



**Ways to
welfare in
Cumbria**



**Six month
Service review
December 13**

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1. Introduction

In October 2012 the Government published the White paper 'Universal Credit': welfare that works'. The White Paper detailed the government's proposals for wide-ranging welfare reform which have subsequently been included within the Welfare reform Act. Included within the proposal was reform of the Discretionary Social Fund which was administered by the Department of Works and pensions (DWP). In April 2013, Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants ended as part of the changes to working-age welfare and benefits.

Alongside these new benefits, the government provided some limited funding (April 2013-March 2015) to unitary and county councils to help develop other forms of support based on local circumstances and need. The level of funding to the county council is less than the overall funding awarded to people through the DWP. The government direction was clear in that it did not expect councils to recreate crisis loans and community care grants

On this basis the county council agreed that it was necessary to do more with less, and do things differently.

As a result of these changes Cumbria County Council created a dedicated advice, support and information service called 'Ways to Welfare' to help people who find themselves in severe hardship. This service would be delivered through the in-house co-ordination service Community Support Team (CST).

Ways to Welfare commenced on the 2nd April 2013, and it was decided at development stage of the programme to complete an initial six month review that would be published December 2013.

Ways to Welfare was developed to provide support for local people facing crisis or serious hardship. The programme is significantly different to what was offered through the DWP Social Fund. Rather than making an application for cash, our customers call up and discuss their situation with a trained social care worker who will advise on the most appropriate course of action for that individual to take in relation to their individual circumstances. The assistance offered is usually in the form of signposting to a community-based support organisation, however, financial assistance or the provision of certain basic supplies/ items may also be offered.

It should be noted that the model adopted by Cumbria County Council, was a new concept and was not based on a model being introduced by another authority. The council acknowledged the fact that government funding announcements were limited to two years and through the implementation of this model could ensure citizens would have support beyond the funded years. A number of councils across the north of England have linked their funding to their housing benefits departments with the knowledge that no support was confirmed as being available beyond the two years.

The content of this report is based upon information recorded by the Community Support team, during the first six months 2nd April 2013-19th September 2013, and customer and stakeholder reports.

The report contains recommendations for the future development of the service in section 6 of the report.

2. The aim is to complete a six month review of Local Welfare Assistance

The objectives of the 6 month review are to:

- Gain a clear picture of who is contacting the community support team, for what reason and where are they from.
- Ascertain the extent to which the current service is achieving its objectives
- Ascertain customer satisfaction with the service.
- Consult with stakeholders to ascertain satisfaction and perceived accessibility.
- Highlight gaps in welfare support service provision.
- Highlight areas of deprivation for targeted interventions around behavioural change.
- Guide service development based on evidence based need.

The 6 month review is part of the Local Welfare Assistance wider commitment to regularly scanning the external environment and the internal resource base to provide access to the most suitable and best value support services to prevent and manage crisis for Cumbrian people.

3. Cumbria County Council Service objectives for LWA

Cumbria County Council, cabinet members in September 2012 agreed to introduce the Local Welfare Assistance programme commencing April 2013 to provide Cumbrian's facing severe hardship or crisis with support that would be delivered within their community to help meet their needs; this was to be achieved through:

- a) A dedicated internal team (consisting of 3 FTE social care workers; 1 administrator, an office and a manager)
- b) To link the support to developments in advice, advocacy and prevention support
- c) Support would be delivered through the third sector, housing associations and other providers
- d) People accessing the support will receive information on how they can check they are receiving the right benefits, advice on managing money and debts, maintain their home, access recycled goods and food banks
- e) People will also receive advice on how to access support from credit unions, children centres, Citizen Advice Bureaus and other schemes
- f) Homeless or people at risk of homelessness will be signposted to the Housing Option Team, and landlords or may be eligible to receive help to access housing support

4. Methodology

a. Analysis of the service provided by the community support team

A robust analysis of customer support data over the first 26 weeks of the community support team (CST) being fully operational as described in the Northgate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This will give a clear indication of the key characteristics of customers and the nature of the crisis situations that has been presented. This analysis will relate to all 974 identifiable customers calling the CST within the first six months. Please note, within the reporting period there was a total of 1162 calls, however, within the first three weeks of operation not all identifiable data was captured relating to callers. This analysis will be offered on a district level so as to offer a more local perspective of demand on the service. We also investigated the traffic for the welfare section of the county council website.

b. Mapping of Cumbrian areas of need

Each of the 974 customers will be highlighted on a map of Cumbria using the Cumbria Atlas. This will provide a visual description of demand on the CST and will enable comparisons of customer location with unemployment. This mapping will highlight key areas of known need and also areas of potential need due to shared characteristics with areas of high demand.

c. Customer satisfaction survey

A customer satisfaction survey performed to gauge understanding and usefulness of as well as satisfaction with the service from a customer perspective. This was done via a short telephone questionnaire delivered through an independent research company- DJS Research limited. The aim was to survey 400 of our customers across the districts based on percentage split by calls. However, due to a number of factors 324 surveys were completed a 35% responses from total calls made, although DJS contacted 1088 customers on more than one occasion . The respondent list was equally split by gender and 24% of customers with a disability.

d. Stakeholder consultation

Over 700 Stakeholders including key agencies were given the opportunity to complete an online consultation using the council's preferred Purseus software. Strategic partners and those who refer in and work with Local Welfare Assistance were invited to share their views on an individual and organisational basis- including Cumbria Advice Network members, housing associations, Supporting People providers; care agencies, internal and external support staff and third sector organisations operating within the welfare sector. Cumbria County Council received a total of 143 submissions from stakeholders, however, not all of the 143 responses had completed all questions. The purpose of the consultation was to gain an understanding into accessibility, usefulness and satisfaction from a wider stakeholder perspective but also guide insight into local pockets of unmet need and gaps in service provision.

It is important to bear in mind that Local Welfare Assistance has significantly developed since April 2013 taking into account on-going feedback from stakeholders and customers during this period and a number of recommendations have already been met

5. Findings

5.1.1 Analysis of the service provided by the community support team

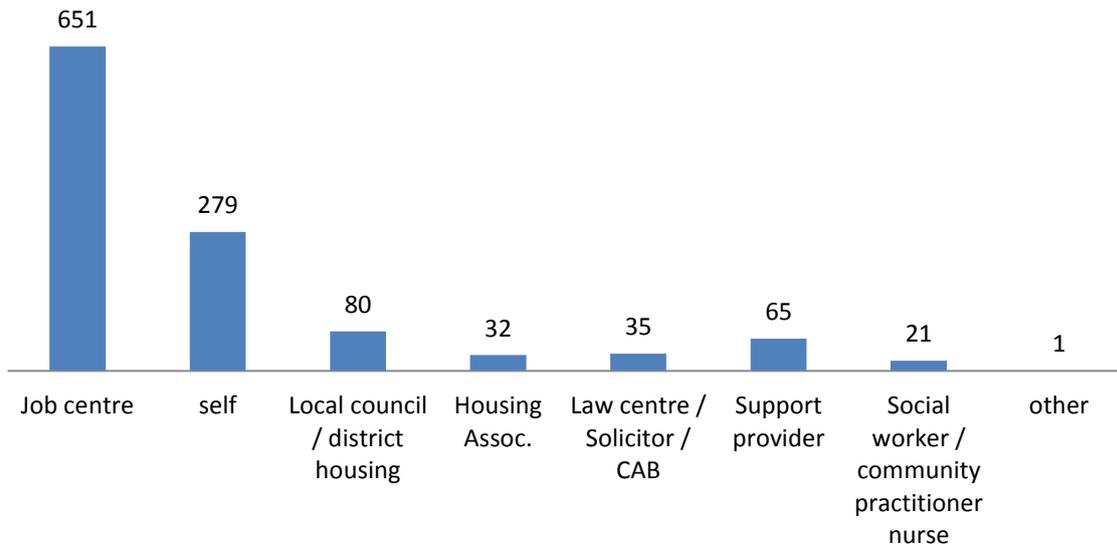
The following data relates to information captured from community support team customers between *Tuesday 2 April 2013 and Friday 19 September 2013*. The following information relates to the county as a whole however a district by district breakdown is available in Appendix 1.

- In the first six months of operation there has been slightly more male than female customers calling the CST.
- 1 in every 7 customers is aged between 26 and 55. 20% of callers are aged 25 and younger and only 7% of callers are older than 55.
- Over half of all customers are referred to the CST via the Job Centre with a further quarter being self-referred. The remaining quarter are referred from other support agencies. It is worthy of note that the number of referrals from partner agencies has been increasing month on month as awareness of the service has increased.
- 65% of callers contact the CST as they do not have enough money as a result of either benefit issues or budgeting issues. 1 in 10 customers calls as a result of benefits being sanctioned.
- About half of our customers call through a need to obtain food, with 1 in 3 customers having no money to fund gas or electric in their home. 1 in 10 customers called with a need for furniture or white goods.
- Over half of customers are signposted to their nearest foodbank with a further 36% being advised to call the DWP regarding the loans and cash advances that are still available. 1 in 5 are signposted to the Citizen's Advice Bureau for additional for benefits and money advice. 11% were referred to the council's Supporting People programme.
- 30% of customers were signposted to other local support services. It is worthy to note that the number of customer signposted to support agencies has been increasing significantly as the service has developed.
- Where financial assistance has been awarded this is for energy for 60% of the time, 19% for furniture and 17% for food when a foodbank has been unavailable.

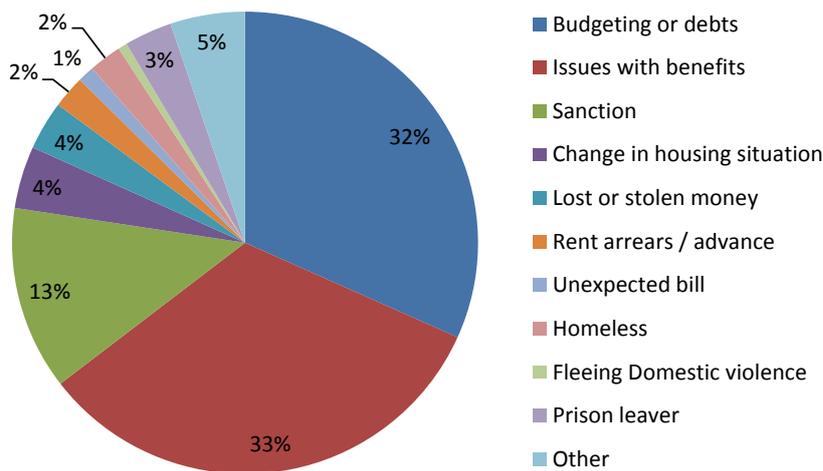
Cumbria Figure 1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	11	101	203	157	30	5	12	519
Male	10	116	240	211	50	2	16	645
Total	21	217	443	368	80	7	28	1164

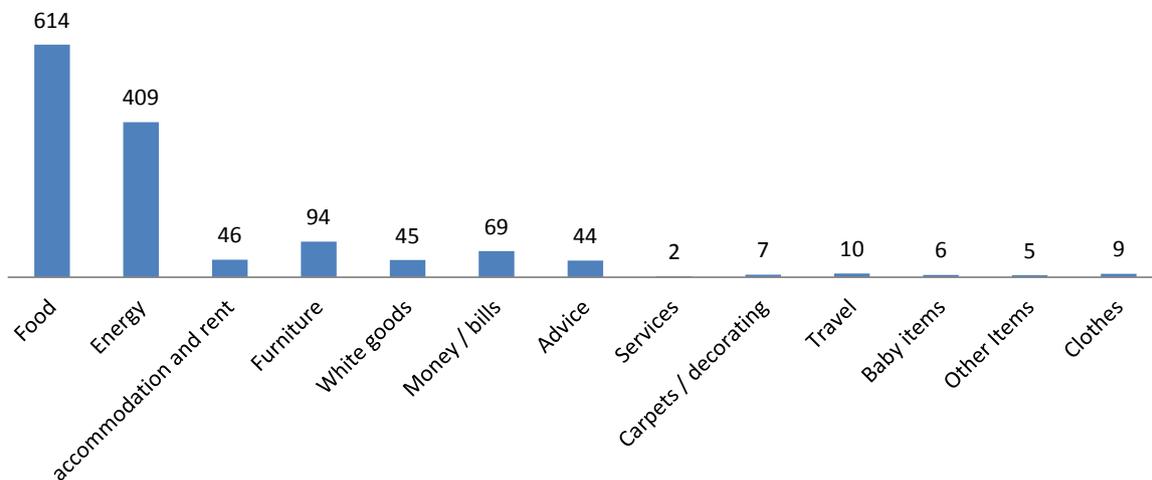
Cumbria Figure 2 – Where was the customer referred from?



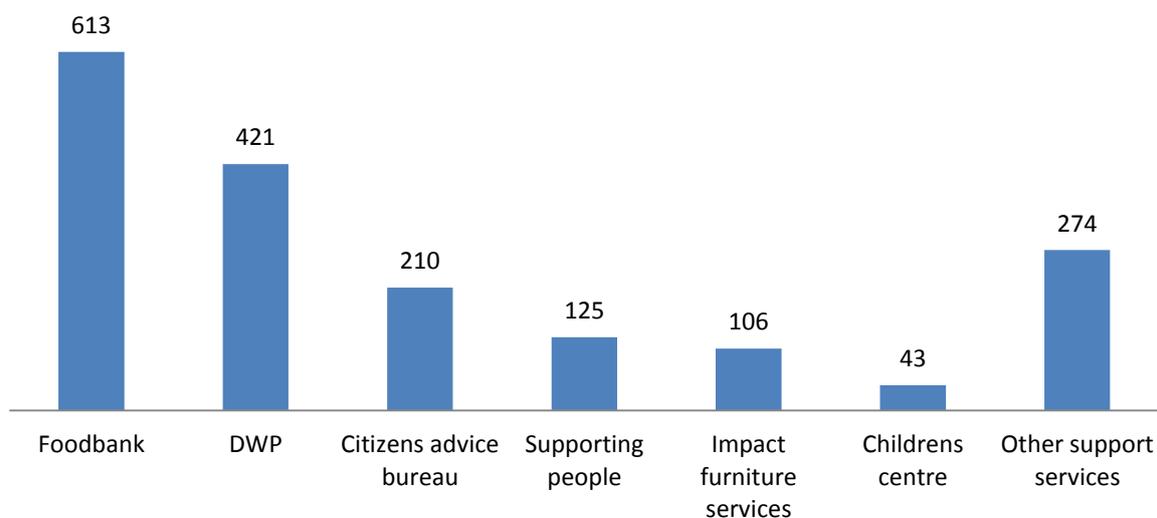
Cumbria Figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



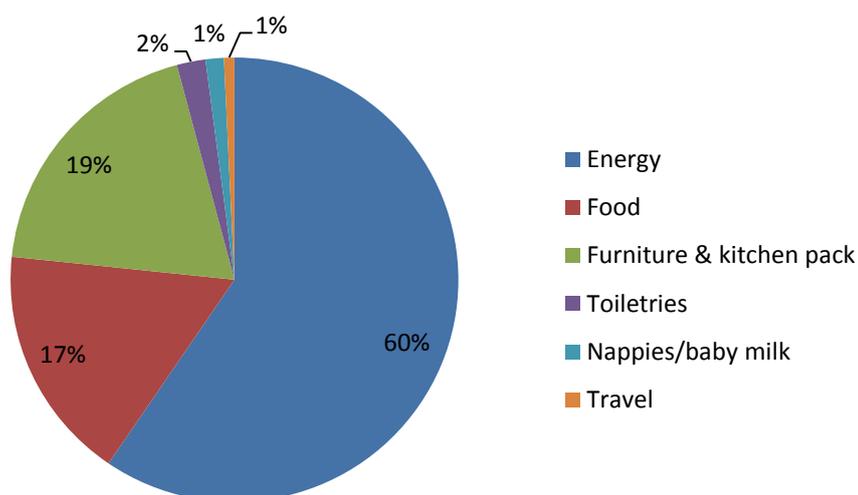
Cumbria Figure 4 – of the 973 customer who accessed CST they needed:



Cumbria Figure 5 – during the reporting period 1164 calls were made to the CST of these there were a number of repeat calls, the customers were signposted to?



Cumbria Figure 6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?



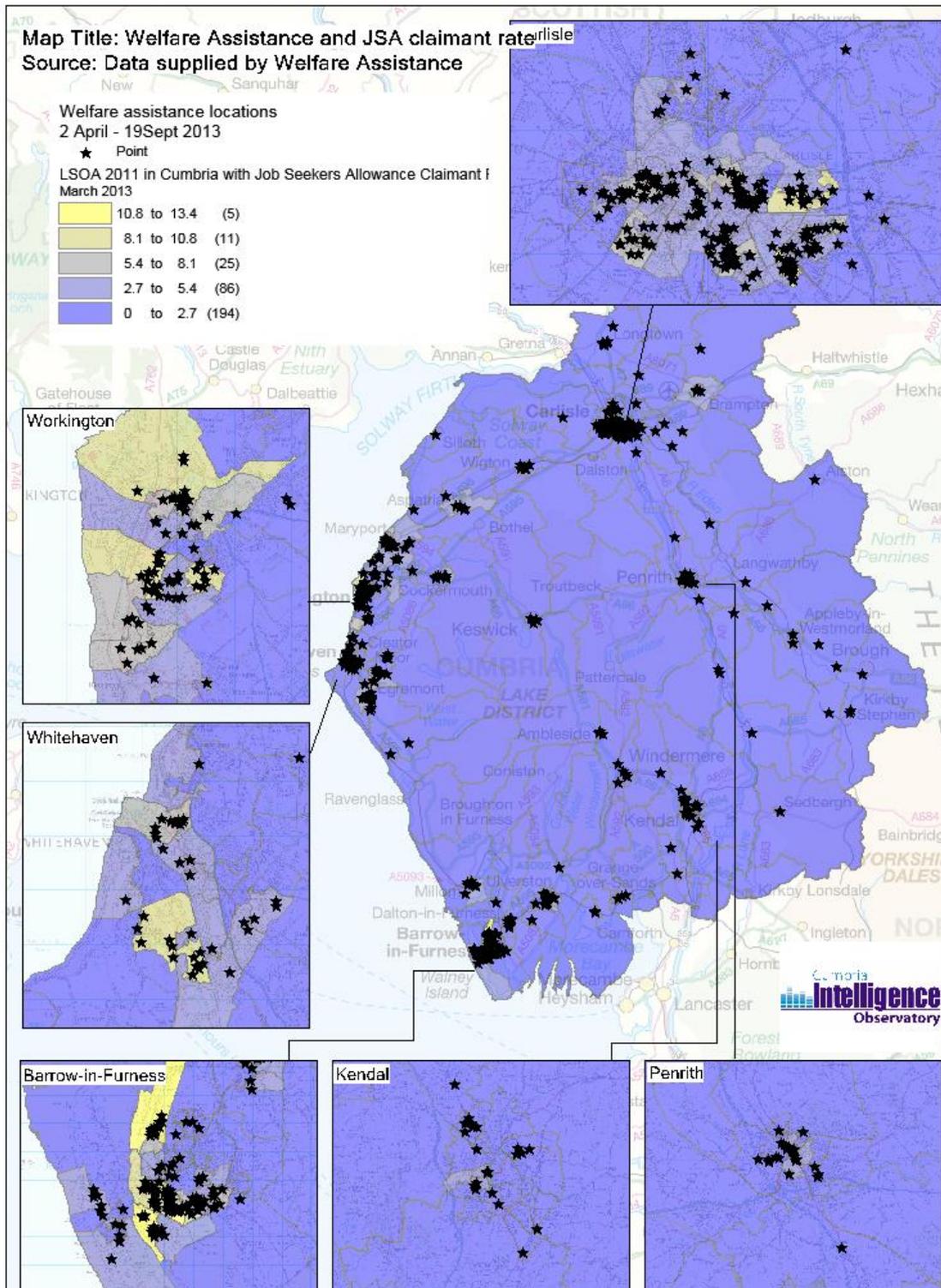
5.1.2 Online traffic for Cumbria.gov.uk/welfare

There have been 225 visitors to the welfare section of the council’s website and the home page has a low bounce rate of 28.7% which is indicative of a useful site that visitors stay on, once landed, to find out more information.

The most popular page after the home page gives further information about food banks.

Page	Views
Ways to welfare	225
Finding your nearest Foodbank	162
Contact community support	131
Knowing what your entitled to	94
Help with housing	76

5.2 Maps of CST customers



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As is apparent by the map highlighted above, demand upon local welfare assistance relates to areas of high unemployment. However, there are a significant number of calls from rural areas of the county where unemployment is not significant. This reinforces the quite random nature of crisis that those individuals who call the community support team are experiencing and not necessarily as a result of unemployment and benefit claimants.

District specific maps of local welfare assistance demand are available in appendix 2.

5.3 Key points highlighted in the customer satisfaction survey report

- The majority (81%) of users are satisfied with the service they received
- Key to peoples satisfaction was the manner of the staff spoken to and the overriding feeling they were getting some sort of much needed help
- Main consensus was that respondents felt that nothing could be improved at all
- Majority of respondents (85%) found getting contact details was easy
- Over 77% of callers had their call answered within 7-10 rings (55 % within 4-6 rings)
- 88% of callers spoke to someone who was able to help
- 73% found staff to be knowledgeable
- 90% found staff to be friendly, helpful and listened to their needs
- 83% said staff gave them time
- 91% of callers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they were referred to
- 78% reported that the call to the services has resulted in them receiving the help they needed
- 81% reported that the reason they called the services in the first place had not reoccurred.

The complete user satisfaction report is available in appendix 3

5.4 Key points highlighted in the stakeholder report

- Of the 143 respondents only 57 (40%) had signposted people to ways to welfare
- 53% found the service accessible
- 83% of respondents understood the model adopted by Cumbria County Council to address changes brought about by Welfare Reform Act
- 43% agreed that the approach is appropriate for longer term sustainability, 26% disagreed
- 61% of respondents stated that they currently offer a service that assist people in crisis and this includes in -house Adult Social care provision, mental health and trade unions
- Of those stakeholders who accessed the services 34% were satisfied/ very satisfied with 44 % neutral and 21% dissatisfied
- 61% of stakeholders stated that they had seen an increase in demand on their services as a result of the changes to the Social fund in April 2013 but most were unable to give data to support this statement

The complete stakeholder satisfaction report is available in appendix 4.

6. Future service developments,

Future development will be based on the information captured since commencement of the programme, taking into consideration the service model to date, customer and stakeholder feedback and gaps identified in service provision.

	Feedback	Development to date: April to Dec. 2013	Future Development
1	Access to Support		
a)	Majority of Customers are happy with the existing phone system however a number of stakeholder noted that accessing the phone line at times was difficult	Reviewed our telephone system to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable caller to leave voice message, - set up internal quality measure in that all calls will be returned with 2 hour - offer caller the option of a call back to reduce cost - use 01228 number to reduce cost, less costly than accessing DWP call centre 	Increase understanding of the phone service for customers and agencies Review internal process to streamline calls
b)	Stakeholders raised issue of no weekend or evening cover	To-date there is no evidence of demand for evening or weekend support and this mirrors the DWP service Cumbria County Council website offers twenty four hour access to advice and information The CST is open Mon-Fri 9.00 -4.30 except statutory bank holidays Festive period 2013-14 open every day except 25 th 26 th & 1 st Jan.	Monitor demand on service.
2	Awareness and understanding of support available through Ways to Welfare		
a)	CST data shows majority of customers are referred via the job centre for cash or loans	CST inform all callers of what W2W can offer	Continue to educate stakeholders of W2W programme, sharing outcome of six month review
b)	Customer survey highlights a number of people were not aware of what Ways to welfare could offer them	Held customer road-shows (Carlisle) Developed 'Managing your money' booklet with area specific information	Roll out targeted countywide road show possibly linking with partner agencies

c)	Majority of Stakeholder (83%) noted they understood the model as adopted by Cumbria County Council but only 43% agreed with the model	<p>Promoted the programme through attending: CAN annual conference, CAB policy and strategy and local team meetings; District councils and local committees;</p> <p>Produced and circulated 32,000 Ways to welfare leaflets to key stakeholders and major public facing Cumbria county Council buildings, ASC, libraries, CAB, job centres, children services, housing associations, supporting people, children centres,</p> <p>Engaged with local media</p> <p>Held countywide stakeholder sessions</p> <p>Engaged with NW DWP area stakeholder meetings</p>	Continue to engage with stakeholders, countywide and share outcomes of six month review
3	<p>Community Support team on-going development</p> <p>a) Majority of customers and stakeholders made positive comments in relation to Community support team staff</p> <p>b) Comments were made in relation to staff knowledge and skills in dealing with vulnerable people</p>	<p>Recruited to CST post in line with skill base and knowledge of social care workers to assist with the development and embedding of a new model</p> <p>All staff have attended welfare benefits information sessions, CCC core training; supported to meet with agencies and shadow other professionals; review of case studies and lessons learnt</p> <p>Staff informed and directed to signpost to specialist advice and support services where appropriate</p> <p>Introduced review process for customers not happy with the outcome</p> <p>CCC complaints policy for customers not happy with service</p>	<p>Continue with professional development of all staff and review of service with lessons learnt</p> <p>Internal 'mystery shopping' to be introduced as part of quality audit</p> <p>Introduced system to review customers services through follow up calls with cross section of customers</p> <p>Ensure stakeholders and customers are aware of review and complaints process</p>

c)	Cumbria County Council carried out an internal financial audit in September 2013- this audit reported that the financial processes were adequate.		
4	<p>Equality impact</p> <p>a) Very small number of people raised issues relating to ability to meet cultural needs</p> <p>b) Noted by stakeholder that title 'Ways to welfare' may impact upon people accessing the support</p> <p>c) For some people there is a need for their support worker to make contact with CST on their behalf</p>	<p>Equality Impact assessment completed and reviewed six monthly addressing potential inequalities within , age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, , ethnicity</p> <p>Ability to support through financial assistance where needs cannot be meet through local support</p> <p>Ability to access alternative support through links with NCI programme, LACS, current CCC contract holders;</p> <p>Providing the customer gives verbal consent to share information with their support worker/ advocate CST will communicate with the support agency on the customer behalf.</p>	<p>Maintain and review EIA, incorporating customers and stakeholder feedback</p> <p>Link with countywide multi-cultural centre & advocates to capture local information and services</p> <p>Monitor referrals to CST& report</p> <p>Promote access to support and advice across all age groups (young and older people)</p> <p>Link with agencies to increase awareness of Welfare reform changes and how existing service can meet individual needs</p> <p>Provide suitable written literature for customers, e.g. easy read; formatted documents;</p>
5	<p>Demand v expectation</p> <p>CST data, customer and stakeholder reports all show the greatest need and demands from a customer are;</p> <p>Food</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Furniture</p> <p>Money /debt advice</p>	<p>Database that has captured locally based provision across the county</p> <p>Food: Liked in with local foodbanks and offered support. Give financial assistance where a caller is in crisis and cannot access local food back, due to : availability;</p>	<p>Acknowledging that government funding ceases for Welfare assistance in March 2015 the next 15 months is to focus on service development.</p> <p>Food: To consider the financial implication whereby access / signposting to foodbanks to alleviate crisis due to longer term issues will be linked to support</p>

		<p>accessibility, disability, cultural needs Increased access to food vouchers linked to actual support, through localised support workers (foodbanks and children centres)</p> <p>Energy: We have signposted to government websites; energy companies Offered financial assistance for people in crisis and need Signposted to agencies for specialist advice in relation to energy providers and tariffs Have awarded grant funding to third sector agencies to provide process of application and funding for winter warmth Informed customers of available grants Increased financial assistance during winter months</p> <p>Furniture: Developing a working partnership with IFH to access recycled furniture Provide start up kitchen packs (white goods) Exploring option of accessing wider range of suppliers for recycled furniture and white goods</p>	<p>packages To consider the longer term need for money advice and budgeting support for people on low income To promote the appropriate use of foodbanks and public donation To monitor demand of food within areas not currently serviced by foodbanks To consider the longer term need of customers in relation to financial resilience</p> <p>Energy: Continue to provide up to date and accurate information in relation to grants and funding</p> <p>Furniture: Look to extend the reused furniture service by incorporating a voucher system to give the customer more control and choice around the essential items on offer. We will also look to include additional reused furniture organisations into the scheme to further improve choice and the service offered. Encourage partners supporting people currently in short-term accommodation to prepare their customers for the time they leave this scheme and find themselves needed essential items.</p>
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		<p>Money and debt advice: Signposting to existing agencies to offer specialist advice. However this does not necessarily mean that customers will access support in a timely manner. CST are unable to make direct referrals to agencies for this support</p>	<p>Money and debt advice: We will look to review how our customers access the range of money and debt advice and support services that are currently commissioned. To consider the potential for a central access point around such services could lead to a better customer experience, meeting holistic needs and referrals as suggested by stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>We will raise awareness in relation to the pitfalls of borrowing money through legal and illegal means, linked to existing agencies.</p> <p>We will look to enhance the skills and awareness around resource efficiency within our partner organisations and Cumbrian residents generally. The purpose is to reduced waste and makes the most out of every pound available. This will include extending product life, reusing clothes, minimising food waste, accessing 'free' markets, etc. This will be done via community based action.</p> <p>To consider financial implication for post April 2014- to continue to offer financial assistance for people in crisis.</p>
6	Customer journey		
a)	Majority of customers were happy with the signposting and support offered and reported that they had accessed the locally based support agencies.	<p>Developed closer links with foodbanks and IHF (furniture provider)</p> <p>Developed a service database that highlights the number of signposting agencies</p>	<p>To consider developing a more robust referral pathway between CST and community based services that will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Be more streamlined -Timely -Accessible
b)	A number of stakeholders and customers		

	<p>reported that the service should: “be part of a wider holistic support approach that would see services working together to support client longer term”</p> <p>“linking up support services to provide a more holistic support to clients to help avoid future crisis”</p> <p>“Professional to work together to support people”</p> <p>“CST don’t know if people have engaged with services’</p> <p>CST state that there have been a number of people who have accessed the team wanting a ‘quick fix’ and not wanting to engage with other support agencies who can help with their longer term problems</p>	<p>Improved relationships with third sector providers and support agencies</p> <p>However, CST can at this stage only refer into IHF, supporting people and a certain foodbanks. This poses a delay in customers being able to access critical support when signposting is the only option.</p> <p>Utilised the road show to bring agencies together and raise awareness of services</p>	<p>-Reduce the need for customers to make multiple contacts</p> <p>-provide the advice and support the customer needs from a single access point</p>
7 a)	<p>Grant funding- sustainable support</p> <p>Cumbria County Council have committed a level of funding to be accessed by local agencies and community groups to develop longer term sustainable support provision for people affected by the changes brought about by the welfare reform Act.</p> <p>It was envisaged that the customers and stakeholder reports would identify gaps in local provision to influence grant funding.</p>	<p>To date there has been a level of support both advice and financial to a number of agencies to assist the CST and customer demand this includes:</p> <p>Equipment to support local churches Equipment to support foodbank On-going costs linked to food delivery Improved accessibility of food parcels Contribution to purchase food supplies and money advice Assisted with support linked to foodbanks and children centres in Allerdale and barrow</p>	<p>Considering the outcomes of the six month report, LWA will advertise and promote the grant funding process to commence January 2014</p> <p>The ability to submit application for Grant funding will be available to local community groups and agencies to develop or extend provision that will assist Cumbria County Council in meeting the demands on welfare assistance.</p> <p>Any grant funding must ensure that the support/ service or network is long term sustainable (beyond</p>

<p>Stakeholders were asked 'Where do you see a need for further development? i.e. what support services would be helpful but don't currently exist' - feedback does not highlight specific support linked to ways to welfare, which highlights the wide range of agencies completing the stakeholder questionnaire</p> <p>CST report that the greatest demand is: food, energy, furniture, money advice</p>	<p>Assistance to develop access to clothing Financial assistance to families and disabled people as a result of cold weather</p> <p>Explored assistance linked to credit unions- emergency loans</p>	<p>April 2015)</p>
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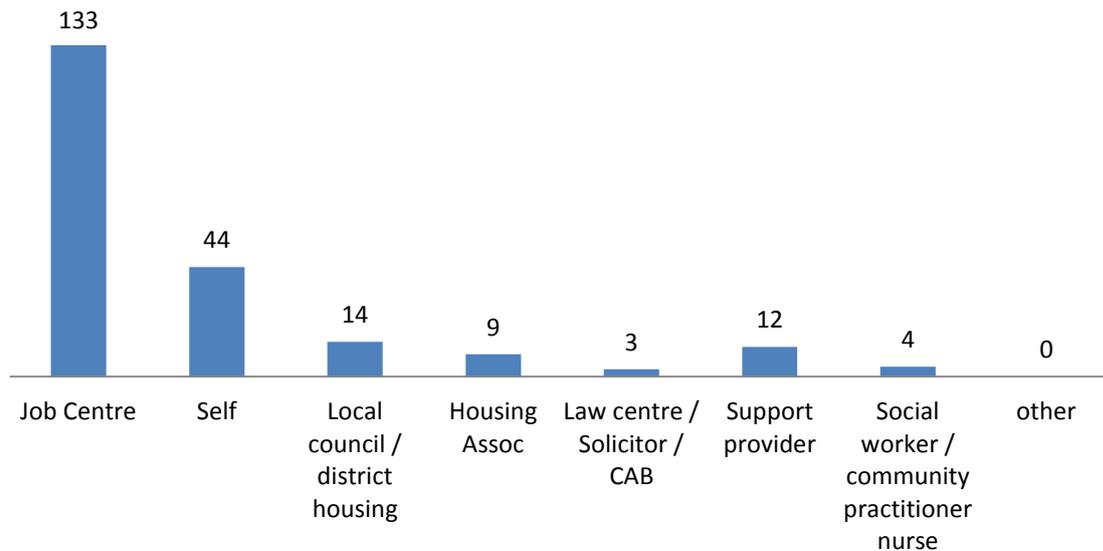
Appendix 1- Demand on LWA by district

Allerdale

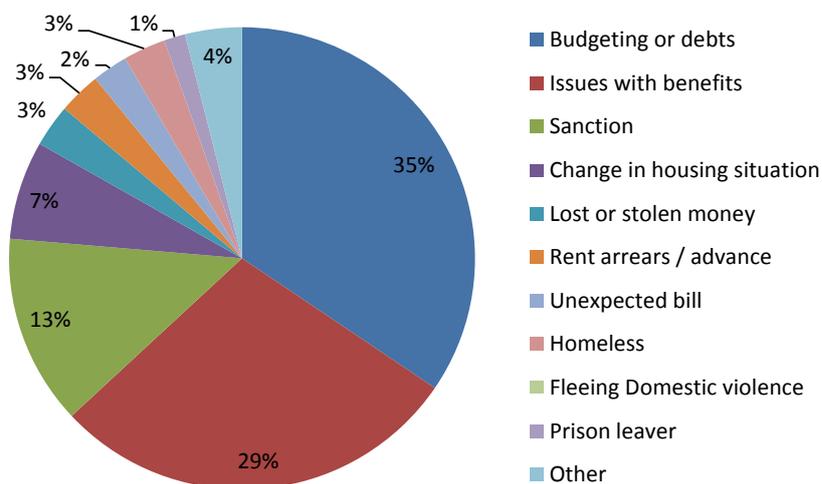
Allerdale Figure1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	2	16	39	28	8	2	2	97
Male	4	14	52	32	14	0	6	122
Total	6	30	91	60	22	2	8	219

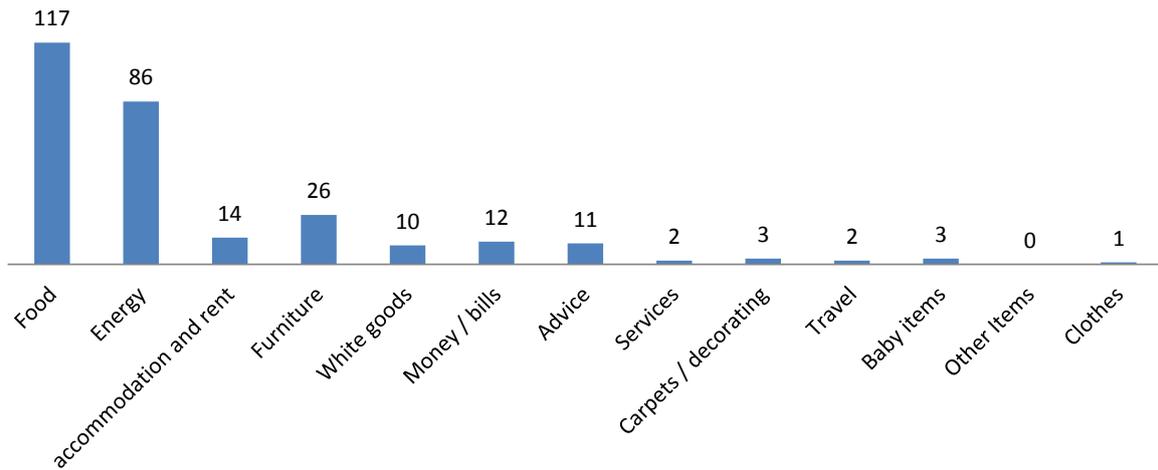
Allerdale Figure2 – Where was the customer referred from?



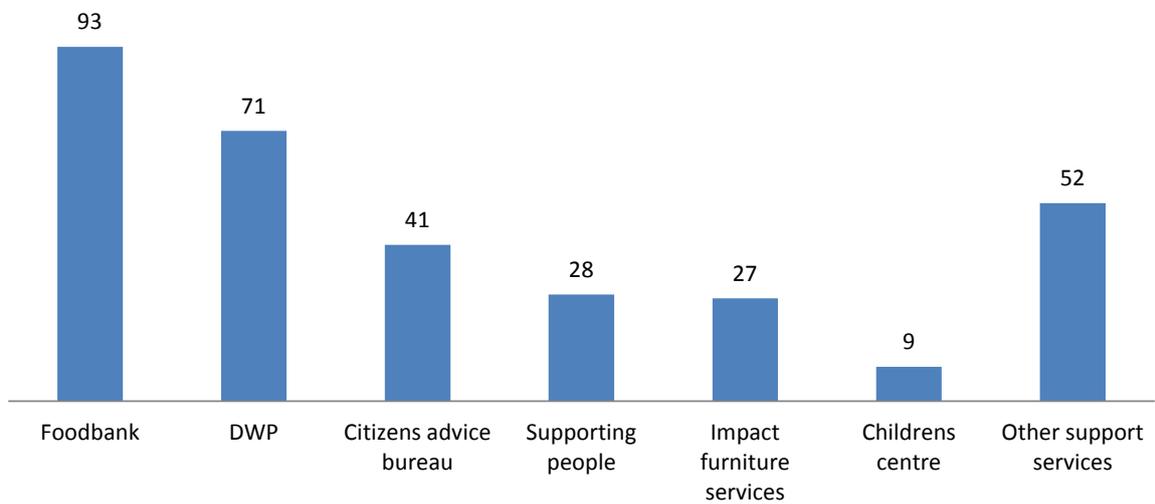
Allerdale Figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



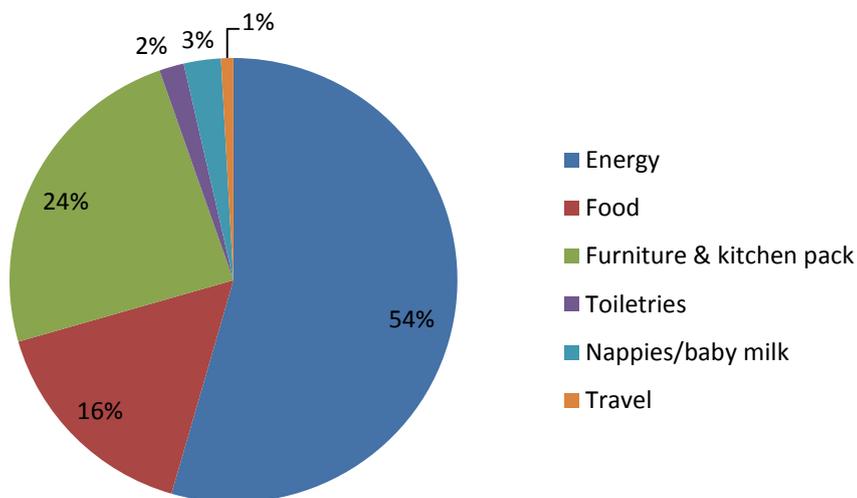
Allerdale Figure 4 – What did the customer need?



Allerdale Figure5 – where was the customer signposted to?



Allerdale Figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?

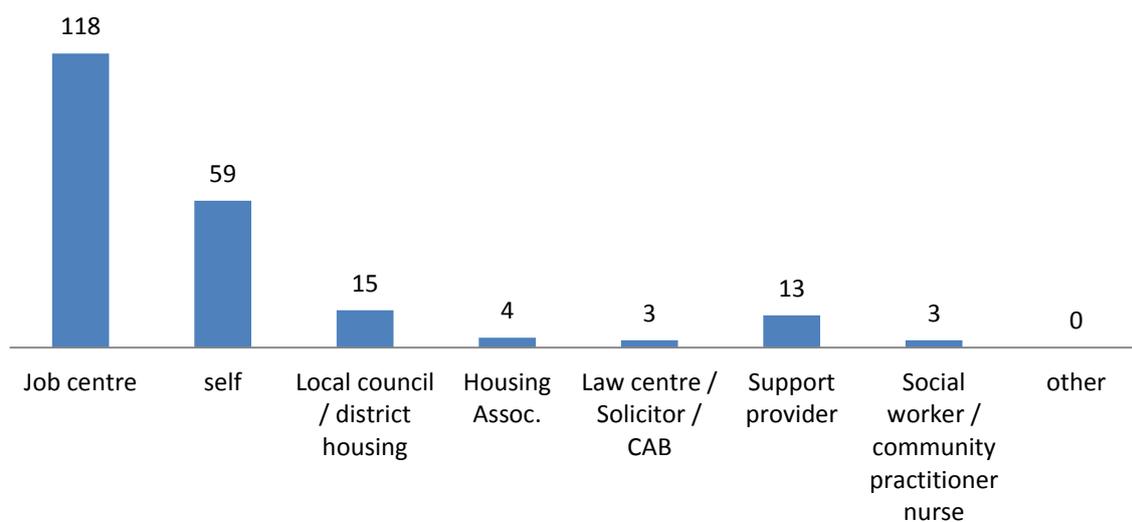


Barrow

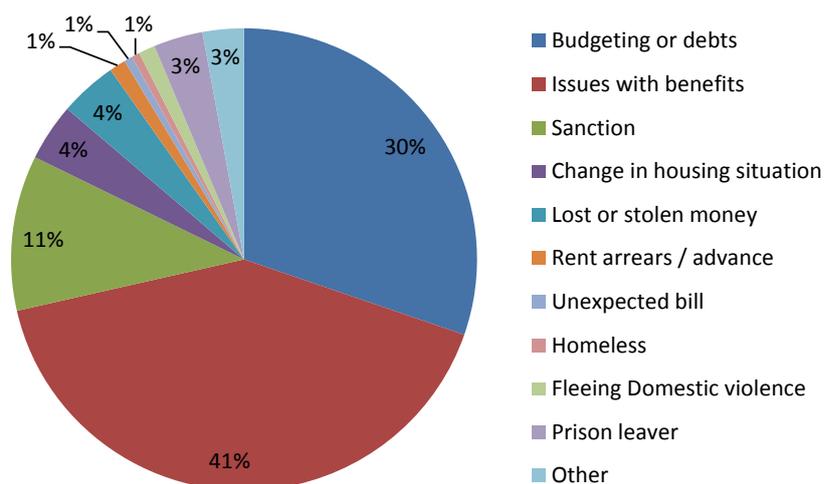
Barrow figure1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	3	22	39	29	4	0	3	100
Male	1	20	58	61	8	0	1	149
Total	4	42	97	90	12	0	4	249

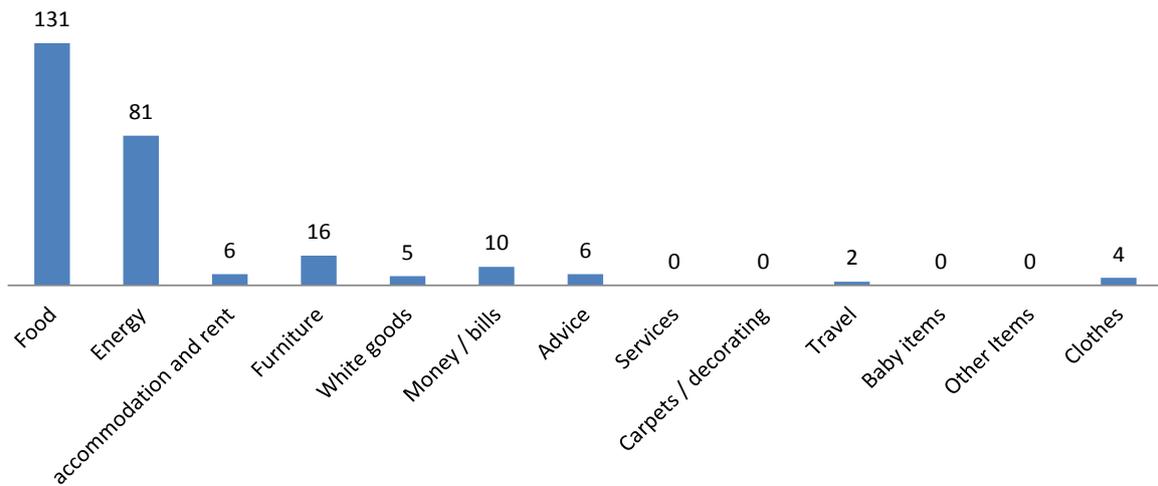
Barrow figure2 – Where was the customer referred from?



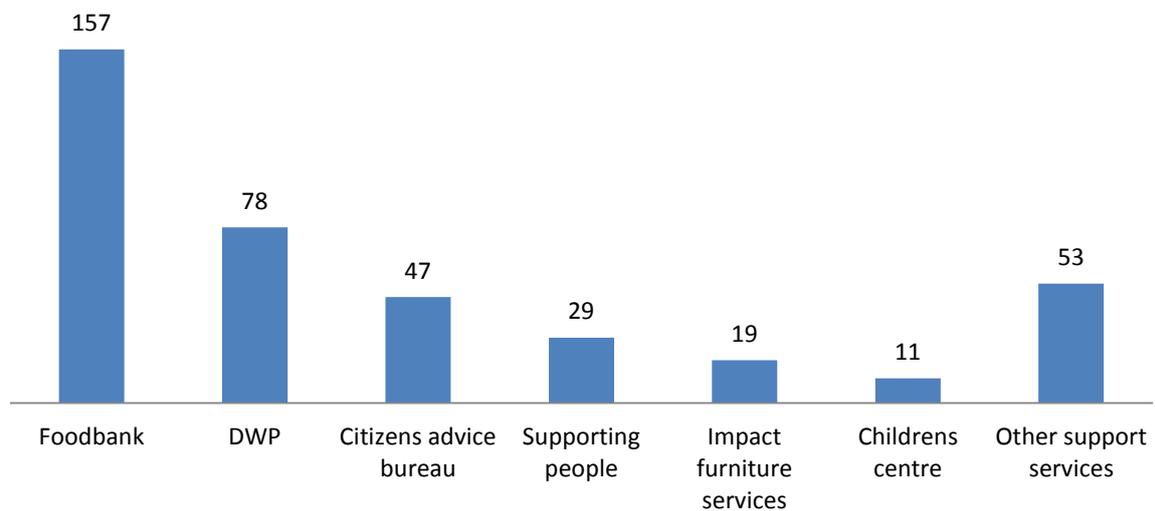
Barrow figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



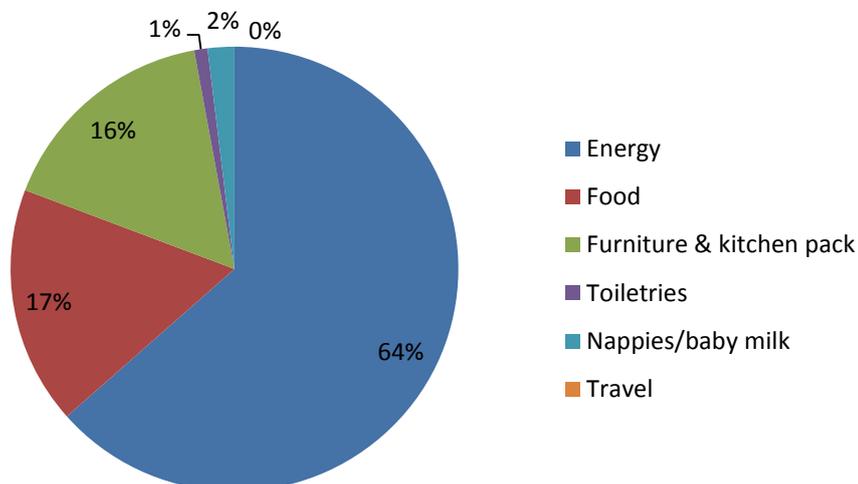
Barrow figure 4 – What did the customer need?



Barrow figure 5 – where was the customer signposted to?



Barrow figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?

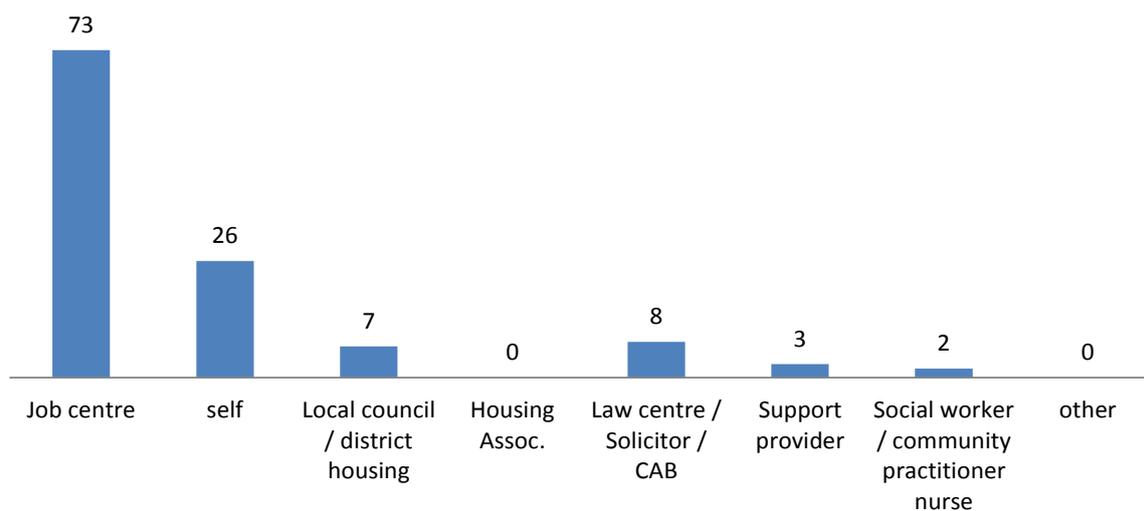


Copeland

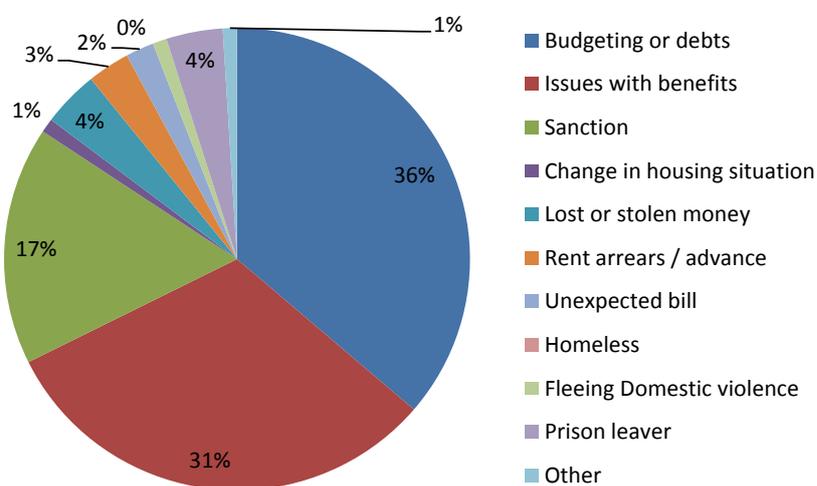
Copeland figure 1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	1	7	20	21	1	1	0	51
Male	1	11	23	23	8	1	1	68
Total	2	18	43	44	9	2	1	119

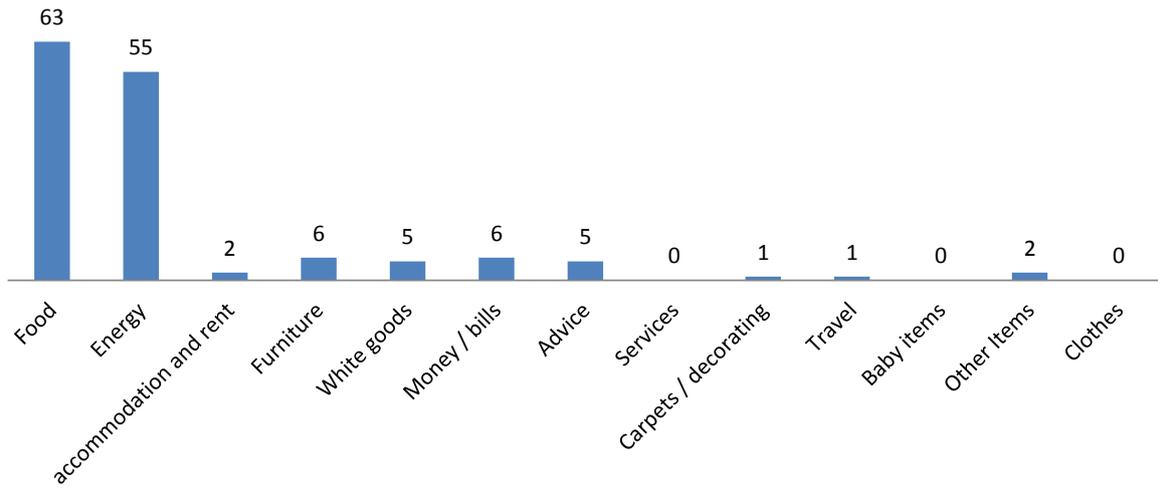
Copeland figure 2 – Where was the customer referred from?



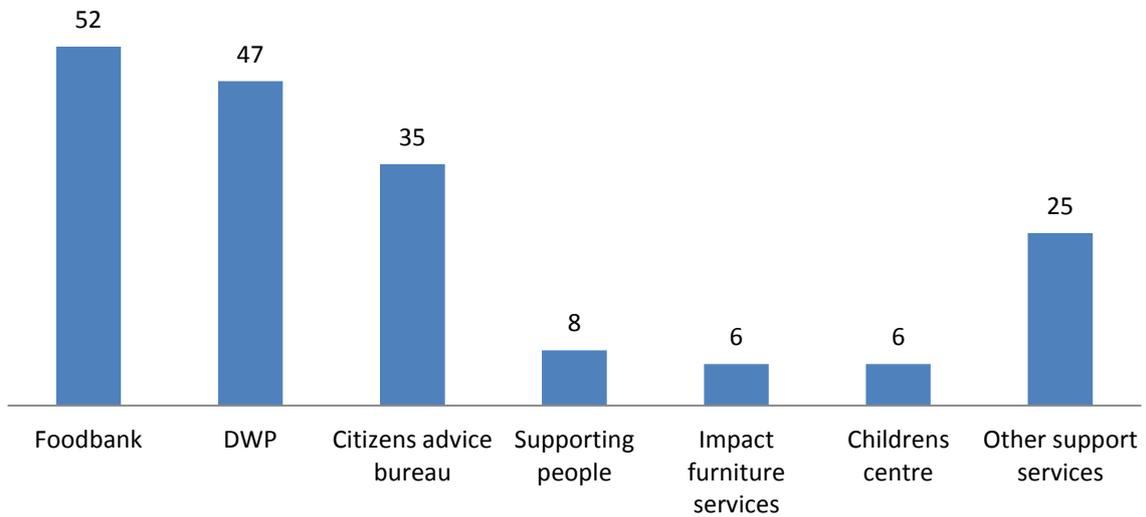
Copeland figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



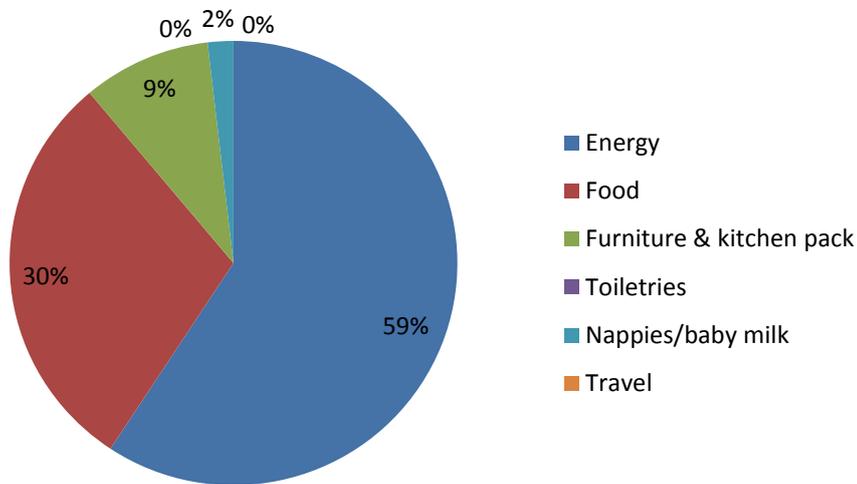
Copeland figure 4 – What did the customer need?



Copeland figure 5 – where was the customer signposted to?



Copeland figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?

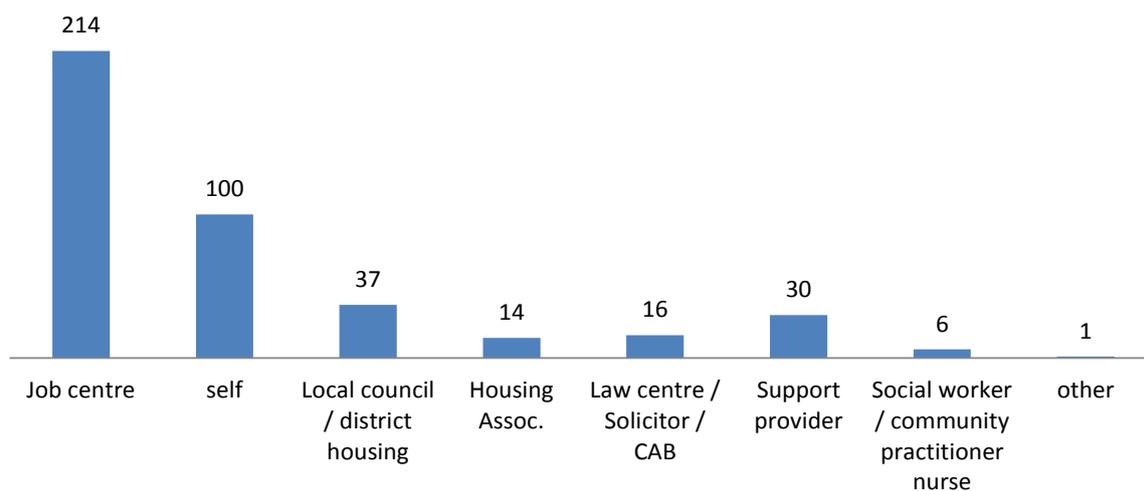


Carlisle

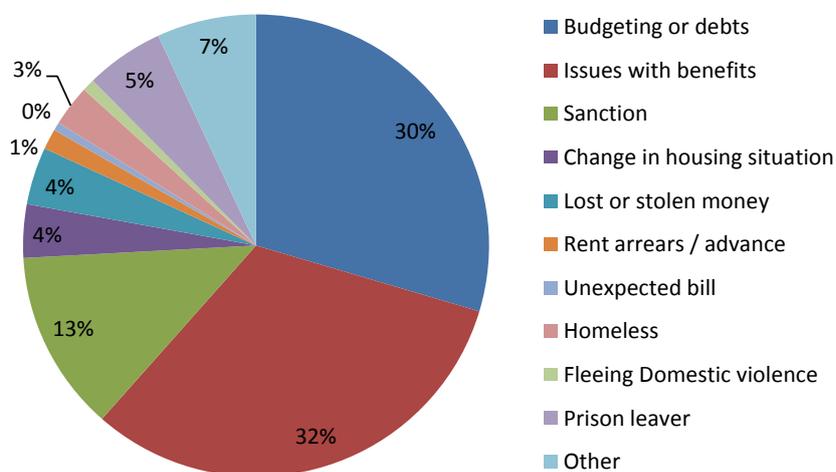
Carlisle figure 1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	4	45	74	52	14	1	5	195
Male	3	48	84	67	12	1	8	223
Total	7	93	158	119	26	2	13	418

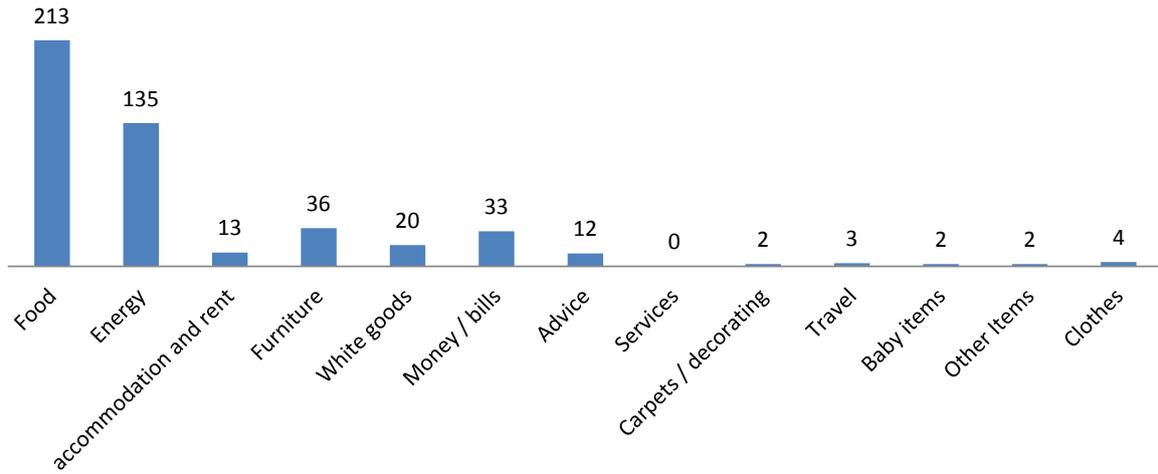
Carlislefigure2 – Where was the customer referred from?



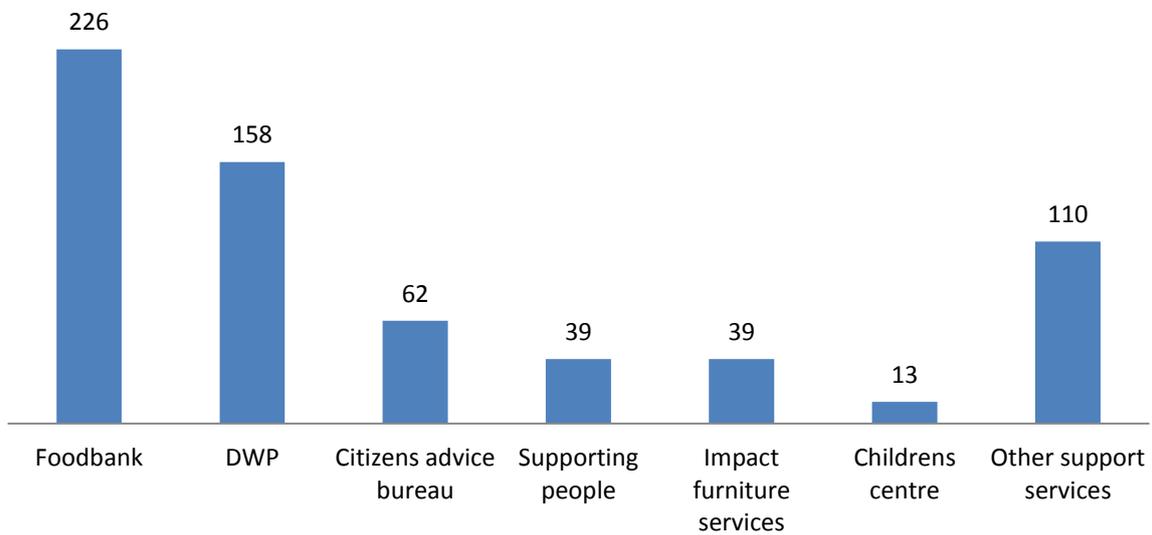
Carlisle figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



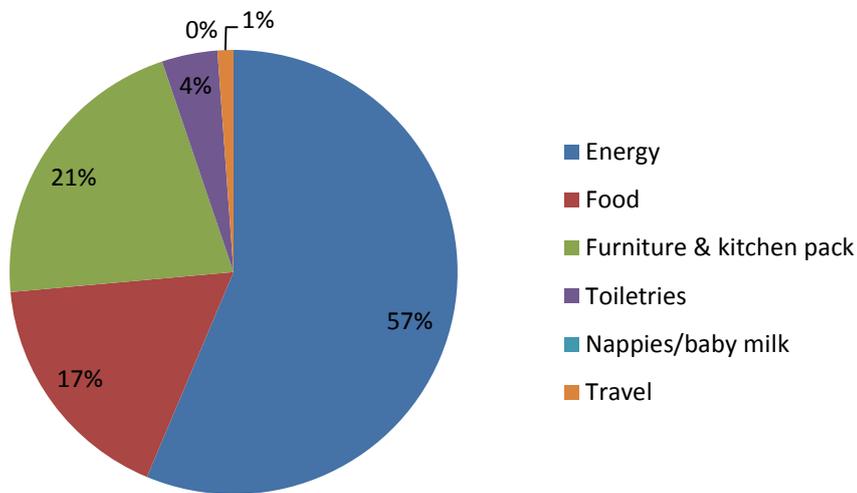
Carlisle figure 4 – What did the customer need?



Carlisle figure5 – Where was the customer signposted to?



Carlisle figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?

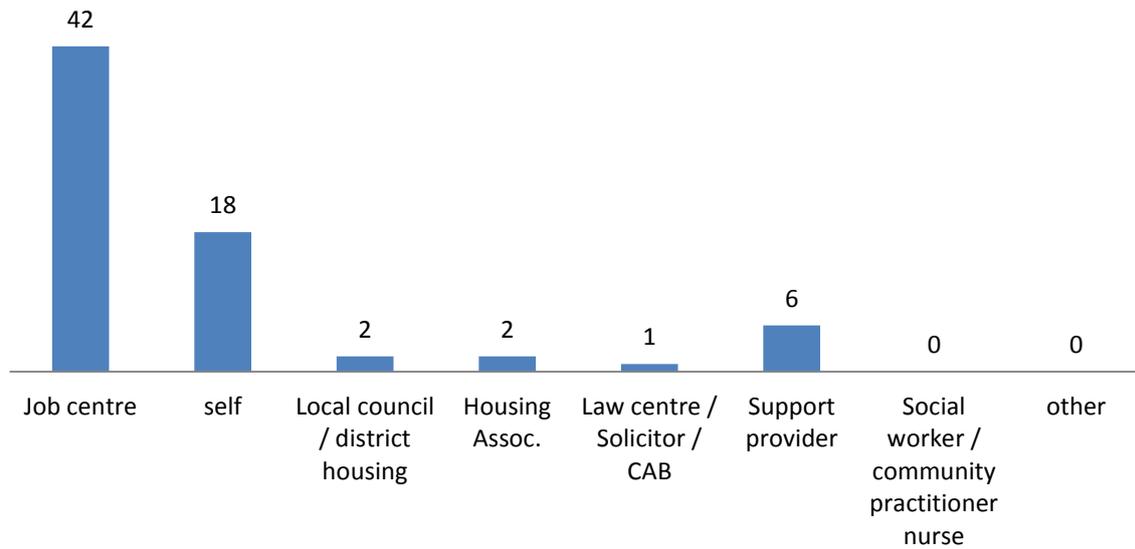


Eden

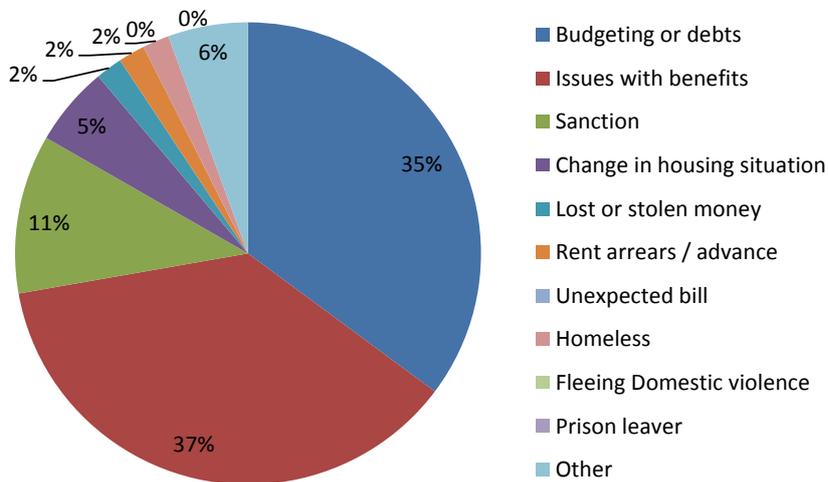
Eden figure 1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	1	6	9	12	1	0	1	30
Male	1	13	10	13	4	0	0	41
Total	2	19	23	25	5	0	1	71

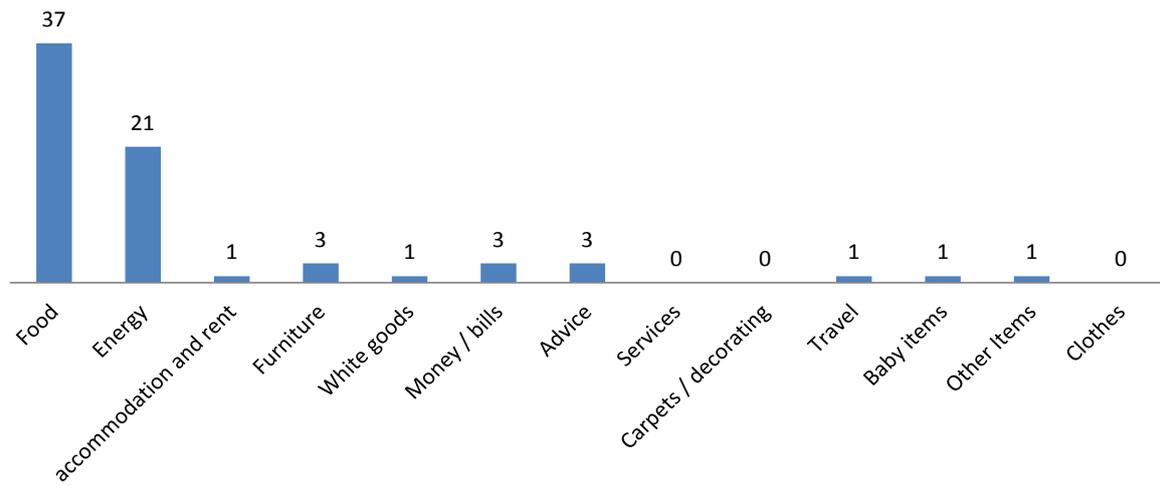
Edenfigure2 – Where was the customer referred from?



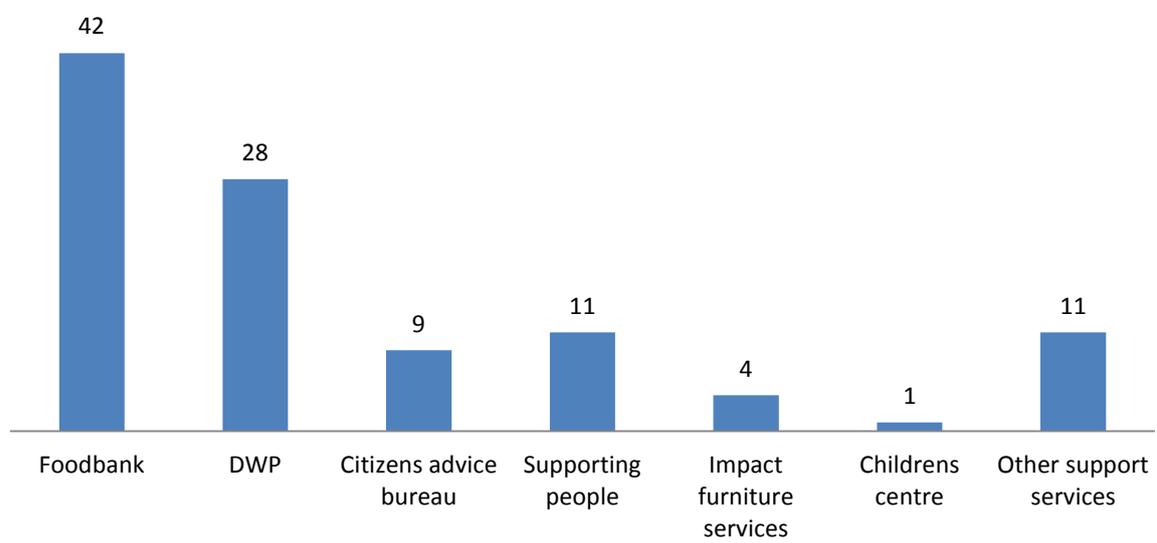
Eden figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



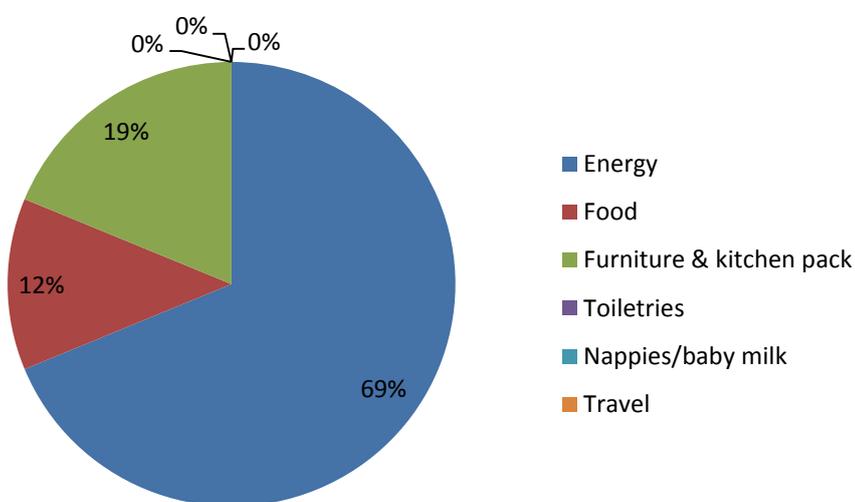
Eden figure 4 – What did the customer need?



Eden figure5 – Where was the customer signposted to?



Carlisle figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?

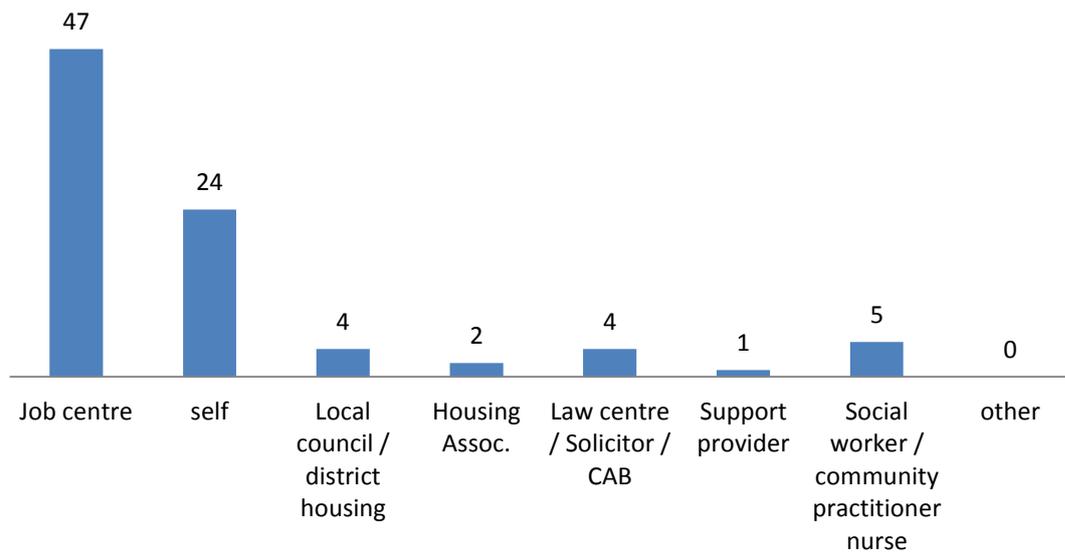


South Lakeland

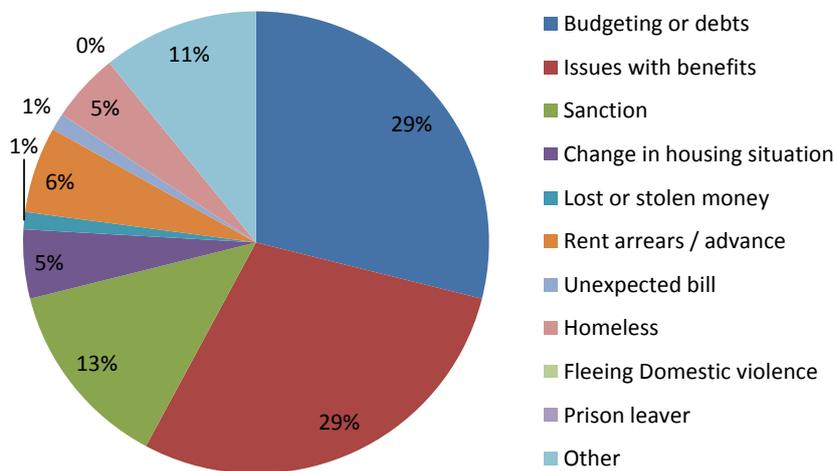
South Lakeland figure 1 – Age and gender breakdown of customers

	16-18	19-25	26-40	41-55	56-70	70+	Not recorded	Total
Female	0	4	22	15	2	1	1	45
Male	0	10	13	15	4	0	0	42
Total	0	14	35	30	6	1	1	87

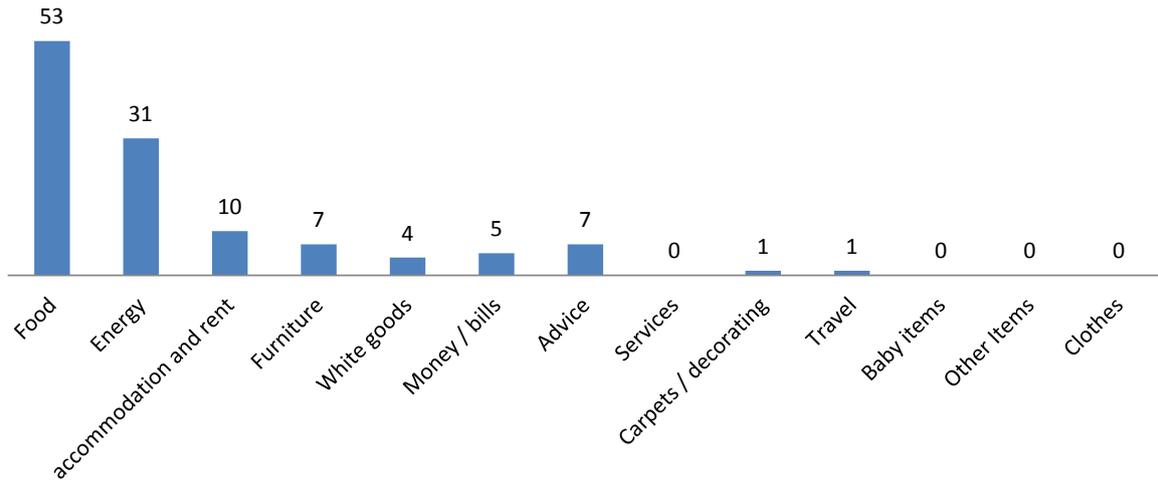
South Lakeland figure 2 – Where was the customer referred from?



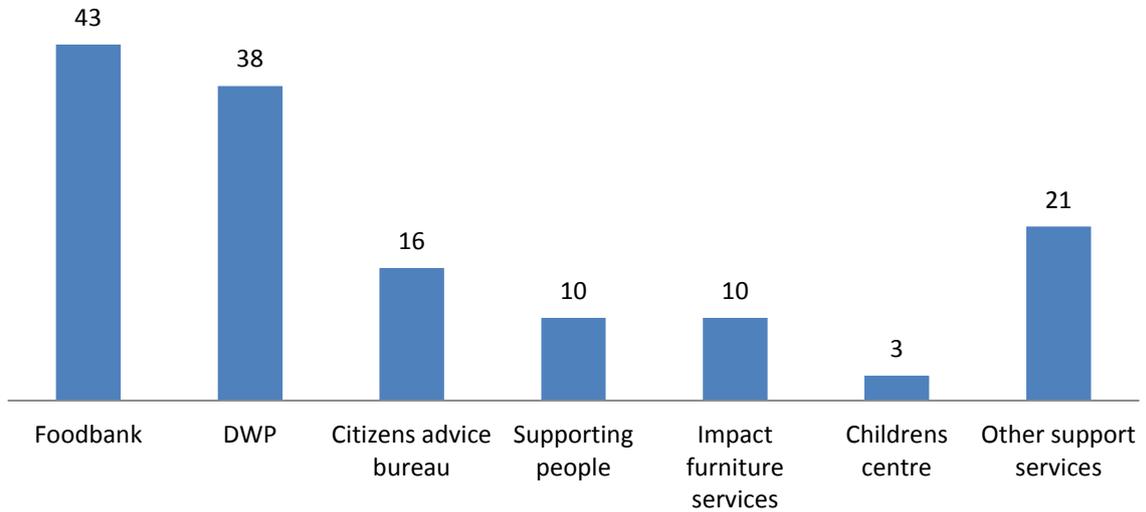
South Lakeland figure 3 – Reason for call to Community support team



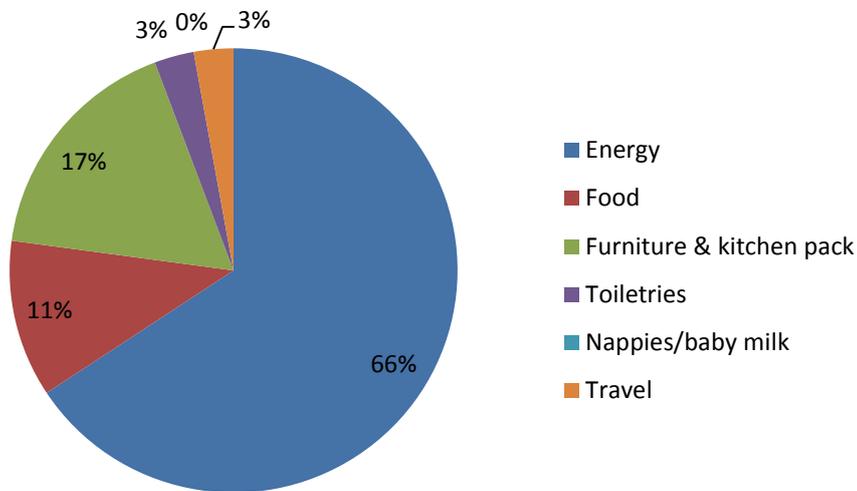
South Lakeland figure 4 – What did the customer need?



South Lakeland figure5 – Where was the customer signposted to?

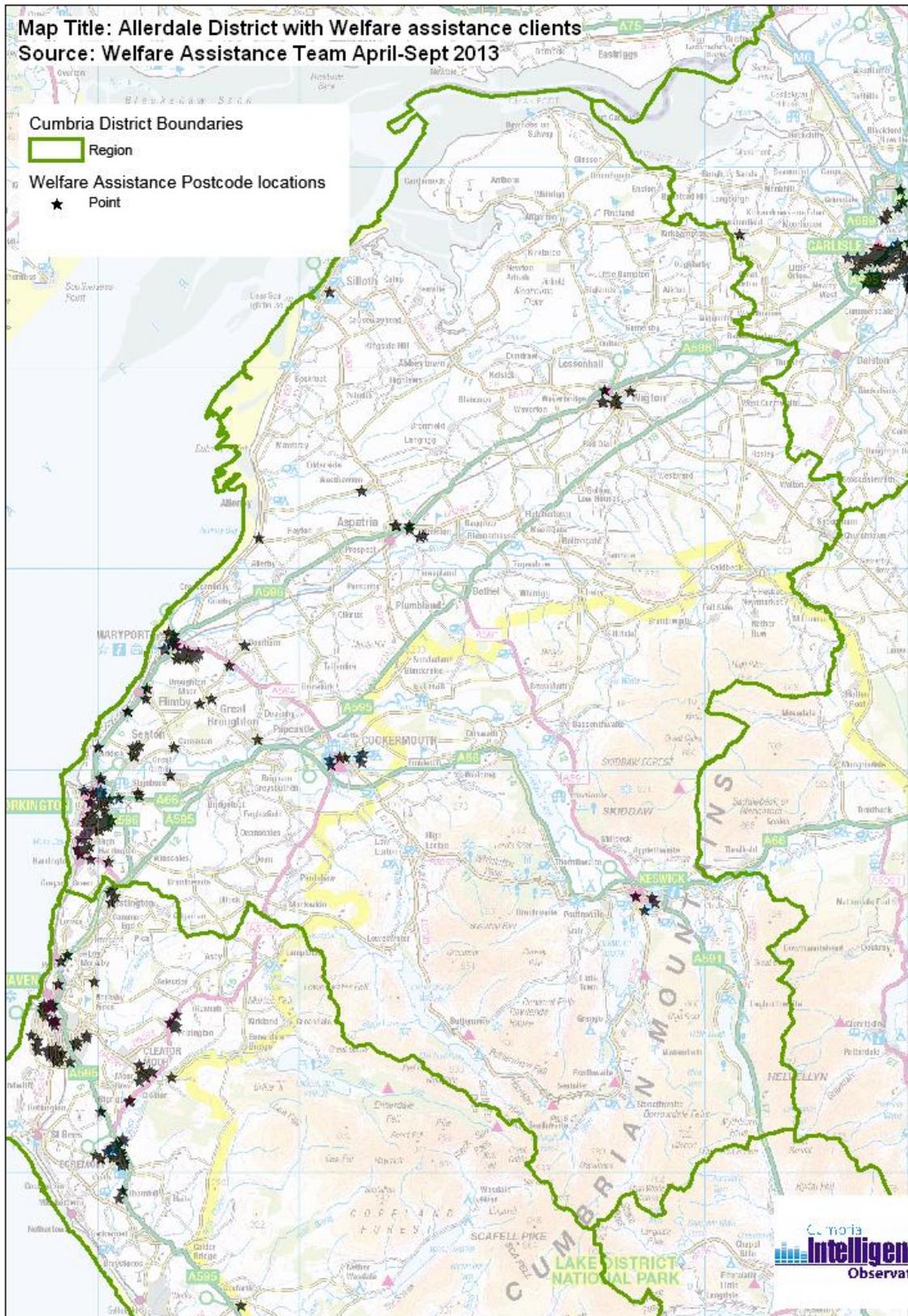


South figure6 – When financial assistance was granted, what was this for?



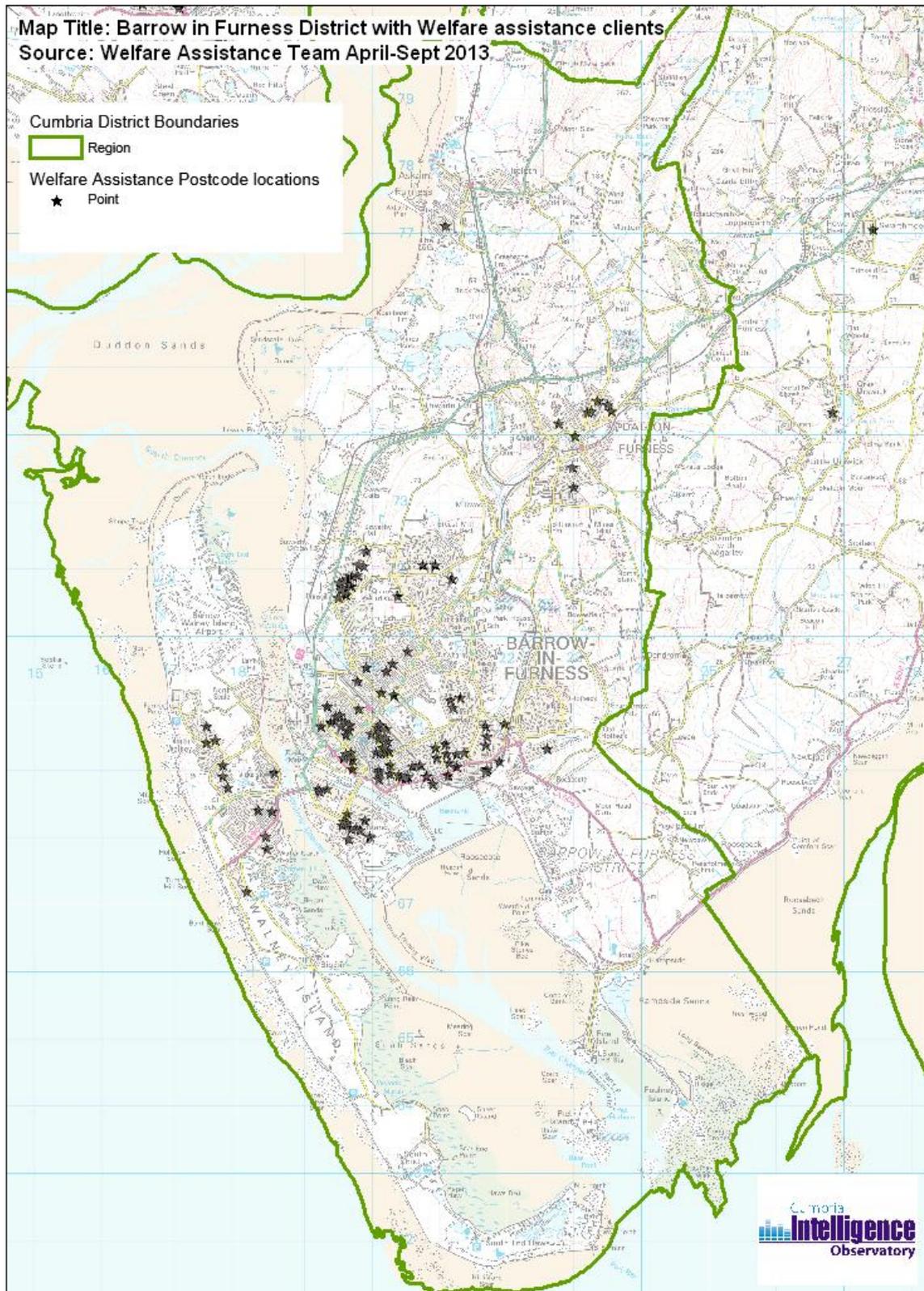
Appendix 2 – District maps of LWA demand

Allerdale

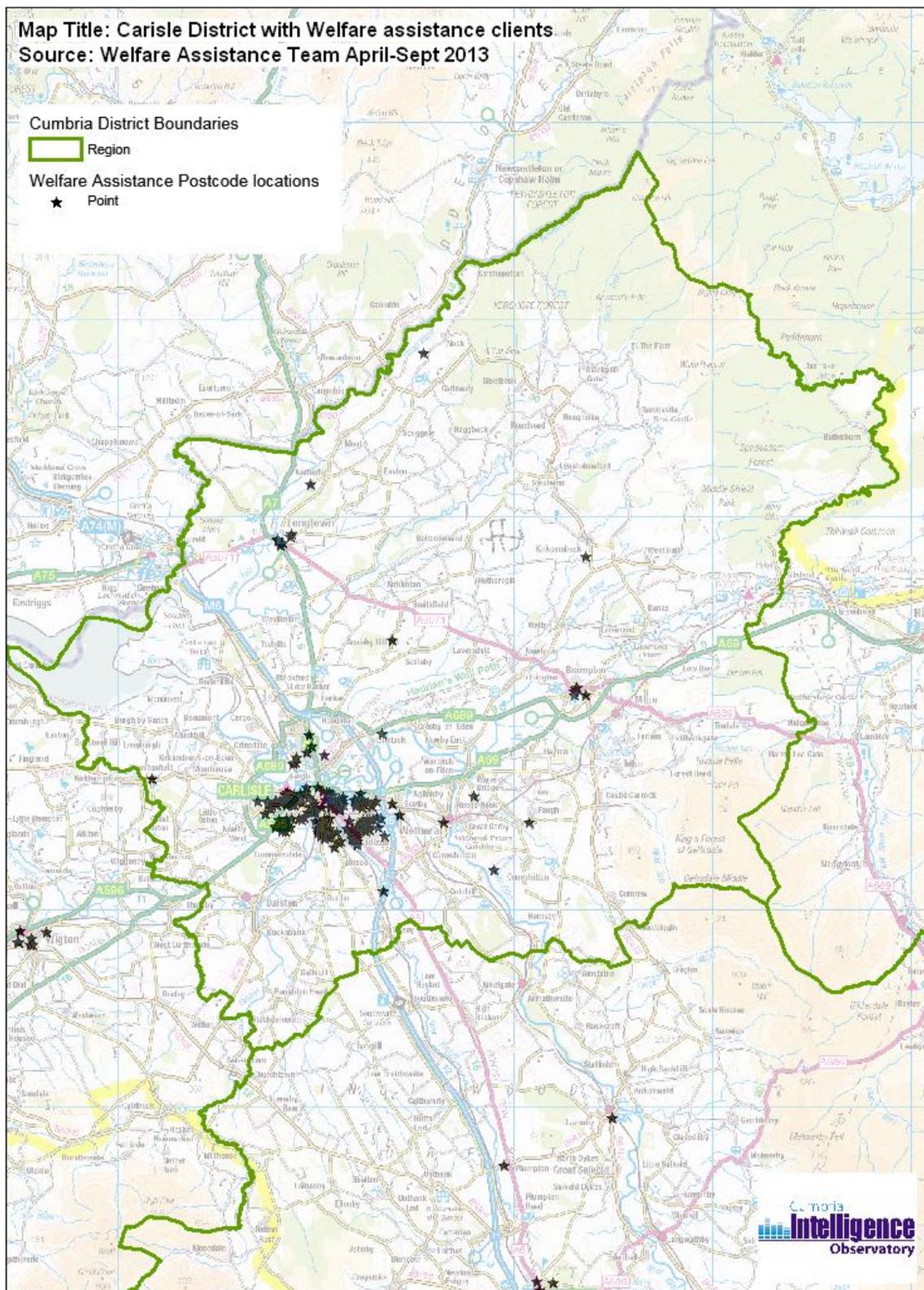


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Barrow

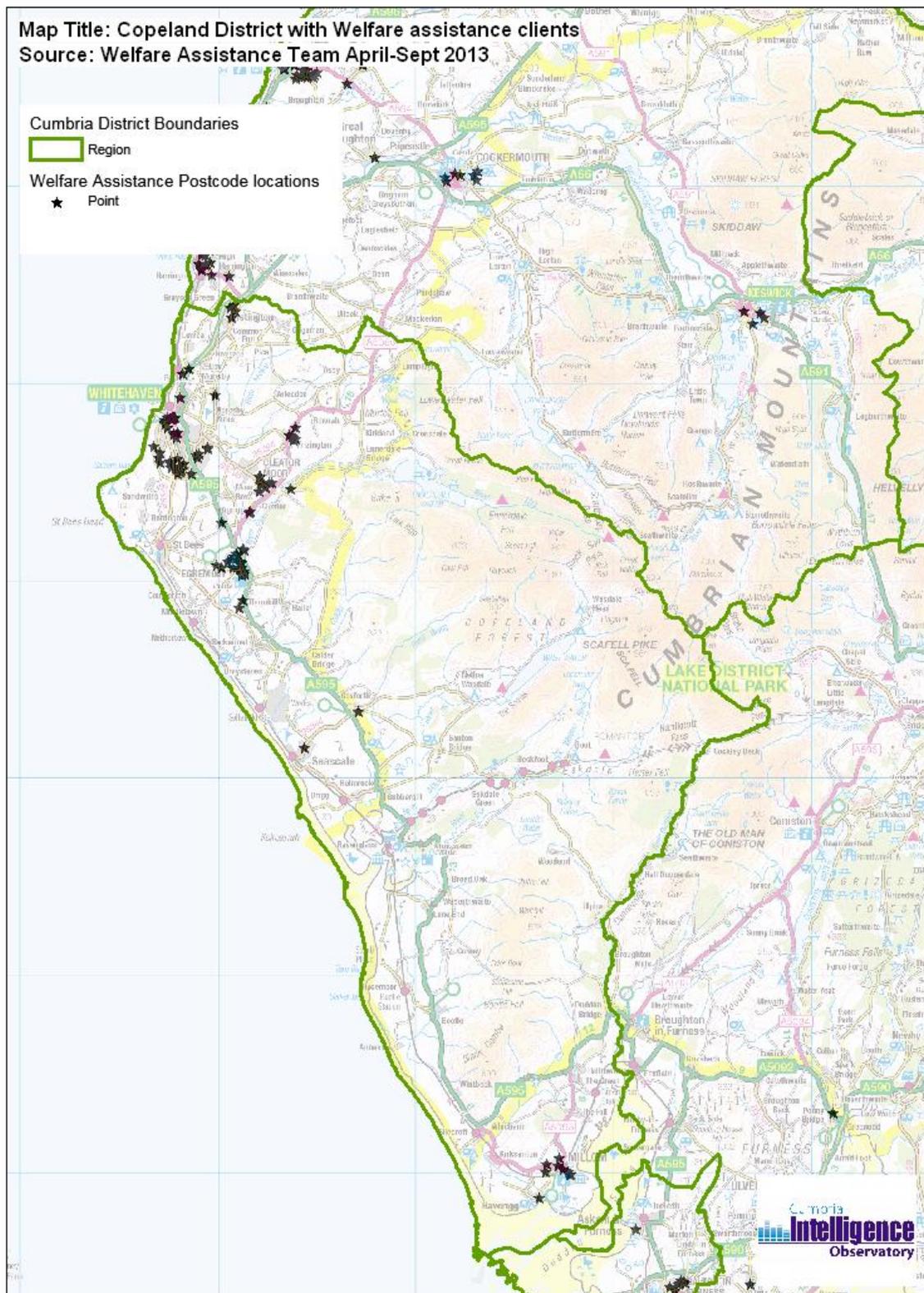


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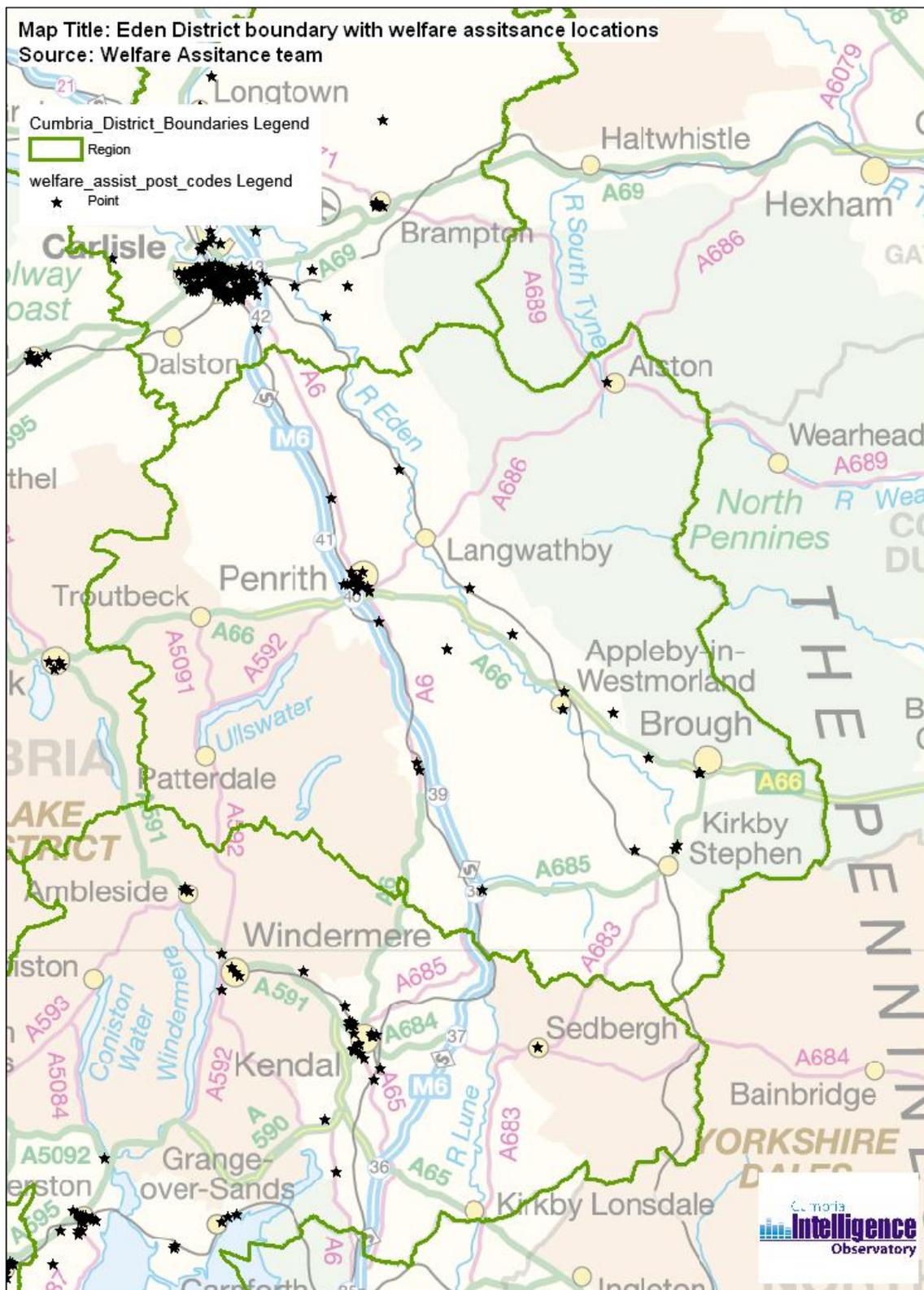
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Copeland



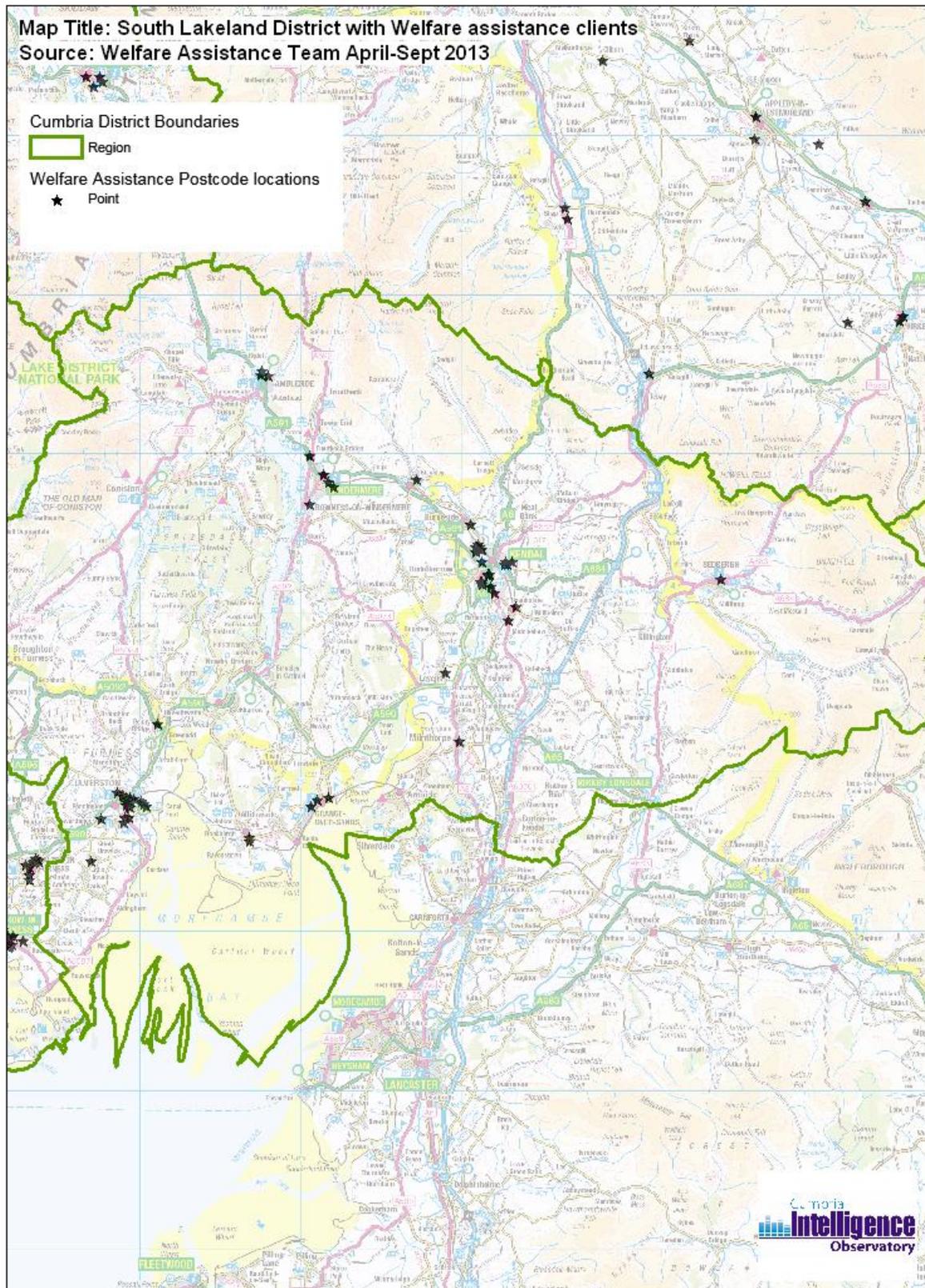
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Eden



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South Lakeland



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Appendix 3 - Customer satisfaction Research

Local Welfare Assistance Online Stakeholder Report

Background

- In April, crisis loans and community care grants ended as part of wider changes to working-age welfare and benefits.
- In their place, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is introducing short-term advances (for people moving between or onto benefits) and interest-free budgeting advances/loans (for people in receipt of benefits for six months who experience emergency and unforeseen expenses).
- Alongside these new benefits, the government provided some limited funding to unitary and county councils to help them develop other forms of support, based on local circumstances and need.

Cumbria County Council has developed a dedicated advice, support and information service to help people who find themselves in severe hardship or crisis. This service is delivered by a telephone based, advice team called "community support".

As part of a wider review an online survey was commissioned to seek views of those who work with and support those groups who may require assistance from Cumbria county Council's dedicated service. This was carried over November and early December 2013.

Over 700 stakeholders including key agencies were given the opportunity to complete the online consultation. Channels of communication included through the Cumbria Advice Network, Cumbria County Council – Adult Social Care and Children's Services supporting people providers.

In total there were 143 separate responses. Due to rounding some totals in tables and figures may add up to 99%/101%.

Is our approach right?

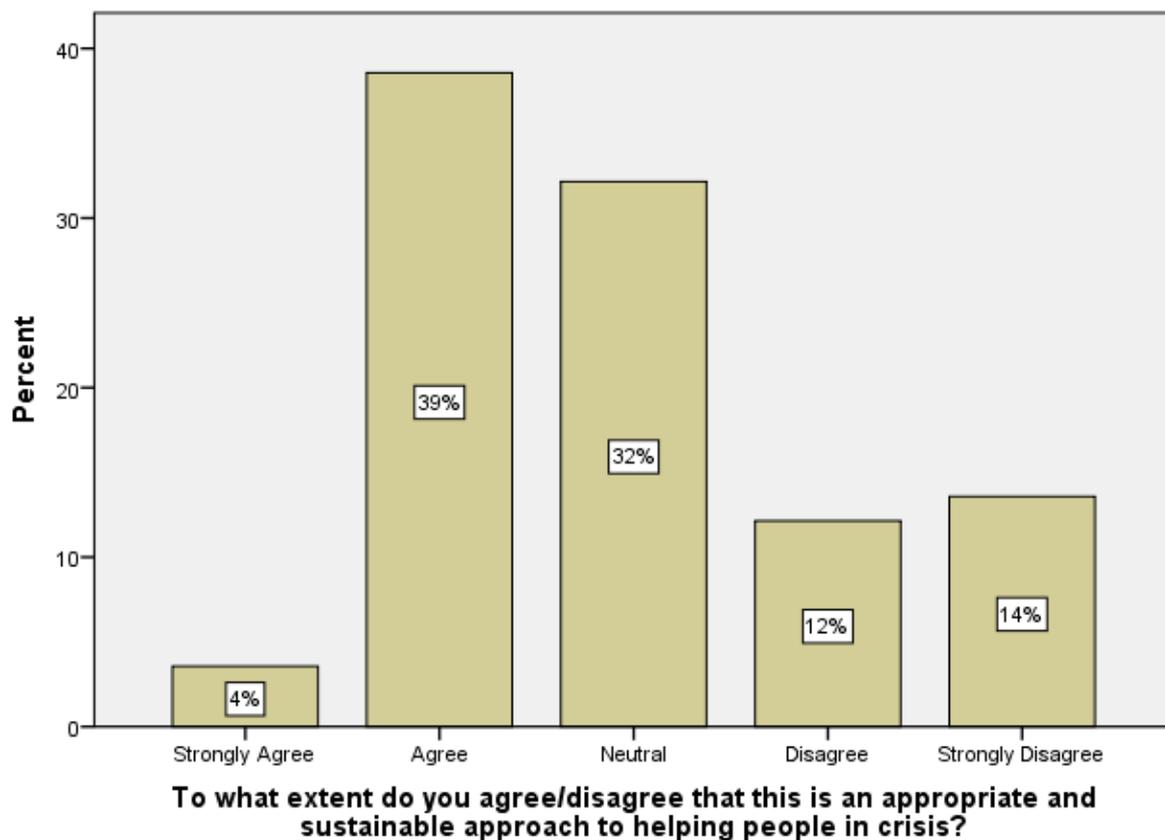
Respondents were asked if their understanding of the service matched our approach of having a dedicated social care worker who assesses the needs of the individual making the call and then determines the most appropriate support. Which would often be signposting to a community based support organisation, though other support such as provision of supplies and financial assistance may be offered.

Of the 140 who responded to this question 83% said yes this was their understanding and 17% said it was not.

20 of those who indicated this was not their understanding provided commentary as to why that was the case. Nine indicated they didn't know or simply were not aware of its existence and a further four stated they were not aware of the change from the DWP. Others indicated that they felt this was about more practical support and were not convinced signposting would achieve this, That there should be follow up following signposting to ensure individual needs had been met had they have not been left in crisis and felt this could act as a barrier to support provision.

As can be seen from figure 1 significantly more respondents indicated they strongly agreed/agreed (43%) that the current approach is appropriate and sustainable, compared to those disagreed/strongly disagreed (26%).

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree/disagree that our approach is appropriate and sustainable (base=140)



Those who disagreed that the current approach was appropriate were asked what they would like to be offered over the next 18 months (see table 1). There was some concern that the 'Ways to Welfare' leaflet and the title itself reinforces prejudices and stigmatises access to the services. A number commented although they do not actually disagree with the county council's approach they feel the decision to change this provision from the DWP should be reversed. A

number would like to see improved access and the service to become more visible. There was some support that the service should be part of a wider holistic support approach that would see services working together to support the client longer term. A number of people recognised the difficulty of providing the service with a background of government cuts. Some felt that the county council should be able to provide actual practical support including provision of money in addition to signposting. There was also concern whether Third Sector organisations could cope with the referrals. There was also a comment that referred to the need for improved access at the weekends.

Table 1: Commentary on what respondents who disagreed with the CCC approach felt should be offered over the next 18 months

Commentary
One that is more accessible and more user friendly. This one sounds like finding a way not to give people who need the support they need, or at least making it difficult to access. These people often struggle to access help as it is, making it harder may have a very negative impact upon vulnerable groups.
Practical assistance to those in need not just signposting to third sector organisations who are already struggling with capacity, without taking on additional referrals from people who used to be supported by statutory provision
People may feel stigmatised by going to Social care and feel that they are not coping within the family and do not want their children taken from them, so an agency away from social care should be managing financial support for families.
disagree that a remote telephone service is appropriate
People do need a level of assistance that no qualified social care worker are not always able to see the complexity of their situation
When there are massive cuts in spending on welfare, no service will work for everyone. You would need to collect evidence to demonstrate that any service is truly effective and does what it says it is supposed to do, rather than being a cynical exercise in spin.
Government U-turn on this policy. Otherwise an even less cost process to council. Potential yearly funding for alternative provider to undertake current role.
funding for furnishing new/1st homes
I think any service would struggle to provide an appropriate and sustainable approach to welfare given the current government policies. The issue of deprivation is complex and one service will not be able to deliver sustained change.
something similar to the system that was in place previously, but with information about local services as well
Less reliance on charity / voluntary support. Clearer guidelines for the public & more availability at weekends as there was via DWP.
Improved access to cash payments or loans available in each district in Cumbria
A much more reactive service offering real support to access the help required. The clue is in the word crisis. People in crisis are normally at the end of their tether and not able to deal with just being signposted to what/where someone at the end of the phone thinks is appropriate!
access to crisis loans and CCG as well as signposting to resources if available in the local community
I do not disagree with the steps Cumbria County Council has taken; I disagree strongly with the changes to Crisis Loan payments

A more sustainable service would offer service users and longer term support not just sign posted to organisations that they do not use
Sign posting must be a key but not the only component. At some point a fund to provide financial support must be accessible as the best, short term intervention to a crisis.
The service needs to be more visible to service users - currently there seems to be little guidance about what they might be able to access, it is a 'ring up and see what they offer' situation. I am also not aware of anyone actually being offered financial assistance directly, my only experience has been of people being signposted to organisations who can use their own money, if available, not the council fund.
I believe it is a good idea only if there are the organisations to refer to, but currently there is extreme pressure on food banks etc and therefore not always the help people require. It can also have a stigma attached which for some families may lead to a deterioration in their health and mood due to feeling low from having to access resources this way.
Same as was before Social Care unlimited time per each client
I feel more support should be available for people in crisis and this should not be by charities eg Food bank. It should be statutory that we help people in crisis.
People need more intensive one to one support rather than being passed on to charities. Councils should not pass on the responsibility, they have a responsibility to their citizens.
improved access to people delivering the service, greater understanding of the needs of the clients, financial support to meet the needs created or exacerbated by delays and changes to the benefits system, especially following the introduction of mandatory reviews
I think it's difficult to provide systems regarding welfare as there are so many variables to what is need? Do we use set of criteria to identify needs and signposting?
I find the leaflet about 'Ways to Welfare' an insult to people who are already financially struggling. I feel a system similar to DWP crisis fund should be offered. Cumbria is giving far less material assistance than other authorities
I feel more support should be available for people in crisis and this should not be by charities eg Food bank. It should be statutory that we help people in crisis.
Sometimes there is no resource to signpost to and when [rarely] cash is required there's no resource at all.
improved access to people delivering the service, greater understanding of the needs of the clients, financial support to meet the needs created or exacerbated by delays and changes to the benefits system, especially following the introduction of mandatory reviews
I don't believe that the current service offers real help to those in crisis. A referral to a foodbank or posting out an ASDA card doesn't always help if the person has difficulty accessing these services
Due to welfare reform and in particular, new appeal procedures, the current format of welfare assistance is too restrictive -(a limit on financial help)each case should be treated on it's own individual need
Calling it "Ways to Welfare" is demeaning and reinforces prejudices against people receiving benefits to which they are entitled - hence the high level of under claiming. How about it being called "Getting Things Straight" or some term that emphasises how the help is designed to enable people to become more self-reliant?
re-instatement of crisis loans

Stakeholder experiences with Ways to Welfare

A total of 88 respondents indicated that they offered a service that would assist people in a crisis. There was a large range of support offered by those who completed the questionnaire including: In-house ASC provision, Financial/debt advice services, mental health, information/signposting services, CAB,

foodbank/other food support services, various children services support, credit unions, various day services, alcohol misuse, probation services, community based support and trade unions.

57 respondents said they had signposted people to Ways to Welfare/Community support, of those the majority felt (65%) felt the person has been supported, although a significant minority (35%) felt that had not.

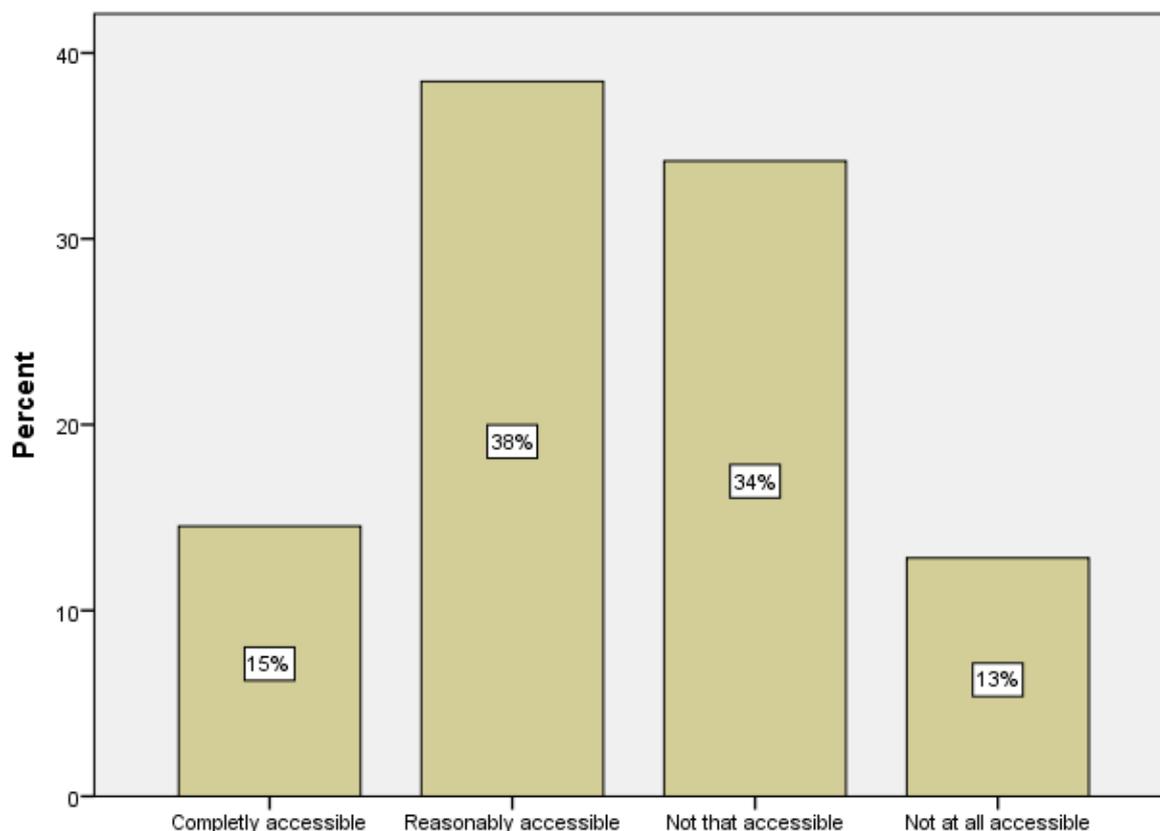
Those who felt the individual had not been helped were asked why they felt this. The most common issue raised was the quality of the telephone contact with the community support team. Issues raised included that it could be difficult to make contact with calls not being answered and on occasions it was felt that those requesting help were not always treated with respect. Examples given of people being challenged of their genuine need and an individual being told they should be grateful for what they get. A respondent acknowledged although the level of support for clients they referred was mixed they had noticed a definite improvement recently with telephones being answered more frequently and better quality in signposting. Some respondents felt that often practical support required (including financial) often isn't available and they find clients they referred are signposted back to their organisations. It was acknowledged that IFS support was generally good though there was one example where support with furniture was refused. There were a number of comments stating there was no follow up with them so unsure whether the client referred was supported or not. There was also some commentary on the quality of signposting with people being told to go to charity shops rather than being offered support.

Respondents were asked how accessible they found the service (see figure 2). 53% felt the service was accessible to some degree whilst 47% found that it wasn't accessible. 77% of those who felt their client was supported described the service as being accessible compare to 24% for those who did not.

Respondents were also asked how their service could be made more accessible, the principle suggestions include:

- Have out of hours/weekend service
- Ensure there are sufficient staff to answer the telephone and maybe provide a Freephone number
- Improve advertising of the service, fliers sent out to internal/external teams and organisations. Go out and meet teams/organisations to explain the service, ensure key contact areas such as the civic centre are aware of the service and have the telephone number
- Improvements to the website
- Noted that young people have had difficulty accessing the service so more information directed to this demographic
- Allow professionals/advocates to speak/apply on behalf of the client, as some have difficulty doing this

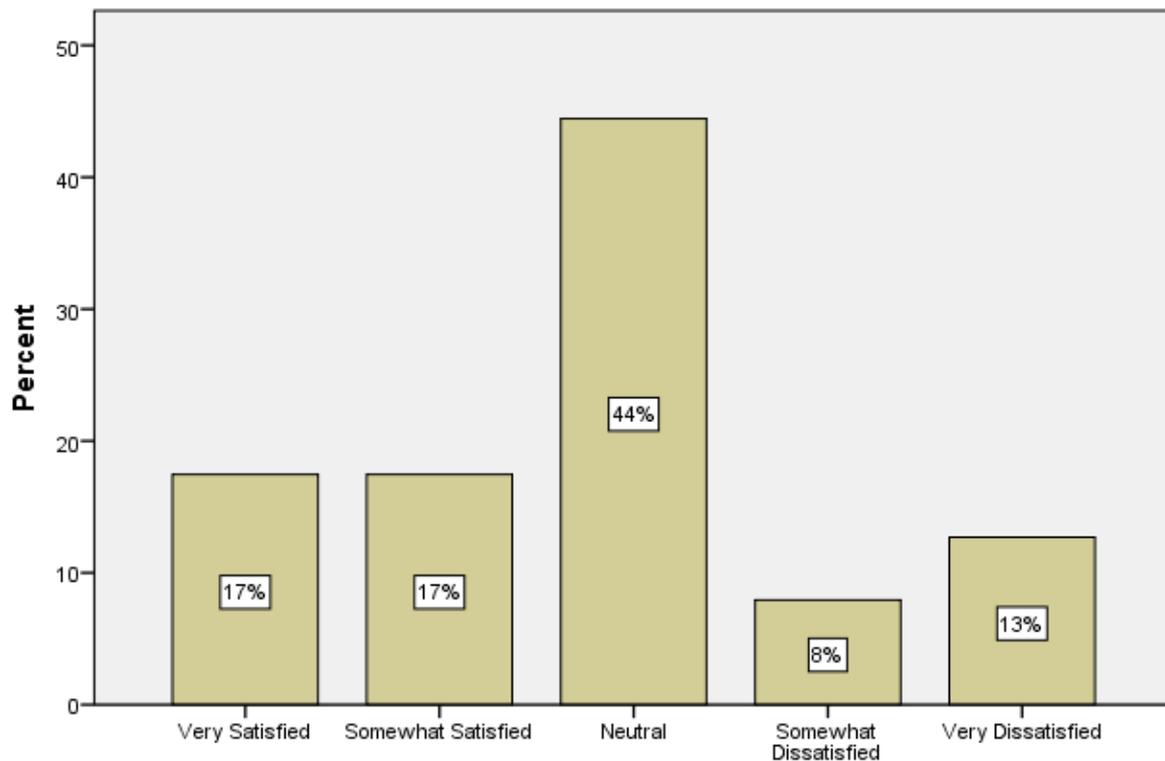
Figure 2: How accessible respondents found the service (base=117)



As can be seen from figure 3 34% indicated they were satisfied with the Community Support team's response to their client with 21% indicating they were dissatisfied, 44% indicated they were neither satisfied or dissatisfied. 52% of those who stated they felt the current approach was appropriate and sustainable also stated they were satisfied with the response of the community support team compared to 21% who did not feel it was the right approach.

Respondents were asked for further comments on the response from the Community Support team. These included statements expressing they had had a positive experience with the team, also described as being polite and supportive. Others raised issues around the consistency of the service and support available is restricted and does not always meet people's needs. Also issues of support can often be delayed and on occasions support needs to be in place immediately.

Figure 3: How satisfied respondents were with the Community Support team's response to their client (base=63)

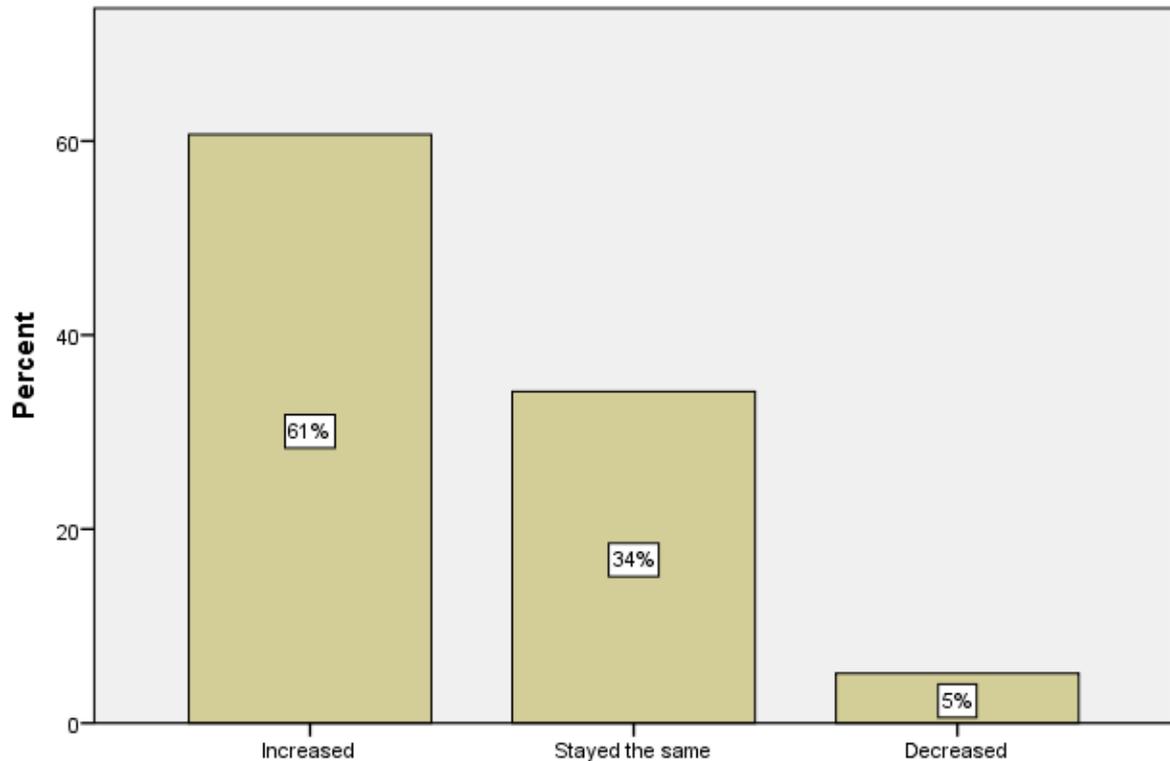


Impact of Welfare Reform Act

It was indicated by respondents that the Welfare Reform Act had impacted on specific groups in a number of different ways, all of which negatively. These included a high number of JSA Sanctions decisions being appealed. A significant increase in the number of food bank referrals/vouchers and high level of concern at the sustainability of food banks and third sector organisations to continue to support the increasing number of referrals. Concern that mental health patients have been put through more stress which has impacted on their health. Also concern that reduced support has led to increased crime. A number of comments indicating that those with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the changes. Other groups adversely affected included single adults and the elderly. A high number of comments relating to the impact of the 'bedroom tax' leaving people worse off and in greater need of support.

Figure 4 shows that 61% feel that demand for their services has increased since April 2013 with only 5% stating it had decreased. Respondents were mostly unable to give figures about level of increase as they do not record that data. However those who did, quoted increases ranging from 25% to 3 times the level of previous referrals. Also commentary that cases are also becoming more complex.

Figure 4: Increase/Decrease in demand for services since April 2013 (base=117)



Respondents were asked which areas of the service they felt should be further developed, 62 respondents providing the following suggestions:

- More support for those starting a new tenancy/setting up home grants
- Money to be available in crisis
- Support with emotional needs
- Face to face contact where appropriate, telephone service may not be appropriate for some groups such as the elderly, those with hearing impairments and those with mental health issues
- More accommodation/hostel services/spaces
- Access to white goods and carpeting
- More financial advice including universal credit
- Affordable warmth
- Broaden participating retailers in relation to food especially in rural areas
- Credit union in South Lakes
- Gap in Kendal and Ulverston as no CAB
- Timescales to reduce for those working with CAP to get accommodation
- Build closer ties with unions as they have good support services
- Reintroduce a system formerly known as DESK where people can talk about their concerns
- More support for young mums in setting a home
- Provide people with opportunities to contribute such as volunteering

- More support for those who are leaving prison
- Improved opening hours for foodbanks
- Professionals to work together to support people
- Support organisations to work closely together to support people
- More social support to reduce isolation
- Planned drop-ins such as GP surgeries, children centres
- Improved website with better signposting
- Access respite care
- More family support services/advice
- Linking up with Cumbria Advice Network

Key messages

Continue to improve the telephone service in terms of: Answering calls promptly and treating callers with respect.

Increase visibility/awareness of service through information placed at key locations with high footfall such as GP surgeries and the Civic centre. Work with professionals and organisations to increase awareness, improve website

Consider have advice/support options available outside normal office hours

Consider linking up support services to provide more holistic support to client to help avoid future crisis

Financial/debt support advice appears to be critical and consider increasing availability of crisis loans for some groups

Support with housing also critical

Consider developing different ways in which some groups can contact/communicate with the support team

Develop follow up support/contact to ensure needs have been met

Appendix 4 - Stakeholder Satisfaction report

User Satisfaction Research

Report of Findings Prepared for:



By DJS Research Ltd

December 2013

Your contacts

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Coverage

- 1 Background & Methodology
- 2 Overall Views
- 3 Leading up to the Call...
- 4 Expectations vs. Experience...
- 5 Following the Call...
- 6 Conclusions & Recommendations
- 7 Appendix





Background & Methodology



Background

Context

- Following changes to working-age welfare and benefits the Department for Work and Pensions is introducing short-term advances and interest-free budgeting advances/loans.
- Alongside these new benefits, the government provided some limited funding to unitary and county councils to help them develop other forms of support, based on local circumstances and need.
- Cumbria County Council has developed a dedicated advice, support and information service to help people who find themselves in severe hardship or crisis. This service is delivered by a telephone based, advice team called “community support”.

Requirement

- Research was needed in order to establish user satisfaction with this service. Specific objectives included:
 - ✓ To investigate customers expectation around the service.
 - ✓ To ascertain the extent to which the current service is achieving its objectives and supporting customers through a short term crisis.
 - ✓ To establish whether customers are acting on advice given and engaging with local support services around longer term action to prevent the crisis from reoccurring.
 - ✓ To ascertain customer satisfaction with the service.

Methodology

Method

- In all, 324 computer assisted telephone interviews were conducted with users of this service from 20th November – 2nd December 2013.
- A spread of interviews were gained across key demographics (see appendix for breakdown) including:
 - ✓ Age
 - ✓ Gender
 - ✓ Working status
 - ✓ Location
 - ✓ Disability status
- Sample was provided by Cumbria County Council.

This report details the findings from this research



Overall Views



Overall Views

The majority (81%) of users are satisfied with the service they received, however satisfaction did seem to vary depending on whether people's problems had reoccurred or not

Overall how satisfied are you with the service that you received from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?



○ = sig diff

Overall Views: Very/Quite Satisfied

Key to people's satisfaction was the manner of the staff spoken to and the overriding feeling that they were getting some sort of much needed help

Why do you say that?

Staff manner
(62%)

"I was very satisfied; she was **very helpful** and **she gave us time** to get the right information - we needed my brother's number and we couldn't find it, **she waited** whilst we found it instead of making us call back."

"At the time I could not have managed without their help and they knew I had had a stroke and found it difficult to understand so **they explained everything clearly and slowly.**"

"She was **calm**, she **listened** and **knew what I needed.**"

"They helped with a food parcel and **the lady rang me back when my credit ran out** in the middle of the call. I was quite pleased that she rang me back as **I didn't expect that.**"

"The lady I spoke to was absolutely brilliant, she **made lots of phone calls on my behalf** and basically did all the work for me. **I didn't expect anyone to be so helpful** and **she was amazing.**"

"They have been very kind. **I don't know where I'd be without them. I'd have died**, not from my illness, but due to starvation or hypothermia."

"I managed to get myself a flat within three months, and feel stable **because of the advice and help from the Council.**"

"I **had no idea what to do** or where to go, **they were helpful** with what I needed."

"They were **really really good** and **pointed me in the right direction** to get the support I needed and **they understood.**"

"Because they **helped us when no-one else could or would.**"

"I **got what I needed, and that was a relief.**"

Led to a
positive
outcome
(36%)

Other comments appeared to be more individual in nature:

"Because **the lass couldn't do any more for me** as she said that **her hands were tied.**"

"**They were spot on, everything was dealt with promptly**, but it was a **headache to activate the energy card**, I had to go to the shop three times and spent £45 and made a number of phone calls before the card was activated."

Overall Views: Very/Quite Dissatisfied

A general frustration at not receiving the help that they felt was needed characterised respondents lack of satisfaction

Why do you say that?

Lack of help
received

“Because I still haven't received any financial help and I wasn't transferred to anyone who could help me. I have extreme circumstances and money should have been there to help me.”

“I didn't get any help. In the old system, I used to get loans no problem. However, in this new situation, it's a real struggle.”

“Because they weren't very helpful, we had no food or electricity and they gave us minimum support.”

“Because I did not receive the help they said I would and have never heard from them.”

“I didn't get any other payments or help with electricity other than the first payment of £20.”

“They didn't help me, they have funding off the government but they denied it. They supplied false information.”

▪ Other, more fragmented, comments included:

“I cant remember, I would have phoned under the influence.”

“The lady was unfriendly and judgemental.”

“They kept giving me different dates that things would get sorted but it often takes 6-7 weeks.”

“They did not get back to me.”

“She was patronising and it is a waste of time employing call handlers for this welfare line when all they do is refer you to a food bank.”

Overall Views: Ways to Improve

The main consensus was that respondents felt that nothing could be improved at all, however some suggestions were made

What aspects of the service from the Council's Customer Support Telephone Service would you change or improve?

*"No, **what I accessed was brilliant.**"*

*"I **couldn't improve** on it."*

*"Nothing; I was satisfied, they were **extremely professional** and I would phone again."*

*"No I was **really pleased**, person I spoke to was **fantastic.**"*

*"You **couldn't improve it**, the lady I spoke to was excellent."*

*"They were absolutely fantastic, really helpful, there is **no room for improvement.**"*

*"**Would not change anything**, excellent service provided. I received more than what I asked for, she went above and beyond what was asked of her."*



Nothing

*"It would be **better if they didn't have to consult** with colleagues."*

*"I think that the **people that are dealing with things should be a bit more up to date** on things and know what they are talking about, also for things to happen quicker."*

*"Improve the **staff knowledge** as they weren't sure what to do at first."*

*"They need **more communication** with people and **understanding** from the customer's point of view."*

*"They need **training on how to deal with people**, **empathy** is free. People, when they are ringing for help, are not doing it because they can't be arsed to feed themselves it's because they need help."*

*"To help people who ring up about food vouchers and to **understand that some people have learning difficulties** and to be able to deal with them differently."*



**Staff
knowledge
and empathy**

Overall Views: Ways to Improve

Making it easier to get through to the service and ensuring that staff are empathetic would be well received

What aspects of the service from the Council's Customer Support Telephone Service would you change or improve?

Ease of getting through

*"When **busy** the calls go to answerphone. I know **it is the easiest way** but if they could **answer it would be preferable**, no matter how long it takes to answer."*

*"The **time taken to answer the phones** and the **general knowledge of the staff** around what people are needing."*

*"The only thing is I wish that they would **answer their phones quicker**."*

*"Get **somebody to answer the phone**, I had to send an email first and then they called me back."*

*"To **answer the phone a bit quicker!**"*

*"**Pick the phone up quicker**; have more people to work the phones."*

*"We had to wait for them to answer the phone, that was the only problem - **we had to keep ringing back as no one was answering**."*

*"I would **change the holding system, it was frustrating** to be on hold 45 minutes for a for a five minute phone call."*

*"The **telephone manner of some people**, it was a bit short."*

*"I just want them to be **well mannered and not to treat me differently** from anyone else."*

*"Would like the person on the end of a phone to **be a bit more patient** and realise that people have various problems."*

*"The lady I spoke to seemed to **have an attitude** with where I spent the money, she knew where I had spent it and because it was a chemist shop, which also sells cheap food, she was doubting what I spent the money on and told me it didn't look good. They should be more understanding and not have an attitude."*

Staff manner

Overall Views: Ways to Improve

Other more individual mentions were also offered

What aspects of the service from the Council's Customer Support Telephone Service would you change or improve?

Other comments

*"They should **know more about ethnic minorities**, they referred us to a food bank but food banks here don't do Halal food so I couldn't eat the food. My husband isn't Muslim so he ate it, but I ate nothing for a few weeks and I was heavily pregnant."*

*"It was a bit long - **the whole process was quite long**. in terms of the conversation - it was quite a long one, about 40 minutes I think, I know we had the gap when I got cut off, but it seemed a very long process."*

*"They could do with **more localised food banks**. When you have to carry the food for miles it's very hard work."*

*"We knew nothing about it - it should be promoted more widely as people don't know what is available to help them. People are often too proud to ask for help; we waited from February until May, until we were desperate, so **it should be made more available**."*



3

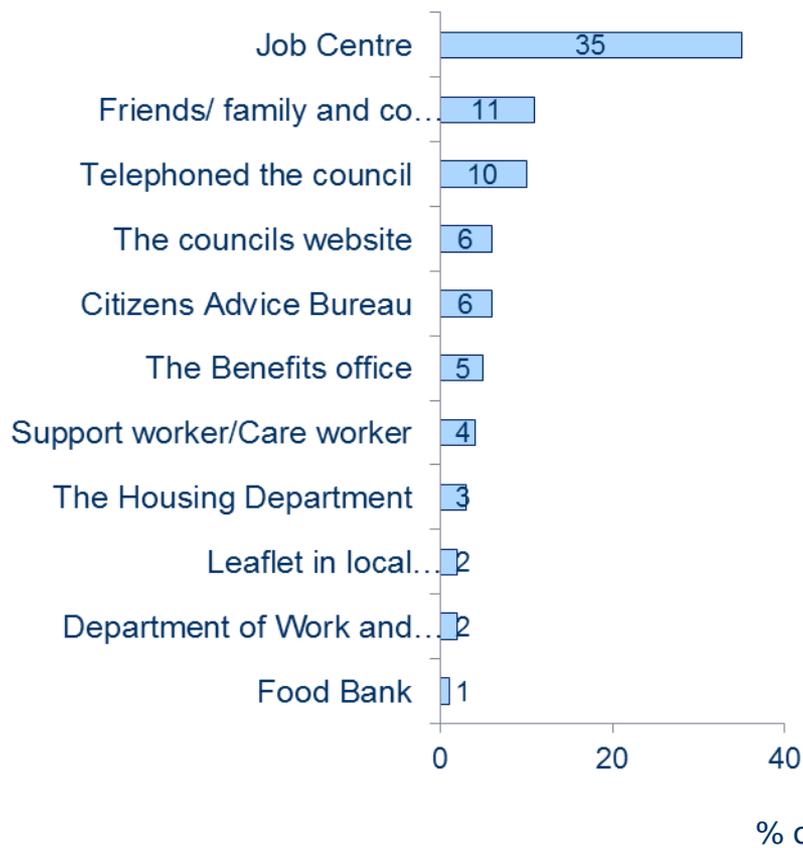
Leading up to the Call...

Leading up to the Call

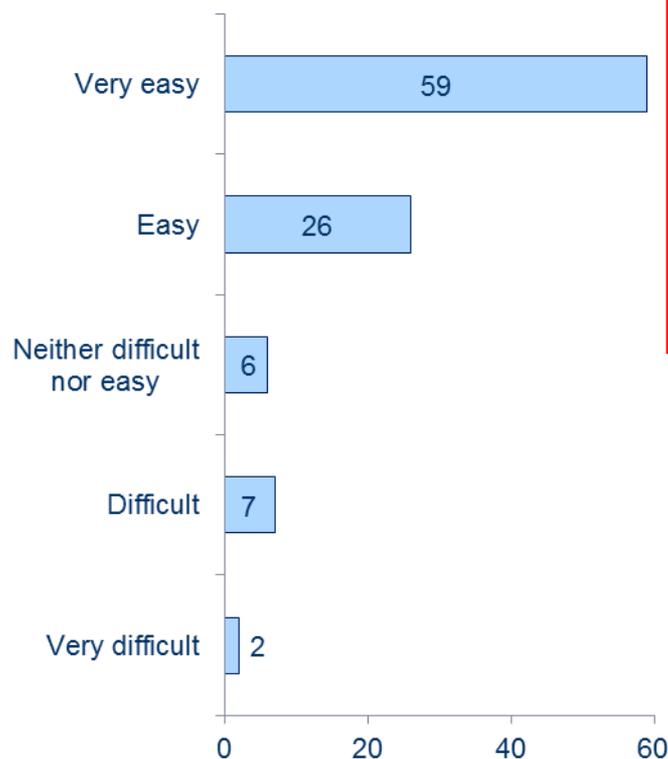
The majority of respondents (85%) found getting contact details for the service to be easy with over one-third (35%) first finding out about it via the Job Centre



How did you first find out about Cumbria County Council's 'Ways to Welfare', Customer Support Telephone Service?



How easy was it to find contact details for the Customer Support Telephone Service?



Female respondents were more likely to have found finding contact details very easily (66% cf. 52% male)

Leading up to the Call

The majority of respondents (60%) were expecting money, for one purpose or another (most often for food and/or energy), to be the main outcome from the call

What were you expecting when you called the Customer Support Telephone Service? UNPROMPTED



Financial
assistance
(60%)

“Support **to get a bit of money** as I was struggling at the time to have enough **for food.**”

“A **crisis loan** to get **gas** and **electric** and **food.**”

“Some **help towards money** for **gas** and **food.**”

“I asked for **a bit of money** for **food** and **electric.**”

“I just hadn't got any money, I moved to a different town and I had nothing. I needed money for food and bills until my money came through so I phoned to see if there was anything I could get.”

“I'd suffered a heart operation and they kept suspending benefit till I met criterion. **I had no money and needed money** for gas/electric, food etc. **I needed money quickly.**”

“I was expecting more than I got, **I wanted an emergency payment to help with food and bills.**”

“...I was **looking for money** for **electricity** and **gas** and for **food.**”

“**I needed a crisis loan** to buy **food** and pay for my **gas** and **electric.**”

“**Financial help,** for **gas** and **food.**”

“**I had no money so needed money** for **gas,** **electric** and **food.**”

“**I was looking for money** for **food** as I had no benefits.”

Leading up to the Call

Others called the service with no preconceived ideas of what it is they may be able to get from it

What were you expecting when you called the Customer Support Telephone Service? UNPROMPTED



No
expectations
(34%)

*"I **didn't know what to expect**; I was just in financial difficulty and was referred to them."*

*"I **didn't know** what to expect."*

*"I **wasn't sure what kind of help they could give us**."*

*"It is a new system so I **didn't know what to expect**."*

*"I **don't know what I expected**, I wanted to know what benefits I could get."*

*"I was just told someone might be able to help me financially but I **didn't know what to expect** really."*

*"**Didn't know what to expect** as I wasn't told who I was ringing, I was just given the number to ring."*

*"I was **not really expecting anything**. I was very desperate at the time and just wanted to see who could help, that is why I was looking on the internet."*

*"I was looking for financial help but to be honest I **wasn't sure what I would get**."*

*"I was **very unsure** what to expect."*

*"**Wasn't sure what to expect** but I got told that they might help with food as I had no money for anything."*

*"I was struggling and was **not sure what to expect** from them but thought I might get some financial support to get what I needed."*

Leading up to the Call

When prompted, respondents mainly expected either financial support or a referral on to a service that could help them

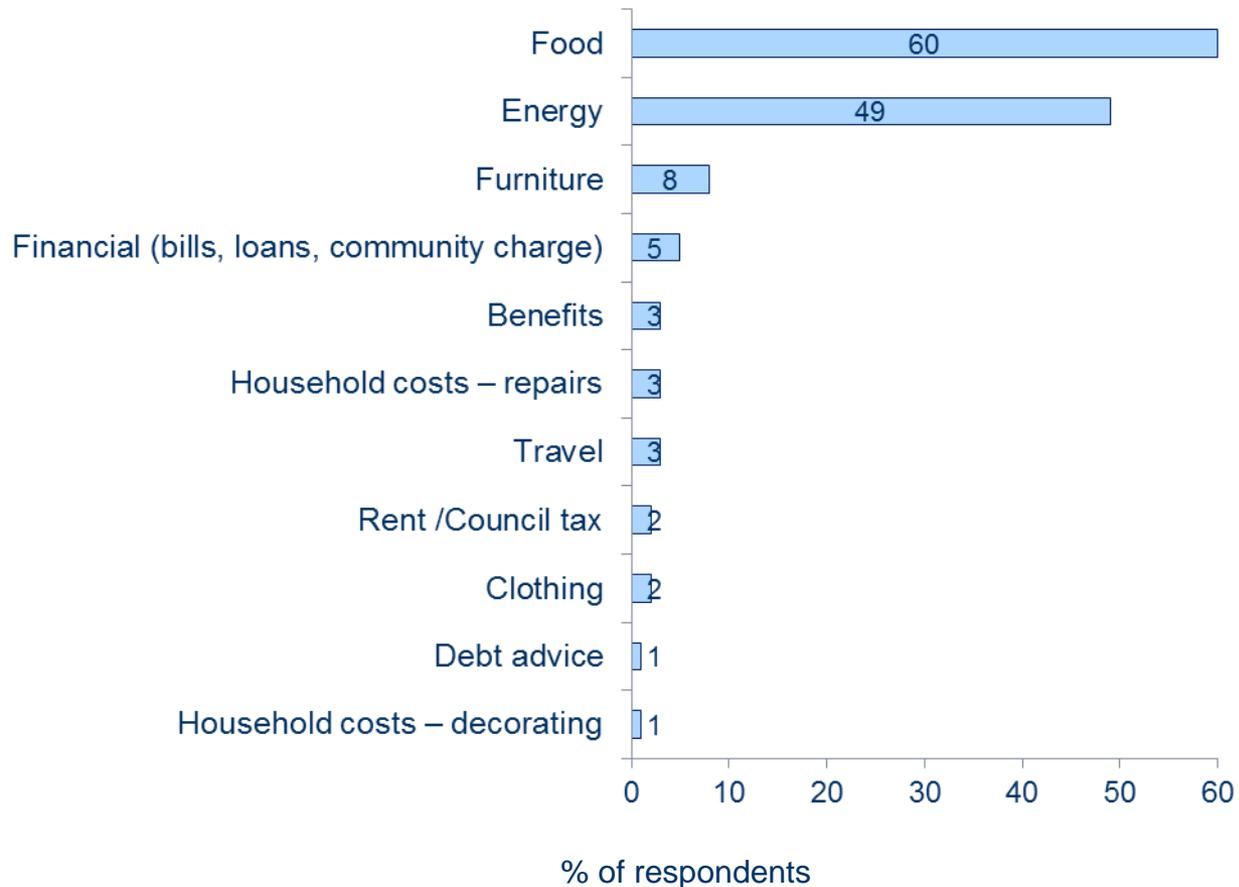
Which of the following best describes what you expected to receive when you called the Customer Support Telephone Service? PROMPTED



Leading up to the Call

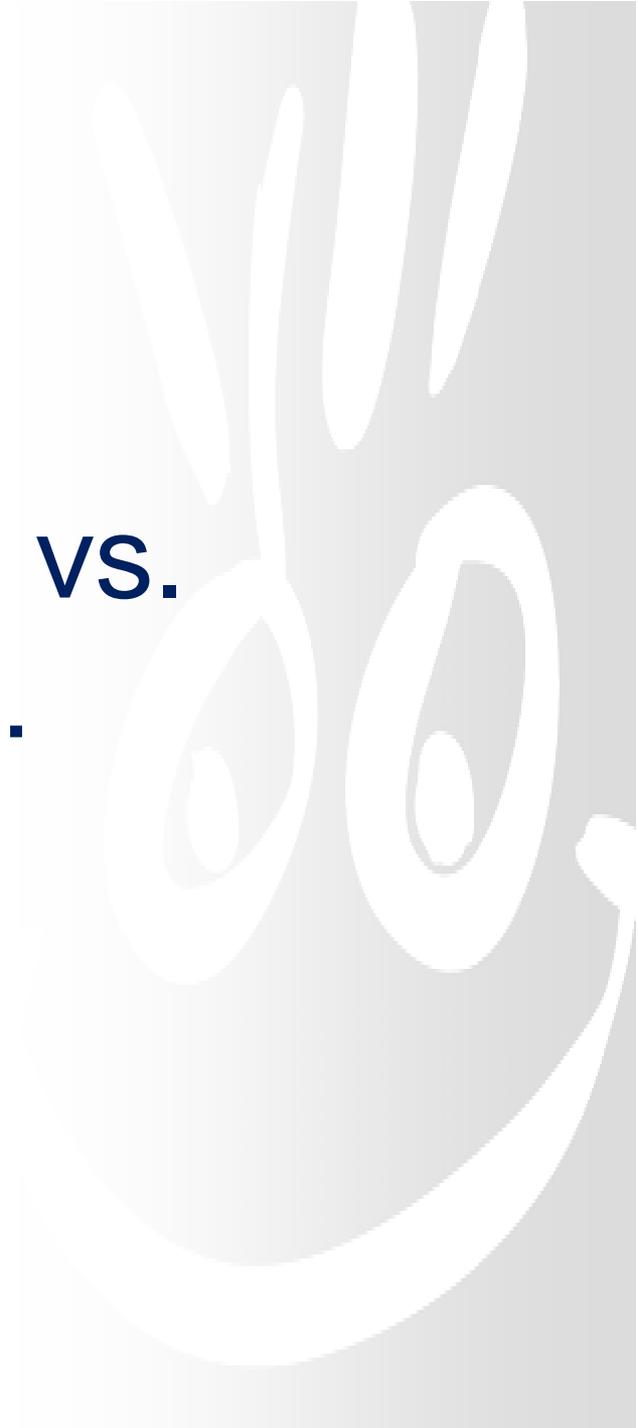
The vast majority of calls were made to seek out advice/help relating to either food and/or energy queries

What was your call to the Customer Support Telephone Service in relation to?





Expectations vs. Experience...

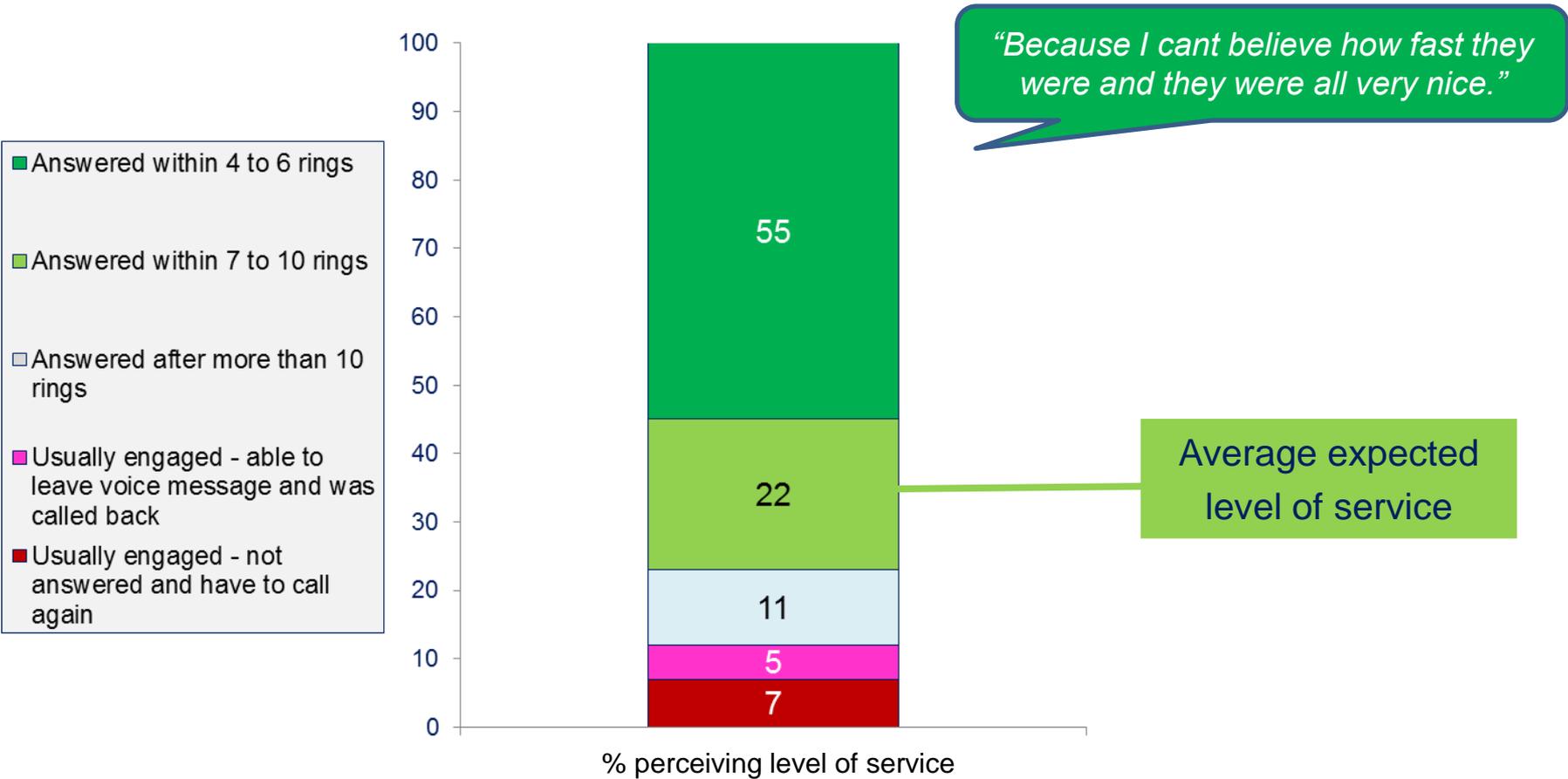


Expectations vs. Experience...

On average callers expected staff to answer their call within 7-10 rings and over three-quarters (77%) received this level of service

Rate which levels of service you did receive/expect from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?

EASE OF INITIALLY GETTING THROUGH TO TELEPHONE SERVICE

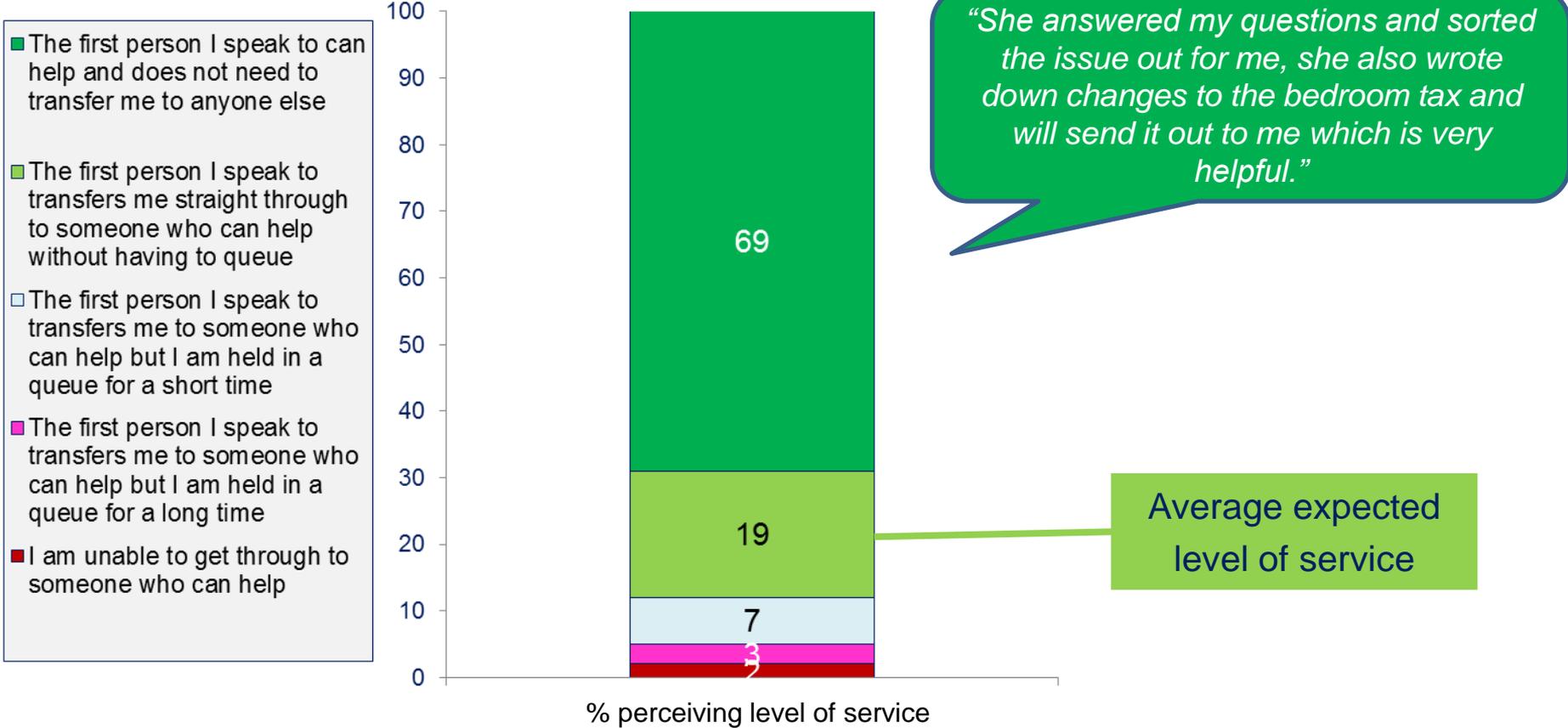


Expectations vs. Experience...

On average callers expected to be able to talk to someone who can transfer them directly to someone who can help and the majority (88%) received this level of service

Rate which levels of service you did receive/expect from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?

EASE OF GETTING THROUGH TO SOMEONE WHO COULD HELP

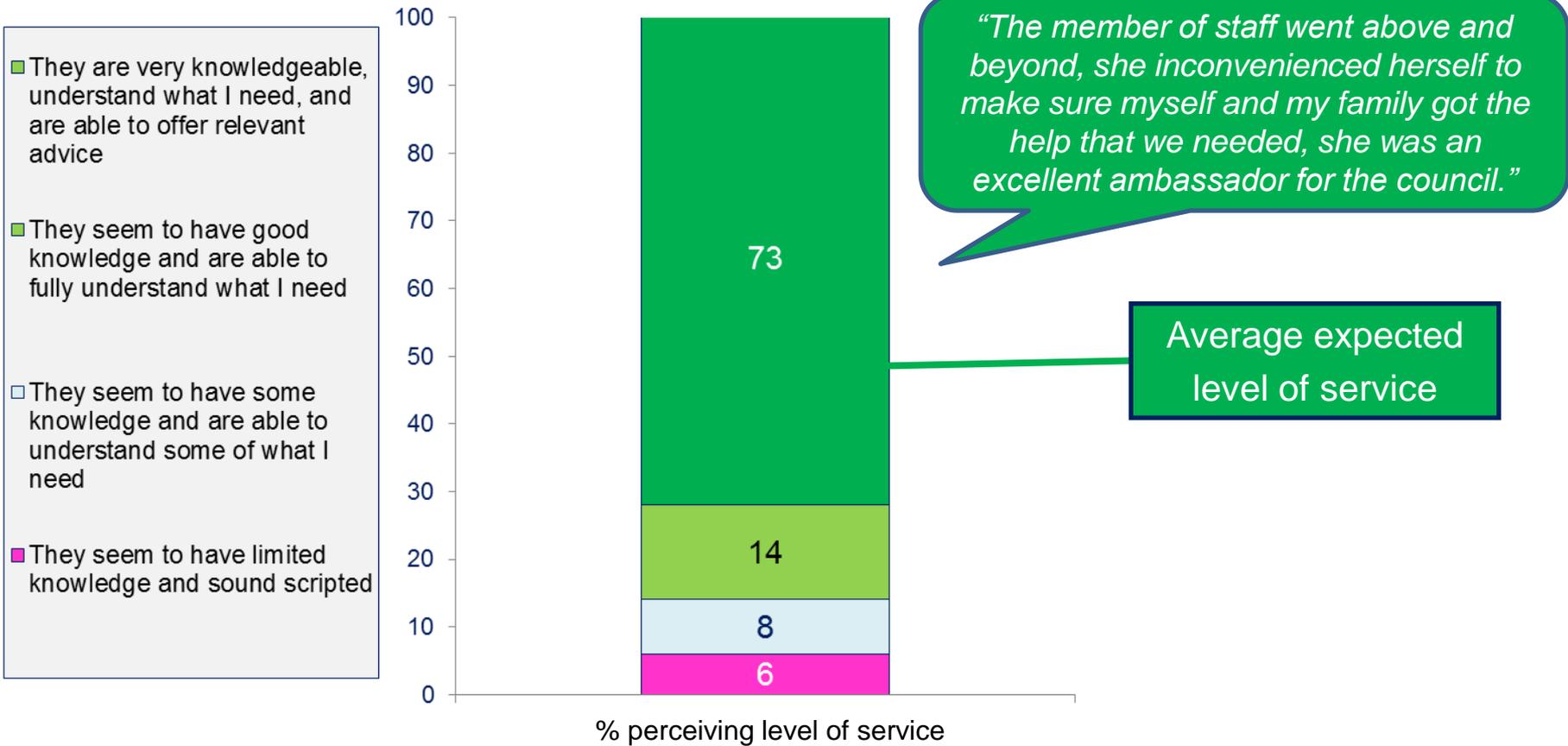


Expectations vs. Experience...

On average callers expected staff to be very knowledgeable and offer relevant advice. Nearly three-quarters (73%) received this level of service

Rate which levels of service you did receive/expect from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?

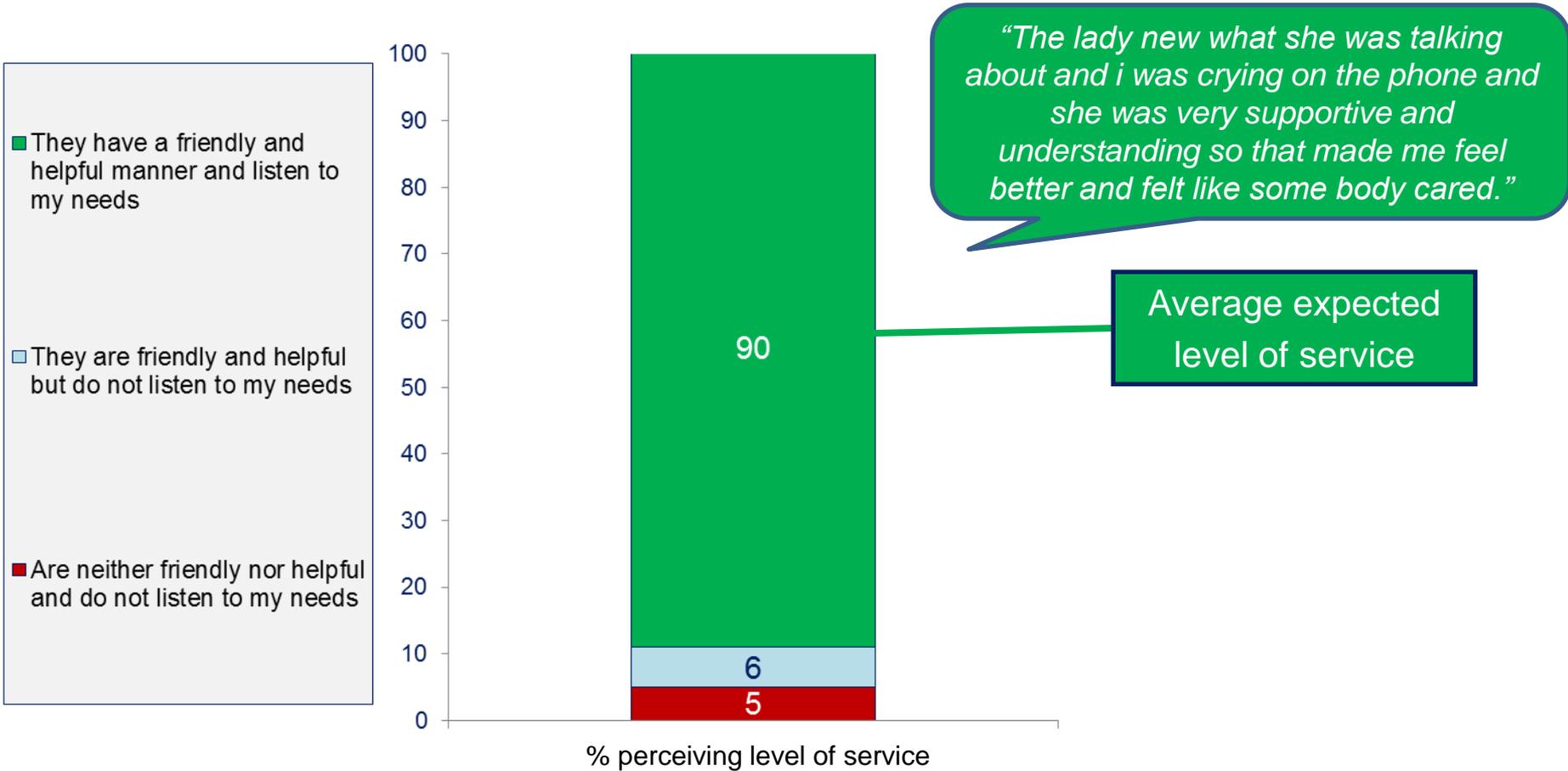
KNOWLEDGE OF THE STAFF WHO DEALT WITH YOUR ENQUIRY



Expectations vs. Experience...

On average callers expected staff to be friendly, helpful and listen to their needs and the vast majority (90%) received this level of service

**Rate which levels of service you did receive/expect from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?
ATTITUDE OF STAFF**

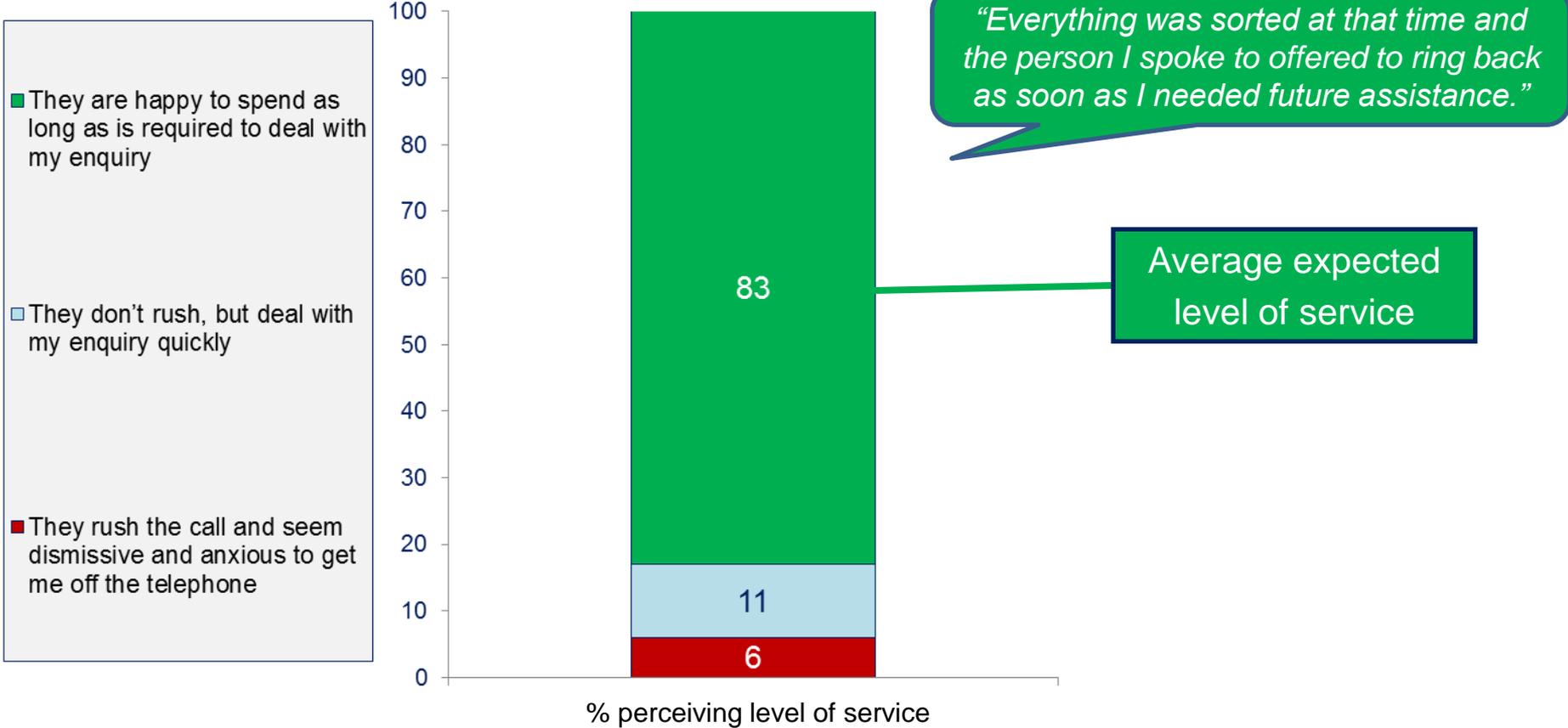


Expectations vs. Experience...

On average callers expected staff to spend as long as was needed to deal with their enquiry and over eight-tenths (83%) received this level of service

Rate which levels of service you did receive/expect from Cumbria County Council's Customer Support Telephone Service?

TIME TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE ENQUIRY



5

Following the Call...

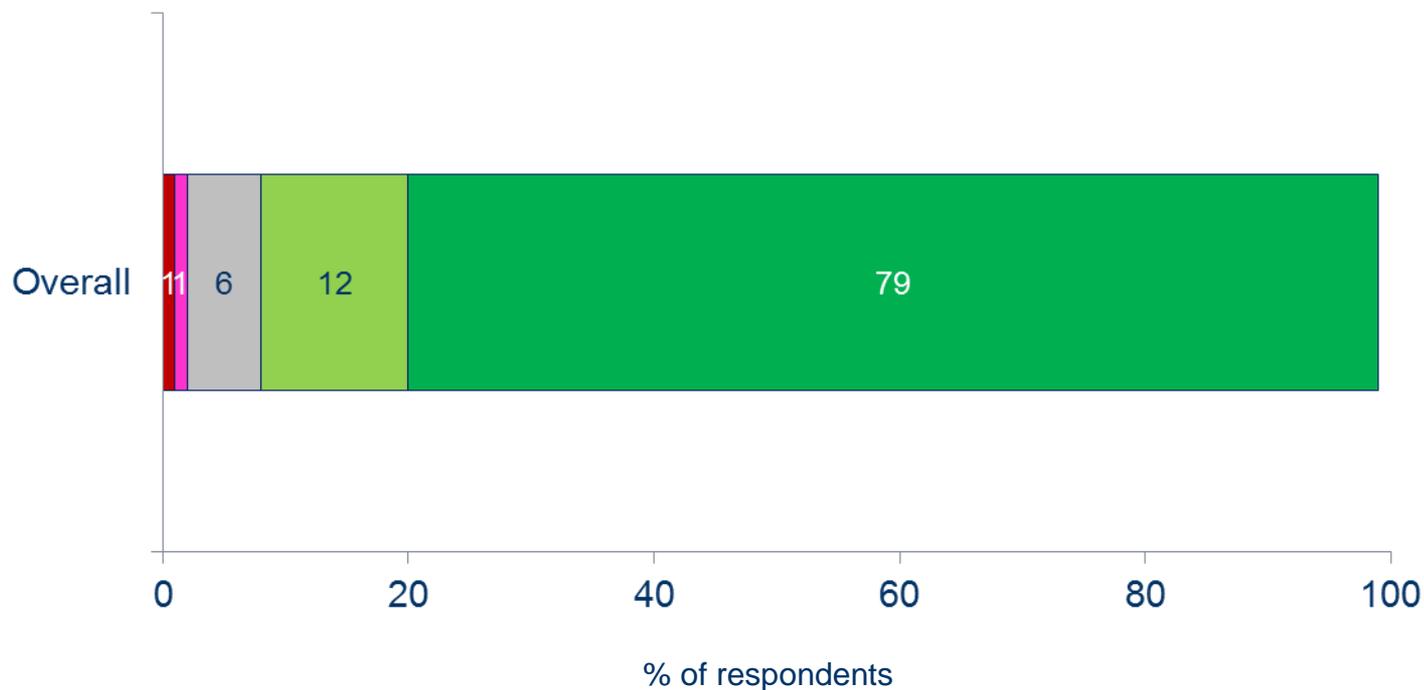


Following the Call

Of those referred onto other services, high levels of satisfaction characterised their experiences – the vast majority (91%) were (at least) satisfied

Overall how satisfied are you with the service that you were referred to?

■ Very Dissatisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied

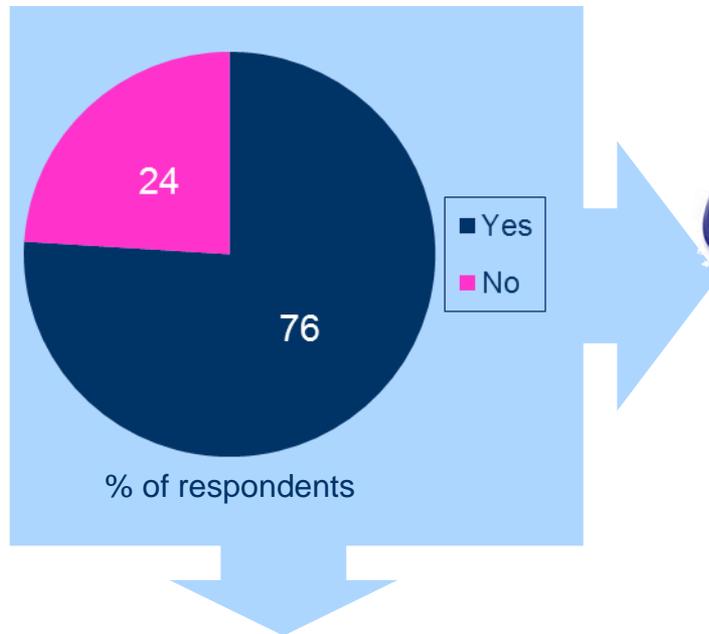


Base: All respondents who were referred 146

Following the Call

For over three-quarters (78%) of respondents, the call to the service has resulted in them receiving the help they needed

Since the call, have you received the help and support that you needed?



Those whose initial reasons for contacting the service had reoccurred were more likely to feel as though they had not received the help and support that they needed (35% reoccurred cf. 21%)

Why do you say yes?

“They were brilliant; I got a card for gas and electric and food vouchers.”

“We received food parcel that day – brilliant!”

“I got a letter the next day with the slip for the food bank, and they gave us enough for several weeks!”

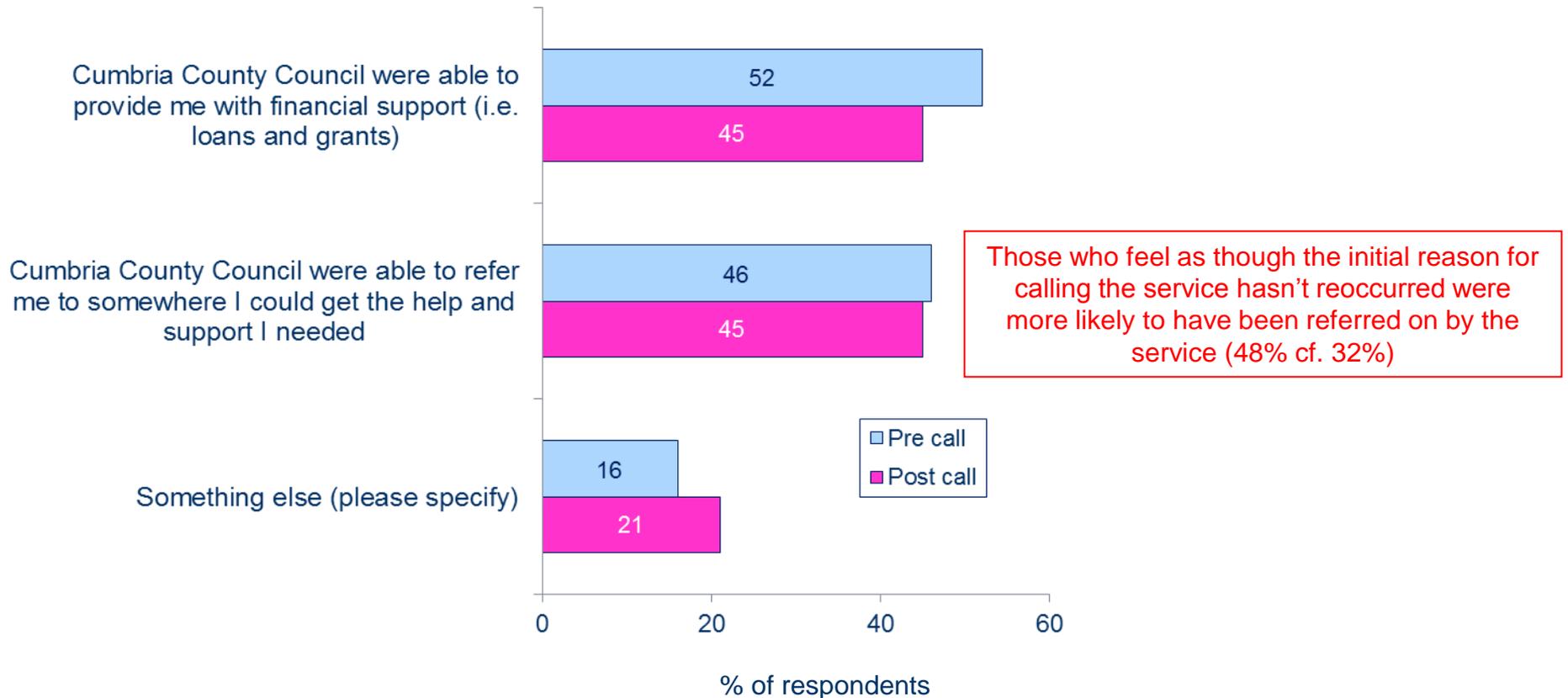
“I got the help straight away - credit from impact housing, and I got a couch, mattress and TV.”

“They provided the deposit and referred me to a second hand shop for furniture and rang them to let them know when I was coming and to let me have what I needed.”

Following the Call

Reflecting on the outcome of the call, respondents generally felt that the service offered them a mix of both financial assistance and referrals with a key difference being that those who were referred on were less likely to experience their crisis reoccurring

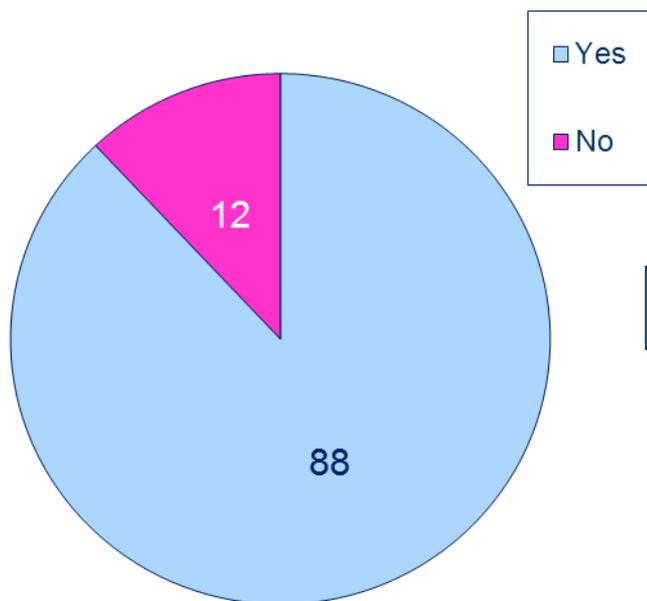
Following the call, which of the following best describes what you received?



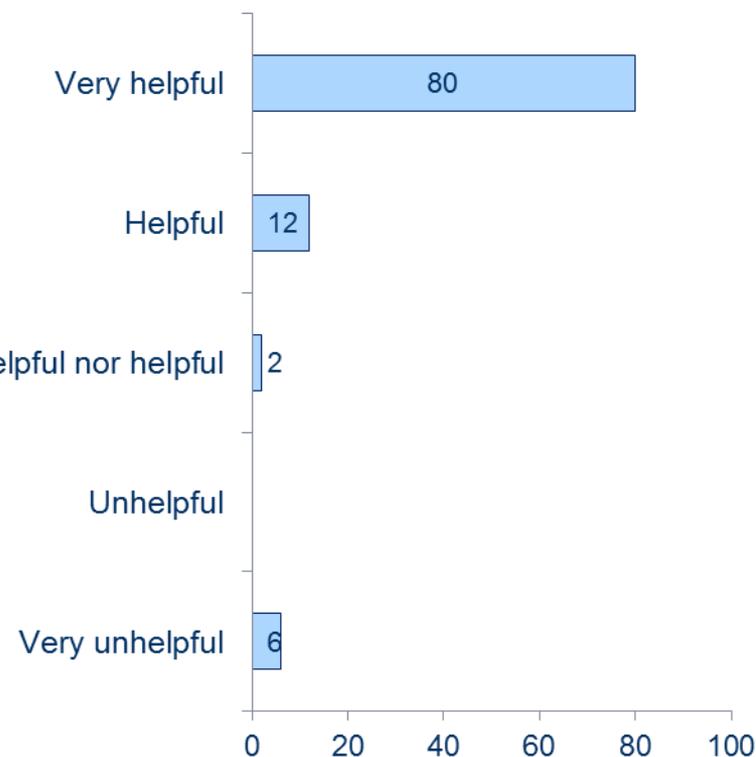
Following the Call

Importantly, the vast majority (88%) did in fact access the services that they were referred to and found them to be, at the very least, helpful (92%)

Since the call, did you then access the services that you were referred to?



How helpful were they?



Following the Call

Despite this, a key issue people face when following up on their referrals is the embarrassment they feel in following them up

Why did you not access the services that the Council's Customer Support Telephone Service referred you to?

“I borrowed the money from family, it was **demeaning** to contact the food bank, it was up to me to decide what to do.”

“**Embarrassment!**”

“I can't use a food bank because I have coeliac disease and **need special food**, half the food would have gone in the bin.”

“I **wasn't comfortable** doing so and didn't need the support that badly.”

“Because I couldn't go to the food bank as it was **upstairs and I couldn't get up there with my buggy.**”

“**Food bank** does not provide gas and electric, it is **not suitable** for every problem.”

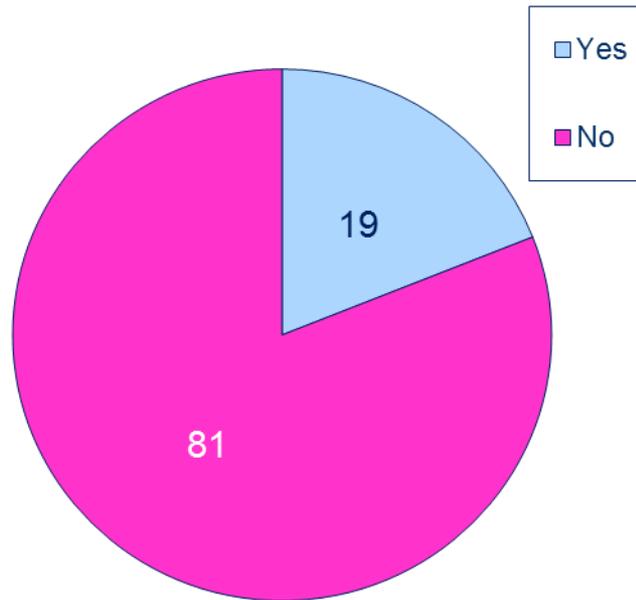
“I felt **embarrassed.**”

“Because the **food bank was no good for what was wanted**; nappies, gas electric and toilet roll.”

Following the Call

Encouragingly, for over eight-tenths (81%) of people, the reasons why they called the service in the first place had not reoccurred

And have any of the reasons why you contacted the Council's Customer Support Telephone Service occurred again?



% of respondents



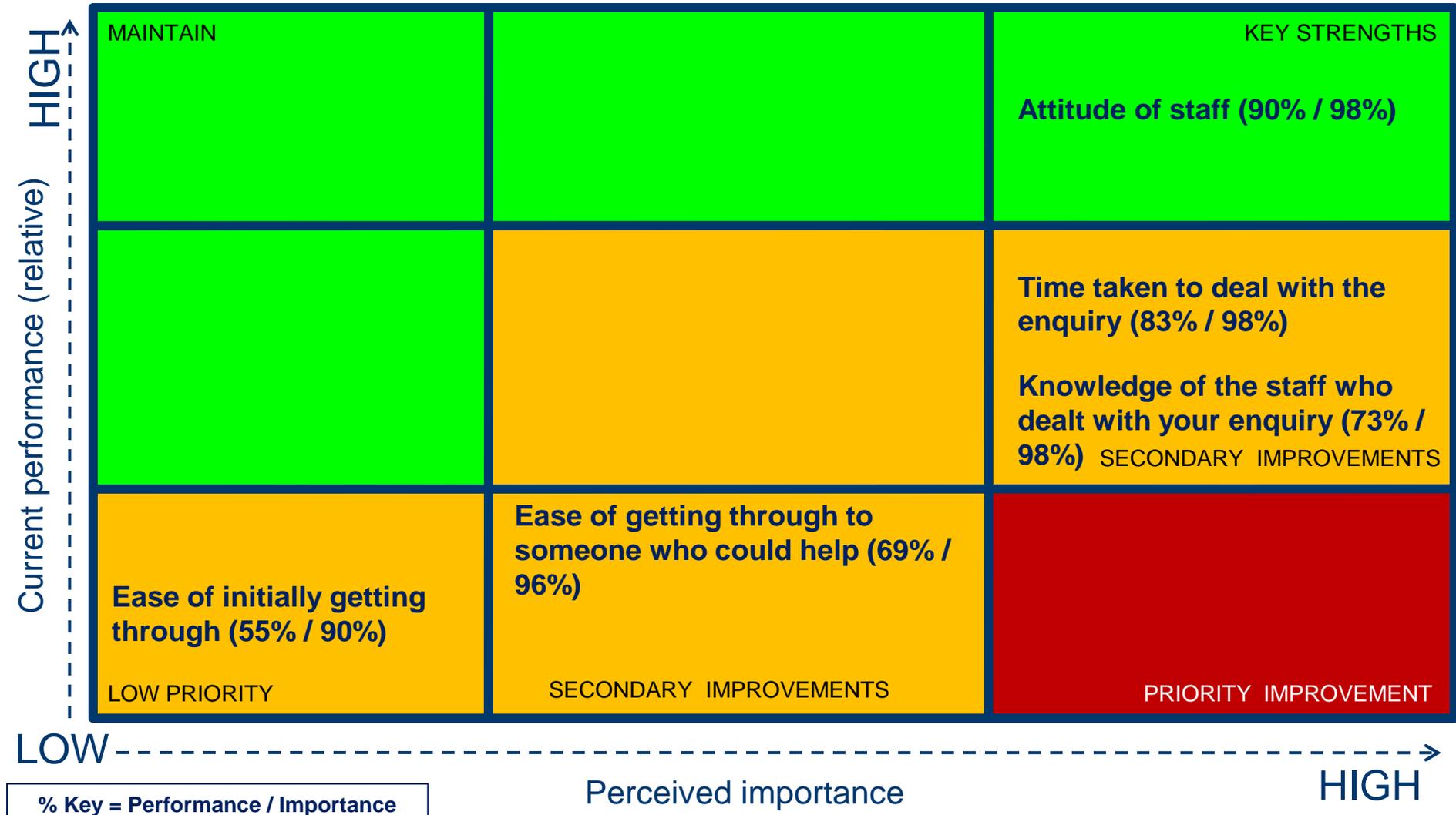
6

Conclusions & Recommendations

By looking at what is important to users in combination with how you are performing, we are able to create a strategic priority matrix to summarise areas for action...

Areas to Focus On...

Priority Matrix



Conclusions & Recommendations (1)

- 
- Satisfaction with both the service itself and the referrals that it makes is high
 - Encouragingly, since the call, the majority of respondents have not experienced a reoccurrence of their crisis
 - ✓ The main drivers of this satisfaction are a) the manner of the staff taking calls and b) the fact that satisfactory outcomes occurred following the calls
 - ✓ Areas that could be targeted for improvement include: **staff knowledge levels and empathy** and **ease of getting through/promptness of answering**

- 
- Respondent expectations were being met across the core measures:
 - ✓ Reflecting the priority matrix on the previous slide, key measures highlighted (relatively) for improvement are: **ease of initially getting through to telephone service** and **ease of getting through to someone who could help**

- 
- The majority of users were being helped through their short term crises, often thanks to food and or energy (i.e. gas and/or electric) provision
 - Encouragingly, the majority of users who were referred were acting on this referral and engaging with local support services around longer term action



Appendix:

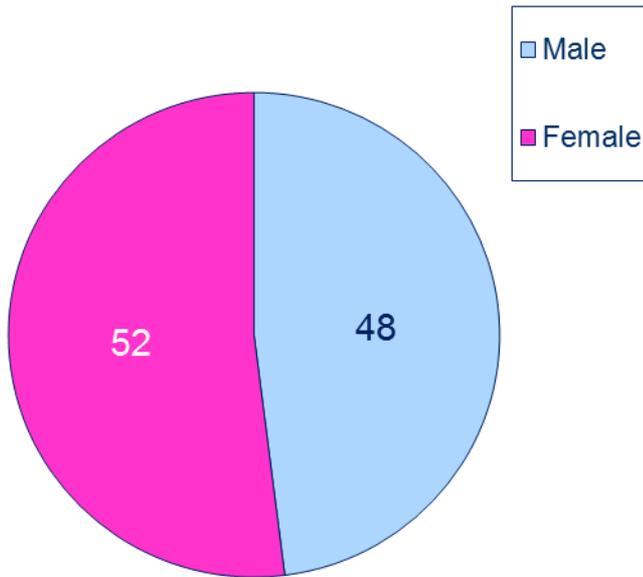
Who we spoke to



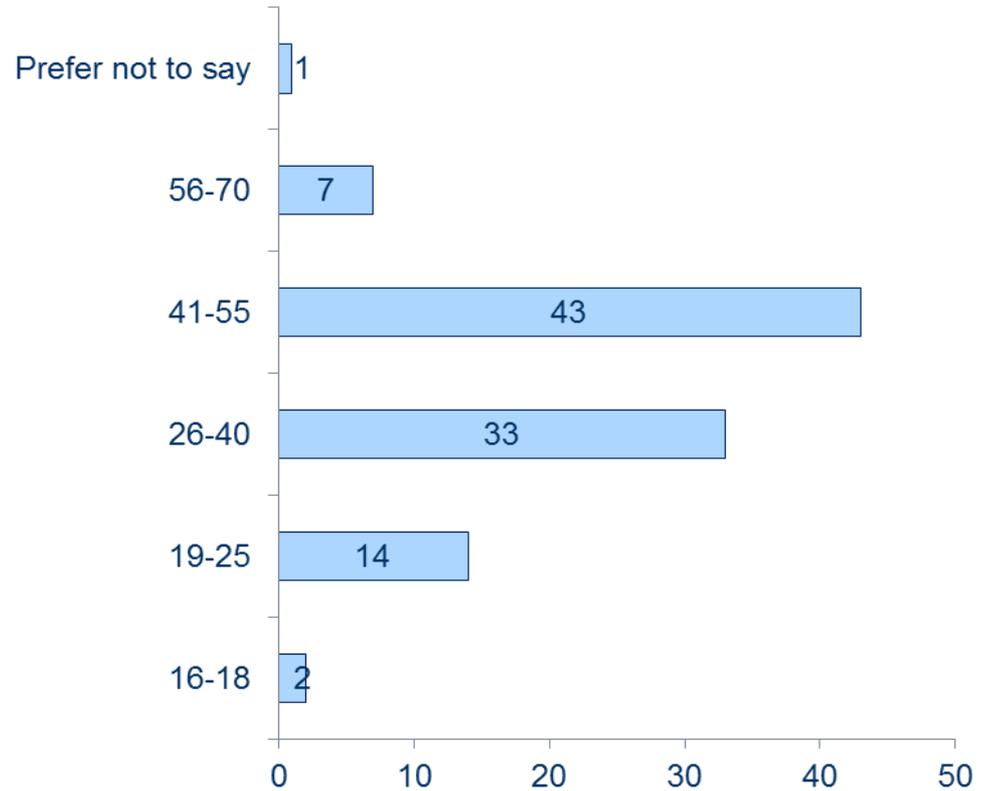
Who We Spoke To

Sample Breakdown

Gender



Age



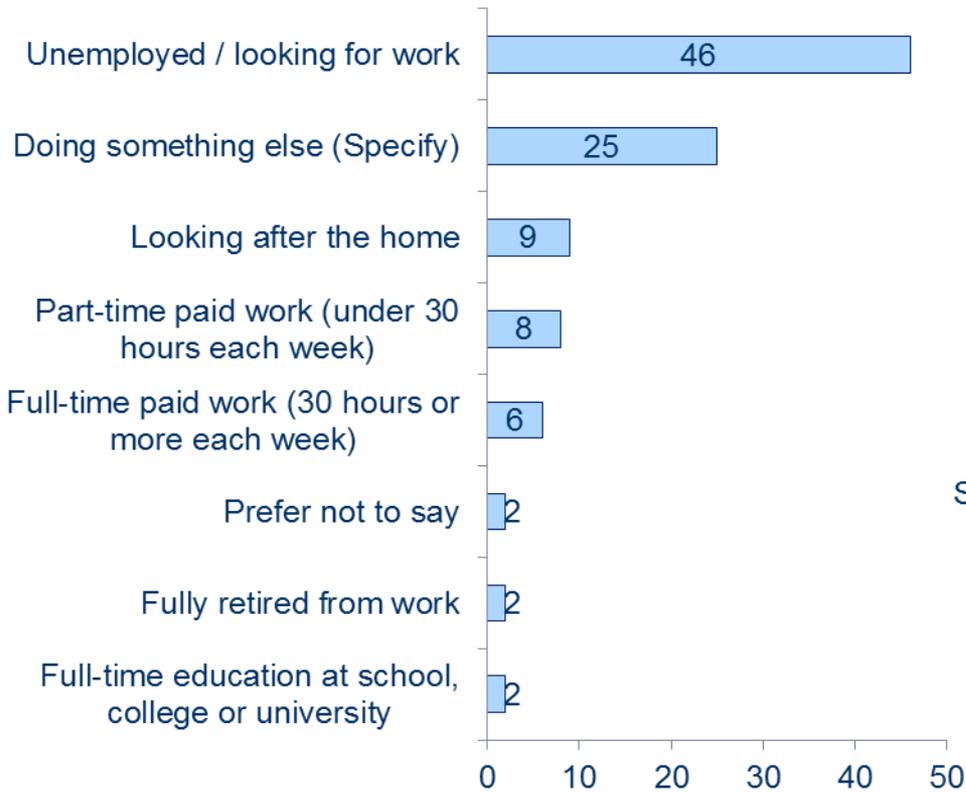
% of respondents

Base: All respondents 324

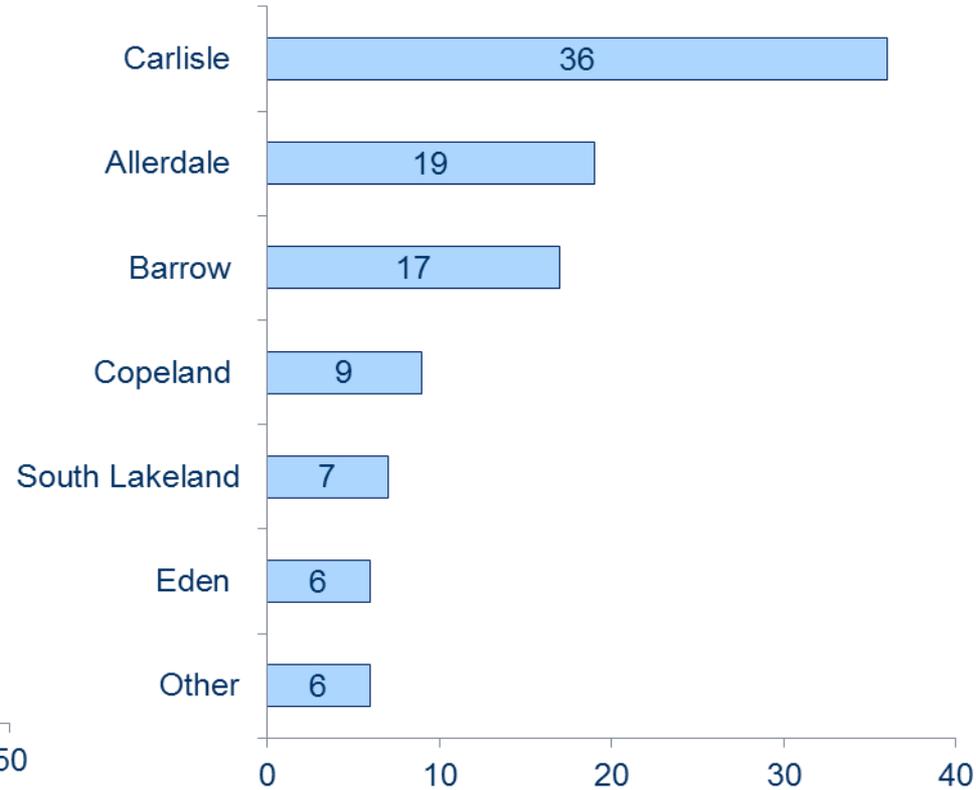
Who We Spoke To

Sample Breakdown

Working Status



Location



% of respondents

Base: All respondents 324

Who We Spoke To

Sample Breakdown

Disability Status

