

<p><b>Why is the reduction for DESSS 70% when other services are not being cut so much and the Government allocation actually suggests the budget should be significantly increased on last year?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are considering budget reductions to a range of services because of the Council's need to make £17m savings in 2018/19. This follows significant savings requirements in the previous seven years.</li> <li>• We have to prioritise funding to areas where we have clear statutory duties to support the most vulnerable, and this means considering significant budget reductions in a range of preventative services. This is not an approach we wish to take, but is required by the ongoing reductions to County Council funding.</li> <li>• The Revenue Support Grant has been cut in successive years. The reduction in our funding for Local Welfare Assistance in 2015/16 from the previous year was significantly greater than resources indicated by Government. Our Revenue Support Grant is continuing to reduce from £26.727m (2017/18) to £14.966m (2018/19) to £3.491m (2019/20).</li> <li>• Although no funding was available for the Local Welfare Assistance responsibility, the County Council nonetheless set up a permanent budget to deliver a service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where is the £380k under-spend from previous years that ESCC said would be retained in the DESSS budget?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The £380k under-spend will be spent on the service whatever the decision is about longer term future of DESSS.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The ESCC budget report shows many vulnerable groups are affected. What impact assessment has been done?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Council is currently undertaking extensive consultation on its budget proposals and no final decision has been made about DESSS.</li> <li>• The outcome of the DESSS consultation and an equalities impact assessment will be considered by the County Council Cabinet at its meeting in June to ensure that the implications of any decision that is made is fully understood.</li> <li>• Whilst we are actively promoting the consultation and have created a number of ways for people to participate, we need to acknowledge that people who qualify for support from DESSS are usually only able to receive support from the scheme once a year, and the majority of people who use the scheme don't have an eligible social care need under the Care Act.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of the service therefore means that we don't have an ongoing client list for the DESSS service through which we can engage users of the service. That said, we are working with service providers to promote the consultation and have promoted it to a wide range of stakeholders including the voluntary and community sector and organisations who signpost to the DESS scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Now that it is clear that the Government's failure to ring-fence the funding means that Councils are not providing the level of LWP services needed in their area, will the Government reconsider this policy?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Council receives no Government support to provide Local Welfare Provision.</li> <li>• The Department of Works and Pensions originally passed responsibility for urgent welfare assistance to upper tier councils and provided a grant to fund this responsibility. This grant ended in 2014/15.</li> <li>• From 2015/16 Government indicated the funding for Local Welfare Assistance, following a Treasury reduction, was subsumed in the Revenue Support Grant. This funding was not specifically identified nor ring-fenced.</li> <li>• It is important to stress that any sense of national funding to support Local Welfare Assistance ended with the Revenue Support Grant.</li> </ul>