. Very happy with the support I am receiving and would recommend them to anyone.
- We are grateful & thankful for all services who have helped in supporting dad and ourselves. We hope all services locally can continue for those who need it.
- We could not have received better help anywhere, and we are very grateful to FCC for all they have done for us.

Equalities Data for the responses:

	<b>Age</b>
16-24	7
25-34	14
35-44	10
45-54	12
55-64	6
65 and over?	20

White	66
Black	1
Prefer not to say	2

	<b>Gender</b>
Female	41
Male	27

	<b>Gender changed since birth</b>
No	63
Yes	5

	<b>Disability</b>
No	42
Yes	25
Prefer not to say	1

	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>
Bi-sexual	3
Heterosexual / straight	63
Prefer not to say	2

	<b>Ethnicity stated</b>
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	<b>Relationship status</b>
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Divorced	4
Married or same sex civil partnership	14
Other please specify	1
Single	37
Widow	7
Separated	3
Prefer not to say	2

No religion	13
Prefer not to say	11

	<b>Pregnant</b>
Does not apply to me	23
No	40
Yes	2

	<b>Carer</b>
Yes	7
No	61

	<b>Religion stated</b>
Christian	39
Atheist	3
Hindu	1
Other	1

	<b>Preferred Language</b>
Both Welsh and English	6
English	62
Welsh	2