



## **COMMUNITY CARE DIVISION**

### **FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICE**

### **ANNUAL REPORT 2010- 2011**

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## INTRODUCTION

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> annual report of the Floating Support Service which commenced operation in September 2004. The annual report outlines the achievements and challenges to the service throughout 2010/2011.

There continues to be high demand for Sandwell Homes Floating Support Service and over the course of this year Support Officers have supported 428 vulnerable and socially excluded people. The support provided has enabled people who have used the service to turn their lives around giving them control and choices. One of the key achievements of the Floating Support Service has been that 98.2% of people who have used the service have achieved or maintained independence against a target of 98.1%.

Many of the people who have used the service have told us that without the support of an experienced and easy to talk to Support Officer they would not have been able to make the necessary changes in their lives because of the range of difficulties and barriers to overcome.

The case studies further on in the report demonstrate the positive outcomes achieved for people using the service and highlight the work of the Support Officers. They evidence the prevention of homelessness and the avoidance of more intensive and expensive help from statutory agencies.

Customer satisfaction surveys show high levels of satisfaction with the service as well as a high numbers of compliments. Customer feedback evidences that positive outcomes have been achieved for people suffering from domestic abuse, mental ill health, drugs and alcohol abuse, homelessness. At a recent Floating Support Service meeting for people who have support from the service one person said, "Sandwell Homes really cares about their customers".

During this year a new service for offenders, commenced. The Accommodation Link and Support Officer (for offenders) is funded by the Supporting People programme for 3 years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011- 1st January 2014. This initiative in partnership with Sandwell Probation

Local Delivery Unit provides a much needed link for offenders to access appropriate housing and support.

In September 2010 the service changed its name to the Floating Support Service. This reflects that support is available cross tenure and not limited to Sandwell Homes tenants.

## PERFORMANCE

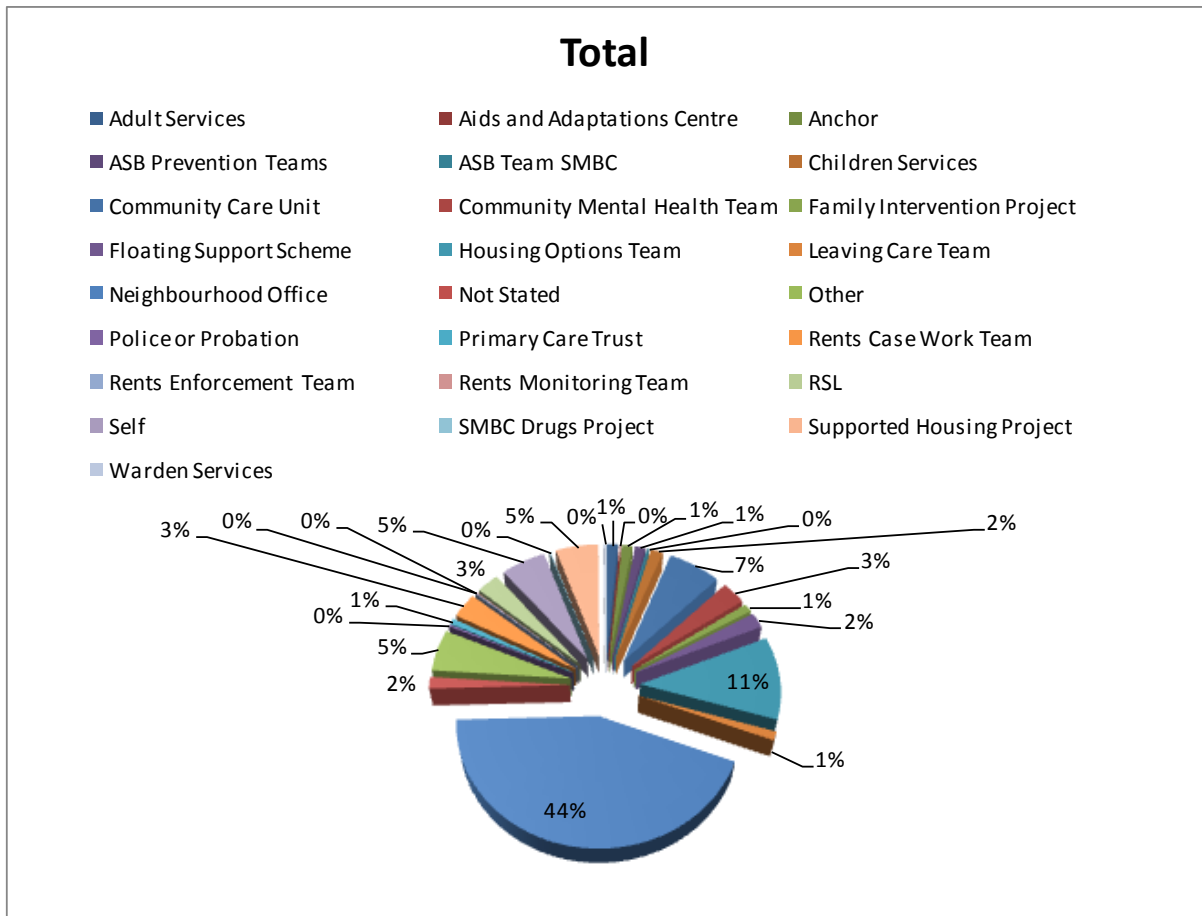
The Floating Support Service has achieved the Supporting People contractual obligations for the service. The information below shows performance against NI 142 Supporting People target of 98.1% (the number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living).

Floating Support Service Performance 2009/2010	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Service users who established or maintained independent living as % of all users in the quarter	98.75%	97.55%	97.33%	98.15%
No of service users who have had their support needs assessed and have a support plan in place	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Total 2009/2010</b>				<b>97.9%</b>
Floating Support Service Performance 2010/2011	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Service users who established or maintained independent living as % of all users in the quarter	98.1%	98.5%	97.6%	98.7
No of service users who have had their support needs assessed and have a support plan in place	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Total 2010/11</b>				<b>98.2%</b>

Performance in 2010/11 is 98.2% compared to performance of 97.9% in 2009/ 10

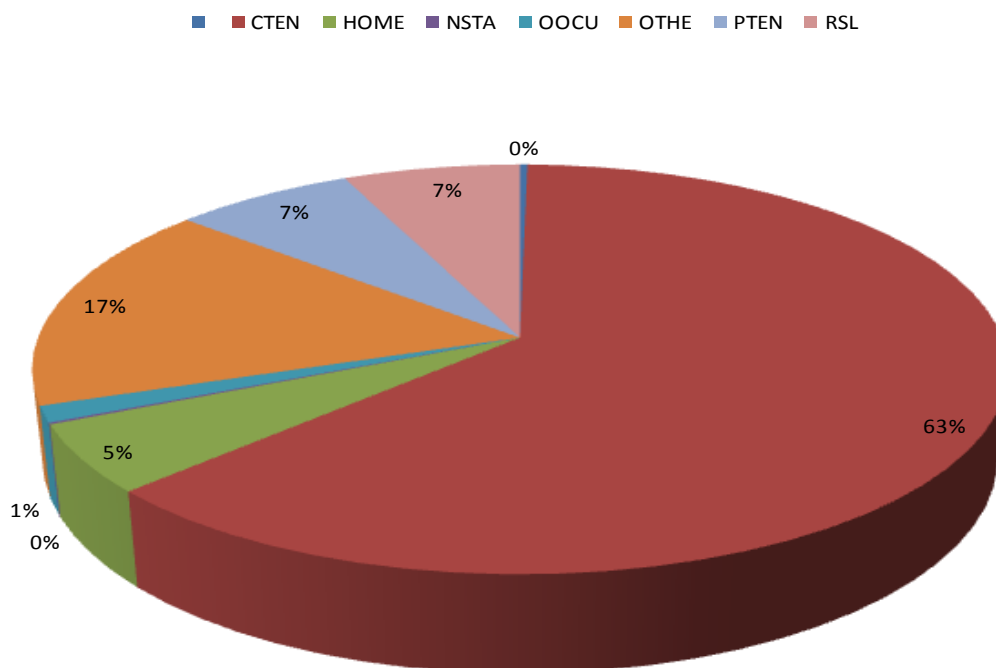
## REFERRALS

The table below captures the source of referrals.



Sandwell Homes continues to be the main source of referral to the Floating Support Service. There has been an increase in referrals of vulnerable people living in Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and private sector accommodation supported housing and temporary accommodation compared to 2009/10.

### Floating Support Service referrals by tenancy type



Vulnerable people accepted for Floating Support by Accommodation type	2009/10	2010/11
Sandwell Homes	211	270
Homeless (B &B and temporary accommodation)	34	31
Owner occupier	4	10
RSL (Registered Social Landlord)	12	23
Private sector tenancy	29	36
Other (supported housing and temporary accommodation)	43	81
(NSTA) not stated	43	1
Data field incomplete	87	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>453</b>

**There has been an increase in referrals from external agencies of 30% from 146 in 2009/10 to 190 in 2010/ 2011.**

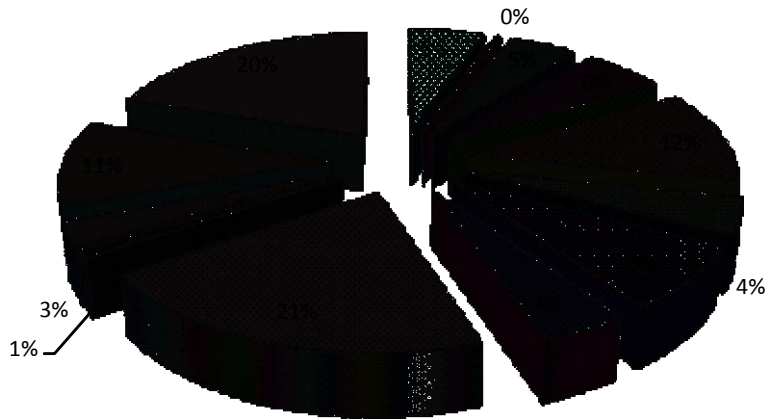
The Floating Support Service receives referrals from a wide range of agencies including the Community Mental Health Teams, Community Learning Disabilities Team, Primary Care Trust's, SMBC Private Sector, RSL's, Anchor Project, Leaving Care Team.

<b>Referrals by Agency</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>
Adult Services	3	11
Aids and Adaptations Centre	0	1
Anchor	6	10
Children Services	4	12
Community Learning Disability Teams	2	0
Community Mental Health Teams	21	24
Family Intervention Project	4	9
Leaving Care Team	13	9
RSL	8	22
Other	40	43
Police or Probation	4	2
Primary Care Trust	2	6
Supported Housing Project	39	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>190</b>

Case studies further on in the report show how the Floating Support Service works closely with a range of agencies to achieve independent living and keep people in their home.

### Floating Support Service referrals by agency

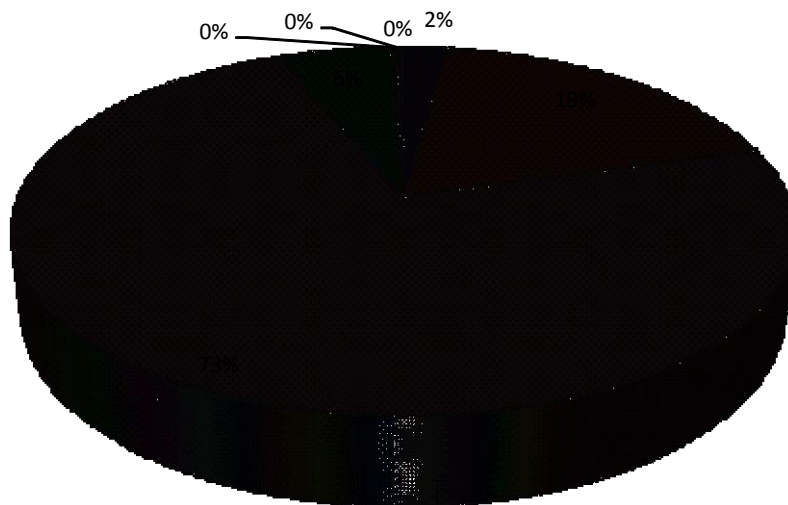
- Adult Services
- Aids and Adaptations Centre
- Anchor
- Children Services
- Community Mental Health Team
- Family Intervention Project
- Floating Support Scheme
- Leaving Care Team
- Other
- Police or Probation
- Primary Care Trust
- RSL
- Supported Housing Project



Sandwell Homes referrals by teams shows that there is still a significant number of vulnerable tenants who need support to sustain their tenancy or maintain independence.

### Floating Support Service referrals by Sandwell homes

- ASB Prevention Teams
- Housing Options Team
- Neighbourhood Office
- Rents Case Work Team
- Rents Enforcement Team
- Rents Monitoring Team
- Warden Services



<b>Sandwell Homes referrals by teams</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
ASB Prevention Teams	11	10
Housing Options Team	123	86
Neighbourhood Office	352	342
Rents Case Work Team	31	26
Rents Enforcement Team	0	1
Rents Monitoring Team	0	1
Warden Services	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>467</b>

## **HOUSING OPTIONS**

**Housing options referrals decreased by 29.5% from 122 in 2009/10 to 86 in 2010/11**

The reasons for the drop in referrals from housing options are unclear however it is anticipated that the numbers referred under prevention of homelessness will increase in 2011/12.

A high priority for the Floating Support Service is providing support to those at risk of homelessness, the prevention of homelessness and providing support with resettlement. The case study below demonstrates the effectiveness of support provided to an owner occupier referred by the Housing Options team. It evidences how the support provided enabled the individual to not only to get his property back but also his life back on track.

### **Homeless Prevention Case Study**

Just over a year ago Mr R was diagnosed as being terminally ill. Subsequent treatment resulted in him suffering a stroke. His property was repossessed when he fell behind with his mortgage payments. He had no family support and had not told anyone about his failing state of health.

Placed in temporary accommodation he was referred to the Floating

Support Service by Housing Options for support while the Housing Options money advisor negotiated with his mortgage lender and other creditors to reschedule payments and for him to return to his home. Mr R was supported to sort out issues with his Council Tax and pension payments. Emotional support was also provided.

He still has his bad days but he has joined a Cancer Support Group and has been able to use the benefit of his experience to help someone else. Mr R admitted “I just buried my head in the sand, as I thought I’m not going to be here much longer.” However he now feels that without Housing Options and the Floating Support Service, he would not still be in his own home, leading a happier, more fulfilled life. Mr R has also made contact with local charity Loaves N’ Fishes and offered his services as a volunteer in a bid to try and “give something back to the community.”

## **RENT ARREARS**

**In 2010/11 28 referrals were received from teams dealing with people who had rent arrears**

The Rent Casework team refer cases where it is recognised that there is vulnerability and there is a need for additional support. In these more complex cases the support officer will joint work with the Rent Casework team to prevent eviction. The Floating Support Officers provide support to access a Welfare Rights Officer and where appropriate the Citizens Advice Bureau. They provide ongoing support with budgeting, developing life skills, accessing health services and other agencies.

84% of people who have used the service identified that they had a problem with rent arrears and were at risk of losing their tenancy.

The following case study demonstrates the effectiveness of the support provided which resulted in the individual clearing his rent arrears and sustaining his tenancy.

### **Case study referred by the Rent Enforcement Team**

Mr D, a single man aged 22 at risk of homelessness was facing eviction due to rent arrears totalling £500.00.

Mr D worked in a local Pub but didn't have regular shifts. He suffered with depression and had a history of attempted suicide. He was without any support network in the form of family or friends in the area.

He had received letters advising him of the arrears but because of dyslexia Mr D had not responded to the letters. At the point of the referral he was due to attend court in five days time and unless the outstanding arrears were paid in full the Enforcement Team would pursue the eviction.

Following allocation of his case his Support Officer liaised with the Enforcement Team. Mr D was very emotional. He did not feel he could face up to court on his own. He was supported to complete an income and expenditure sheet and advised to take this with him to court. Mr D was supported during the court process to make an agreement to pay his weekly rent plus £3.50 weekly towards his arrears. Mr D also agreed that if he had spare money at the end of the week he would pay extra towards the arrears.

The immediate risk of eviction was dealt with and his Support Officer continues to support Mr D to address his other issues in order for him to live his life independently.

## **ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

In 2010/11 21% disclosed they had a problem with anti social behaviour even though this was not the primary reason for the referral.

Of those vulnerable people supported by the Floating Support Service because of ASB 100% were successful in sustaining their tenancies.

The case study below demonstrates how targeted support and joint working with other agencies can result in vulnerable people who are at risk of losing their tenancy because of ASB modifying their behaviour and taking responsibility for their actions. In doing so they consciously made a choice to turn their lives around.

## **Case study ASB referred by Anchor**

Miss T, her partner their two children aged five and two years old were living on the tenth floor in a block of flats were referred to the Floating Support for assistance with, ASB and drug related problems. Both were on a programme of methadone treatment and received support from the Anchor Project for drug misuse. They were known to Children Services as their daughter aged five often missed school or would turn up late for school.

Following a police raid of the property where items of drugs and methadone were found compounded by complaints from neighbours about loud noise over a weekend. Mr M was arrested. He admitted to possession of drugs as well as supplying drugs. Miss T was reported to Sandwell Children Services and decided that she could no longer carry on living with her partner while he continued to use drugs as this placed her and the children at risk.

Through joint working with the support worker from Anchor Project she was offered emotional and practical support to support her to change her behaviour and not fall back into drug misuse and to give her and her children a chance to move on with their lives.

Miss T faced losing her home and ending up in a hostel and the children being taken into care. Her support officer liaised with the Housing Manager who was dealing with the eviction process and attended a case conference with all agencies involved, ASB Team, Social Services, Children Services, and School Educational Officer. It was agreed to re-house the family.

The family were supported with resettlement to access benefits and health services as Miss T was also suffering from depression. Miss T has now completed her drug programme and is free from drugs and has finally started to move on with her life.

Since her move Miss T has been back in touch with her family who she lost contact with due to drugs misuse and is beginning to rebuild their relationship.

## COMMUNITY CARE DIVISION

<b>95 referrals were received from Community Care division an increase of 43.9%</b>		
<b>Referrals Community Care</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>
<b>Community Care Housing Officers</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Supported Housing</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>95</b>

These referrals are from people who are:-

- Discharged from hospital
- Ready to move on from supported housing
- moving into supported living
- leaving care

Once re-housed by the Housing Vulnerable People Service within the Community Care Division vulnerable people are supported for up to two years with resettlement. Without this support many may fail to live independently and return to hospital or become homeless. The involvement of floating support following re-housing in their new home avoids more costly interventions by Adult Services .This is highlighted in the case study below.

### **Case Study referred by the Housing Vulnerable People Services (HVPS)**

#### **Background**

Mr S aged 78 and homeless. He was referred to the Floating Support Service by the Police as he needed to move under Safeguarding Procedure.

Mr S had been living with his abusers for approx 5yrs in what can only be described as squalid conditions. He was also a victim of financial abuse. He had no recent experience of living on his own and there

were concerns that he would fail his tenancy without any support and would continue to be at risk of further abuse.

Mr S was initially moved into respite care by the Adults Team, whilst an offer of accommodation was secured by the Housing Vulnerable People Services (HVPS).

Mr S was assessed as needing support with managing his finances, with resettlement and setting up a home, registering with a GP, dealing with his post, furnishing and decorating his flat, monitoring of his health and possible self neglect and prevention of further abuse.

Mr S was supported throughout the rehousing process, the viewing and sign up for his tenancy.

As he had no furniture or household items of his own he was supported to make an application for a Community Care Grant to enable him to buy to buy white goods. Loaves 'N' Fishes provided furniture and household items for his new flat.

The Floating Support Officer liaised with the Appointeeship Unit who now safeguard his finances and arranged for Tipton Homecare to help Mr S maintain his flat to the required standard and to do his weekly shopping. A referral was also made to Community Alarms, the Warden Service, STAY (telecare) and Foot Health Clinic and Mr S was accompanied to doctors and hospital appointment to arrange to have his hearing, his mental health (early signs of dementia) and other health issues checked. The Floating Support Officer also arranged for a shower to be installed into the flat and for him to be measured up for a walking stick.

Although Mr S had resettled in his flat and his care and support needs were being met there was concern that he was still at risk of financial abuse and due to health issues was not capable of independent living. A further referral to the safeguarding team was made and it was agreed by all agencies that Mr S should be assessed for a move into Extra Care Sheltered Accommodation.

## PRIMARY SUPPORT NEED

**29% of vulnerable people referred had mental health difficulties as their primary support need**

Analysis of referrals since the service commenced show that year on year a high level of referrals from people whose primary support need is mental health. These referrals range from people who may be experiencing their first episode of mental ill health to people with enduring mental health problems referred by their CPN or by their social worker.

The case studies below highlights that people that have used the service not only require support to manage their mental ill health but support with many other issues including debt and rent arrears.

### **Case study Mental Ill health**

Ms A, aged 22 was referred by Anchor for support to manage her mental health. Her support officer arranged an appointment with her GP to discuss her mental health and for a referral to be completed to the Primary Care Liaison Team. However as Ms A was expressing suicidal thoughts and spoke of wanting to end her life the primary care and crisis team were contacted as a matter of urgency and support was provided prior to them receiving the referral from the GP.

As Ms A had a number of debts an appointment was arranged with the CAB and all her creditors were contacted to advise that she is seeking debt management advice and requested they place further action on hold. As Ms A had also defaulted on a payment plan to clear her former arrears she was supported to contact the rents team to set up another payment plan.

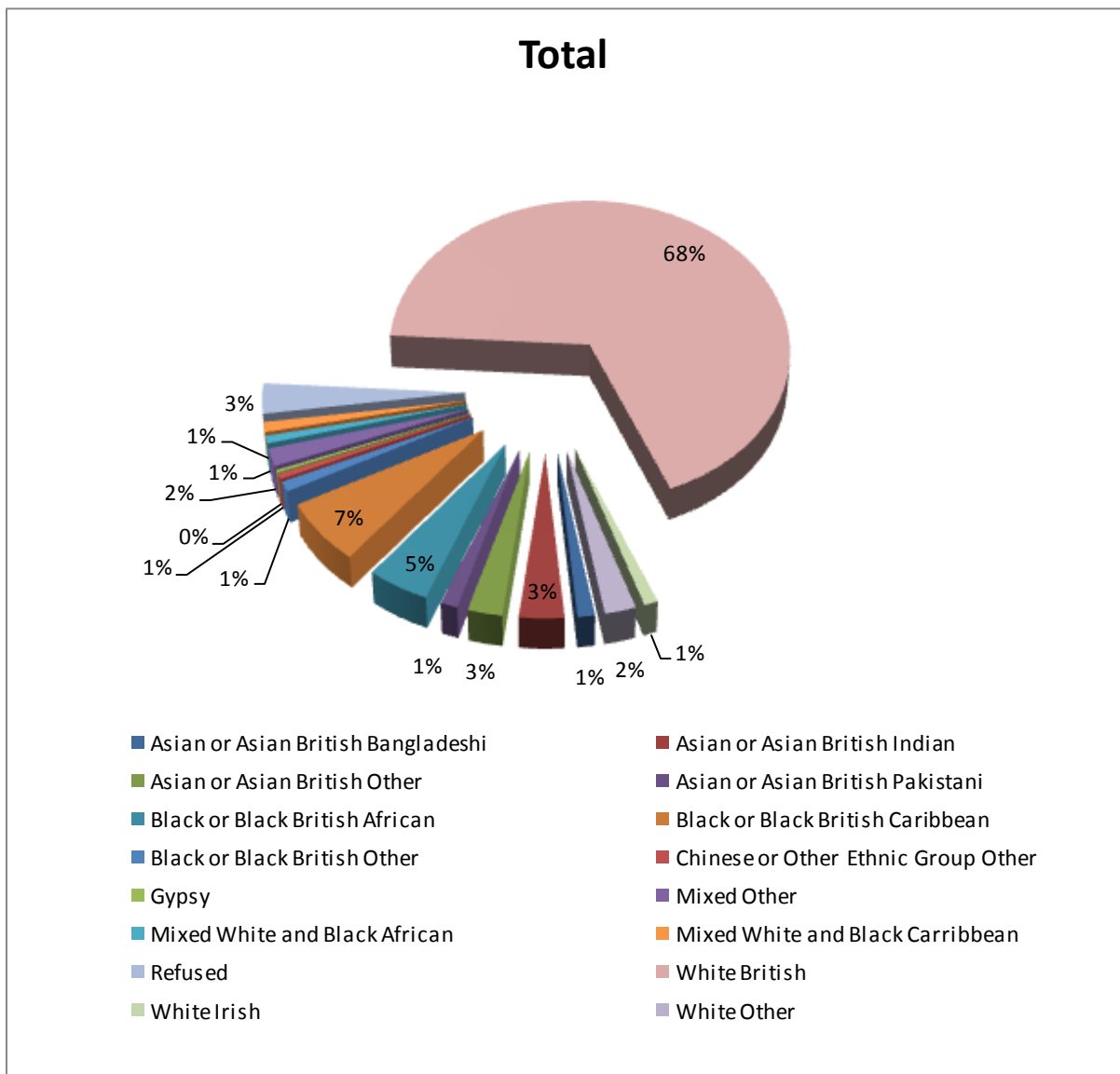
As Ms A also needed to move for safety reasons, a joint visit was arranged with her Housing Officer to discuss ongoing issues and she was supported to make an application to move on welfare grounds.

Although support had only been in place for a short time, Ms A feels things are starting to move forward for her as she felt her life was at a standstill and was not sure which way to turn.

## No. of vulnerable people supported by ethnic origin

The Service has a Key Performance Indicator to measure take up of the service by Black and Minority Ethnic Groups of 20%.

Of all referrals received in 2010/11 take up of the service by BME Groups was 27.5% compared to 29% in 2009/10.



## OUTCOMES

Since June 2007 the Floating Support Service has reported on the outcomes to the national outcome data collection.

These outcomes are measured nationally.

The five key outcomes achieved for 2010/11 are listed below:

<b>Achieve Economic Well Being</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Number who maximised their income, including receipt of the correct benefits	293	292
Number who reduced their overall debts	178	174
Number who found paid work	17	13
Number who participated in paid work during the last 12 months	22	17
<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Number who participated in their desired training / education	68	54
Number who achieved a Qualification	15	16
Number who participated in Leisure cultural, faith activities, & or informal learning	50	55
Number who participated in their chosen work-like activities	15	19
Number who established contact with external Services / Group / friends / Family	175	183
Number who established contact with friends / family	91	74
<b>Be Healthy</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Number who managed their physical health better	133	108
Number who managed their mental health better	108	111

Number who managed their substance misuse issues better	38	49
Number who managed independent living better as a result of assistive technical aids & adaptations	69	50
<b>Stay Safe</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Number who maintained their accommodation	153	161
Number who secured / obtained settled accommodation	126	148
Number who complied with their statutory orders / related processes in relation to offending	15	14
Number who better managed self harm	11	11
Number who needed support to avoid causing harm to others	9	3
Number who achieved the minimising of the risk of harm from others	35	40
<b>Make a Positive Contribution</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Number supported who achieved greater choice & control or involvement	187	166

**In 2010/11 Service Users received a total of £253,689.62 in benefits and charitable donations compared to £241,068.18 in 2009/10**

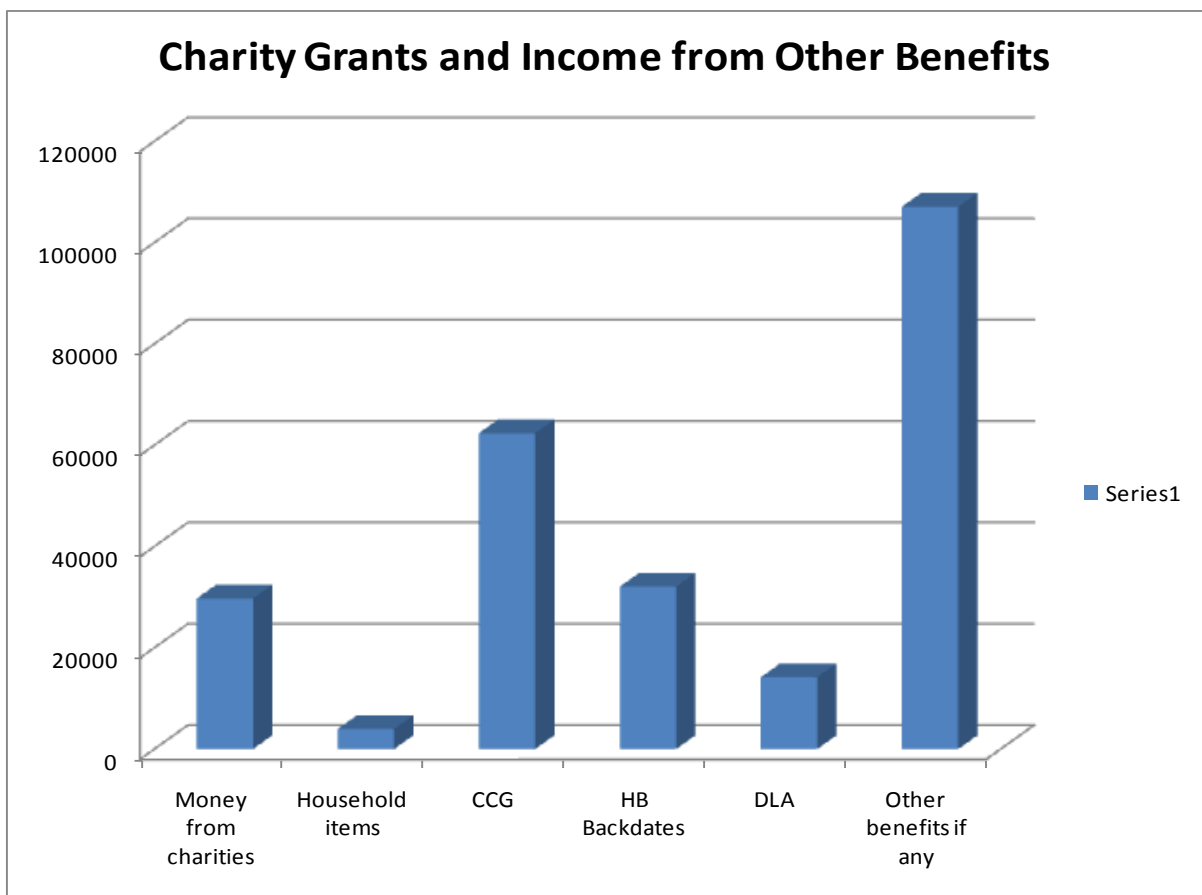
Maximising income and improving the economic wellbeing of vulnerable people has become more difficult this year due to the increase in the numbers of people requesting assistance from charitable funds, the changes in welfare benefits and the criteria for accessing charitable grants has become more difficult .

Despite this support officers have obtained a total of **£253,689.62** in benefits and charitable donations for people who have used the service.

The chart below evidences the total amount of benefits and charitable donations achieved.

These benefits include:

- Housing benefit
- Disability living allowance
- Incapacity benefit
- State Pension
- JSA
- Income Support
- Community Care Grants
- Donations from local charities



## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is undertaken quarterly. The performance target is 85% of all customers are satisfied with the service. The people who have used the service continue to score the service highly the target has been achieved throughout 2010/11.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
93.5%	94.0%	91.7%	89.7%

Between June and September 2010 we asked 85 of our stakeholders to complete a survey regarding the knowledge and skills of the Floating Support Officers. 32 of the 33 stakeholders responded positively to this question and their responses ranged from good, very well to excellent. Some of the comments received included:-

- “displays high levels of competency”
- “very impressed”
- “very skilled at their job”
- “highly experienced officers”
- “good communication skills and detailed knowledge”

## SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- Developed a post with the Probation Service for offenders and secured Supporting People funding for the post for next three years with the awarding of a 3 year Supporting People contract in February 2010.
- A Service level and information sharing agreement with the Probations Service has been agreed and is now in place.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Our achievements this year were:

- 98.2% of service users have achieved or maintained independence against a target of 98.1%.

- Customer satisfaction surveys evidence high levels of satisfaction with the service.
- Two support officers and three apprentices successfully completed the Institute of Housing Certificate in Supported Housing.
- Three Apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeship in Community Care Division.
- Worked in partnership with Sandwell Homes Learning and Development Unit to provide support to eight people to attend basic DIY skills training.
- Provided training for support officers to raise awareness of working with hoarders to improve the knowledge and skills of staff

## **FUTURE PRIORITIES**

Key priorities for the Floating Support Service for 2011/12 include:

- Relocation of North and South teams to one site.
- Review referral criteria and service information.
- Change the focus of the service to meet the needs of the homeless and those most in need.

## **CHALLENGES**

Over the next three years as a result of Local Authority Supporting People spending cuts to the funding to the Community Care Division the Floating Support Service will be faced with a number of challenges. These are:

- to redesign and change the focus of delivery.
- to provide a service targeting those who are most vulnerable and those with high level needs.
- to retain experienced and knowledgeable workforce with a range of skills.
- to deliver a high standard of service which delivers value for money.

Anticipated cuts to Adult Services and other Supporting People Providers funding will potentially generate an increase in demand for Sandwell Homes Floating Support Service from:

- Vulnerable people who do not meet the access criteria to receive a service from Adult Services.
- Vulnerable people where Supporting People services have been decommissioned.

As a provider of Floating Support there is a need to evidence that the service offers value for money, achieves the required performance standard and outcomes for the service. There is a need to ensure that the service meets the needs of those at risk of homelessness, preventing people becoming more vulnerable. The challenge is to do this within a reduced budget.

## **SUMMARY**

Overall the Floating Support Service has demonstrated year on year that it has achieved its aim of supporting vulnerable people to sustain their home and maintain independence in the community and improve the outcomes for people who use the service.

The case studies demonstrate how skilled and experienced support officers can motivate people with a range of needs to make the necessary changes in order to turn their life around.

The service continues to show high levels of customer and stakeholder satisfaction which demonstrates that the service is highly regarded.

The development of a new service for offenders in partnership with the Sandwell Probation Local Delivery Unit has provided a much needed link with the Probation Service and has been well received by Supporting People and Probation.

The redesign of the service targeting those who are most vulnerable and those with high level needs will mean that priority will be given to those:-

- who are at immediate risk of homelessness.
- at significant risk of harm.
- need support to manage their home following discharge from hospital.

- have been assessed by adult services as having low to moderate needs and who do not meet adult service criteria of critical or substantial need.

The focus on prevention and on providing housing related support to vulnerable people delivers real cost savings .Work carried out by Cap Gemini <sup>1</sup> on the Benefits Realisation of Supporting People investments completed in 2008 suggest that every £1 spent on Supporting People services saves over £2 through reduced demand on statutory and other locally commissioned services. The ratio of savings to investment varies across the client groups :

- People with Alcohol related issues £1 (investment): £4.40 (return)
- People with drug problems £1 : £5.20
- People with mental health problems £1 : £2.20
- People with a learning disability £1 : £2