

Supporting People Programme

July 2008

Supporting People Programme

Derbyshire County Council

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Supporting People Inspections

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively and delivers high-quality local services for the public.

Within the Audit Commission, the Housing Inspectorate inspects and monitors the performance of a number of bodies and services. These include local authority housing departments, local authorities administering Supporting People programmes, arms length management organisations and housing associations. Our key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) set out the main issues which we consider when forming our judgements on the quality of services. The KLOEs can be found on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing.

This inspection has been carried out by the Housing Inspectorate using powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 and is in line with the Audit Commission's strategic regulation principles. In broad terms, these principles look to minimise the burden of regulation while maximising its impact. Supporting People inspections are carried out with the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

Supporting People is the Government's long-term policy to enable local authorities to plan, commission and provide housing-related support services which help vulnerable people live independently.

The Supporting People programme brings together significant funding streams including transitional housing benefit (THB), which has paid for the support costs associated with housing during the implementation phase, the Housing Corporation's supported housing management grant (SHMG), and the probation accommodation grant scheme (PAGS) into a single pot to be administered by 150 administering local authorities (ALA). Unitary and metropolitan authorities and counties are designated as an administering authority with the county taking the lead in most cases for the districts in their area.

Administering local authorities work in partnership, with districts where this is relevant, to agree Supporting People strategies and delivery mechanisms for housing related support services with housing, social services, health and the probation service providers. Negotiation and consultation is also required with service users, all housing and support service providers, other statutory service providers, the private sector and voluntary organisations to plan and commission support services to meet identified needs.

The former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)¹ has published a number of consultation papers on the developing programme and a work plan setting out what local authorities and their partners will need to achieve in order to deliver the programme effectively. All the relevant papers for Supporting People can be found on the Supporting People k-web that can be accessed through the Supporting People website: www.spkweb.org.uk.

¹ Now the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

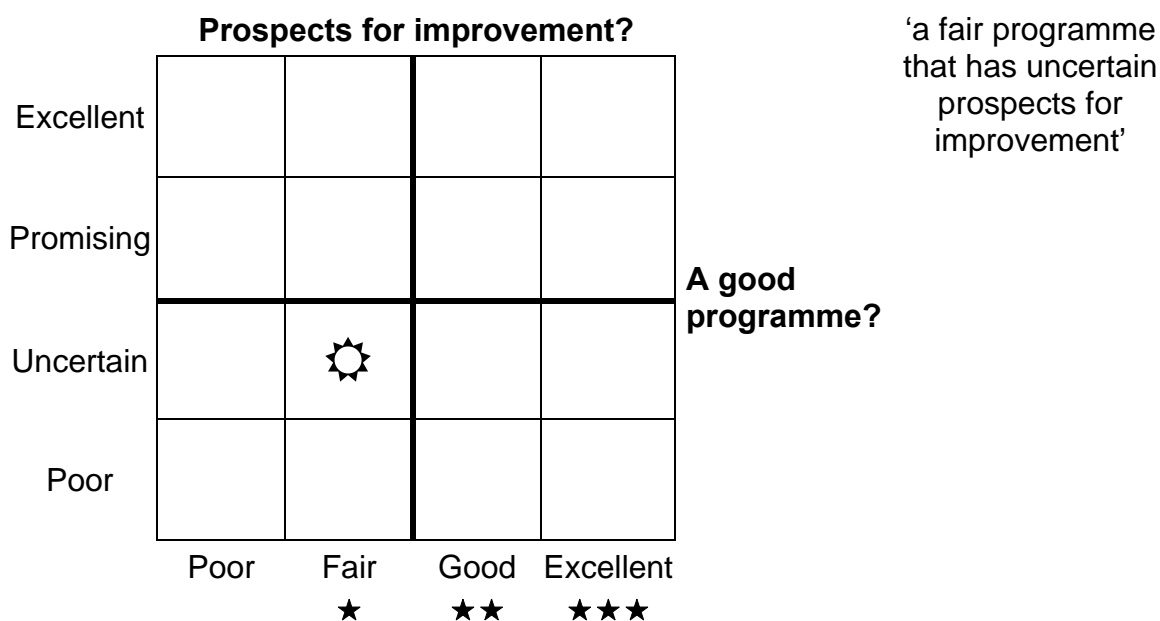
Summary

- 1 Overall, Derbyshire County Council's administration of the Supporting People programme is 'fair' with 'uncertain' prospects for improvement.
- 2 The Council receives a Supporting People grant of £17,260,646 and an administration grant of £448,046 for 2007/08. There are 234 services provided through 94 contracts. Derbyshire has 8495 units of supported accommodation, 2,880 units of community or social alarms, 2,465 units of home improvement agency support and 585 units of floating support.
- 3 The highest cost service at £879.58 per week is an accommodation service for people with a learning disability. The lowest cost service is £0.54 per week for an alarm service for people with a physical or sensory disability.
- 4 The programme has a number of strengths. The Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group have provided consistent input into the programme. A well regarded team is in place and there are positive relationships with service providers. The quality of services has improved and savings have been made by the programme. Sound contract monitoring arrangements in place which will ensure that quality is maintained and further improved.
- 5 Some new services have been developed and others have been remodelled to provide more flexible support that is responsive to the needs of service users. Service users are involved in the programme in a number of ways including participating in the governance arrangements which means they are able to influence decisions about services which directly affect them.
- 6 However, these strengths need to be set against a number of weaknesses in the delivery of the programme. The governance arrangements have not provided sufficient drive and strategic leadership and do not include all key stakeholders. The programme has been slow to deal with the funding of ineligible care costs which has meant that money has not been spent on the housing related support needs of vulnerable people.
- 7 There are other issues the programme still needs to deal with. These include resolving issues about the lack of move-on accommodation and the lack of information on diverse needs. The programme has not consistently addressed value for money issues. Information on the programme is difficult to obtain and the accessibility of services needs to be improved. The lack of provision in certain areas and for some user groups means that choice is limited for service users.
- 8 The programme can demonstrate a track record in making improvements in some areas but has been far too slow in addressing all the issues it needs to. The programme is not at the stage of development that could be expected after five years of operation.

Scoring the Supporting People programme

- 9 We have assessed Derbyshire County Council as providing a 'fair', one-star programme that has uncertain prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Figure 1 Scoring chart²



Source: Audit Commission

- 10 We found the programme to be fair because it has a range of strengths including:
- some new services have been commissioned and some existing services have been remodelled to provide more flexible support that is responsive to the needs of service users;
 - services have improved through effective improvement planning and the quality, as measured by the QAF has improved with the majority of services operating at level B;
 - there are effective support plans in place which enable service users to measure the progress they are making in gaining skills in independent living;
 - there is good engagement with service providers and there are many effective partnership arrangements in place;

² The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the programme is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a programme that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent programme (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the programme, also on a four-point scale.

- service user involvement in the programme has been strengthened and they are involved in the governance arrangements which means they are able to influence decision making; and
 - the Supporting People team is well regarded and is capable of delivering the programme.
- 11 However, there are some areas which require improvement. These include:
- the programme has continued to fund ineligible learning disability services which means that resources have not been available to develop housing related support services for other vulnerable groups;
 - the governance structures have not provided sufficient leadership and ambition for the programme and do not contain representative of all key stakeholders;
 - needs information has not been updated and the five year strategy is no longer driving the development of the programme;
 - the approach to value for money has not been consistent and neither the governance groups or the service providers have sufficient information to know if services are offering value for money;
 - the approach to diversity is weak with limited use of profile information and although BME groups have been consulted there are no outcomes from this work;
 - information on the programme is hard to obtain. Derbyshire's website is difficult to navigate and there are inconsistent links from the District Council websites; and
 - although work is taking place in developing solutions to addressing the difficulties for service users to move on to independent living, the programme does not have a strategy to coordinate this.
- 12 The programme has uncertain prospects for improvement because:
- the over cautious and unambitious approach of the Commissioning Body has delayed changes that are necessary to move the programme forward;
 - the Council cannot demonstrate sufficient improvement in value for money over the life of the programme as there have been a number of different value for money initiatives which have not been well managed through a lack of robustness or thoroughness;
 - performance management is underdeveloped and is not always clear what the significance is of the information that is being presented;
 - there are insufficient links between the programme and other Council and partner strategies; and
 - the programme has missed deadlines which have impacted on its ability to deliver improvements.

13 However, there are some drivers for improvement. These include:

- an annual plan is in place for the programme which also informs the work plans for the Supporting People team;
- the Supporting People team and service providers are involved in the continual improvement in the quality of services;
- members of the team have the necessary skills and experience to deliver the programme; and
- there is good corporate support for the programme and sound linkages into the LAA process which will take effect in 2009.

Recommendations

- 14 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, organisations need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. Our recommendations identify the expected benefits for both local people and the organisation. In addition, we identify the approximate costs³ and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context, the inspection team recommends that the Council shares the findings of this report with service users, service providers and councillors, and addresses all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation

R1 Improve the governance of the programme by:

- *ensuring that the Commissioning Body is able to provide strategic leadership to the programme;*
- *ensuring that decisions are made to support rapid change in the programme so that it can move forward as quickly as possible;*
- *ensuring that the Commissioning Body sets ambitious targets for the programme;*
- *ensuring that the Commissioning Body receives concise information that clearly shows what decisions need to be made;*
- *ensuring that an effective planning mechanism for the programme is established to enable the governance groups to make timely decisions; and*
- *ensuring that people involved in the governance of the programme have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and that information on these is widely shared.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- the programme will have the leadership it needs to make timely decisions about developments and improvements; and
- stakeholders will be clear about the role of the governance groups and the people involved in these.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by September 2008.

³ Low cost is defined as less than 1 per cent of the annual service cost, medium cost is between 1 and 5 per cent and high cost is over 5 per cent.

Recommendation

R2 Improve the management of the programme by:

- *completing the assessment of ineligible funding in learning disability services to ensure that money is not being spent on services other than housing related support;*
- *improving the approach to value for money ensuring that this is applied consistently across all services and that the process and information is widely shared;*
- *improving the suite of performance management information which includes better linkages between the information and a commentary on what the information means; and*
- *producing an annual report on the programme to inform all stakeholders of the achievements over the year.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- funding will be released and made available for developing the programme to the benefit of vulnerable people; and
- systems are in place to support the better coordination and development of the programme.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by October 2008.

Recommendation

R3 Improve the outcomes from the programme by:

- *developing a strategy to coordinate the work that is taking place to address the availability of accommodation for service users to move on to as they gain skills in living independently;*
- *gathering comprehensive information on the diverse needs of service users and using this to inform service developments;*
- *learning from what other authorities have achieved and use this to set ambitious targets for the programme; and*
- *improving the navigation of the website and the quality of the information that it contains along with better linkages to the websites of the District Councils.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- better access to services and information by service users.

The implementation of this recommendation will have medium impact with low costs. This should be implemented by October 2008.

Recommendation

R4 improve the linkages between the programme and other client services by:

- *ensuring that all stakeholders, including the Council's adults' services are represented in the governance groups for the programme; and*
- *ensuring that linkages are made between the Supporting People strategy and the service strategies of other partners and stakeholders.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- representatives of all the different service user groups are involved in decision making processes; and
- there is clarity about how well the programme works with and supports wider services.

The implementation of this recommendation will have medium impact with low costs. This should be implemented by January 2009.

Recommendation

R5 Report and publicise the key findings of this report to service users; stakeholders; councillors and staff.

Recommendation

R6 Take action to address all other weaknesses identified in this report

- 15 We would like to thank the staff of Derbyshire County Council who made us welcome and who met our requests efficiently and courteously.

Dates of inspection: 31 March to 3 April and 7 to 9 April 2008.

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Report

Context

The locality

- 16 Derbyshire County Council is in the East Midlands region of England and covers 255,000 hectares. The population of the county, which does not include the city of Derby, is around 750,000 people. A large part of the north and west of the county is rural, much of it being within the Peak District National Park, and the population is dispersed in small, often isolated, rural settlements. In contrast, around 100,000 people live in the main urban area of Chesterfield. Ilkeston is the second largest centre with a population of around 36,000.
- 17 Derbyshire is a large, mainly rural county of moors, hills, small villages and busy towns. Levels of affluence and deprivation vary across the county from thriving tourist centres in areas of outstanding natural beauty to areas of decline such as those still suffering from the demise of the coal industry. Employment rates are in line with the national average. However, average earnings are below the national average and unemployment is high in some areas, especially in the north-east of the county.
- 18 The County's population is predicted to increase by around 11 per cent between 2004 and 2029. There is a higher than average percentage of people of pensionable age – 20 per cent of the population is aged over 65 compared with the national average of 18.6 per cent. The minority ethnic population is very small at 2.8 per cent, of which the largest single group, 0.37 per cent, is of Indian heritage. More recently, small but growing numbers of people from Eastern Europe have begun to settle in the north-east of the county.
- 19 Seventeen areas within the county are among the most deprived 10 per cent in England. While unemployment levels in Derbyshire are below the regional average there are pockets of high unemployment. There are relatively high numbers of people on incapacity benefit - a legacy of the coal mining industry. Life expectancy varies by as much as 17 years across the county and some areas have higher than average rates of poor health because of smoking, obesity and unhealthy lifestyles. Teenage pregnancy rates are above national averages in some areas.
- 20 Primary care for the majority of the county is provided by Derbyshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT). Primary care for the Melbourne area of South Derbyshire is provided by Derby City PCT while primary healthcare services to the town of Glossop and the surrounding area in the north of the county come from the Tameside and Glossop Health Authority.

The Council

- 21 The Council has had a Labour administration since 1981. The authority currently comprises 38 Labour, 15 Conservative, 10 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent county councillors. There is a Leader and Cabinet governance structure with nine councillors each taking an executive lead for a strategic or service portfolio. The Conservative Group Leader occupies the tenth cabinet seat.
- 22 The annual gross expenditure for 2007/08 is over £1 billion (including schools) and the capital programme currently runs at £156 million per year. The Council employs 37,000 people (19,798 Full-Time Equivalents) making it one of the biggest councils in the country and a major employer in Derbyshire.
- 23 Partnership working is important to Derbyshire. The Derbyshire Partnership Forum is the county-wide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Delivery of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is through four main boards and overseen by the LAA Board. The Safer Communities Board, Children and Young People Board, Healthier Communities and Older People Board and Sustainable Communities Board coordinate and oversee the strategic delivery of projects at a county, district and local level.
- 24 Derbyshire County Council received a 'four star' rating from the Audit Commission in 2007. The 2007 Direction of Travel rated the Council as improving well.

The Supporting People programme

- 25 The Council receives a grant of £17,260,646 for 2007/08 and an administration grant of £448,046. In 2007/08 the grant had a total underspend of £2.25 million since 2003. This was the result of efficiency savings and contract negotiations from the service reviews, decommissioning of ineligible services and delayed in completing projects.
- 26 There are 94 contracts providing 234 services. Derbyshire has 8,495 units of supported accommodation, 2,880 units of community or social alarms, 2,465 units of home improvement agency support and 585 units of floating support. The highest cost service at £879.58 per week is an accommodation based service for people with a learning disability. The lowest cost service is £0.54 per week for an alarm service for people with a physical or sensory disability.
- 27 Derbyshire County Council was inspected in fifth year of the Supporting People programme and this report reflects that and focuses on the current context for the Council and the work that has taken place in the delivery of the programme and hence the outcomes for vulnerable people.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

What has the programme aimed to achieve?

- 28 The Council and its partners agreed a five-year Supporting People Strategy in March 2005. The strategy contains an overall vision and aims for the programme that supports local and national priorities for helping vulnerable people. It also identifies gaps in services and priorities for the programme.
- 29 The vision for the programme is:
- ‘The Supporting People programme in Derbyshire will deliver high quality and cost effective housing related support services to enable vulnerable people to exercise choice, retain independence and reduce social exclusion.’*
- 30 The strategy specifically identifies gaps in services for young people, offenders, people who misuse substances, people with mental health problems and people with chaotic lifestyles. The strategy also identifies that the lack of affordable housing affects the provision of move on accommodation for service users.
- 31 The strategy identified the service priorities to be services for young people who have a variety of needs and services for people with chaotic lifestyles and complex needs. The latter group identified the need for services for people who have a combination of problems and whose needs cannot currently be met by services which target a single client group need. These priorities were reconfirmed by the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body in the autumn of 2007.

Is the programme meeting the needs of the local community and users?

- 32 The assessment was based on the following key issues:
- governance and partnerships;
 - grant compliance, strategy and needs;
 - delivery arrangements;
 - commissioning and performance;
 - value for money;
 - service user involvement;

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- access to services and information;
- diversity; and
- outcomes for service users.

Governance and partnerships

- 33** The DCLG has set out the following structural arrangements for the governance, development and delivery of the Supporting People programme.
- Accountable Officer and the Supporting People team: drive the whole process.
 - Inclusive forum: consults with service providers and service users.
 - Core strategy group: proposes strategic direction, service review procedures and timetables and work needed to secure the effective and efficient delivery and development of the programme.
 - Commissioning body: agrees strategic direction, compliance with grant conditions, outcomes of service reviews and monitors the delivery and development of the programme.
 - Councillors: approve key decisions of the Commissioning Body.
 - Supporting People team: delivers the local programme.
- 34** This is an area with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. There is commitment to the programme and the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group have provided consistent leadership and involvement. There are sound partnership arrangements with, and the engagement of, health, housing, probation and service providers. However, the Commissioning Body has not provided sufficient strategic leadership and a number of issues have taken too long to be resolved. The Core Strategy Group has not developed over the life of the programme and has not expanded to include all key stakeholders such as social care commissioning managers.

Corporate commitment

- 35** There is a clear corporate commitment to the programme. Officers from a number of corporate sections, such as legal services, work with the team and fully support the work they are undertaking. The programme is part of the adult social services department and has clear links through this into wider departmental and corporate systems and procedures. The work that the county has been involved in on the development of the LAA has ensured that the programme is widely acknowledged for the role it plays in supporting vulnerable people across the county.

- 36 County Councillors are well acquainted with the programme through regular Cabinet reports and the discussions at subsequent Council Meetings. District and County Councillors make up the membership of the Commissioning Body and this group is chaired by the portfolio holder for adult social services. District Councillors regularly report back to their Cabinets on the programme. These activities have enabled Councillors across the county to have a greater understanding of the programme and the contribution that it makes to overall county and district council and partner objectives.

Commissioning Body

- 37 The Commissioning Body has provided consistent leadership for the programme. It was decided in 2002, before the programme became operational, that Councillors would represent the County and District Councils to enable effective partnerships between the councils. Health and the Probation Service are represented by senior officers. All partners have consistently attended meetings and membership of the group has remained relatively stable. This has provided continuity and ensured that decisions have been based on experience and expertise in the programme.
- 38 The Commissioning Body has not provided sufficient strategic direction for the programme. A number of issues have not been tackled quickly enough, such as dealing with ineligible spending and improving access to move on accommodation. The Commissioning Body reaches decisions by consensus and this can delay the decision making process. Issues are referred back to the Core Strategy Group if it is unable to reach a decision or if there are disagreements between members. We observed a meeting of the Commissioning Body and the volume of information that was presented to members of the group was onerous. Improved access to concise executive summaries that clearly identify the impact of reports on the strategic direction of the programme would help to improve participation and the outcomes from Commissioning Body meetings. This has resulted in the slow development of some elements of the programme which has limited the benefits delivered to service users.
- 39 There have not been sufficient links between the Commissioning Body, the Core Strategy Group and all stakeholders to ensure the effective governance of the whole programme. Although members of the Commissioning Body meet with their individual housing representative who sits on the Core Strategy Group, there are no formal meetings or exchanges that involve all stakeholders. A number of stakeholders we met as part of the inspection were not clear as to who sits on the governance groups and what the respective roles are. Although minutes of the Commissioning Body are on the Derbyshire County Council's website, these are out-of-date and no minutes of the Core Strategy Group are posted on the site. This is a missed opportunity for all stakeholders to understand what is discussed at the groups and the wider linkages that there are across the programme.

Core Strategy Group

- 40 The Core Strategy Group has not developed and changed its focus as we would have expected by this stage of the programme. District Council housing staff, health and probation have been consistent members of this group over the life of the programme which has brought a level of expertise and continuity. There has been provider representation on the group since 2006 and two service users have also recently joined the group. However, there has been limited representation from adult social services commissioners. Representatives from the Youth Offending Service (YOS) or the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) are new members and have only just started to contribute to this group. This has meant that the group has not been sufficiently challenged with other ideas and approaches and has not had to reconsider its role and structure in light of a developing and changing programme.

Accountable Officer

- 41 The Accountable Officer performs this role successfully. He is an effective champion for the programme. The role of the Accountable Officer is held by the Council's Assistant Director of Strategy and Commissioning within the Adult Social Services department. This post has many external links including to the health services and Government Offices. As well as providing management for the Supporting People team, the Accountable Officer champions the programme through a range of groups and forums and ensures that linkages between the programme and other corporate and partner strategies is developed. The Accountable Officer has performed this role for the past six years and has brought continuity and experience to the position.

Health, Housing, Social Care and Probation/Criminal Justice partnership arrangements

- 42 Partnership working is a strength of the Council. Health, housing and probation are well represented and engaged in the programme and there are effective partnership arrangements in place. There has been continued representation from the PCT and they are involved and engaged in the programme.
- 43 The District Councils have an effective voice in the programme. This is through the governance arrangements, with representation from Councillors on the Commissioning Body, and senior officers involved in the Core Strategy Group. The district housing officers are leading the work on addressing the lack of move-on accommodation for service users.
- 44 Adult social services involvement in the programme has been limited. There is not yet an integrated strategic approach covering housing related support, adult social care and health. An older persons commissioning strategy has just been developed but there is no housing and support strategy for mental health, learning disabilities, and physical disabilities services linked to social care and health provision. Commissioning managers covering these areas are not members of the Core Strategy Group. This means that there has been insufficient discussion about how the programme supports vulnerable people in the community.

- 45 Children and young people's services are linked onto the Supporting People programme. Young people have been a priority for the programme since its inception and a representative of these services is a member of the Core Strategy Group. However, attendance at these meetings through 2007 has not been consistent. Although the YOS has nominated a representative to join the Core Strategy Group, they have not yet attended a meeting. This lack of attendance at meetings means that other services such as probation and health have to play a greater role in ensuring that the needs of these service users are included in discussions.
- 46 Safeguarding arrangements are not comprehensive. Safeguarding vulnerable adults has been given a high priority in work with service providers and the policies and procedures have been updated to include specific reference to supported housing. Training has been set up for providers and safeguarding issues are regularly discussed at Supporting People team meetings. However, the team is only aware of one safeguarding issue being dealt with currently and it is not known if this is correct or that other issues have been dealt with and not reported back to the team. We made a mystery shopping telephone call relating to the potential mistreatment of a service user. Staff did not know who to refer the call to and the section we were put through to did not mention safeguarding or the need for prompt action. Without clear procedures and responses, service users could potentially be placed at risk or left in dangerous situations.
- 47 The Probation Service is fully engaged in the programme. There is appropriate and consistent attendance at the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group by probation staff which has ensured that the needs of offenders are understood and included in the programme. This has been reflected in the recent decision to use Supporting People funding for additional floating support for offenders. Given the high correlation between the risk of offending and homelessness and housing related support needs, this has been a positive move to extend and increase services for this group.
- 48 The MAPPAs arrangements are robust with a clear policy and procedure which is regularly reviewed and tested by the management of high risk offenders. There are clear links between the MAPPAs process and the programme with the Supporting People lead officer sitting on the MAPPAs strategic management board. Despite there being no formal protocol there is good liaison and dialogue resulting in confidence between the partners and a number of positive housing related support outcomes for high risk offenders.

Service providers

- 49 There are effective arrangements in place for engaging with service providers. Providers elect representatives to sit on a providers working group which is the main conduit with the Supporting People team. The working group also arranges the regular providers forums, provides representation on the Core Strategy Group and the regional providers group.

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- 50 Overall, relationships with providers are strong. The majority are effectively engaged. As part of the inspection, we surveyed providers and 95 per cent were either satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements for involving them in the delivery and development of the programme and in partnership working. There are a small number of providers who are still not utilising the opportunities for engagement and the Supporting People team is exploring ways of encouraging more involvement from these providers. This ensures that providers are able to play a real and informed role in the programme.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

- 51 The VCS is effectively engaged with the programme. The role it plays in the programme is recognised and valued. The majority of service providers in Derbyshire are from this sector and as a consequence, it has specific representation at the Core Strategy Group. The Supporting People team has delivered appropriate levels of support and training for small VCS providers ensuring they are able to comply with the requirements of the programme. As a result, the voluntary sector has the opportunity to engage with the programme effectively.

Grant compliance, strategy and needs

- 52 This is an area of weakness. Although the eligibility criteria have been revised, they have not been consistently applied and the programme has continued to spend on ineligible services. The five year strategy is not driving the delivery of the programme and has not been reviewed to assess progress against the original plans. Although the priorities for the programme have been reconfirmed, the needs analysis is out-of-date and no process was put in place to ensure that this information was comprehensively reviewed and updated. There is no strategy for dealing with the lack of access to move on accommodation despite this being an issue for the programme.

Grant conditions and eligibility criteria

- 53 Comprehensive eligibility criteria are in place. The eligibility criteria have recently been updated to reflect current priorities and these were widely discussed with service providers, service users and other key stakeholders. The criteria include case studies to demonstrate the impact of their application. The criteria are readily available to providers and are on the Council's website. This ensures that there is clarity amongst service providers and service users about what tasks and support the programme can fund.

- 54 Despite clear eligibility criteria being in place, the service has continued to pay for ineligible services. These relate to services for people with a learning disability in Derbyshire County Council run services. Although this was originally identified through the service reviews which concluded by March 2006, the issue was not resolved at that point. Further work during 2006/07 identified the extent of this ineligible funding to be in the region of £1 million per year. This was only reported to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body in the autumn of 2007. Adult social services took over this funding from April 2008 but no arrangements have been made to repay the programme. This has meant that Supporting People funding in the region of £5 million has been used to provide statutory care services at the cost of housing related support services for vulnerable people.
- 55 The retraction of ineligible funding has taken too long to deal with and is still not fully resolved. From April 2008 a cap of 21 hours housing related support was applied to service users with high level needs but service users with lower level needs will not be assessed until July 2008. This means that there is potentially more ineligible funding to be uncovered. Moreover, the time taken for this issue to be presented to the governance groups has raised concern about the transparency of the programme's funding arrangements.

Five year strategy

- 56 The five year strategy is not being used to drive the delivery of the programme. It was completed in 2005 and is a well written document. It was produced in consultation and built on the draft strategy that had established the programme in 2003. However, the programme is now being guided by the annual work plans which do not link back to the strategy. The strategy has not been formally reviewed to assess progress against original planned actions and objectives. This means that it is not fit for purpose in shaping and driving the programme.
- 57 There are not clear links into all other Council and partner strategies. This reflects uneven or absent strategies in adult and children's social services although there are Supporting People outcomes in some plans. This is an area that needs further joint work and this is planned through the development of joint commissioning strategies. The Supporting People procurement timetable outlines when these service areas will be reviewed. However, the programme has been in place for five years and further progress should have been made. This represents a missed opportunity to develop and commission services to best meet the needs of vulnerable service users.

Needs mapping, analysis and review

- 58 The five year strategy made use of a thorough needs analysis to inform the priorities of the programme. The needs and priorities were developed in consultation with stakeholders and service users. This meant that the programme was able to identify gaps in services and make plans for future re-investment in services.

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- 59 However, no process was put in place to regularly up date the needs information since the writing of the strategy. Needs information has not been effectively updated to inform strategy development. While individual pieces of work have been completed by various stakeholders, such as housing needs surveys, there has been no central coordination of what needs to be collected and compilation of key data in a comprehensive and accessible format which can inform the prioritisation process.
- 60 Despite this lack of comprehensive information, the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group worked together at the end of 2007 to confirm the priorities for the programme. The programme has re-confirmed young people at risk as the key priority. This group was the first to be looked at by the Supporting People procurement strategy and work has taken place to identify needs and establish new services.
- 61 Current work to update information has not been successful. The Supporting People team has recently sent a gap analysis survey out to providers to enable it to update the information it holds. There has been a very poor response to this. Although it was sent to all stakeholders, there have been only five returns so far. The reason for the low level of returns has still to be investigated.
- 62 Plans are in place to update information in the future. The Joint Strategic Needs assessment (JSNA) will be the model for up dating the needs analysis for the programme. The JSNA is about bringing all the current data sets together, from all the departments within the various councils as well as other stakeholders such as health and probation. This will enable everyone to look at what data is available geographically and assess the needs and plan for services. Supporting People are stakeholders in this process. The first JSNA will be produced in August 2008 but it is expected that it will take time for it to be bedded in and for stakeholders to be jointly producing data driven work.

Strategy for access to move-on accommodation

- 63 The programme has failed to effectively tackle the issue of the lack of move on accommodation. This is an issue for the programme which was identified as an issue in the five year strategy. In our survey of providers, this was the area where they expressed the highest level of dissatisfaction. The result of the lack of suitable move-on accommodation for service users means that they remain in services for longer than necessary. This, in turn, has implications for both programme costs and longer waiting times for new clients trying to access services.
- 64 Although Districts Councils have been working separately to resolve and deal with the issues of lack of move on accommodation, these activities have not been coordinated across the county. Nor is there any data available that demonstrates the success that each district has had in dealing with this. This could mean that many service users are staying in services for far longer than is needed but the programme does not know this.

- 65 While this is a general issue, it is not consistent across all providers and all service user groups. A number of providers we visited were able to secure accommodation for their service users when it was time to move on, with the waiting time usually a few months. Some areas have introduced Choice Based Lettings and this is seen positively as it enables service users to have more choice of area and property.
- 66 A working group of the Core Strategy Group is developing a strategy to coordinate activity in this area. However, the development of the strategy is being held up by discussions on issues which could be dealt with as part of the strategy action plan. There is no target date for completion of the strategy. Until this is in place, the approach will continue to be piecemeal and mean that there is inequality in accessing accommodation across the county.

Delivery arrangements

- 67 This is an area where strengths outweigh weaknesses. A well regarded team is in place delivering the programme. The team is effectively managed and their work is planned and monitored. The programme is fully engaged with the LAA. Sound processes are in place for managing and monitoring financial performance and risks, fairer charging arrangements are in place and are being accessed by service users. Information is produced on time for the CLG. The main area of weakness is in performance management and monitoring where arrangements are not comprehensive and it is not clear how the information is being used to drive the programme.

Supporting People Team

- 68 Administration of the Supporting People programme is delivered by a well regarded team. Staff are drawn from a variety of appropriate backgrounds. Service providers who responded to our questionnaire reported a very high level of satisfaction with the advice and support that individual team members provide to them.
- 69 Staff in the team are effectively managed. There are regular one-to-one meetings with managers, team meetings and wider divisional meetings. Performance is managed through annual appraisals which provide the opportunity to review progress and identify any concerns and development and training opportunities. Staff have been on a range on work related training as well as being supported to gain further professional qualifications.
- 70 The work of the team has been mainstreamed into the adult social services department. Staff working with contracts, finance and IT are part of both the Supporting People team and wider departmental structures. However, despite the work that has been undertaken in the team to facilitate open communications and sharing of information, there are still examples of some staff having a narrow approach to their work. This has meant that some providers have had difficulty in understanding how well different aspects of the programme, such as contracts and finance, work together.

Work planning

- 71 Effective work planning arrangements are in place. There is an annual plan for the programme and from this flows the work plans for the separate areas of the team. A project management approach is also used for significant work streams such as the procurement of services for young people. The project plans ensure that objectives are clear, milestones are achievable and that the work is signed off by, and reported to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body.
- 72 While the work plan is driving the programme this does not link back to the five year strategy. Nor is it clear that the strategy has been superseded by the annual work plan. This means that stakeholders are not able to see clear linkages between what is being done now and how this links back to the original objectives of the strategy.

Local Area Agreements (LAA)

- 73 The programme is fully engaged with the LAA. Derbyshire was originally a pilot authority in 2005/06 and a decision was made to align funding for older adults and vulnerable young people to help achieve relevant targets. The whole of the Supporting People budget was aligned in 2006/07 under the Healthier Communities and Older People block. The Chair of the Commissioning Body is also the Chair of this block and has ensured that there are strong links between the programme and the LAA. This means that the programme has been able to play a role in the development of the LAA.
- 74 For 2009/10, the Healthier Communities block will be replaced with the Health and Wellbeing Partnership. There are now two national indicators (NIs) for Supporting People programmes and Derbyshire is including one of these, NI142 on long-term services, as one of the 35 priority improvement targets linked to the LAA. There has also been analysis of how Supporting People will contribute to other targets. The Derbyshire Partnership Forum provides an opportunity for joint working and understanding. There is a commitment to the programme and politicians saw the inclusion of it in the LAA as an opportunity for progression and further improving services for vulnerable people.

Performance monitoring and management

- 75 Performance monitoring and management is disjointed. There is no annual report produced on the programme and performance information provided to the governance structures is underdeveloped. There is a need to shape the information for different audiences and to ensure that key messages are clear. Current reports lack explanation on some areas of performance, some targets are insufficiently linked to service streams and there is a lack of benchmarking information. Changes are being made to the production of management information which will include linking information together more effectively and including a commentary that summarised the information. Until this has been completed, it is difficult for the governance groups to quickly understand what is being presented and what decisions are needed.

- 76 The systems for reporting back to the Commissioning Body on work issues are not effective. For example, a report submitted in 2006 that detailed work to be done following the completion of the service reviews still has outstanding and ongoing work and the Commissioning Body is not aware of the status of this. As a result, the Commissioning Body cannot be confident that all areas of work are being progressed satisfactorily.
- 77 Financial management and monitoring processes are sound. Financial management information is regularly reported to the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group. This covers spend to date on the programme, financial risks, the management of financial risks, the management of the under spend and the administration grant. Financial monitoring also feeds into directorate and corporate systems. This ensures that the grant is managed and the spend on the programme is effectively monitored.
- 78 Underspends on the programme have been used to fund non-recurrent services for young people and people with complex needs. These are priority groups for the programme and this means that the money allocated to provide housing related support to vulnerable people has been used effectively.
- 79 Arrangements to monitor quarterly returns from service providers are effective. Workbooks are checked so that mistakes, such as a provider entering incorrect information, can be picked up and corrected. There are sound arrangements in place, with appropriate escalation, to deal with providers who do not submit performance information according to agreed timescales. There appears to be a high turnover of staff amongst service providers within the county and this has contributed to the issue of workbooks not being submitted on time. To remedy this, the Supporting People team has planned training for providers on completing workbooks. This will be run on a quarterly basis so that providers can send new starters before they need to complete the workbooks. This will be in place from June 2008 and should help in the process of collecting information accurately and on time.
- 80 The use of Performance Indicators to drive improvement is underdeveloped. No individual PI targets have been set for providers. PI information is still produced across all service providers and is not being used as a way of improving performance for specific providers. There are not agreed shared targets (beyond standard PIs) with partners relating to the Supporting People programme. Partner targets where the programme can influence performance are not being monitored or reported to the governance structures. This means that there is no clear linkage between what partners and stakeholders are doing and the impact this is having on the delivery of the programme.
- 81 Supporting People indicators are included in the service plan for the adult social care department. These indicators are considered on an exception basis and have not shown any issues in terms of performance. This ensures the programme's performance is looked at in terms of the overall functioning of the department.

Fairer charging

- 82 Effective fairer charging arrangements are in place. Accessible information and leaflets are available in hard copy and on the Council's website. Work has been done with providers to ensure that all users in chargeable services know that they can request a financial assessment. The assessments are carried out for the programme by the Social Care Assessment Section which also undertakes home visits and annual assessments for service users. Successful applications have doubled over the life of the programme and in total 380 service users have been successful in obtaining financial help towards their costs. This means that service users are able to access the necessary information and are able to maximise their income and allowances.

Risk management

- 83 Sound arrangements are in place for managing risks within the Supporting People programme. There is a comprehensive risk register for the programme that is regularly reported to the Commissioning Body. Service providers have business continuity plans that form part of the risk assessments. This means that all stakeholders have a good understanding of the risks associated with the programme and plans in place to deal with these.

CLG data uploads

- 84 Information is produced on time for the quarterly uploads to CLG. Despite there being occasional problems with providers submitting workbooks, this has always been within acceptable limits. Data is regularly checked as part of the working and use of the Supporting People IT system and was also cross-checked when the steady state contracts were issued. This ensures the quality of the data that is provided to the CLG.

Commissioning and performance

- 85 This is an area with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Steady state contracts are in place and the procurement strategy is comprehensive. Sound contract monitoring arrangements are in place and services have improved through these, the action plans following the service reviews and movement through the QAF. Complaints are used positively and there are examples of where these have led to service improvements. There is good involvement of service providers in a regional group. Set against these are the weaknesses that service reviews were not comprehensive and that they took longer than expected to finalise. Joint commissioning strategies are under developed as is regional working where there are few tangible outcomes. Although the programme is ambitious for services to improve, it set a qualified target of all services at level B or higher by the end of 2007/08 and 33 per cent of services did not reach this.

Contracts

- 86 Steady state contracts are in place for virtually all services. A very small number are still outstanding as they have not yet been signed by both parties. None of the outstanding contracts are being disputed and the delays are believed to be administrative. These are being actively chased so that all services have a contract in place. Steady state contracts increase certainty of funding for providers enabling them to more effectively plan services.
- 87 There has been a considered approach to the length of steady state contract issued to providers. The length of contract issued following the service review depended on a traffic light rating of services. This related to the level of issues arising from service reviews, and the timetable for developing new commissioning strategy for specific service streams. Services with a red light had a one year contract, amber schemes had two year contracts issued and green schemes a three-year contract. This has enabled re-tendering and procurement to be effectively managed.
- 88 Service reviews were not comprehensive. They did address issues of quality and also identified some efficiency savings that could be made. They did not sufficiently address value for money which is discussed in more detail in the next section. Nor did they address issues of exclusions, local connections and tenure restrictions. All these issues are to be addressed through the re-procurement of services which is scheduled to take place between 2006 to 2010. However, the decision to wait until service streams are re-procured has meant that there has continued to be inequity in provision – both in terms of service level and access.
- 89 The service reviews also took longer than anticipated to complete. Although they were all finished by the deadline of March 2006, there was still outstanding work in finalising the reports and agreeing action plans. Staff also continued to be involved in assessing the level of ineligible services in learning disability services. These issues meant that there was a gap between the service reviews ending and new contract monitoring processes beginning.
- 90 Contract monitoring arrangements are sound. Contract monitoring meetings are scheduled for all services. Providers are also required to complete an annual QAF self-assessment. The frequency and intensity of monitoring is based on risk criteria which includes how well the service is progressing against its improvement plan. All providers have been assessed as to whether they are a high, medium or low risk. Contract monitoring started in February 2007. This monitoring of services helps ensure that quality levels are maintained and continue to improve.

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- 91 Contract monitoring is integrated with adult social services arrangements. The contract monitoring staff are part of the contracts team within the adult social services directorate. It is planned that this will enable common approaches to contract monitoring and that services which operate across a number of areas, such as personal care and housing related support, will be assessed on the same standards. However, due to staffing problems within this section, this approach is not yet operational and there are no joint contract monitoring arrangement for providers who are providing both care and housing support to clients. This means that providers are currently still working to different monitoring arrangements.
- 92 Supporting People is not yet fully integrated into arrangements for joint commissioning. This is an area of development for the programme and the adult social services department. Joint commissioning strategies are in process of being developed across all client groups. The Supporting People lead officer is moving into the post of Head of Joint Commissioning which will ensure that there are good linkages between the programme and the new strategies. In the absence of these joint commissioning strategies, there is little correlation between what the Supporting People programme and the adult social services are working to.
- 93 The Supporting People procurement strategy is detailed and comprehensive. It sets out the timetable for the re-commissioning of services by service user group. Work on the re-procurement of services for vulnerable young people and people with complex needs has been completed and work on older people services is currently underway. There is a joint commissioning strategy being consulted on for older peoples' services and Supporting People is part of this work. The extra care strategy links into the Supporting People review of sheltered housing and is a good example of joint working between the district councils and adult social services with Supporting People funding being utilised in the new extra care schemes. This means that the procurement strategy is being used effectively to ensure that there is a joined up approach to service development.

Reporting

- 94 Processes for reporting are not yet comprehensive. The Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group received regular reports on the service reviews programme as well as reviewing all the outcomes reports. The Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Groups now receive reports on performance against the contract monitoring. Stakeholders were able to review the progress of the service reviews through the summary reports posted on the Supporting People pages of the Council's website. However, this facility is no longer available and so far there are no arrangements for sharing the results of contract monitoring more widely. This means that stakeholders are not able to judge how well monitoring is progressing and what it is achieving.

Quality assurance

- 95 Provider performance against the QAF standards shows an improving picture. Some services have improved to level A but the biggest improvement is in the number of service now operating at level B. There are now no services performing at level D.
- 96 The following table shows the QAF scores as at March 2005 and March 2008.

Table 1

QAF core objective scores	March 2005	March 2008
A	5%	10%
B	22%	57%
C	60%	33%
D	13%	0

- 97 Ambition for improvement has not been realised. The programme was ambitious for all services to be at level B by the end of 2007/08 but the above table shows this has not been achieved. The target was qualified as it accepted that small providers may take longer to achieve this. However, 33 per cent of all providers failed to meet this. Improvements in the QAF will continue to be part of the outcome from the contract monitoring that is now in place but so far, no new target for services to reach level B has been put in place. This means that there are still many users in services that are not providing a high standard of quality.

Cross Authority

- 98 Regional work is under developed. Derbyshire is a member of the East Midlands Regional Implementation Group (EMRIG). There are few outcomes from the work undertaken to date. It has however agreed a joint accreditation arrangement for providers and is working on regional benchmarking. The group had spent a lot of time developing a regional outcomes framework which was subsumed into the national approach developed by the CLG. A new chair of this group has recently been elected and a number of regional initiatives and activities are being planned. This means that the authorities across the region have not been able to benefit from the economies of scale that shared work and outcomes can achieve.

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- 99 Regional work with providers has been established. The Supporting People Providers Network (SPPN) was set up 18 months ago to mirror the EMRIG with an aim of undertaking targeted work to help the ALAs improve specific service areas. The first area it has looked at is provider involvement across the region. This work is being finalised and the report and recommendations for improving involvement overall are due to be published in the next few months. Derbyshire has been fully engaged in the work of the SPPN and made a valuable contribution to this through the lead officer sitting on this group as an advisor and link back to EMRIG.

Improvement planning

- 100 Improvement planning from the service reviews has been satisfactory. The action plans issued to providers have been largely well managed and followed up to ensure they are completed. However, some plans show that actions have not been completed in line with targets dates that had been set. Where actions have not been completed, these have been carried forward to the contract monitoring meetings that are now in place. This has resulted in slower than anticipated improvements to the quality of some services currently provided to vulnerable people.
- 101 The new contract monitoring process will be used to monitor the improvement of services in the future. However, no new target has been set for all services, both large and small to reach at least level B of the QAF. Until this is done, and the target reached, the programme cannot be confident that all services are improving and providing better standards of service for users.

Complaints

- 102 Complaints are used effectively as part of the quality assurance process of the programme. The complaints service is managed appropriately and operates in accordance with departmental and corporate guidance. Specific complaints about services are investigated as a 'one-off' or may mean that a monitoring visit is brought forward. Supporting People and adult social care contracts are dealt with by one manager which ensures that complaints received by one service are cross referenced appropriately.
- 103 The programme effectively learns from complaints. The results and findings of investigations are fed into both the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. Some complaints have resulted in service improvements such as better parking provision and improvements the fabric of an accommodation service. Other complaints have been about service levels and dealt with on a case by case basis. Effective investigation of complaints ensures that service users are protected from poor services and opportunities to improve services are explored.

Appeals process

- 104 Clear arrangements are in place to deal with appeals against service reviews or other decisions. An open approach with service providers and stakeholders and a willingness to discuss and negotiate decisions has meant that the appeal procedure has not needed to be used. However, the arrangements mean that service providers are able to challenge decisions where a compromise cannot be reached.

Outcomes

- 105 There have been some tangible improvements to services. Following the issue of improvement plans, the quality of services has improved. Efficiency savings following the service reviews have also resulted in a reduced contract price or more services being offered for the same money. A number of ineligible services have been decommissioned. In total, £1.8 million has been saved from efficiencies and ineligible service decommissioning which is now available for reinvestment and commissioning new services.

Value for money

- 106 This is an area of weakness. The programme has not consistently addressed value for money. Some actions have been taken but these have not been applied consistently. Information provided to Supporting People governance structures has been insufficient to enable a clear understanding of the overall value for money of the programme and providers do not have sufficient information to be confident about the value their services offer. There remain value for money issues outstanding from the service reviews and although these will be addressed through re-procurement this means that the grant has not been available to spend on other services to meet need. Benchmarking is underdeveloped and there has not been a regional approach on value for money which would have supported activity in this area.

How do costs compare?

- 107 Since the programme went live in April 2003 the average cost of floating support services have fallen by a quarter. The cost of accommodation services have also reduced. The reductions in the cost of services are the results of targeting ineligible services and increasing the volume of floating support for the same contract price.

Table 2 Unit cost comparisons between April 2003 and April 2008

Weekly unit cost	April 2003	April 2008	Change
Accommodation based services	£ 29.68 per week	£ 27.30 per week	- 8%
Floating support services	£ 128.06 per week	£95.13 per week	- 25%

How is value for money managed?

108 Value for money has not been well managed. There have been various value for money activities but these have not been robust or thorough. Reporting on value for money across the programme has not been comprehensive. While reports on individual measures to improve value for money have gone to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body, there are not regular reports providing overall information. For example, there is no information on how unit costs and hourly rates are developing across the programme, relative benchmarking information and links with the performance information provided. This means that the governance groups do not have an overview of the level of value for money and the quality that the programme is delivering.

Methodology for contracted services

109 Service reviews did not consistently address value for money and eligibility issues. While they did identify that some learning disability services were high cost they did not identify the level of ineligible funding in these services. Additional methodology was devised following the review process and a further assessment of these services took place. There are also services where there are still significant differences in costs for the same service, for example older people services. Progress on addressing variations in costs has been limited. While these are being assessed now through the reprocurement work, the issues have not been addressed in a timely manner.

110 Although value for money is to be assessed through the contract monitoring process this is not a transparent process. For example, providers have been given information on the spread of costs for services in their 'band' but they do not know what the difference in provision is and why they are more or less expensive than other services. Nor do they know what the quality issues are and how these relate to costs. Providers are concerned that value for money has not been openly discussed and it is not clear if this is because there are no issues or that they are not being included in any work that is taking place. Providers know that issues will be addressed through contract management and the re-procurement of services but feel at a disadvantage in this process due to a lack of information.

Benchmarking

- 111 Benchmarking is under developed. CLG regional and national data had been used to provide comparative information through the service reviews. However, this information is now dated and general. Derbyshire has done little to benchmark services across the county. Benchmarking has been difficult to produce as services are providing a wide range of different support functions and these will not be rationalised until services are re-procured. Work is only just starting to benchmark within the region to provide more up-to-date and relevant external comparisons. However, this has not progressed as anticipated and there is no information available for this work. Without up-to-date information it is not possible for the Council, and providers to have a real understanding of how costs compare and the level of value for money they are providing.

Procurement

- 112 The Supporting People procurement strategy is detailed and comprehensive. There is a timetable for reviewing the commissioning of support services across the different client groups. Procurement will look to improve the value for money of services. For example, in the procurement of services for people with complex needs, a number of floating support services were identified with limited support and infrastructure. The new tender will be on the basis of a combined service to allow more flexibility and bring about economies of scale in terms and the merger of overhead costs.

Improving value for money

- 113 Efficiency and other savings have not been maximised. Some improvements in cost efficiency were delivered through the budget discussions with providers, service reviews and subsequent contract monitoring process. This has resulted in savings in the region of £0.45 million since April 2003 which approximately 2.5 per cent of the budget. This is in addition to other non-cash savings such as where additional services have been negotiated for the same contract price and where inflation increases have not been applied. Such work ensures that effective use is made of the Supporting People programme grant. However, not all providers offered efficiency savings and not all services have been thoroughly assessed which means that it is likely that further monies could have been saved and re-invested in services to meet identified needs and gaps in provision.
- 114 There are not clear targets for improving value for money and no clear targets to improve the quality of services. Limited work has taken place on efficiency savings through the service reviews. Currently, there are some limited targets on performance but there are not targets on efficiencies. This issue has been discussed at the core strategy group but there is not yet an agreed approach. This means that the programme does not have a clear driver for improving the value of spending on housing related support services.

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- 115** Until April 2008 funding was still be used to support ineligible services. While the bulk of these costs have now been taken over by adult social services the situation has still not been finalised. Work is still to be done to assess people with lower level needs and this may reveal more ineligible spend. Until this is finally resolved, the programme cannot be providing value for money.

Cross authority approach

- 116** Cross authority work on value for money is underdeveloped. There has been no sharing of value for money methodologies or work to develop a regional approach. The use of a cost modelling tool could not be agreed at regional level so this has not been progressed. Progress on regional benchmarking of cost and performance of the programme has been poor. Benchmarking information on costs, PIs and QAF scores has not been produced. This means that authorities have not been able to share work and expertise and providers have not benefited from a common approach across the region.

Administration grant

- 117** There is currently no formal mechanism to assess the value for money of the administration grant. Work on assessing value for money in the use of administration grant is still underdeveloped. Some work has been completed comparing the use of administration grant with six other ALAs. Comparisons show that Derbyshire's spend was mid-range in costs. Discussions are taking place at EMRIG to carry out the same exercise but within the region but as yet the methodology for this has not been agreed. Until there is a mechanism in place, the Council will not be able to clearly demonstrate that this grant is delivering value for money.

Service user involvement

- 118** This is an area where strengths outweigh weaknesses. Service users have always been involved in the programme and inclusive forums have been running since 2002. Service user involvement has been extended and strengthened following feedback from them and their desire to play a greater role across all aspects of the programme. Service users have formed an Involvement Forum and have taken over the planning and organising of the inclusive forum, they have designed and promoted a charter of good practice for service user involvement and have been instrumental in the writing of the involvement strategy. They are also represented in the governance arrangements through membership of the Core Strategy Group. Their role in contracting and monitoring needs to be finalised and embedded but work in this area is currently taking place.

Opportunities

- 119** Service users have always played an active role in the programme in Derbyshire. Inclusive forums, which focus heavily on service users started in 2002 and have taken place twice yearly in five different locations across the county each year. Service users were widely consulted on the development of the five year strategy and involved in the service reviews. The programme has built on this involvement which has ensured that service users are able to influence and participate in the development of the programme.
- 120** The programme has responded to feedback from service users. This is evident from the establishment of the Service Users Involvement Forum which was developed following service user feedback to inclusive forums and meets monthly. Service users highlighted the need to change the format of these meetings to make them more inclusive and allow greater involvement from those who wanted it. The Core Strategy Group looked at best practice in high performing ALAs and as well as the Involvement Forum, service users are now involved in the providers' forums. The programme has also introduced a seventh QAF on service user involvement. This means that service users are having an impact on the operation of the programme.
- 121** The Involvement Forum is becoming self sufficient. While it is supported by the Supporting People team, it is now arranging its own meetings and is active in planning and running the wider Inclusive Forums. The Involvement Forum elected two co-chairs of the group who also attend the Core Strategy Group. Members of this group are keen to be more involved in the programme and are currently discussing how they can be represented at the Commissioning Body and play a greater role in the strategic development of the programme. However, the members of this group are also aware that they need to ensure they do not take on more than they can manage. This will help ensure that their involvement is sustainable and can lead to tangible outcomes and developments in the programme.
- 122** The Involvement Forum has a cross section of service users with a good spread of ages and different client groups. It has members from traditionally harder to involve groups such as people fleeing domestic violence and vulnerable young people. This helps to ensure that it is broadly representative of service users as a whole. However, it is aware that some service areas and service users that are not currently involved and this includes BME communities, people with HIV/Aids and Gypsies and Travellers. The group is currently looking at how its membership can be increased to ensure that it is representative of all groups.
- 123** An effective service user involvement strategy is in place. Service users have been involved in the writing of the Supporting People User Involvement Strategy, 'Having a Voice, Making a Difference'. This details the different ways service users can be involved in the programme and is available in an easy to read format. This means that it is accessible to a wide audience of service users.

Involvement in contracting and monitoring

- 124 Service users are not currently directly involved in the contract monitoring of services. Their involvement is planned for the future and members of the Supported People Involvement Forum have just completed the first stage of peer review training to undertake this work. They will also be involved in 'mystery shopping' that is planned for the future. Service users are keen to play a greater role but are also aware that they need more time to ensure they are fully trained and able to carry out these roles competently. Greater service user involvement in this area will ensure that service improvements are responsive to their direct feedback.
- 125 Service users from the Involvement Forum worked with the Contracts Manager to develop a questionnaire for service users as part of the monitoring process. This is an opportunity for service users to evaluate their service and to play a key role in the on-going monitoring of services.

Outcomes from user involvement

- 126 There are positive outcomes from service user involvement. There are examples of these from across the life of the programme including changes that service users influenced through the service reviews. However, the new Involvement Forum has been responsible for a number of recent, significant changes and improvements to the programme. These include designing and re-writing the Supporting People leaflet to make it more interesting and accessible to service users. Service users planned and organised the Inclusive Forums which took place in 2007. The Forum has also designed and promoted a charter of good practice that details how service users should be treated and included in services and this has been adopted by the programme and service providers.
- 127 Service users are in the process of producing a DVD which has been funded through corporate budgets. This will be finalised by the end of April 2008 and will be widely distributed across the county to help raise awareness of how the programme can help actual and potential service users.
- 128 The involvement of service users in the programme has led to changes in the way they are engaged in a range of activities. For example, a service user was involved in the interview for the appointment of the new lead officer and other service users have been engaged in the appointment to adult social care commissioning posts. Being involved in the recruitment of staff is one way that service users can have a real impact on the way services are delivered in the future.

Access to services and information

- 129** This is an area where weaknesses outweigh strengths. Although referral routes to access services are known, these have not been streamlined and there are a number of exclusions to services. Service users have been involved in redesigning leaflets but these are not readily available. The directory is helpful and contains a range of information on services. Information via the different councils' websites is variable. The response we had to mystery shopping phone calls was mixed and it was not easy to quickly get information on the programme.

Access and referral to services

- 130** There is a good understanding of referral routes into housing related support services by third parties. The service directory has details of how to access services and many accept self referral. Where referral is through third parties and other professionals, these routes are well known. This means that access to services is fairly clear for service users being referred to services by other professionals.
- 131** However, referral into services has not been streamlined. There are not common protocols in place with providers guiding access and nomination arrangements across service streams. For example, some learning disability providers still take direct applications and have local connection policies while others have clear protocols in place. This means that it may be difficult for some referrers and service users to easily access services.
- 132** There are no single referral points for service users. Single referral points mean that a service user only has to make one approach for a service and the vacancies within that area will be matched against their needs. Derbyshire is a geographically large county and the concern is that people may not want to travel and knowledge of vacancies in the south of the county may not be of interest to a potential service user in the north of the county. However, until referrals are better managed, service users may have to find the correct service through 'trial and error' rather than a more accurate matching process.
- 133** Many services operate exclusion policies. This can range from offending behaviour to local connections. The probation service is concerned that offenders have not been able to adequately access services although it has not been able to access information to support this view. Some services operating from buildings where the use is controlled by covenant have not been able to accept open referrals. Neither are all services available across tenure. A number of support services are tied to social housing meaning that owner occupiers who would benefit from them are not able to access them. These issues will be addressed through the re-procurement of services but in the meantime it means that potential service users could be being denied access to services.

Information

- 134 There is a range of accessible and informative leaflets and posters on the programme. The information leaflet has been re-designed by service users to make it more accessible. The leaflets and posters were readily available and on display at the County Council's main office.
- 135 Information on the programme is not readily available in the community. No leaflets or posters were seen in other council offices or other access points in the community, apart from a provider's information leaflet. This could limit potential service users, their carers or advocates from being aware of information about Supporting People.
- 136 The response to telephone enquires is mixed. The Supporting People team arranged its own 'mystery shopping' exercise in 2007. A range of scenarios were used including direct questions about Supporting People. As a result of this, information about the programme was updated and re-issued to providers, all council call centres and voluntary and community organisations. In response to telephone calls we made as part of this inspection we also received a mixed response. While staff were helpful and polite, we had to wait or call back for the information we needed. Staff at two district council switchboards claimed to have no knowledge of the programme in response to a direct question. If actual and potential service users receive similar responses it could result in them not receiving the appropriate advice and support they need.
- 137 The Supporting People team provides a good range of information to service providers. In our survey of providers 95 per cent of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the amount of information they receive. This includes information directly from the team, via newsletters, e-briefings and meetings. This means that providers are up-to-date with issues and able to contribute to discussions and developments.

Directory

- 138 A comprehensive directory of housing related support services is available. This is both on the Council's website and in hard copy at a range of access points. The directory provides all the relevant information on the service provided, including the referral routes and contact details. Unfortunately, the Council's website does not have a searchable version of the directory but it is available in sections so people do not have to look through everything to find services for a specific group.

Website

- 139** Limited information is available from the Council's website. The website is difficult to navigate and much of the information is out-of-date or missing. Recently, information on some of the pages of the site has been updated but it is questionable as to how useful this is. For example, minutes of a forum held in February 2007 were added to the site in February 2008. Providers told us that they had difficulties finding information on the website. For example, there are no minutes from the meetings of the Core Strategy Group and until recently the latest minutes of the Commissioning Body were from 2006. The result of this is that there is a lack of transparency about the governance of the programme.
- 140** The County Council is aware of the issues around the Supporting People pages on the website and this is in the process of being re-structured to improve accessibility and ease of use.
- 141** Links to and from the district council websites are variable and again, not always easy to navigate and a number of links were not operational. One of the district councils had developed its pages on the programme and offered a good range of up-to-date information on the programme. However, another district council had no information on the programme on their website. This means that if people are not determined to find the information, they may be put off using the sites or presume no information is available if it is not found immediately.

Better Care: Higher Standards

- 142** The Better Care: Higher Standards charter shows evidence of strong partnership working in Derbyshire. The charter is clearly written and gives a comprehensive guide to services provided by social care, housing and health partners in Derbyshire. This means that a good level of information is available to actual and potential service users.

Access to Fairer Charging

- 143** Accessible information on fairer charging is available. The leaflet explains the process and how to apply for an assessment. The leaflet is available in different formats and languages to make it widely accessible. Take up of this benefit has increased over the life of the programme and is regularly reported to the Commissioning Body. This means that service users in chargeable services are able to access this benefit.

Diversity

- 144 This is an area where weaknesses outweigh strengths. The Council is strengthening its approach to equality and diversity and the Supporting People team are now members of the social services equality group. The programme has also undertaken consultation with BME communities but so far this work has not resulted in tangible outcomes for service users. Limited use has been made of profile information and the need for different types of accommodation, including the suitability of this for people with disabilities has not been thoroughly assessed. The team has struggled to raise the profile of equality and diversity issues and more work needs to be done in this area.

Identifying diverse needs

- 145 The overall approach to diversity is developing too slowly. Although the Council is strengthening its approach to equality and diversity, it is still at level two of the equalities standard for local government and has not been sufficiently challenging to make quicker progress in this area. The Council has had two external assessments of its performance against the equality standard. A baseline position statement has been produced and an improvement plan to reach level three by March 2009 is to go to the cabinet for approval. An equality group has recently been established in the adult social services department. A representative from the Supporting People team attends this group. While the priority of the group is to reach level three of the equality standard it is also facilitating joint working on diversity within the department. These arrangements ensure there is a sound basis on which to progress equality and diversity issues but the pace needs to be increased.
- 146 The equalities impact of the Supporting People programme has been assessed. An equalities impact assessment on the Supporting People programme resulted in BME communities being consulted about service provision. This was to ensure there was a sound understanding of the needs of these communities as well as identifying gaps in service provision. This consultation involved people from a range of ethnic backgrounds and a small number of representatives from the gypsy and traveller community and focused on services for both older people and people fleeing domestic violence. The results of this consultation have only just been received and these still need to be analysed. However, an initial indication shows that more work is needed to ensure these communities understand what services are available and how to access them. This work will ensure that there is a better understanding of services by different sections of the community.

- 147 Limited use has been made of profile information to assess needs and access to services. There has not been tracking of access to services on a geographical basis. This means it is not clear how effectively potential clients from different areas of the County are accessing services. There is a recognised lack of take up of services in South Derbyshire but the reasons for this are not clear. Collection of Supporting People service user profile information is limited to the information collected on client record forms. This means that data from long-term services will not have been collected on a regular basis and that the scope of information that has been collected for short-term services will be limited, for example, it will not include information on sexuality or faith. The lack of detailed information and its use in shaping the programme continues to be a missed opportunity to effectively take account of the needs of all the community.

Excluded groups

- 148 Needs information on excluded groups is underdeveloped. There is no clear framework for updating needs information generally and this fragmented approach also affects work on excluded groups. The draft report of the corporate gypsy and traveller working group does not identify the level of housing related support required. A recent gap analysis sent to all stakeholders has received a very poor response with only five returns. Work on BME needs is ongoing but still not finalised. This means the Council cannot be sure how far it is meeting the needs of excluded groups.
- 149 Disabled accommodation has not been robustly assessed. Accommodation services were asked to confirm compliance with DDA requirements through the service review process but there has not been an assessment of the number of adapted accommodation based units and whether this is sufficient to meet needs. An example of a service improving its accessibility through the service review process is of a centre that operated from first floor accommodation. This has now been changed so that ground floor accommodation is used ensuring that all service users are able to access this. Until this issue is robustly assessed though, the programme will not be clear that all people with disabilities can access services they need.

Cultural sensitivity

- 150 The Supporting People team has struggled to raise the profile of equality and diversity issues with some stakeholders. Although services for people fleeing domestic violence are culturally sensitive there are no specific services for different cultural groups within the county. There is little ethnic diversity of service users within accommodation and floating support services and some providers have found it hard to understand the relevance of what they are being asked to do. As part of a range of activities to tackle such issues, a providers' forum in October 2007 was used to share good practice on approaches to diversity and cultural sensitivity. The team has also sent a questionnaire to all providers on fair access and diversity. This has so far had a poor response which some providers feel is due to the complexity of the form. Some themes arising from the questionnaire have been identified and it is recognised that more work needs to be done to ensure providers have a more comprehensive approach to monitoring and developing the approach to diversity in services.
- 151 The exception to this are domestic violence refuges which have a higher level of service users from a range of BME and minority groups who tend to come from outside of the county. Refuges have worked hard to ensure that the services are responsive, for example, providing facilities to prepare meals which meet the cultural needs of service users.

Outcomes for service users

- 152 This is an area with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The programme has been able to deliver some new services and some have been remodelled to provide more appropriate and extended levels of support. However, when considered alongside the gaps and the time the programme has been in place, these are limited. Poorly performing and completely ineligible services have been decommissioned but ineligible elements of learning disability services are only now being resolved. Support planning has improved and service users value these in helping them gain skills in independent living. Two-thirds of providers are now operating at levels A and B of the QAF which means that the quality of the services has improved. However, choice remains limited and action to address the spread of services, exclusions and local connections has been too slow. Outcome measures are now in place but it is too early to see the results of this.

Service improvements

- 153 Overall, the level of new services developed and service reconfiguration has been limited. While some services have been developed when considered alongside the gaps in services and the time the programme has been in place this is limited. There has been some new service provision across the programme. The new services developed are:
- 114 units of floating support have been provided for vulnerable young people and people with complex needs;

- ten units of accommodation based support for ex-offenders and people with substance misuse problems;
- six new units of re-provided accommodation based support for vulnerable people with learning disabilities moving out of hostel accommodation;
- a small contribution to two extra care services; and
- a small number of specific support units for serious ex-offenders.

This means that while some elements of the programme have been reconfigured to more effectively meet needs, this is limited in terms of what should have been achieved at this stage of the programme.

- 154** The largest increase has been for vulnerable young people and people with complex needs which are in line with the strategic priorities of the programme. Services for young people were the first to be reviewed and recommissioned as part of the Supporting People procurement strategy following the completion of the service reviews. The funding for this was finalised in February 2008. Until these new services are in place, users will not see the benefits of this work.
- 155** Some services have been extended or remodelled to bring about improvements but the number of these is limited. These include, for example, services for people with mental health problems that have been merged to provide a more flexible range of support and a sheltered housing scheme which now offers support in the community that is no longer tied to the sheltered housing schemes.
- 156** The service reviews have brought about improvements in the quality of services. Improvements plans following the reviews have helped services move through the QAF. Two thirds of services are now performing at levels A and B and there are no services operating at level D. this means that service users are experiencing improved quality standards in their services.
- 157** Poorly performing and some completely ineligible services have been successfully decommissioned. This means that the grant is no longer being used for poor quality or inappropriate services and that funding is released for future investment in good quality services. However, in the case of ineligible services for people with a learning disability this has taken too long to resolve and funding that could have been used to provide housing related support to vulnerable people has in fact been used to provide care services.

Case Studies

- 158** During our visits to service providers we met a number of service users who clearly demonstrated the change in their lives that the programme had helped to bring about.

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- 159 One service user with mental health problems has been helped to gain independence and more control over her life. The service she receives has helped her feel confident enough undertake a number of courses. She has undertaken recruitment and selection training and was on the panel to appoint a new member of staff for her service provider. She also works as a volunteer to give something back for all the help and support she has received. She is clear that the support she has received has improved her ability to live a more fulfilling life.
- 160 Another service user who had used services for people fleeing domestic violence has been supported to regain control over her own, and her children's lives. She has been supported to make decisions about her future work, location and accommodation needs. She is now living in a different area where she is able to gain support from her family and friends. She has been helped to return to work and to increase her independence.

Choice for service users

- 161 Choice remains limited for many service users. There are still issues about the geographical spread of services across the county and some services still operate exclusion and local connections policies. Services are not available across tenure. These issues will be addressed through the Supporting People procurement timetable for re-commissioning services. For example, the work taking place currently on services for older people will address cross tenure services. However, many of these issues should have been dealt with through the service review process and the delay in reconfiguring services means that there are potential service users who have not been able to exercise choice in terms of housing related support services.
- 162 A small number of service users have been able to have specific needs met. For example, spot funding has been used to purchase housing related support for high risk offenders in isolated settings. This has provided flexibility in placing offenders at a safe distance from their victims.
- 163 Plans are being developed within the adult social services division for introducing individual budgets for service users. This would also include users who are receiving Supporting People services. However, these arrangements are not in place yet. Individual budgets will enable service users to have more choice in the provision of their housing related support services as they would be able to purchase these themselves.

Support plans

- 164** The Supporting People team has ensured that effective support planning is in place for service users. It has worked closely with providers where support planning had been poor and has achieved improvement in these. For example, the team undertook an audit of support plans in large sheltered housing schemes to ensure that these were being completed as required. Service users we met had a good understanding of their support plans and how these helped them assess their progress in gaining levels of independence. Effective support planning means that housing related support is focused on improving or maintaining an individual's ability to live independently.
- 165** Support plans have changed considerably through service user involvement at one service. Service users fed back that support plans focussed on what they could not do and these have now changed to focus on what they can do, what their aspirations are and how to use their strengths to resolve other difficulties they have. These changes have allowed service users to focus on the more positive aspects of their lives and to use these to help address other difficulties they have.

Outcome measures

- 166** Derbyshire, along with all other ALAs, is now using the CLG framework for measuring outcomes for service users. This was introduced in May 2007 for users of short term services and measures how successful the programme has been in terms of a number of outcomes. These cover the five key areas of:
- achieving economic wellbeing;
 - enjoying and achieving;
 - being healthy;
 - staying safe; and
 - making a positive contribution.
- 167** Results from this are just starting to come through from the CLG and are being reported to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. The information will also be shared with providers and will be used to target areas for additional help and support where service users are not achieving as much as expected. For example, information received so far shows that less than 20 per cent of service users leaving short term services were able to obtain paid work, where this had been identified as an objective. More help and support in this area will enable service users to improve their independence in supporting themselves in the future.

What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?

What is the Council's track record in delivering improvement?

- 168 This is an area where weaknesses outweigh strengths. There has been effective engagement of service users and some new services have been developed and others reconfigured. The quality of services and performance as measured through the KPIs have improved. However, there are some major weaknesses that are impacting on the programme. These are the lack of ambition and progress of the Commissioning Body which has delayed necessary changes to services, the continued funding of ineligible services and the lack of strategic direction for the programme. There have also been a number of missed deadlines and the Council cannot demonstrate sufficient improvement in value for money over time. These weaknesses mean that the programme has not been driven at the necessary pace to bring about improvements in services for vulnerable people.

Improvements in outcomes experienced by users

- 169 The programme has effectively engaged with service users. There has always been good engagement with service users and this was strengthened in 2007 with the establishment of the Supported People Involvement Forum. A range of past and current service users are involved from a number of different client groups. This forum has achieved a number of service improvements as well as taking over the running of the inclusive forums and attending the Core Strategy Group. This means that service users are beginning to directly contribute to decision making processes that affect the programme.
- 170 A number of services have improved in ways that will be noticed by service users. The Supporting People team has delivered some new services for users who were identified as a priority in the five year strategy. For example, the programme now has 114 more units of floating support for vulnerable young people and people with complex needs. This ensures that the programme is meeting the needs of groups it has identified as in need.
- 171 There has been some limited reconfiguration of services following the service reviews. Some poorly performing services and services which were clearly ineligible for Supporting People funding have been decommissioned. Services for people with mental health needs have been merged to provide a more flexible range of support and a sheltered housing scheme now offers support in the community rather than just in the scheme. However, these changes have not been sufficient to really impact on the programme and major changes are awaiting the implementation of the re-procurement strategy.

- 172** Progress made by the Supporting People programme has lacked ambition and it has not developed comprehensive outcomes for vulnerable people across the county. Improvements in the Supporting People programme have been delayed because of an unnecessary cautious approach to both decision making and managing change. The programme has managed existing services with some success but opportunities to extend and improve services for all vulnerable people have not been taken. The outcome is that there continues to be inequity and some groups receive no service while slow progress is made in making the necessary changes.
- 173** The Council has taken too long to deal with funding issues identified through the service reviews. Until April 2008, the programme was still paying for ineligible services. The programme only assessed the ineligible costs of Derbyshire County Council run learning disability services last autumn and adult social services only took over funding these costs in April 2008 although this issue had been known about for a number of years. There has been no agreement to repay the programme for what amounts to five years worth of ineligible funding. Until all ineligible costs are dealt with, the programme will be funding services that should be paid for from other budgets and will not be able to access funding to expand the range of housing related support it provides.
- 174** The Commissioning Body has not been providing sufficient strategic leadership to the programme. The Commissioning Body has not had information on how well the programme is developing in relation to other ALAs. This has meant that, for example, it was not aware of the progress that other ALAs have made with developing a move on strategy, improving access arrangements and embedding equality and diversity. As a consequence, the Commissioning Body has not been in a position to view the speed of progress that the programme has made and ensure that it is driving the programme.
- 175** A number of deadlines have been missed by the programme. For example, there has been significant slippage in the time taken to commission research into the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Funding was allocated to this work in 2004/05 with the expectation that this would have been completed by 2006. The work has only just been reported and does not contain information on housing related support needs. The programme set itself an ambition that all services would be at level B of the QAF by the end of 2007/08 although it accepted that some small providers may not be able to reach this. The information earlier in this report shows that at March 2008 there were still 33 per cent of services that had not achieved this target and were still operating at level C. Additionally, the DVD produced by service users has not met its expected completion date. This was due to be completed and distributed by March 2008 but at the time of the inspection, was still in production. Slippage in meeting deadlines means that the programme is either setting unrealistic targets or failing to focus on what it has identified as a priority for completion.

Direction of key performance indicators

- 176 Performance trends as shown by the KPIs are positive. Minimum levels of achievement have been set by the team in agreement with providers. With the exception of services for offenders, these have been met year-on-year and in the majority of user groups, have been exceeded. For example, the minimum achievement of KPI 1 which shows the percentage of people receiving support that maintains their independence in long-term services was set at 85 per cent for 2006/07. This was met and raised in 2007/08 to 90 per cent and performance reports show that this is being exceeded by many services. Similarly, KPI2 which shows people in short term services moving on in a planned way shows improvement with the target again being raised and exceeded by some services.
- 177 Action has been taken to improve the QAF scores achieved by service providers. In March 2005, 13 per cent of services scored level D of the QAF. By March 2008 there were no services being provided that scored at level D. By March 2008 there had also been an improvement in the percentage of services scoring at levels A and B although a third of providers are still at level C. This means there has been some improvement in the quality of services that users will experience.

Demonstration of improving value for money over time

- 178 The Council cannot demonstrate sufficient improvement in value for money over time. Value for money has not been well managed and although there have been various value for money initiatives these have not been robust or thorough. For example, some services offered efficiency savings but these were not forthcoming from all providers. There are not clear targets in place for improving value for money. There is not yet an agreed approach on how to manage this through the governance groups. This means that the programme does not have a clear driver from improving the value that it gets from the money spent on housing related support services.

How does the Council manage performance?

- 179 This is an area where weaknesses outweigh strengths. An annual plan is in place and is a key driver for the programme. However, this does not link back to the five year strategy which is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be refreshed. Work plans for the team are in place and financial and risk management arrangements are sound. Performance management is under developed and needs to have better linkage across information and more commentaries. There are insufficient links between the programme and other Council and partner strategies. Leadership has been consistent but has not driven the programme at the necessary pace.

How good is the programme's improvement planning?

- 180 An annual plan is in place and is a key driver for the programme. However, this does not link to the five year strategy for the programme. There have been some changes to the objectives contained in the strategy and these have not been assessed and the strategy revised as necessary. Rather, the strategy has become redundant and the annual plan has taken over this role. This is not clearly documented anywhere and means that stakeholders are not able to understand what changes have been made and why.
- 181 There are clear work plans for the Supporting People team and these link to the annual plan for the programme. There is a well established system of one-to-one meetings and appraisals in the team as well as regular team meetings where progress against plans is discussed. These structures support a clear focus on what needs to be done and ensure that staff are well informed.
- 182 Performance management and monitoring is underdeveloped. Although regular reports go to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body these need to be improved. The team is aware of this and is working on this aspect of reporting. The plan is for information to be linked more effectively and there will be a commentary that summarises the information. This will enable to governance groups to understand the significance of what is being presented to them and the decisions that need to be made as a result of the information.
- 183 Financial reporting and risk management arrangements are sound. The team is able to forecast, plan and monitor budget expenditure. A risk register is in place and regularly updated. Information on these areas of work is regularly reported to both the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. This means that the governing bodies are able to make decisions in these areas based on reliable and up-to-date information.
- 184 There are insufficient links between the programme and other social care and partner strategies. There is still a considerable amount of work to be done to ensure there is horizontal and vertical alignment of the Supporting People strategy and other adult social care strategies which are in the process of being developed. More systematic involvement of representatives from both adults social care services is needed. Joint working is starting within the Council and the impact of the Supporting People programme is recognised but there are as yet few tangible outcomes from this.

Are there arrangements and a culture in place to support continuous improvement?

- 185 Leadership of the programme has been consistent but has lacked ambition. Membership of the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body has changed little over the life of the programme ensuring that these groups have a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw on. However, the stability of these groups has also been a drawback. They have not sufficiently challenged and driven the programme to bring about the necessary changes that would have resulted in greater and faster improvements for vulnerable service users.

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- 186** Improvement planning with providers is not yet fully effective. This is evidenced by the significant improvements in the QAF scores achieved by providers with none currently operating at level D but the programme did not meet its target of all providers to be at level B or above by March 2008. The new contract monitoring processes will provide the basis for the continued improvement of services. Although the Council is ambitious for providers to continue to improve and ensure that service users receive a higher quality service it has not yet set a new target for improvement.
- 187** Learning from others has used by the programme but has not been applied comprehensively. It is open to learning from others and has looked to other ALAs for ideas to improve services. For example, it has looked to an authority for learning on recommissioning domestic violence refuges and another authority for a needs identification questionnaire. This is a useful way of finding potential solutions to issues that have already proved to be effective elsewhere. However, it has not looked to the outcomes of previous Supporting People inspections to understand the pace of change of other authorities and to apply positive practice that has been identified elsewhere. This means that the programme has missed opportunities to improve by using ideas for other authorities.
- 188** Providers are also engaged in learning from others. The SPPN mirrors the authorities in the EMRIG as is committed to addressing specific issues that will provide a range of solutions that all members of the group can implement. The first area it has looked at is on provider engagement in the programme and the report which will be published in the near future will details a range of options for improving engagement based on good practice that has been found operating in the region.

Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

- 189** This is an area of strength. The programme is being delivered by a competent team with access to the necessary management, training and development and IT systems to support them. Capacity is increasing through the mainstreaming of a number of functions and through the involvement of service users and sound partnership working with the district councils. Procurement arrangements are sound and the programme has levered in additional funding to develop services. However, the capacity of councillors to make difficult decisions and challenge effective services needs to be enhanced along with improvements to the value for money that the programme offers.

Access to appropriate skills, tools and finances to deliver improvements

- 190** The quality of the Supporting People team is a key strength. Staff are, for the most part, professional, committed, and enthusiastic and have a strong customer focus. Providers are very positive about the quality of the support they receive from the team. All staff are committed to improvements in the programme and in the services for vulnerable people which bodes well for the future of housing related support services.

- 191 The capacity of the team has been increased through the mainstreaming of the contracts, finance and IT functions. Staff within these service areas have access to other professional groups which means that they are better supported and cover is available for the programme.
- 192 One area of concern is that two key managers from the team are moving to other roles within adult social services. However, the benefit of this is that it will ensure that the programme is fully integrated in the new commissioning strategies that are being developed. A replacement lead officer has been appointed from another ALA so will be joining the team with a working knowledge of the programme and its requirements. This will mean that the handover of management should be as smooth as possible.
- 193 Capacity is also being built through the involvement of service users in the programme. They are currently being trained to play a greater role in contract monitoring and will also be undertaking a variety of mystery shopping exercises for the programme. These activities will increase service user involvement in the programme in a meaningful way that enables them to help shape and steer the programme in the future.
- 194 The capacity of councillors to make difficult decisions and challenge existing services needs to be enhanced. This issue was also identified in the 2007 Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA found that the Council has gone some way towards addressing the development needs of councillors through introducing a personal development review for councillors but the impact of this is not yet clear. It concluded that councillors need to be supported to take on a greater community leadership role and embrace new agendas if political leadership is to remain effective. This is particularly so in terms of their leadership role of the Supporting People programme.
- 195 The Supporting People team has the necessary IT systems it needs to carry out its tasks. It has purchased a Supporting People module from one provider and further software from another provider that enables it to export data to spreadsheets and reports via Business Objects. Staff within the Supporting People team have had training in Business Objects and are able to produce reports directly from the IT system. This means that reports are produced quickly and the need for information is not held up by requests going through a centralised system.

Financial and human resources planning

- 196 There are sound arrangements in place for staff management. There are regular team and individual meetings. These are used to look at a range of issues such as workload, targets, priorities etc. Annual personal development meetings consider training needs. Identified training needs for staff are largely being met through a mixture of internal and external courses. Staff feel appropriately trained and supported to do their jobs.

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- 197** Two major financial issues have impacted on the capacity of the programme. The continuation of the funding of ineligible services has had a negative impact of the capacity of the programme to spend the grant on housing related support services for vulnerable people. Although this is now being addressed, it has meant that considerable funding has been diverted and Supporting People services have suffered because of this. The failure of the service reviews to comprehensively address value for money has also impacted on the ability of the programme to release funding to support new and existing services.

Procurement

- 198** The programme has an effective procurement strategy in place with a timetable for reviewing the commissioning of housing related support services across different client groups. The length of steady state contracts were phased to tie in with the procurement timetable which means that new and retendered services will not be delayed because of contracting issues.

Investing and attracting inward investment to deliver improvement

- 199** The Council has been successful in leveraging in extra funding from both the Housing Corporation and the Department of Health. This funding has been used for two extra care schemes, a foyer scheme for vulnerable young people and funding for a women's refuge.

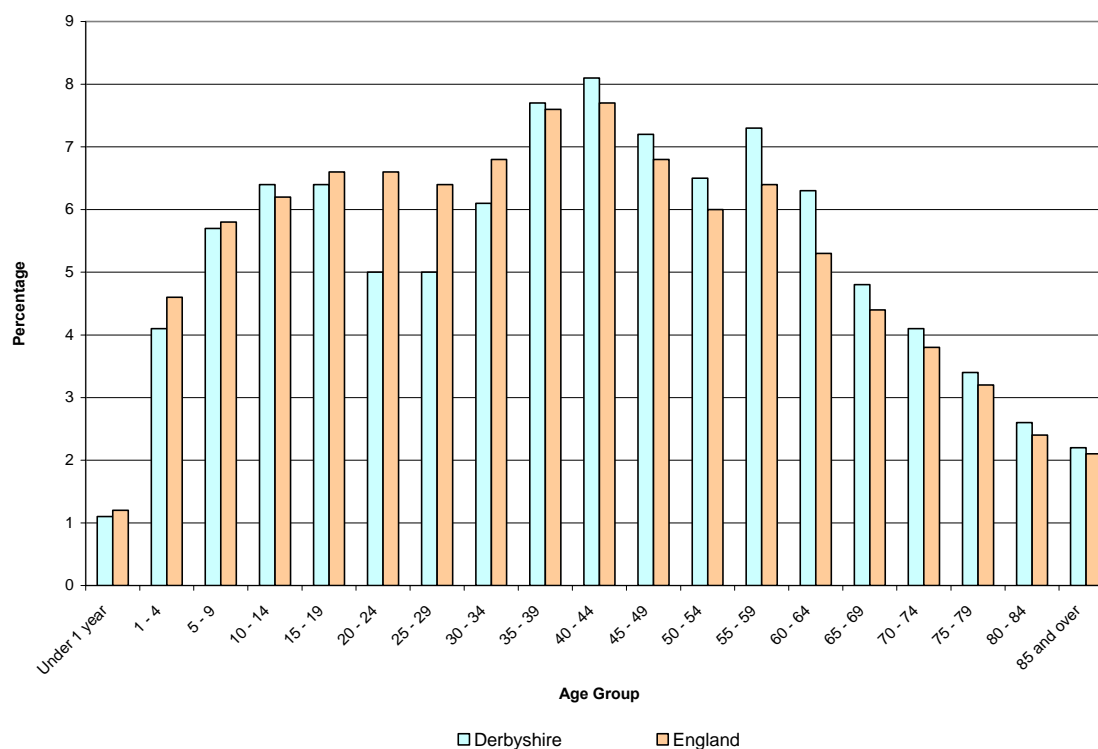
Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Demographic information

This section includes demographic information relevant to Supporting People, comparing the Council and with England.

Measure	Derbyshire	England
Population (mid-2006) ⁴	754,100	50,762,900
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2006)	17.1	15.93
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British) ⁵	1.5	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ⁶	1.6	2.3
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ⁷	274	-

Percentage of the population⁸ in each age group compared with England



⁴ Source: midyear population estimates (2006)

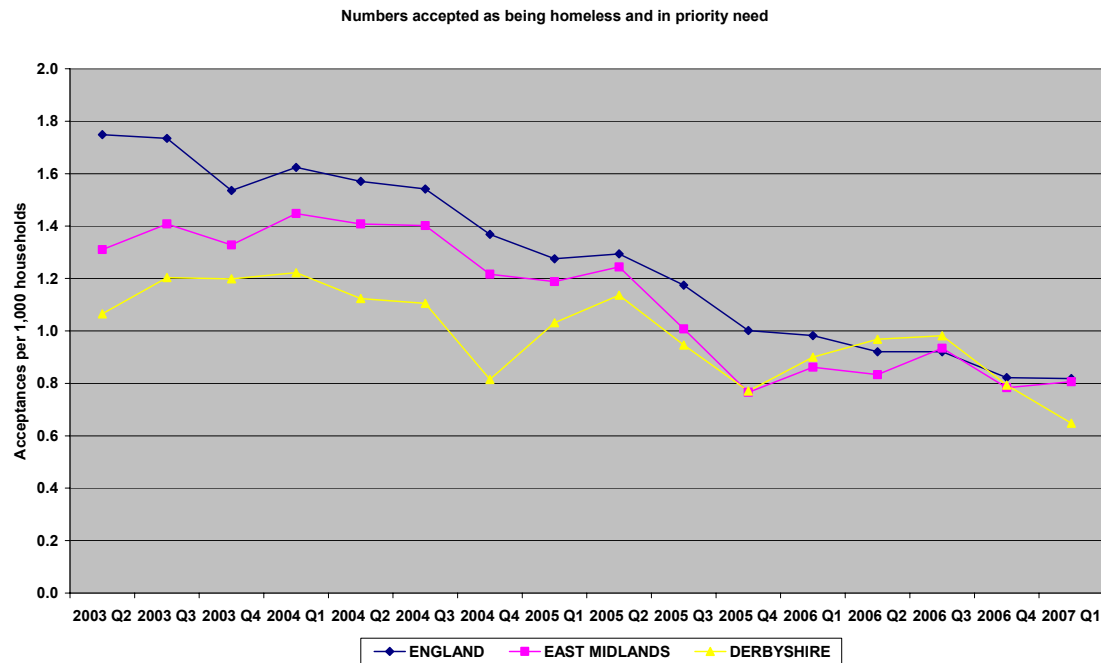
⁵ Source: census 2001

⁶ Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (November 2007)

⁷ Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

⁸ Source: midyear population estimates (2006)

Households accepted as homeless between 2003 and 2007 compared with the region and England (acceptances per 1,000 households)



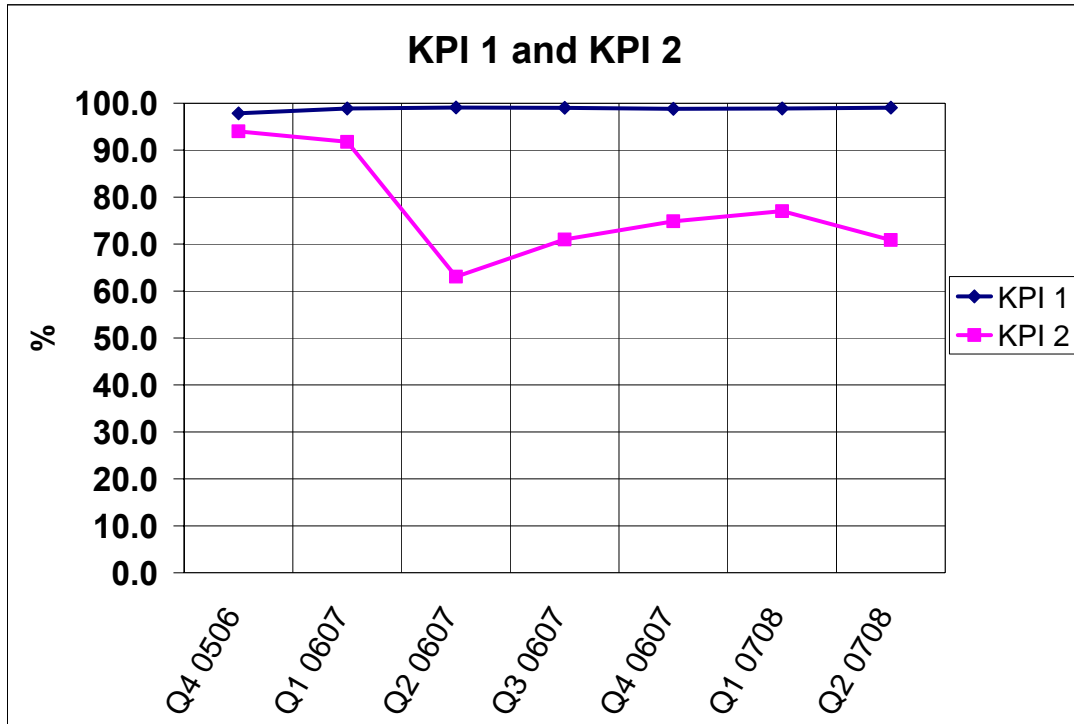
Performance information

This section highlights strong and weak areas of the Council’s performance in services that are relevant to Supporting People. We have used the following information to help us reach our judgements:

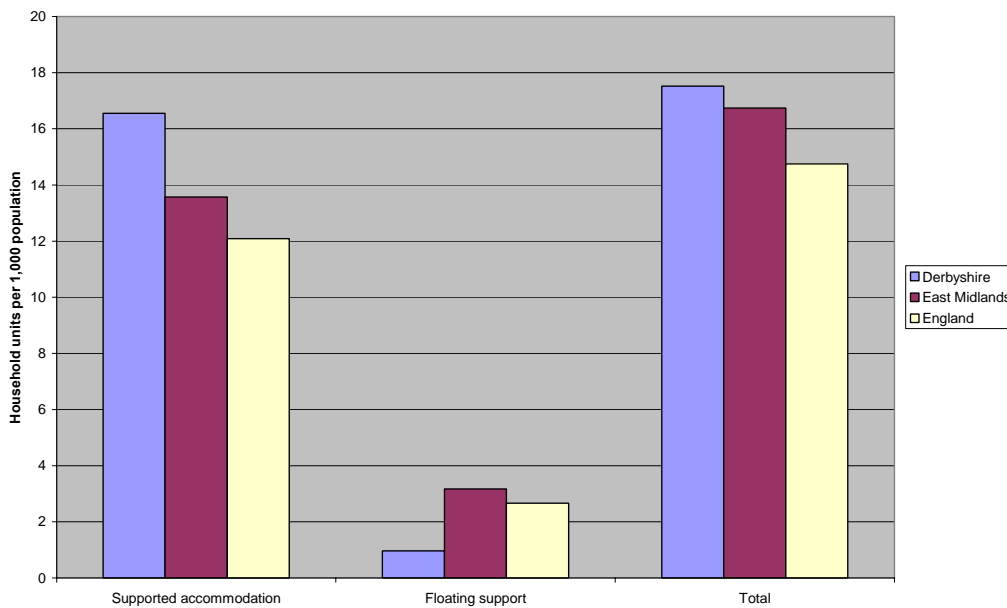
- data for services funded through the Supporting People programme;
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores;
- star ratings for social services;
- Performance Assessment Framework indicators for social services; and
- relevant best value performance indicators.

Supporting People data

Key Performance Indicator 1 and 2⁹



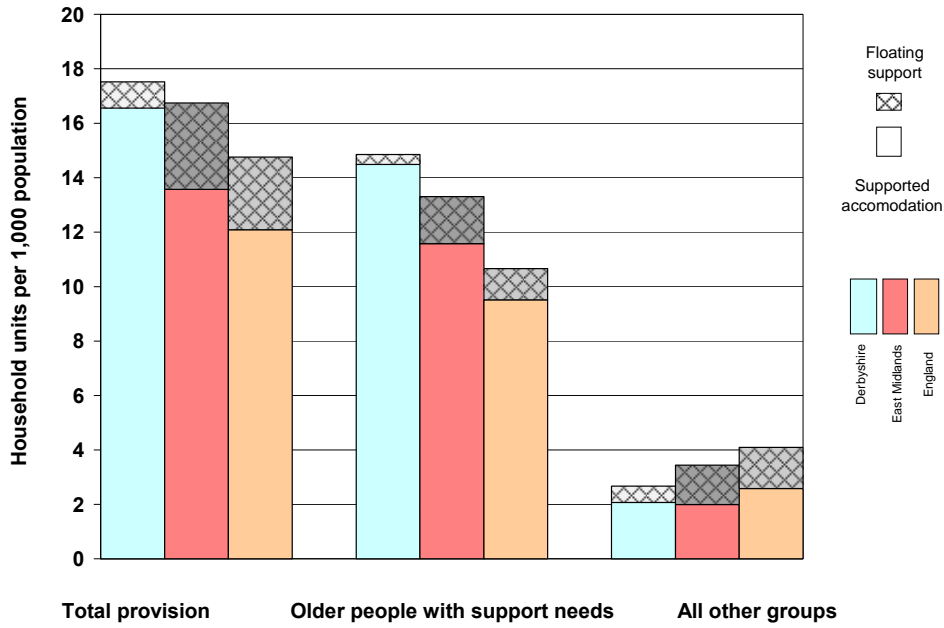
Total service provision funded through Supporting People¹⁰



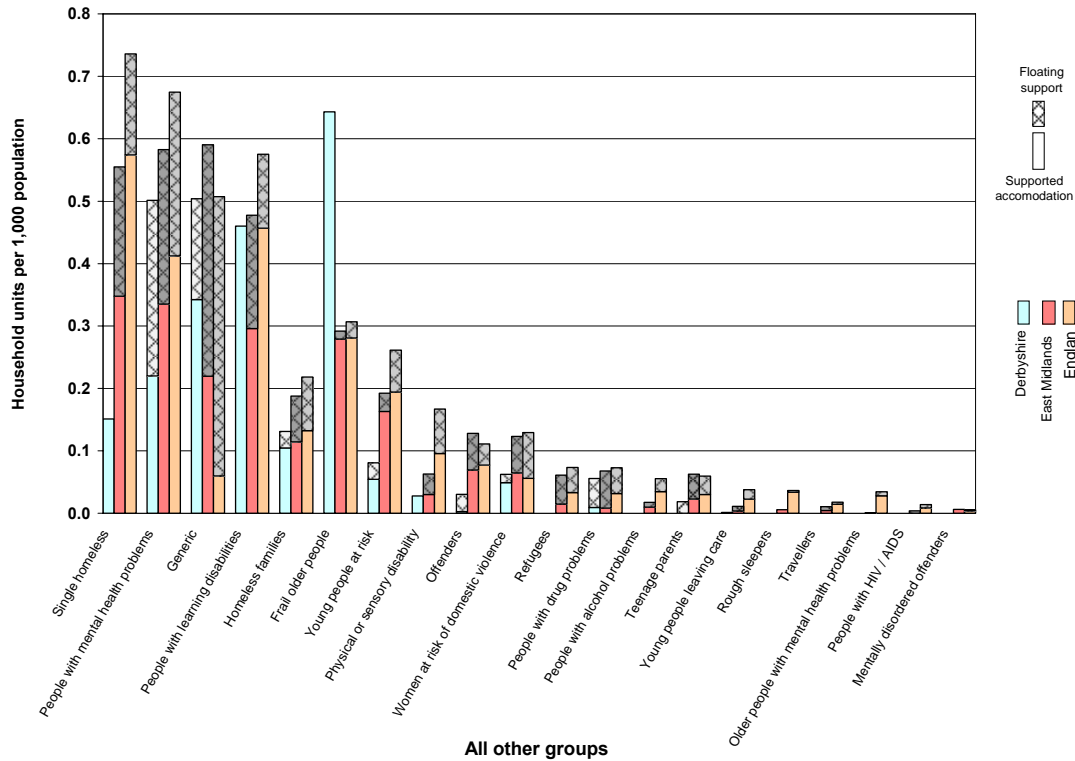
⁹ Source: CLG, 2008.

¹⁰ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England¹¹



Services for other groups compared with the region and England¹²



¹¹ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

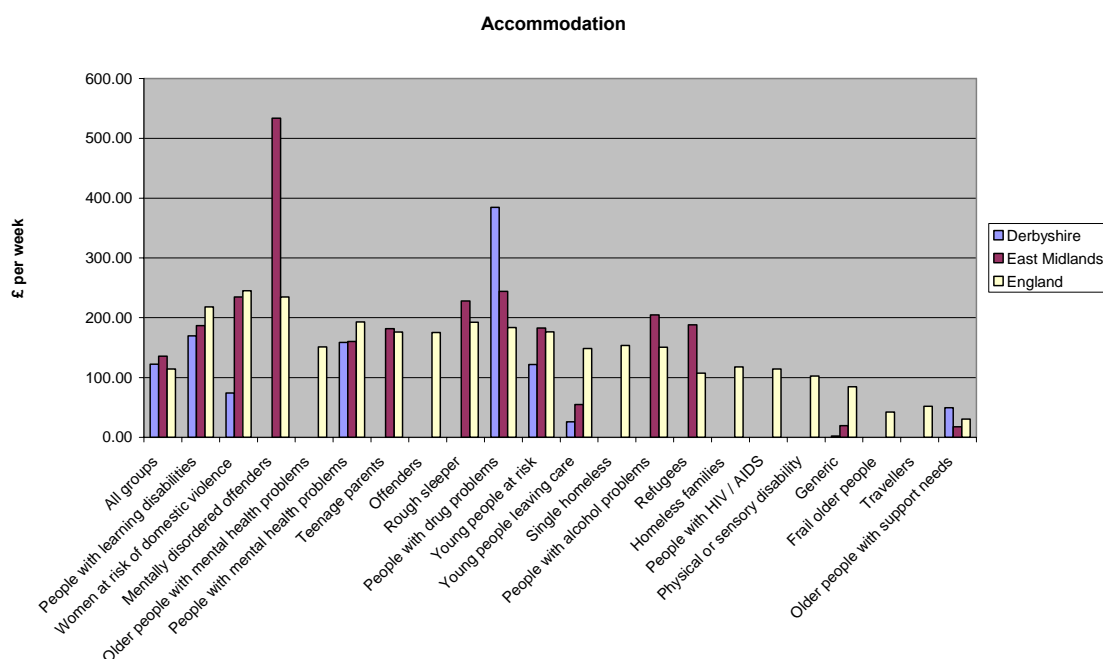
¹² Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Funding for Supporting People¹³

Derbyshire	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Final SP Grant	£ 17,333,558	£ 17,033,821	£ 17,260,646	£ 17,260,646	£17,260,646	£ 17,260,646
Admin Grant	£ 448,046	£ 448,046	£ 448,046	£ 425,644	£ 392,040	£ 336,034

Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2007/08 (£ per week)¹⁴

	Per head of population ¹⁵	Per unit
Derbyshire	£ 0.44	£ 13.71
East Midlands	£ 0.61	£ 24.80
England	£ 0.64	£ 30.64

Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England¹⁶


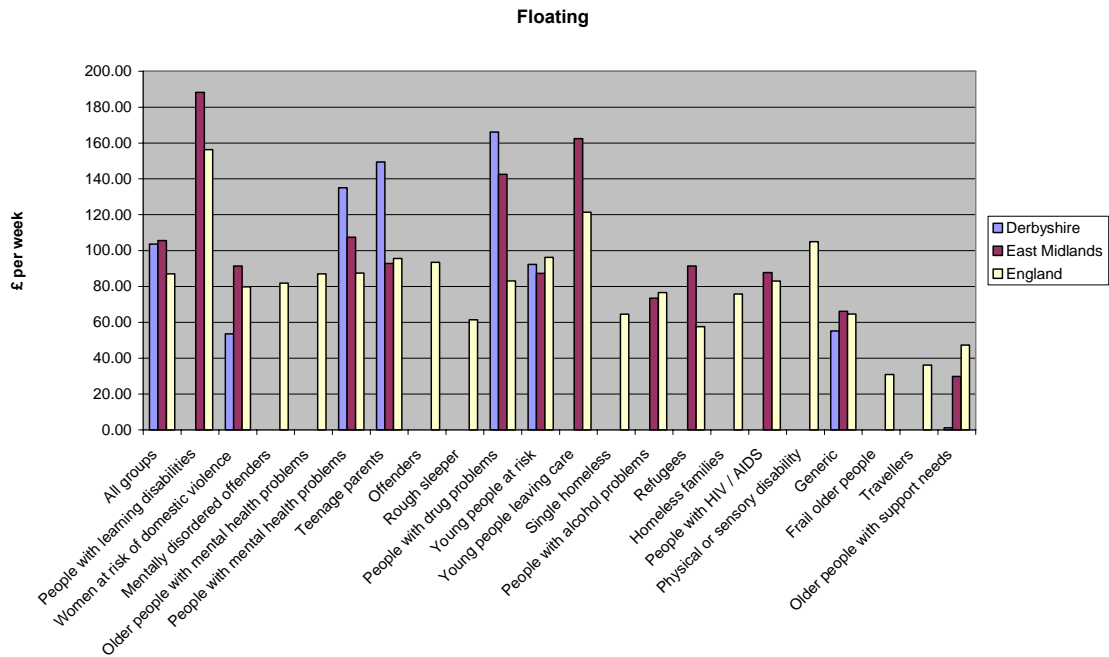
¹³ Source: Grant allocations, CLG.

¹⁴ Source: CLG, 07/08. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

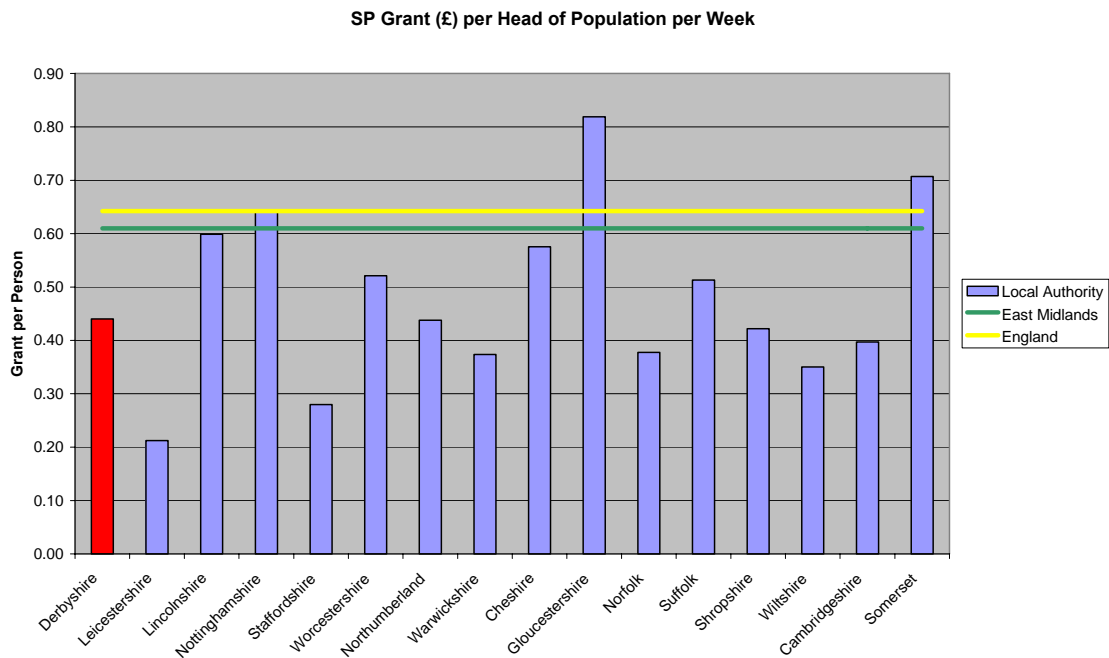
¹⁵ Midyear population estimates (2006)

¹⁶ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England¹⁷



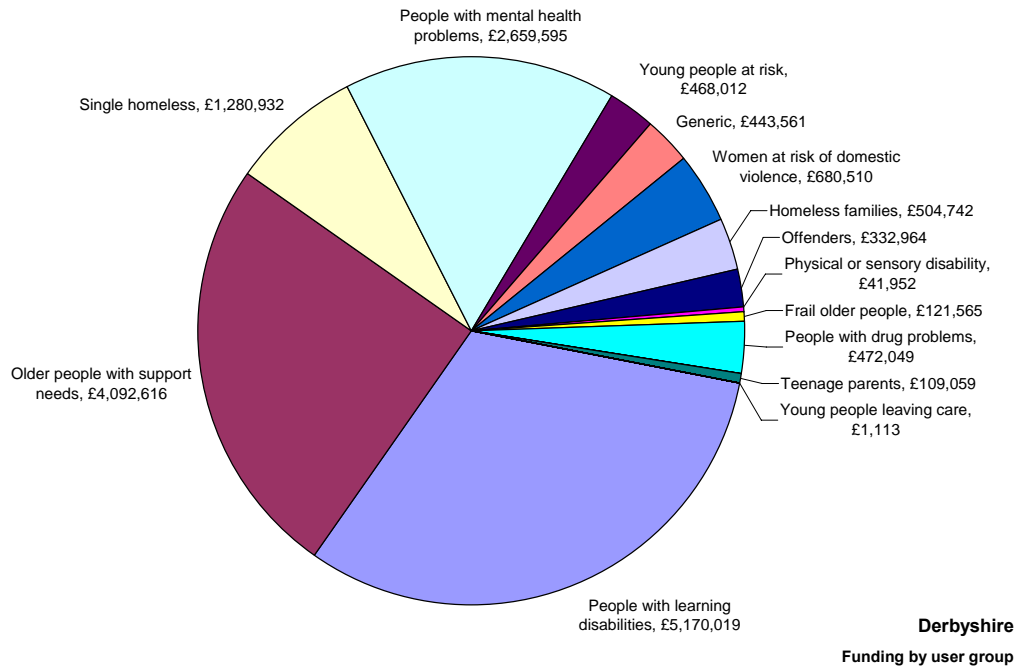
Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours¹⁸, all county councils and all English councils (2007/08)



¹⁷ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

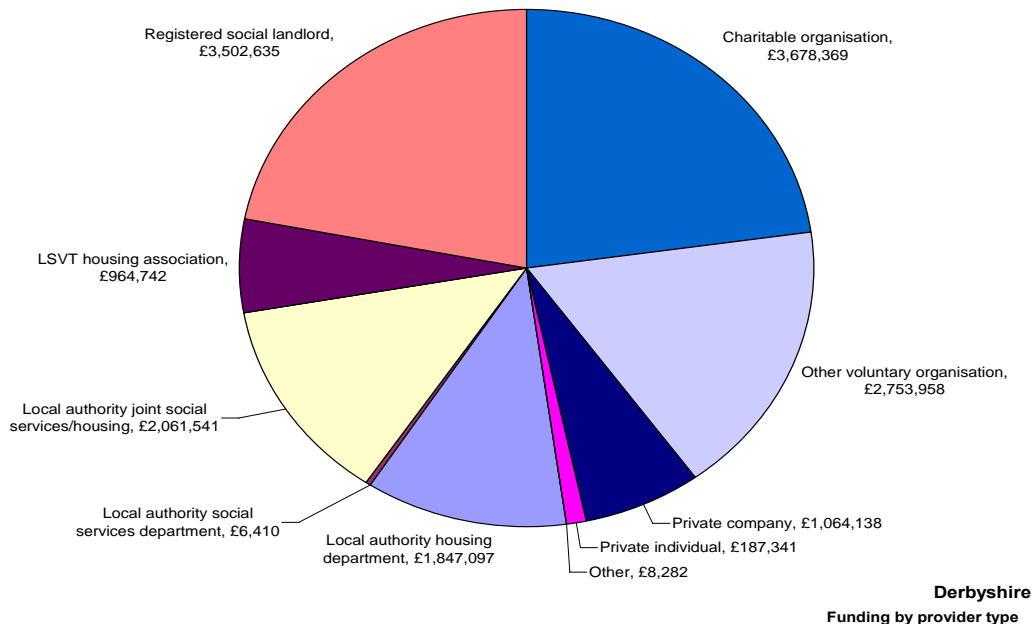
¹⁸ A comparator group of similar councils.

Share of spending between user groups¹⁹



¹⁹ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Share of spending between types of provider²⁰



Social Services star ratings November 2006

The table below shows the Social Services Inspectorate ratings of the Council's performance.

	Serving people well?	Prospects for improvement?	Performance rating (CPA equivalent)
Adults' Services	Yes	Excellent	☆☆☆
Children's Services	Good	Outstanding	

²⁰ Source: CLG, 05/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Social services performance indicators

Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2005/06

The table below shows how the Council's social services performed on indicators relevant to Supporting People.

Derbyshire	
Significantly above average (●●●●●)	<p>Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31).</p> <p>Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39).</p> <p>Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30).</p> <p>Older people helped to live at home (C32).</p> <p>Delayed transfers of care (D41).</p> <p>Employment, education and training for care leavers (A4).</p> <p>Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54).</p>

Derbyshire	
Above average (****)	Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29).
Average (***)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40) ²¹ . Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31st March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51).
Below average (**)	
Significantly below average (•)	

Best value performance indicators

Performance on relevant indicators in 2005/06 compared with county councils

The table below shows how the Council performed on best value performance indicators relevant to Supporting People.

Derbyshire	
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a).
Average	
Within the worst 25 per cent	

District council performance on relevant indicators in 2005/06

The tables below shows how district councils in Derbyshire County performed on best value performance indicators relevant to Supporting People, compared with all district councils.

Amber	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b).
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a). Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).

²¹ 'Average' is the best score for this indicator

Amber	
	Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Within the worst 25 per cent	Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).

Bolsover	
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a) Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Average	Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63). Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a). Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a).
Within the worst 25 per cent	Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).

Chesterfield	
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a) Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Average	Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63). Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a). Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).
Within the worst 25 per cent	Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).

Derbyshire Dales	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a) Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a). Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).
Within the worst 25 per cent	

Erewash	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Average	Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).
Within the worst 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a) Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).

High Peak	
Within the best 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a). Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63). Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a). Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Average	Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).
Within the worst 25 per cent	Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a).

North East Derbyshire	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b).
Average	Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a). Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a). Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).
Within the worst 25 per cent	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a). Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63). Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a).

South Derbyshire	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a). Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a).
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2a). Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63).
Within the worst 25 per cent	Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a). Domestic violence refuge places (BV225).

Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken

When we went on-site we carried out a number of different checks, building on the work described above, in order to get a full picture of how good the service is. These on-site reality checks were designed to gather evidence about what it is like to use the service and to see how well it works. Our reality checks included:

- a questionnaire survey which was sent to all providers of housing related support services;
- focus groups with members of the Providers Forum;
- visits to supported housing schemes, to talk to service users, scheme managers and frontline staff;
- mystery shopping exercises to test how easy it is to access services;
- review of leaflets and the Council's and partners' and stakeholders' websites;
- interviews with members of the Supporting People Team;
- interviews with members of the Commissioning Body and the Accountable Officer; and
- Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Leader of the Council, Managers from different services across the Council, the Primary Care Trust and the Probation Service.