

Supporting People Inspection Report

October 2007



Supporting People Re-inspection

Lincolnshire County Council

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

Copies of this report

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

© Audit Commission 2007

For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 020 7828 1212 Fax: 020 7976 6187 Textphone (minicom): 020 7630 0421

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Contents

Supporting People Inspections	4
Summary	5
Scoring the Supporting People programme	7
Recommendations	11
Report	16
Context	16
How good is the Supporting People programme?	18
What has the programme aimed to achieve?	18
Is the programme meeting the needs of the local community and users?	18
What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?	56
What is the Council's track record in delivering improvement?	56
How does the Council manage performance?	62
Does the Council have the capacity to improve?	68
Appendix 1 – Performance indicators	71
Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken	86

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, we judge that Lincolnshire County Council still administers a poor Supporting People programme but that it now has promising prospects for improvement. Previous inspections in August 2004 and February 2006 assessed the Council as delivering a poor, no-star programme with uncertain prospects for improvement.
- 2 Lincolnshire County Council is a predominantly rural county in the East of England. It has a population of 646,645 with 3 per cent from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities compared to the national average of 13 per cent. The Council is Conservative controlled, and the annual budget for 2007/08 is £372 million. The programme grant covers 397 services delivered through 187 contracts. The programme grant for 2007/08 was £21,373,000. This delivers 8,699 units of accommodation-based support and 7,164 units of floating support.
- 3 While recent improvements have been implemented, assisted by more effective working with partners, these have not yet been sufficient to address the slow development of the programme since it commenced in April 2003. A range of significant weaknesses are still evident. Tangible outcomes for service users, delivered as a result of the programme, are still very limited. There has been little reshaping of the programme to ensure services best meet priority needs despite a large grant underspend accumulated over a number of years. A revised Supporting People strategy is not yet in place and this has led to the programme overall being underdeveloped. Integration of partner strategies with Supporting People priorities is limited as are linkages at operational level. Some partners are still not effectively engaged at the Core Strategy Group and partnership working with adult social care is weak. There has also been insufficient focus on the approach to adult and child protection issues in the programme.
- 4 Service review processes were not comprehensive and effective contract monitoring has been slow to develop. This has been limited progress in addressing issues of ineligible funding and value for money. Only a small number of steady state contracts have been issued creating uncertainty for providers. Contract specifications are insufficiently detailed and outcome measures are not yet being used to effectively monitor performance. Weaknesses in financial management have resulted in a large overpayment of Supporting People grant to one provider, which despite running over a number of years was only identified through our inspection. Value for money in administration costs can not be demonstrated. User involvement has still had limited impact on the programme and some groups are still not effectively involved. Co-ordination and monitoring of access to services is still underdeveloped. Fairing charging is not yet being administered effectively. Information on the diversity of existing clients is still not comprehensive and cultural sensitivity in services has not yet been adequately addressed.

- 5 Some aspects of the programme are operating more effectively. Governance of the programme has improved with consistent engagement at the Commissioning Body, and effective involvement of providers. There is regular performance reporting to governance structures and a stronger focus on risk. Sector reviews, needs analysis and prioritisation of sectors for change have taken place. The Supporting People team is well resourced. A more systematic approach to contract monitoring and service improvement has recently been developed, and there has been a successful focus on reducing the number of services operating below minimum standards. Robust eligibility criteria are now in place and retraction plans are beginning to address significant levels of ineligible funding in learning disability services. An effective value for money methodology is also now in place and is being used in contract management. Levels of user involvement have increased and general information on services is good and provided in a range of formats.
- 6 Prospects for improvement are now promising. There has been an increased pace of change over the last six months which has delivered some improvements. There is a strong focus on the improvement plan for Supporting People including political and corporate commitment. Partners on the Commissioning Body also demonstrate a clear and strong commitment to developing the programme to meet the needs of the county. Plans do focus on key issues for the service and a significant number of actions are already well advanced. This includes the delivery of eight new services to address identified areas of need. The Council has responded positively to the feedback provided during the inspection confirming progress on a number of important issues. Policies, procedures and delivery structures have been improved in a number of areas which will support the delivery of improved outcomes. Regular performance reporting is also helping to drive improvement. However, the track record of improvement overall is still limited. There are not clear project plans to deliver a revised Supporting People strategy and a longer-term detailed commissioning programme. Performance management is not yet comprehensive. Partnership working and procurement are not yet maximising capacity and the ability to maintain the recent rate of improvement with reduced corporate and external support has not yet been demonstrated.

Scoring the Supporting People programme

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

Figure 1 Scoring chart²

	Prospects for improvement?					'a poor programme that has promising prospects for improvement'
Excellent					A good programme?	
Promising	⚙					
Uncertain						
Poor						
	Poor	Fair ★	Good ★★	Excellent ★★★		

Source: Audit Commission

- 8 We found the programme to be poor because it has a number of weaknesses including:
- the programme has only had a limited impact in improving outcomes for service users;
 - there is not a comprehensive Supporting People strategy in place guiding the delivery of the programme;
 - commissioning and decommissioning plans are underdeveloped;
 - engagement at the core strategy group by adult social care has been weak and inconsistent by some other partners;
 - partners and services users are not systematically involved in contract monitoring;

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.

8 Supporting People Re-inspection | Scoring the Supporting People programme

- there has been limited reshaping of services and of the programme overall to ensure it is able to meet identified needs;
- partner strategies are not yet well aligned to make best use of the opportunities offered by the programme;
- a significant underspend of programme grant has accumulated over a number of years;
- development of a move-on strategy has been slow and the number of service users requiring move-on accommodation is not being effectively monitored;
- outcome measures, including assessment of user satisfaction and shared targets are underdeveloped;
- engagement of carers, advocacy groups and the voluntary sector in the programme is underdeveloped;
- a service user reference group is not in place and outcomes from user engagement have been limited;
- there is a lack of coordination and monitoring of access to services;
- only a limited number of steady state contracts have been issued creating uncertainty for providers;
- the approach to adult and child protection issues is undeveloped;
- contract management has been slow to develop and improvement planning with providers has not been comprehensive;
- contracts are not specified in sufficient detail for the majority of the services to enable them to be closely monitored;
- potential value for money and eligibility issues have still to be addressed in a number of services;
- weak financial management has led to a significant overpayment of Supporting People grant to one provider;
- tracking and benchmarking of programme unit costs are not up-to-date and value for money in administration costs cannot be demonstrated;
- fairer charging is not being proactively promoted, not linked to wider benefit assessment and it is taking too long to carry out assessments; and
- information on the diversity of existing clients is not comprehensive and cultural sensitivity in services has not yet been adequately addressed.

9 However, there are some stronger aspects of the programme. These include:

- key partners consistently engaging in the Commissioning Body and providers effectively involved in the delivery of the programme;
- needs analysis and sector reviews have been used to identify priority sectors for service development which have been agreed by the Commissioning Body;
- a well resourced Supporting People team;

- a satisfactory framework for procurement and contract management is now in place including a robust value for money methodology and a clear procurement and pricing model;
 - a clear eligibility criteria has been developed and a retraction plan addressing ineligible funding in learning disability services is in place;
 - good quality support plans for service users; and
 - an accessible website with a range of useful information and an effective web-based directory of services.
- 10** The programme has promising prospects for improvement because:
- there is a strong political and corporate commitment to improve the programme;
 - partners on the Commissioning Body are now focused on developing the programme to meet the needs of the county;
 - there has been an increased pace of change over the last six months;
 - the Council has responded positively to the feedback provided during the inspection confirming progress on a number of important issues;
 - there is increased examination of external good practice to inform good improvement plans;
 - improvement plans focus on key areas for the programme;
 - a significant number of planned improvements are already well advanced increasing the certainty of delivery;
 - policies, procedures and structures have been introduced which will help deliver improved outcomes;
 - regular performance reports on key indicators are presented to governance structures; and
 - IT is being used effectively to increase capacity.
- 11** However, there are some issues which limit prospects for improvement. These include:
- a consistent track record of improvement has not yet been demonstrated and a number of process improvements introduced recently have not yet had a full impact on the programme and the sustainability of improvements has still to be demonstrated;
 - forward planning for the work of the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group is underdeveloped;
 - there is no clear project plan for delivering a new Supporting People strategy and detailed commissioning plans;

10 Supporting People Re-inspection | Scoring the Supporting People programme

- partnership working and procurement is not yet significantly increasing the capacity of the programme; and
- future strategic and performance management capacity is unclear as the programme has been reliant on external and corporate support in these areas which will not continue at the same level.

Recommendations

- 12 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 Rapidly develop the programme to best meet priority needs by:

- *developing a comprehensive strategy for the programme guided by a detailed project plan;*
- *developing and delivering comprehensive commissioning and decommissioning plans, linked to strategic aims and guided by a detailed project plan;*
- *quickly developing detailed plans to utilise and the accumulated underspend of Supporting People grant;*
- *filling gaps in needs information and implementing a process to regularly update needs data to inform strategy; and*
- *finalising and delivering the move-on strategy, including making responsibilities, resources and timescales clear in the action plan.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improved outcomes for service users;
- all partners being clear about the direction of the programme and working to a common purpose; and
- the programme providing improved value for money.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by December 2007.

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 joint working by:

- *working with adult social care to ensure they are effectively participating in the Core Strategy Group and that other linkages are in place to enable effective joint working;*
- *working with partners to ensure they have related strategies in place which are aligned to make best use of the opportunities offered by the Supporting People programme;*
- *monitoring access routes to services and developing a coordinated approach to access across the county;*
- *reducing uncertainty for providers by developing a clear programme for issuing steady state contracts enabling them to be put in place at the earliest opportunity but without limiting future commissioning plans; and*
- *maximising joint commissioning and a partnership work in contract monitoring opportunities within the county and with other councils.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- increased ability for providers to plan for the future; and
- improved co-ordination and delivery of the programme.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by December 2007.

Recommendation

R3 Improve customer focus by:

- *progressing the assessment of the cultural sensitivity of services and implementing an action plan, agreed with service users to ensure schemes meet cultural needs;*
- *surveying satisfaction levels across services and using this information in contract monitoring and to drive improvement;*
- *systematically involving service users in contract monitoring arrangements;*
- *ensuring a robust approach to adult and child protection issues including comprehensive policies and procedures, and training for staff and providers;*
- *effectively engaging carers, advocacy groups and the voluntary sector to enable them to influence the development of the programme; and*
- *actively promoting fairer charging, targeting publicity where necessary, ensuring links to wider benefit assessment and prompt processing of assessments.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improved customer satisfaction; and
- services better tailored to meet customer needs.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by December 2007.

Recommendation

R4 Improve performance management by:

- *using outcome measures and shared targets to drive improvement in services;*
- *ensuring all services have detailed service specifications;*
- *monitoring the number of service users awaiting move-on accommodation and using this information to improve access to move-on accommodation;*
- *robustly using the Quality Assessment Framework and contract management arrangements to ensure continued service improvement;*
- *developing and maintaining forward work plans covering at least 12 months ahead for the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group;*
- *ensuring all performance reports provide a clear analysis of any underperformance and mitigating actions being taken; and*
- *regularly tracking and benchmarking unit costs and reporting this information to Supporting People governance structures.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- improved quality of services;
- increased understanding of value for money; and
- improved work planning.

The implementation of this recommendation will have medium impact with low costs. This should be implemented by December 2007.

Recommendation

R5 Improve financial management by:

- *contacting all providers and requesting confirmation that Supporting People grant has been fully utilised for eligible housing-related support;*
- *ensuring contract monitoring arrangements include robust validation of Supporting People expenditure levels and that this is rapidly applied to all services;*
- *ensuring that all overpaid Supporting People grant is returned to the programme; and*
- *rapidly investigating all services which have potential eligibility or value for money issues identified through the contract management tool.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- all Supporting People grant is utilised for eligible housing-related support; and
- increased value for money in the delivery of services.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by November 2007.

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

Dates of inspection: 18 to 22 June 2007.

Regional contact details

Audit Commission

1st Floor

Bridge Business Park

Bridge Park Road

Thurmaston

Leicester LE4 8BL

Telephone: 0116 269 3311

Fax: 0116 269 4422

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing

Report

Context

The locality

- 14 Lincolnshire County Council is a predominantly rural county in the East of England. It has seven districts of Boston, East Lindsey, Lincoln, North Kesteven, South Holland, South Kesteven and West Lindsey.
- 15 Lincolnshire has a population of 646,645. The largest populated areas are in Lincoln City, Boston, Grantham and Spalding. The county has a very low population density of 109 people per square kilometre compared to the national average of 378.
- 16 Three per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities compared to the national average of 13 per cent. There are a relatively large proportion of older people, with 18.8 per cent being over pensionable age compared to the national average of 18 per cent.
- 17 The largest employer in the area is the public sector, with manufacturing, agriculture and tourism being the other key employers. Unemployment stands at 2.1 per cent and although unemployment is lower than the regional or national averages, the average hourly earnings are the lowest in the East Midlands.
- 18 On the 2004 indices of deprivation, the county ranks 94 out of 150, with one being the highest level of deprivation.

The Council

- 19 The Council comprises 77 councillors. The Conservative group has control with 45 seats, Labour have 21, the Liberal Democrats 8 and there are 3 Independents. The Council has a political structure of Leader and Cabinet model.
- 20 The Council employs 6,237 staff (excluding schools) to plan and deliver its services. The Council's overall budget for the year 2007/08 is £372 million.
- 21 In recent years, the Council has received the following assessments of performance of its services.
 - The Commission for Social Care Inspection has assessed the provision of adult services in Lincolnshire as 'serving some people well' with 'uncertain prospects of improvement' - as the Council has received the same judgement for three years it has been defined as 'coasting' and additional monitoring and support is being provided by CSCI, Department of Health Recovery Unit and the Care Services Improvement Partnership.
 - A Joint Area Review report published in March 2007 found that outcomes for children and young people in Lincolnshire were 'adequate'.

- In a Corporate Assessment by the Audit Commission reported in March 2007 the Council was found to be performing adequately.
- In the Audit Commission's 2007 direction of travel review the Council achieved two stars (from a possible four) for its overall performance and was judged to be 'improving well'.

The Supporting People programme

- 22** Lincolnshire County Council acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the Supporting People programme in the area.
- 23** Progress in implementing Supporting People was assessed by the Audit Commission in August 2004 and in February 2006. On both occasions progress was judged to be poor with uncertain prospects for improvement. Because of this poor rating a further re-inspection was required and this report covers both the progress made since the last re-inspection, an evaluation of the current service and the prospects for improvement against the Audit Commissions' expectations as described in the Supporting People key lines of enquiry.
- 24** The Council received a Supporting People grant of £21,373,000 for 2007/08. The Council also receives a grant of £464,000 to administer the programme in 2006/07. The Supporting People team is located in the Healthier Communities section of the Communities Directorate. The Accountable Officer at the time of inspection was an interim Assistant Director.
- 25** The Commissioning Body voting members comprise Lincolnshire County Council; all seven district councils; Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust (PCT); Lincolnshire Probation Area.
- 26** The Supporting People programme funds 397 services through 187 contracts. The current breakdown of services after reclassification are:
- 8,699 units of supported accommodation; and
 - 7,164 individuals receiving floating support.
- 27** The highest cost service in Lincolnshire is £612.98 per week for an externally provided learning disability service. The lowest cost service is £0.73 a week for a community alarm service for older people with support needs.

How good is the Supporting People programme?

What has the programme aimed to achieve?

- 28 The vision for the Supporting People programme is set out in the Council's 'Identifying Needs and Setting Priorities' document:

'The vision for Lincolnshire Supporting People is that people will be supported through a range of high quality, value for money housing-related support services to help them maintain, or regain, their independence.'

- 29 The document goes on to identify four key objectives.
- Improve the alignment of commissioned services with the priorities of partner agencies.
 - Ensure that there are clear commissioning priorities set by client group, service area and district based on clearly evidenced need for all vulnerable groups – including BME groups – in the community.
 - Increase service user, potential service user and carer engagement in the development and delivery of services and measuring outcomes.
 - Increase the percentage of clients and referrers who find it easy to access information about services, are able to make informed choices and access the services they require.

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

- 30 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;
 - access to services and information;
 - diversity; and
 - outcomes for service users.

Governance and partnerships

- 31** The CLG 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.
- 32** In our previous inspection we found that governance arrangements for the Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire were not well established and engagement from health was weak. There was a lack of understanding by some stakeholders about the programme and what it could deliver. The Commissioning Body had secured more commitment from the district councils but this was on condition of a further review of the Memorandum of Understanding. Councillors and board members were able to voice their opinions through a scrutiny group and some wanted to become more involved in the decision-making process. The Core Strategy Group had recently been re-established but there were a number of aspects that needed to be addressed before it was fully functioning. Service users had limited involvement in the strategic development of the programme and some stakeholders felt that the programme was overly dominated by the interests of social services, rather than being a partnership. As a result, the programme was not being managed and driven forward in key areas.
- 33** In this inspection we found that weaknesses still outweigh strengths in governance and partnerships. Partnership working with adult social care has been weak including lack of representation at the Core Strategy Group. Attendance has also been inconsistent by some other partners. Integration of partner strategies with Supporting People priorities is undeveloped as are linkages at operational level. Forward planning for both the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group is limited. The Commissioning Body did not have effective influence on the service review process and tangible outcomes from Commissioning Body decisions are still limited. However, there is now a stronger corporate commitment to improving the programme and there is consistent engagement from partners at the Commissioning Body which is now operating more effectively. In particular, there is a strong commitment from the Districts Councils at both the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group. There is also now effective involvement of service providers.

Corporate commitment

- 34 There is now a significant corporate commitment to the improving the Supporting People programme but this has not yet resulted in an effective partnership working with adult social care. Senior councillors have an understanding of the programme and are involved with its development and progress. The portfolio holder is the County Council's voting member on the Commissioning Body. An improvement board, Chaired by the Chief Executive has been overseeing the service since February 2007 without undermining the authority of the Commissioning Body. There are regular reports on progress to the executive and the policy and performance committee. There have also been significant corporate resources targeted at improving the administration of the programme. Supporting People newsletters have been circulated to all councillors along with promotion of website information. However, partnership working with adult care outside of the Commissioning Body is still weak. Higher corporate commitment is now assisting the development of programme but underdeveloped joint working with adult social care is limiting the impact of a stronger corporate approach.
- 35 The programme demonstrates improved linkages with corporate strategy. While there are only limited direct linkages in the Council's 2006/07 business plan, there are clear references to links with Supporting People activities in the 2007/08 plan. This demonstrates the increased level of understanding of how the programme can contribute to wider council objectives.

Commissioning Body

- 36 There is effective engagement at the Commissioning Body. Meetings have been monthly since February 2007 and were previously bi-monthly. Attendance from partners has been consistent over the last year and representation is at an appropriate level to enable decision-making. The Council has worked hard to ensure district councils are well engaged in the programme including presentations to some district councils and regular contact at Chief Executive level. Elected member representatives from district councils are now voting members of the Commissioning Body with officers also in attendance. While this makes the Commissioning Body a large meeting, the meetings are well organised and effectively chaired. Primary Care Trust (PCT) and probation service representation has been consistent with the representative from the probation service chairing the Commissioning Body. Non-voting representation has also recently been extended to include Children Services and providers.
- 37 There is a clear understanding of the roles at Commissioning Body level. Appropriate documentation is in place and agreed, including a memorandum of understanding, terms of reference and conflict of interests. Discussions with members also demonstrated an understanding of the role of the Commissioning Body.

- 38 The workplan for the Commissioning Body is underdeveloped. A forward plan linked to agenda items has been developed but this has not been regularly updated and at the time of inspection only detailed items for two months ahead. It is also not clear from the plan what outcomes are expected from the items to be considered. This reduces transparency and coordination of the work of the Commissioning Body and makes it difficult for all members to fully understand the importance of their sustained commitment to the programme.
- 39 Performance management at the Commissioning Body is mixed. Quarterly performance reports are produced which include a wide range of indicators including Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Supporting People indicators (SPIs) and more recently related partner targets. There are also separate quarterly reports on complaints and Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) performance. However, there is insufficient analysis of performance and mitigating actions in the reporting of some performance indicators and there is a lack of clarity on roles between the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group on dealing with performance management. The Supporting People team service plan has also not been reported to the Commissioning Body. Performance management at the Commissioning Body is now assisting delivery although this is not yet maximised in all areas.

Core Strategy Group

- 40 Engagement at Core Strategy Group is mixed. The group has been meeting monthly in recognition of the current workload. The membership has been expanded to include representatives from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), Youth Offending Team (YOT), service providers and more recently service users and the voluntary sector. Engagement from district councils is strong. Probation attendance has been inconsistent but has improved recently. Attendance from adult social care has been weak with limited representation at only four of the last twelve meetings and one of the last eight. The range of adult care service areas is also not effectively represented on the group. There has been regular PCT attendance although until recently this was from only one of three PCTs as they shared responsibility for working in key partnerships. This limited contact with the two other PCTs but they have recently restructured into one PCT providing more consistent engagement. However, PCT representation has not properly encompassed mental health activity. Children's services have been represented by Lincolnshire NCH but not directly by the Council's children's services team. Provider representatives are attending regularly but have not been given voting rights. This means that while some partners are effectively influencing the development of the programme through the Core Strategy Group others are still not effectively engaged.

22 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 41 The group is operating well in a number of areas. There is a good understanding of roles and responsibilities and terms of reference have recently been expanded to more accurately reflect working arrangements. There is a strong commitment to the programme from regular attendees and ownership of the work being completed. The group demonstrates the ability to challenge information presented to it, recently shown in a robust response to the first draft of the needs analysis. There are effective relationships between the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. The Core Strategy Group will make recommendations to the Commissioning Body and the Commissioning Body will request that the Core Strategy Group examines particular issues. The Chairs of the both meet regularly and minutes of both bodies are reported at each meeting. This has increased the impact of the Core Strategy Group on the direction of the programme.
- 42 However, forward planning for the group remains underdeveloped with the same weaknesses in this area identified for Commissioning Body also applying to the Core Strategy Group.

Accountable Officer

- 43 The role of Accountable Officer is operating effectively. At the time of inspection an external consultant was working in the position, at Assistant Director level. This arrangement has been in place for a year and a handover process to the new Assistant Director for healthier communities is ongoing. The post is at sufficient seniority to have an impact internally and externally, including enabling representation at the Council's Business Management Team. There is an understanding of the responsibilities of the role and ongoing engagement by the Accountable Officer with the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group and the Supporting People team.

Health, housing, social care and probation/criminal justice partnership arrangements

- 44 Partnership working with district councils has been effectively developed in most, but not all areas. The level of alignment of housing strategies with Supporting People does vary between Districts but this is partly explained by timing issues and previous underdeveloped Supporting People priorities at county level. The county-wide homelessness strategy does recognise the important role Supporting People has to play. The Supporting People team is effectively engaged with the county housing forum and homelessness forum. However, we found a significant issue in relation to overpayment of Supporting People grant to one District provider where partnership working had clearly not been effective in identifying and resolving the problem. Partnership working with districts is now helping to ensure the Supporting People programme is used to assist the delivery of homelessness and housing strategies but is not yet ensuring the effective delivery of all aspects of the programme.

- 45 Joint working with the PCT is improving but is still underdeveloped. The PCT has gone through a major restructuring in recent years reducing the number of PCTs in the County from three to one and the disruption involved in this has impacted on partnership work. A mental health accommodation strategy is not in place as this was not achieved in the original timescale. Proposals for developing this strategy were recently brought to the Commissioning Body and a partnership approach agreed. There are also some recently established joint PCT/adult social care posts which will assist in joint working but an integrated approach to provision of services is not yet in place. The PCT in partnership with Shelter has recently run a series of mental health and housing awareness raising seminars. These involved providers, partners and voluntary organisations and generated a range of issues that have been circulated to partners for consideration. However, overall, joint working with the PCT has not yet had a significant impact on the delivery of the programme.
- 46 Partnership working with the probation service is mixed. Engagement at senior level at the Commissioning Body has strengthened partnership working, and communication with the Core Strategy Group representative is strong. It is also positive that the recently developed offender accommodation strategy went to the Supporting People management team for comment. However, the strategy focuses on accommodation-based support for offenders and does not sufficiently address or explore the need to further develop floating support services in the County. It does not provide any analysis of the effectiveness of current provision, identify where there are gaps or other needs, nor does it reference any links with the YOT. At operational level probation is working well in partnership with the DAAT which will assist Supporting People partnership work. There are also connections with the YOT although these are less well developed and joint working between YOT and DAAT is also underdeveloped. Overall, while improved engagement is having some impact the benefits of joint working in this area are not yet being maximised.
- 47 MAPPA arrangements are generally working well but the links with the Supporting People team are unclear. There is appropriate involvement of probation and providers and information sharing. However, arrangements for how best to link the Supporting People team into this work have not yet been agreed although a presentation by the Accountable Officer to the MAPPA board is planned to discuss this issue. Offender-related public protection issues are being addressed in partnership but it is not clear if the Supporting People team is having adequate involvement in this process.
- 48 Partnership arrangements with adult social care are weak. Client group strategies are not fully developed across adult care services and therefore are not well aligned to the developing opportunities through Supporting People. The Supporting People team is not well engaged with adult care partnership structures where they exist, for example not being involved in the learning disability partnership and in other areas such as older person services there are not adequate structures in place. These issues have been recognised with, for example, discussions ongoing about how Supporting People can be best engaged in the learning disability partnership. However, partnership working is currently limited and this impacts on the effectiveness of the programme.

24 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 49 Joint working on adult and child protection issues is underdeveloped. This area of work has not been given a high priority. The issues have not been effectively considered by the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group. Supporting People is not mentioned in the Council's Children and Young People Plan. The vulnerable adult protection committee is not fully representative and current procedures are not effectively aligned for Supporting People services. Examination of casework demonstrated that this was impacting on the ability to effectively deal with cases. One case we looked demonstrated delays in applying adult protection policy because it was not clear if the policy was applicable to Supporting People service users.
- 50 Shared targets and outcomes for the programme have not been developed. It is positive that related partner targets are included in Supporting People performance reports as this encourages analysis of the impact of Supporting People on these targets. However, there is not agreed shared targets for outcomes for the Supporting People programme which would provide increased focus on key partnership priorities.
- 51 There is recognition of the role Supporting People can play in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Lincolnshire was in the last phase of development of LAAs and the LAA was agreed in March 2007. This was developed with a wide variety of partners involved with the county-wide local strategic partnership. There is a clear commitment to use the Supporting People programme to help deliver some of the targets in the agreement with further details to be developed following completion of the Supporting People strategy and there is agreement to align all Supporting People spending over a three-year period. This will help develop future joint working and raises the profile of Supporting People although the impact in terms of tangible outcomes is not yet clear.

Service providers

- 52 There are now effective arrangements for service providers to engage in the programme. Regular provider forums are held to which all providers are invited. There are also three provider focus groups covering disabilities and health, older people and the socially excluded. The focus groups operate independently of the Supporting People team and are also open to all providers. The focus groups elect a provider executive which meets with the Supporting People management team. The provider executive is represented on the Core Strategy Group, Commissioning Body and also attends the East Midlands Regional Provider Group. The executive also uses part of general provider forum to discuss issues about the programme with providers independently of the Supporting People team. This ensures that provider views are reflected in the delivery of the programme.

- 53 Providers have been consulted on key elements of the programme. For example, the approach to value for money, eligibility, contract monitoring, needs analysis, complaints and appeals have all been discussed with providers. There is also evidence of these discussions resulting in changes such as alteration to the cost funding model used to assess value for money and the sector targets for providers 2007/08. This increases transparency and enables the consideration of provider issues in the delivery of the programme.
- 54 A regular provider newsletter also helps publicise issues relating to the programme. This is produced monthly and distributed in a variety of formats including hard copies and an electronic version so it can be easily shared internally by providers. It is also available on the Council's website. This is important to ensure providers are kept informed about developments in the programme.
- 55 Training is being provided to providers on key elements of the programme although this has been reactive rather than part of a strategic approach. Training has been provided in a number of areas, for example the QAF, completion of provider workbooks and outcome monitoring. There has also been recent externally provided training on procurement, mental health and housing awareness and working with vulnerable adults. However, the strategic approach to training is still limited in that there has not been full discussion with providers leading to an agreed prioritised training programme.
- 56 Providers demonstrated satisfaction with support and involvement. In a survey of providers we carried out, 88 per cent were satisfied with support provided by the Supporting People team and 84 per cent were satisfied with their involvement in the programme. Our visits to providers also found a majority satisfied with levels of support and involvement. This increases the effectiveness of partnership working.
- 57 Mechanisms are not in place to enable regular sharing of good practice between providers. While there are examples of specific items of sharing good practice and on occasions referring one provider to another for advice there is not a systematic approach to ensure that the sharing of good practice is maximised.

Voluntary and community sector

- 58 Engagement of the voluntary and community sector has been weak. This has been recognised by the Council and improvement plans are included in the service user engagement strategy. The first stage of this has been delivered with the recent engagement of the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) who now sit on the Core Strategy Group. However, plans to work with the CVS to identify other groups who need to be engaged and how this should be delivered are still being developed. This means that Voluntary and Community organisations have had little influence over the development of the programme and the benefits of their knowledge and experience have not been effectively utilised to benefit the programme.

Grant compliance, strategy and needs

- 59 In our previous inspection we found that although the five-year strategy was in place it was seen by partners as an aspirational document that needed to be reviewed and informed by additional information from strategic reviews and other sources. The Supporting People programme was funding ineligible services and the Council had been slow to estimate the amount involved and, with partners, put in place a planned transfer of funding over time to the proper funding source.
- 60 In this inspection we found that weaknesses outweigh strengths in grant compliance strategy and needs. It is a significant weakness that there is no clear strategy in place for the programme and this has led to the programme overall being underdeveloped. A move-on strategy that will identify issues for people needing a planned approach to move from accommodation-based services to general needs housing, with floating support where this is needed, is also still only in development. A systematic approach to addressing ineligible funding has been slow to develop and there was insufficient quality assurance in development of retraction plans. However, a robust eligibility criteria is in place and retraction plans are addressing significant levels of ineligible funding. Needs information is now more comprehensive, sector reviews have been carried out and sectors have been prioritised for change, and some 'quick wins' have been identified for new services to address gaps.

Grant conditions and eligibility criteria

- 61 There was not a systematic approach to addressing ineligibility following service reviews and this has slowed work on addressing ineligibility. Eligibility issues were identified as part of the service review process but these were not routinely followed up after completing of reviews. Some cases were dealt with during 2005/06 and 2006/07 with high value services being prioritised. However, a significant number of cases which had eligibility issues identified at service reviews have only recently been followed up through a new contract monitoring procedure, with further cases still to be dealt with. This means that the Council has continued to fund services identified as ineligible and has been slow to release ineligible funding to fund other priority services.
- 62 There is now a clear eligibility criteria in place that have been agreed with partners. The current version was agreed by the Commissioning Body in November 2006 following a review of a previous less robust version. Consultation took place with providers and the Core Strategy Group considered the criteria before recommending it to the Commissioning Body. In our survey of providers 84 per cent were satisfied with the Council approach on eligibility. This helps ensure that all providers have a clear understanding of eligibility and enables a consistent approach to all services. This also has the potential to release ineligible funding to fund unmet needs.

- 63 There has been a strong focus from the Council on addressing ineligibility in its own learning disability services since 2006. £8 million of Supporting People grant expenditure was spent on its own learning disability services during 2006/07. The service review process identified that these services had the most significant ineligible funding issues. During 2006 these services were assessed against the new eligibility criteria and a retraction plan has been put in place. This will reduce Supporting People expenditure by £2.35 million over three years with £1.25 million being delivered in the first year 2007/08. The ineligible services will be funded through the Council's adult social care budget so there will be no direct impact on service users.
- 64 The process for developing the retraction plans did not include sufficient quality assurance by the Supporting People team. The process was jointly overseen by the Supporting People team and the commissioning side of Learning Disability services but the actual detailed assessments were carried out by Learning Disability commissioners. In some instances this was related to specific service users but in others a general assessment of groups of service users was made. There was no joint assessment or sample checking by the Supporting People team. This reduces quality assurance in the process and increases the likelihood of ineligible funding not being accurately identified.
- 65 There is now a systematic approach to addressing ineligible funding. A desktop analysis of all service reviews was carried out against the new eligibility criteria in December 2006. Services were classified according to the likelihood of ineligible funding remaining and from January 2007 this information was incorporated in the new contract monitoring process. This has introduced a systematic approach to addressing outstanding issues and the top twenty cases have now been dealt with. This has addressed all cases which were assessed as 'definite' in relation to ineligible funding but there still remains 56 cases assessed as 'likely' to be resolved. While there is still some way to go in this work this is helping to ensure that Supporting People funding is not being used to provide other services.

Five-year strategy

- 66 It is a significant weakness that there is not a robust five-year Supporting People strategy in place. The Council has recognised the weaknesses of the existing strategy and this is not being used to drive the programme forward. The Council is in the process of co-ordinating the development of a new strategy which is due to be in place by autumn 2007. While, it is positive that the Council is seeking to ensure that the new strategy is based on comprehensive information, the time that has elapsed since our previous inspection should have been sufficient to develop and agree a revised strategy.
- 67 It is also a weakness that there is not a detailed project plan in place for the development of a new strategy. Needs analysis work is progressing and there is an expectation that consultants will be involved in producing an initial draft of the strategy. However, there is not a clear documented plan with timescales for delivery. This reduces the transparency of the process, increases the chance of oversights and makes slippage on delivery more likely.

28 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 68 It is positive that some high level priorities for the programme have now been agreed by the Commissioning Body. This followed a comprehensive prioritisation process involving the Core Strategy Group and a joint workshop with Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group. Recommendations for priorities were formally agreed by the Commissioning Body in February 2007. This process took account of recent sector reviews and needs analysis and identified priority client groups and priorities for switching services away from accommodation-based to floating support. These priorities are currently being consulted on more widely and will inform future strategy and commissioning plans.

Needs mapping, analysis and review

- 69 The Council has recently carried out a wide-ranging needs analysis. This was carried out by external consultants who worked closely with the Supporting People team and a sub group of the Core Strategy Group. The main sources of information used in the process were:

- the views of users and potential users of services;
- county-wide strategies for specific client groups;
- the outcome of the sector reviews;
- specific surveys on housing needs for specific client groups;
- district-based strategies;
- data from mainstream reporting arrangements;
- members of the Core Strategy Group were invited to provide statements of the priorities arising from their area of responsibility; and
- providers were also consulted through the provider focus group structure.

Further consultation with stakeholders on the findings had still to be completed and was planned for July 2007. However, the work carried out provides a strong basis for understanding gaps in current service provision and service development opportunities for the majority of Supporting People services.

- 70 Robust sector reviews were carried out during 2006. These took an overview of the service reviews carried out and consulted with stakeholder on themes and issues. Reports on the findings were reviewed by the Core Strategy Group and summary reports approved by the Commissioning Body. This raised a range of issues about levels and methods of service provision and gaps in services which have been fed into the needs analysis. This has helped make the need analysis more robust.
- 71 There are still some weaknesses in needs analysis including:
- there was insufficient consultation with children's services and some elements of learning disability services to inform the needs analysis;
 - some aspects of physical disability and learning disability information, although utilising the latest data available, are not sufficiently up-to-date;

- there is limited data on people with complex needs and issues around the accuracy of information on the level of use of DAAT services; and
 - the analysis of BME vulnerable people's needs is underdeveloped although this has been identified by the Council and forms part of improvement plans.
- 72 The needs analysis has not yet had a significant effect on service development. It has yet to be incorporated into a fully developed strategy and incorporated into more detailed commissioning plans. Initial drafts of the analysis and work from the sector reviews were used to inform the plans to commission eight new services. These were seen as 'quick wins' to address clear gaps in services. Commissioning of these services is well advanced but they are not yet in place and overall the link between needs analysis and reshaping services to best meet needs is still limited.
- 73 An outline framework for updating needs information has been drawn up but has not yet been developed further. The framework has not yet been discussed with partners and there is no central database where needs information can be regularly updated. The Council is therefore not yet in a position to track and incorporate new needs information as it becomes available and is in a weak position to respond to the needs of vulnerable people in emerging communities.

Strategy for move-on accommodation

- 74 A strategy for move-on accommodation has been slow to develop. At the time of inspection only a draft strategy was in place with consultation ongoing. Bearing in mind the time the programme has been operating it would be expected that an agreed move-on strategy would in place and impacting on the delivery of services. Providers expressed significant dissatisfaction with the availability of move-on accommodation and in our survey only 29 per cent were satisfied with the approach to move-on. This means there has been inadequate action to ensure the availability of appropriate of move-on accommodation and pressure on accommodation-based services who are keeping existing users for longer than necessary and are unable to accept new service users.
- 75 Monitoring of move-on requirements is inadequate. While the national performance indicator on the proportion of planned moves is monitored there is no monitoring of the actual number of service users awaiting move-on accommodation. This is important to assess the extent of the problem on an ongoing basis, and understand how it is impacting on different services. This means that the data informing the strategy is not comprehensive.

Delivery arrangements

- 76 In our previous inspection we found that the Supporting People team were committed and enthusiastic and had worked hard to cope with a challenging workload, but they had not been well managed. It was a significant weakness that the administration budget had been underspent over the last two years, despite concerns about the capacity of the Supporting People team to effectively progress the programme. There were weaknesses in performance management including an understanding of risk.

- 77** In this inspection we found that weaknesses outweigh strengths in delivery arrangements. There has been a significant overpayment of Supporting People grant to a district council provider who was planning to spend the overpayment on ineligible capital improvements. Until highlighted through the inspection, this had not been identified by the County Council. Outcomes measures are also not yet being used to effectively monitor performance, there is insufficient analysis in reporting of some performance figures and fairer charging is not yet being administered effectively. However, the Supporting People team is now well resourced and a workplan is in place with a range of local performance indicators. There is regular performance reporting to governance structures including performance against related partner targets and a strong focus on risk.

The Supporting People team

- 78** The Supporting People team is well resourced and appropriately located within the Communities Directorate. The administration grant is being fully spent and the Council committed an additional £353,000 during 2006/07. In addition to this, the Council has utilised considerable corporate resources to help improve delivery of the programme. Following a corporate restructuring in 2006 the team been located in the Communities Directorate. It is in the same Directorate as adult social care to enable closer joint working although this is not being successfully achieved at the present time.
- 79** The structure of the Supporting People team is now more robust although internal division of responsibilities is still causing some inefficiency. Staff delivering the service are now all within one team. There is also now a head of service who has overall responsibility for all aspects of the service. The new approach to contract monitoring detailed in the Council's contract performance protocol does provide an approach where one officer deals with a range of issues with a provider. However, current division of responsibilities in the team still causes some fragmentation of work. There are splits between officers carrying out contracting work and QAF improvement work and there are insufficient links between operational and strategic activity. The additional resources that have been allocated to the delivery has reduced the impact of these issues. An internal report has analysed the structure of the team and restructuring proposals are currently out to consultation but at the time of inspection the structure of the team was not maximising effectiveness in delivery.
- 80** The approach to training is mixed. Staff are able to access training requested and some mandatory training has been delivered on issues such as diversity. An internal programme of training to share skills across teams has recently been developed. However, the strategic approach to training is still underdeveloped with a lack of strategic analysis of training needs. For example, the need for specific training on adult and child protection was not identified until this was raised during the inspection. This means that the effectiveness of the team is not yet being maximised and the needs of vulnerable people are not being fully addressed.

Work planning

- 81 There is a very recent Supporting People team service plan in place for 2007/08 which demonstrates more strengths than weaknesses. The plan has links to strategic plans for delivery of the programme. There are a range of local indicators and targets in place with timescales and responsible officers identified. However, the plan was not completed until June 2007 and it had not been approved by the Core Strategy Group or the Commissioning Body. Monitoring is to take place at the Supporting People management team. This should help guide the work of the team but its recent introduction means it is not yet possible for us to judge its effectiveness in driving improvement. The lack of links with Supporting People governance structures could also reduce effectiveness of scrutiny and monitoring.
- 82 There has been an increased focus on improvement planning and monitoring since January 2007. An improvement board was set up at that time which has monitored the delivery of an integrated improvement plan for the service. The improvement board includes senior officers from the Council including the Chief Executive and the portfolio holder for Supporting People. This has helped drive improvement in the programme in some areas.
- 83 Prior to this there was monitoring of an improvement plan but voluntary improvement work carried out by the Audit Commission in December 2007 found that this plan was not delivering sufficient improvement in the programme. There was also a service plan in place for 2006/07 but this was superseded by improvement plans and therefore not effectively used.

Performance monitoring and management

- 84 It is positive that a range of performance management information on the programme is now being collected and reported. A quarterly performance management report is produced which goes to the Core Strategy Group and the Commissioning Body. The report was developed during 2006/07 and now includes all national KPIs, SPIs and a range of partner targets for adult social care, health and probation. KPIs and SPIs are divided by different sectors and targets for this year have recently been agreed following consultation with partners. This has increased focus on the performance of the programme.
- 85 Effective quarterly reports are also produced on complaints and QAF performance. Complaints reports provide details of all complaints received by providers and the Supporting People team during the period. QAF reports show the number of services in different categories and changes in ratings. These both help drive performance and in particular has focused attention on eliminating poor QAF scores in services.

32 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 86 Analysis of performance information is mixed. We found that this is evident in some instances, for example performance on the number of planned moves was identified as a concern and has been a focus of activity including the commissioning of new service to assist young people in finding and settling in move-on accommodation. However, performance reports do not consistently analyse underperformance across sectors and identify actions being taken to improve performance. This means that performance information is not yet being used to provide comprehensive information to Supporting People governance structures.
- 87 There is a significant weakness in the financial management of the programme. A large overpayment of Supporting People grant to one of the district council providers has occurred. This has taken place over a number of years and at the end of 2006/07 was estimated to be £1,128,000. The district council was planning to spend this money on ineligible capital projects during 2007/08 until we highlighted the issue to the County Council. Payments being made to the provider had not been revised since the original schedule of payments was established at the commencement of the programme. Work on analysing costs has recently taken place with alterations to payments due in October 2007. However, despite this work the level of accumulated overpayment from previous payments was not identified by the County Council. This demonstrates a lack of effective financial management which has resulted in a significant level of grant funding not being utilised to meet the housing support needs of vulnerable people.
- 88 Outcome measures for the programme are still at an early stage of development. While some existing national performance indicators are linked to outcomes these are not sufficient to monitor the effectiveness of services. Collection of outcome-related indicators has been piloted in six services from April 2007. This is based on a model adapted from another council. The first tranche of this information has recently become available. This is to be integrated with CLG national guidance on outcomes which has already been launched with all providers. While these recent developments are positive use of outcome measures are not yet having a significant impact on the programme and it is not therefore possible to assess the impact of this in driving up service standards for service users.

Fairer charging

- 89 There is a clear policy in place for fairer charging assessment and documentation is of a good quality. The Commissioning Body has approved the Council's corporate policy on fairer charging and documentation is comprehensive and easy to understand. This helps ensure the policy is applied consistently and makes it more accessible.

- 90 However, fairer charging assessments are not yet being delivered effectively. The responsibility for these assessments is being transferred from the Supporting People team to the Financial Assessment Benefits team in adult social care on a phased basis from April-September 2007. This does integrate the work into specialist teams who will be able provide a wider assessment of benefit entitlement. However, it is currently still taking too long to complete assessments and links to wider benefit assessments are not yet comprehensive. The time taken for the Supporting People team to carry out assessments has not been regularly monitored. The number of assessments is low and there has not been a targeted campaign to publicise the service. This means that the Council can not be sure all service users are receiving the assistance with charges they are entitled to and slow processing provides poor customer service.

Risk management

- 91 There is a comprehensive risk register for the Supporting People programme. This has been developed in line with the corporate approach to risk management. This differentiates level of risk and identifies mitigating actions. It is reported monthly to the Supporting People management team and quarterly to the Core Strategy Group and Commissioning Body. This helps ensure risks to the programme are managed effectively.
- 92 There is a focus on ensuring business continuity plans are in place but these are not all completed. Business continuity plan for services were identified as a priority through the risk management process. A standard template has been designed for providers to use in preparing plans and the Supporting People team is pro-actively developing plans with providers. At the time of inspection 50 providers had returned business continuity plans, but 18 were still outstanding. This means that risks from service failure have not yet been minimised.

CLG data upload

- 93 CLG data uploads are now taking place effectively. A designated officer has had responsibility for this activity since December 2006 and this has improved the accuracy of submissions. There has also been a focus on working with providers to ensure accurate completion of workbooks. Performance has improved from 84 per cent in September 2006 to 94 per cent in March 2007. Non-returns are now promptly followed up and non-compliance is linked with contract monitoring arrangements. Successful data uploads enable more effective assessment of the delivery of the programme.

Commissioning and performance

- 94 In our previous inspection we found that the service review programme had made slow progress. There was a plan in place to complete reviews by the revised deadline of April 2006. However, to achieve this some reviews were being undertaken by desktop and reviews were only assessing for minimum standards. The Council had not issued any steady state contracts or fixed term contracts and there was a lack of transparency regarding the bidding process for new Supporting People schemes.

- 95** Weaknesses outweigh strengths in commissioning and performance. Service reviews only focused on improvement to minimum standards and effective contract monitoring has been slow to develop. Only a limited number of steady state contracts have been issued creating uncertainty for providers and commissioning plans are still underdeveloped. However, the new contract performance protocol is providing a more systematic approach to contract monitoring and improvement, and there has been a successful focus on reducing the level of QAF D scores.

Contracts

- 96** Service reviews were not undertaken in a robust and effective manner. All service reviews were completed by the renegotiated Government deadline of April 2006 (the initial deadline for all ALAs was March 2005). Of 131 contracts in place, 96 contracts received a validation visit. Of those where only a desktop review was completed, 21 were community alarm services but 14 covered other contracts. Where contracts covered a number of similar services only a proportion were visited as part of the validation process. This was particularly the case for providers of sheltered housing services. Overall, 50 per cent of services received a validation visit with 13 per cent receiving a second visit. QAF levels were validated and potential ineligibility issues and value for money issues highlighted. However, the eligibility criteria and value for money methodology were not robust at this time and the focus was on assessing services against minimum standards. This is also demonstrated by the failure to identify a significant overpayment of Supporting People grant to one of the district council providers. There was also limited involvement of partners in the review process. The review process did not therefore provide a comprehensive assessment of all services.
- 97** Initial contract monitoring following reviews was not comprehensive. This commenced during 2006/07 but was reactive to issues arising rather than part of a systematic approach. There was a fragmented approach to monitoring which was not effectively linked to addressing value for money and performance issues which were dealt with by other teams. A formal procedure for monitoring was in place but capacity meant that the number of services formally monitored was limited and there was not systematic involvement of stakeholders. QAF self-assessments were requested from providers during the year but not validated unless a monitoring visit was planned and those that did not complete the self-assessment were not chased. The means the benefits of contract monitoring during most of 2006/07 were severely limited.

- 98** Contract monitoring and management through the new contract performance protocol is satisfactory. The contract performance protocol combines a risk-based assessment with random sampling. It was agreed with providers and introduced from January 2007. The risk assessment draws on issues found during the service review process around eligibility and strategic relevance, assesses KPIs, SPIs and QAF performance, and includes an assessment of services against the new eligibility criteria and value for money methodology. Visits were initially focused on schemes where eligibility was an issue and are currently focusing on high cost services. However, if there are any other issues for the services prioritised these are also addressed as part of the same process as part of an action plan agreed with the provider. Each service has a specific officer with designated responsibility for progressing all the issues. Internal monitoring of progress in resolving issues and allocation of new cases is carried out at regular Contract Performance and Protocol meetings. All services are also required to submit an annual QAF self-assessment on a phased basis during 2007/08. Validation visits have recently commenced on a random 10 per cent of self-assessments and all cases where an increase of two QAF levels is claimed. The process is helping to ensure ongoing monitoring is now consistently addressing performance of services.
- 99** There are some weaknesses in the contract performance protocol. It does not formally involve service users in contract monitoring. While this may be picked up through internal monitoring meetings it is not required by procedures. There is also no process for provider peer review. Similarly there is no guidance on how partners should be involved in the process. This is particularly important where partners refer users to a service or hold contracts with the same provider as monitoring processes could be combined. We were also informed that there is a target to visit every service at least once every three years but this is not in the contract performance protocol or identified in any other documents. This limits the effectiveness of the process.
- 100** Service specifications for existing services are not clearly defined. Contractual conditions only provide basic information on levels of provision but are not accompanied by more detailed service specifications on which performance can be judged. Specifications for services currently in development are more comprehensive but these are not yet operational. Unclear service specification makes performance monitoring more difficult and less effective which reduces the ability to ensure service users are receiving high quality services.
- 101** The Council has been slow to issue steady state contracts and this has not been consistent across services. The Council states it was initially unable to issue steady state contracts following service reviews due to insufficient capacity and reliability of data. However, 17 contracts have now been issued which are concentrated among internally provided learning disability services. These were issued on the basis that retraction plans for ineligible costs for these services were agreed. While it is important that the high level of ineligible costs in these services are addressed this has created an inconsistent approach between the Councils own services and other services.

36 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 102** The lack of progress in issuing steady state contracts creates uncertainty for providers, limiting their ability to plan the development of services. A policy decision has now been taken not to issue any further steady state contracts until the Supporting People strategy has been revised. This is to ensure that services issued with steady state contracts fit with the envisaged future shape of Supporting People services, although absence of an agreed strategy means that there is a lack of clarity around this. This is another negative outcome from the underdeveloped strategic approach. Our survey of providers found that only 66 per cent were satisfied with the outcome of service reviews and contract negotiations. This underdeveloped and inconsistent approach can affect service development with a resulting impact on service users.
- 103** The Council has made only limited progress in commissioning and decommissioning services to ensure the programme best meet needs. The flawed basis of its existing five-year strategy resulted in an embargo on procurement until a new strategy and commissioning plan is in place. There is a commitment for revenue funding of five capital schemes already under construction and to a further eight new schemes, all of which are modest in scale (in total a £750,000 annual commitment), which are currently being procured to meet the clearest needs identified in the earliest stages of the new strategy being developed. However, comprehensive plans for future commissioning and decommissioning are not expected to be in place until later this year. This means that commissioning powers have not yet been effectively used to ensure services best meet priority needs.
- 104** This also means that joint commissioning has not been used to deliver new services. While there is partner involvement in the design of some of the new services being developed there have been no new jointly commissioned services taking advantage of combined resources to deliver integrated services and improved outcomes for service users.
- 105** In view of the vulnerability of many users of Supporting People services, there has been an inadequate focus on issues of safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people understanding the context of abuse. This has not been a significant feature in review and contract monitoring processes and our examination of one case of alleged abuse found that it was not effectively dealt with by the provider and that there had not been sufficient follow up action by the Supporting People team to ensure improvement. This lack of focus in the context of Supporting People commissioning, contracting and monitoring is presenting a risk to service users, particularly where the vulnerable people receiving services are not engaging with other agencies who may provide a higher level of vigilance around protection from abuse.

Quality assurance and reporting

- 106** Quality assurance in the service review process was poor. It is a significant weakness that service review reports were not taken through Supporting People governance structures for approval despite this being a requirement of grant conditions. Although all service reviews were completed by the end March 2006, they were only signed off by the Supporting People team. This means the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group did not have the opportunity to influence and comment on conclusions in the reports. Following advice from the CLG headline reports were presented to the Commissioning Body for formal approval in December 2006. These were also put on the website in an anonymised form. Headline reports did include assessments against the revised value for money framework and brought issues up-to-date. However, this was primarily an information reporting exercise. No peer moderation took place with other authorities in the service review process. There was also only limited involvement of partners in the review process. Partners were sent a strategic relevance questionnaire but were not further involved in the review process. This means there has been limited scrutiny of the service review process and outcomes.
- 107** Quality assurance in the contract performance protocol process is mixed. The prioritisation process within the system does provide some quality control of the issues examined. There has been one report to the Core Strategy Group detailing the work completed through the protocol. However, it has not yet been agreed how the contract performance protocol work should be monitored through governance structures on an ongoing basis. There is also a lack of partner and peer involvement in the monitoring process.
- 108** It is positive that since January 2006, providers have been asked complete feedback forms on validation visits. This enables the Supporting People team to assess the effectiveness of their work. However, the results of this feedback are not reported to Supporting People governance structures. This means that information is available for the team to assess its performance but is not assisting scrutiny and monitoring through Supporting People governance structures.

Cross-authority

- 109** It is a weaknesses that cross-authority work has not been used in carrying out service reviews, ongoing contract monitoring processes and improvement planning. Even though many providers also operate in neighbouring authorities there has not been work to develop joint monitoring and review processes with links to improvement planning. This is a missed opportunity to share information and to make the process more effective.

- 110** There has been only limited use of joint accreditation opportunities. An accreditation protocol has been in place for over a year among the East Midlands Regional Housing Group covering basic accreditation. In practice, however, Lincolnshire Supporting People team does not make use of this beyond referring to its database of accredited providers as part of the procurement process. It carries out additional work in house to ensure all financial criteria are met by providers. This means that joint processes are not being used to maximise efficiency.
- 111** Similarly cross-authority commissioning has not been used or adequately explored. There has been some contact with other councils in developing a floating support services for gypsies and travellers and it is likely that Lincolnshire will utilise a provider working effectively in two other councils. However, services are not being jointly commissioned and the limited scale of this initiative means the benefits of cross-authority commissioning have not had a significant impact on the programme. Opportunities in this area are restricted by limited progress in commissioning generally.

Improvement planning

- 112** The level of improvement has been affected by historic delays in monitoring provider progress, insufficient focus on services with QAF levels above D and a fragmented approach to dealing with other issues. Improvement plans were agreed with services with D grades and monitoring of these did not effectively commence until September 2006 demonstrating a lack of ambition to improve standards across the county. There was a fragmented approach with value for money and eligibility issues being dealt with separately from the QAF improvement process. This is also evidenced by the significant number of issues now being identified through the contract performance protocol process. This has limited progress through improvement planning since service reviews.
- 113** There has been a strong focus on improvement planning for services with level D QAF scores since September 2006. Following completion of service reviews and sector reviews, work commenced on ensuring improvements were implemented and standards raised. This has been successful with a reduction from 150 D ratings to 6 achieved from September 2006 and May 2007. The six remaining are all sole providers. This focus has improved weaker performing services.
- 114** Improvement planning linked to the contract performance protocol is proving effective. This commenced from January 2007. Where services are identified as requiring action through the protocol, all issues relating to the service are examined and an action plan agreed with the provider with timescales. All the issues arising are dealt with by one specific officer who also has responsibility for monitoring progress against the plan. Progress against plans is reviewed internally at monthly contract performance protocol meetings. There is effective joint working with providers where improvement plans are agreed. Providers felt that issues were handled effectively with reports following valuation visits being produced in timescales and significant opportunities to discuss findings. While there is still considerable work to be done in applying the new approach to all services this making improvement planning effective.

- 115 The Supporting People team is still unable to provide comprehensive improvement support to services with QAF ratings of C or above. B grades have increased and now constitute 25 per cent of the programme. A grades still only represent 0.8 per cent. Approximately 62 per cent of these grades have been validated by the Supporting People team but this has not taken the form of improvement support. Resources for this work are not yet being prioritised through the contract performance protocol which will mean many services will not receive support to improve their services. Action to address poor performing services has been slow and this will have resulted in vulnerable people receiving services of a lower standard, for a longer period, than would have been the case if the Council had taken action sooner.

Complaints

- 116 There is an integrated approach to complaints which is generally robust. Procedures have recently been reviewed with providers and there is now a consistent and integrated process for complaints across services. Easy to understand leaflets (including a simple pictorial leaflets) have been produced and distributed to help users access the service and complaints can be made directly on the website. Performance is closely monitored through monthly provider returns, detailed quarterly reports to the Commissioning Body and follow-up 'exception' visits where necessary. Performance is followed up through CPP risk-based visits, sector reviews and general liaison. This helps to ensure that both providers and service users are listened to, to improve services.
- 117 However, there are weaknesses with complaints procedures and learning from complaints is not being used effectively. Although monthly returns and performance reports identify themes by type (for example, conduct of other user), they do not analyse complaints by client group or provider to highlight other trends. It is not clear how learning from complaints has been systematically used to improve services. Performance is not measured against the target to acknowledge complaints within ten days, and there is no provider procedure target for final response to the complaint. Service user satisfaction with the complaints process is not routinely measured and reported. Tackling these issues would identify weaknesses to inform further service improvements.

Appeals process

- 118 There have been weaknesses in the appeals procedure. The procedure up until March 2007 only covered service reviews. One provider made a complaint about how a contractual decision was handled and this was reviewed by the Chair of Core Strategy Group but never formally considered by the Commissioning Body. Contracts do not include a section on appeals. Inadequate appeal procedures make it difficult to ensure an equitable and transparent approach.
- 119 It is positive that a new comprehensive procedure was formally agreed in April 2007 following consultation with all providers. This covers appeals for all issues and allows a final right of appeal to the Commissioning Body. This should help ensure that provider appeals are dealt with robustly.

Outcomes

- 120 The service review process did not result in significant remodelling of services to help achieve strategic aims. Eight services had some remodelling a result of the process. Two small services (with a total of six users) which were identified as not being eligible were decommissioned. However, in terms of the overall scale of the programme and the need for reshaping services this was very limited.
- 121 Other changes through review and contract monitoring have been slow to emerge. Recent increased activity on improvement work has reduced level D QAF levels and there has been progress on other issues prioritised through the contract performance protocol. While this recent work represent progress the overall level of outcomes are still limited and there is no discernible drive to incrementally improve all services for all users within stated timescales.
- 122 Although the sector reviews in late 2006 were more sophisticated than the earlier service reviews and they have informed subsequent work to map needs, their impact on service delivery to date remains limited. They did not result in any decommissioning and their impact on reconfiguration and remodelling was limited. Although they have informed the current commissioning process, this is unlikely to impact for several more months. Although the strategic issues they raised were taken forward, they also resulted in a large number of action points for the team on non-strategic matters which were not pulled together into an action plan and this is only currently being done. This means that positive outcomes for service users from this work are still to be delivered.

Value for money

- 123 In our previous inspection we found the Council was not in a position to demonstrate that the Supporting People grant consistently delivered value for money. An approach to value for money that included both cost and quality was being developed but has yet to be applied to all services. Unit costs of services were above both the regional and national average and the cost of some service provision, particularly in learning disability services, is exceptionally high.
- 124 In this inspection we found that there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in value for money. Unit costs now compare more favourably with regional and national figures. Cost reductions have been delivered and significant reductions are being achieved this year through a retraction plan and other work on value for money. A comprehensive value for money methodology is now in place with links to other contract monitoring. A robust procurement process has also been established with a cost funding model which is also linked to contract management. However, tracking of costs and benchmarking has not been consistent and it has taken a considerable time to address value for money issues in a number of services and potential issues at other services have still to be addressed. The programme has not been significantly reshaped to achieve better value for money, carried forward funding has not been effectively utilised and value for money in administration costs cannot be demonstrated.

How do costs compare and how is value for money managed?

- 125** Benchmarking information has been produced on average unit costs at the 31 March 2005 (Appendix 1) and shows adequate results in a number of areas. Unit costs for services are in many instances close to regional and national averages. Costs for learning disability services which were previously much higher than average are now closer to average cost levels. These figures were reported to the Core Strategy Group and Commissioning Body in July 2005. This is positive as it demonstrates that costs are not unusually high in a number of service areas.
- 126** However, there has been insufficient tracking of how average costs of different sectors are progressing, in particular in relation to higher costs areas. The benchmarking information reported in July 2005 shows that there are still some significant differences in unit costs. For example, unit costs for floating support for young people are double the national average and for floating support for domestic violence three times the national average. While there has been some ongoing work with providers in these areas and more recently through the contract performance protocol, the average unit cost information has not been updated to show the trends in these costs. This means the impact of value for money work on the higher cost areas can not clearly be demonstrated.
- 127** It is an important strength that the Council has now effectively defined value for money on the basis of cost, performance, quality and outcomes. Its methodology is clear and widely understood by partners and providers. This takes into consideration a range of factors, including performance against QAFs and KPIs. It is sufficiently flexible that factors such as service user involvement and complaints can be built in as parallel systems develop over time. The model produces a rating for each scheme which is used, alongside the eligibility criteria and the cost funding model to support the contract performance protocol process. Every scheme has been rated and value for money targets for each service are in place, based on the 2005/06 average costs across the county in each sector. Those schemes scoring above average are currently subject to early validation visits. This is beginning to drive improvements in value for money.

Benchmarking

- 128** Benchmarking of programme costs has not been regularly updated and reported. As identified above a benchmarking report was produced in July 2005 using nationally produced figures. However, the Council has not sought to develop and update information through direct benchmarking with other similar councils.
- 129** Target average hourly costs and support levels used in the value for money methodology have not been benchmarked outside of Lincolnshire. Being based on Lincolnshire averages means that poorer comparative value for money could be built into the model.
- 130** Benchmarking of administration grant expenditure has not been effective. Some comparisons with other councils were carried out in January 2007 but these were not necessarily close comparators in terms of scale or nature and so the results were not meaningful.

Procurement

- 131 There is now a robust procurement process in place. The previous procurement strategy was abandoned, on the basis that it did not represent good practice. The Council is now procuring new services in line with an operational protocol (within the overarching framework of the corporate procurement strategy). This has been consulted on with the provider executive and is currently being discussed in provider focus groups. The protocol was developed over the course of procuring the 'quick win' services commissioned since February 2007 and most aspects were applied during this process. It is based on a process of clear tendering, cost funding assessment and dual panel interview, which balances cost and quality issues. This will help ensure effective procurement of new services.
- 132 It is a strength that there is a robust cost funding model for future procurement and contract negotiations. This has been widely consulted on and in use since February 2007. The model is working well and no amendments have been made to it as a result of practical application in recent cases.
- 133 Grant aid agreements have been utilised for pilot schemes. Three schemes covering younger people, offenders and mental health groups will be piloted before assessing schemes prior to commissioning longer-term services. Grant aid funding will also be used for the proposed gypsy and travellers floating support service. This helps develop new services more quickly and enables further assessment before longer-term commitments are given.
- 134 The procurement of grant aided pilot schemes was not openly market tested. Existing providers were invited to submit bids to an evaluation panel within the procurement strategy. This means new providers who may be able to provide an effective service were excluded from expressing interest. This means that the Council cannot demonstrate it has maximised value for money in this procurement process.

Improving value for money

- 135 Value for money has not been consistently improved through review processes and contract management, although a recent more systematic approach is starting to have an impact. There has been an overall 5 per cent real terms reduction in unit costs since the commencement of the programme up to the end of March 2007. During 2004/05 a banding system was introduced to cap the prices of high cost services. While this was not a considered approach to addressing value for money it did reduce costs on high cost learning disability services. Following the service review process there some work on looking at eligibility and value for money in high cost and high value services but this was not systematic or comprehensive. This is also demonstrated by a significant overpayment to one of the district council provider not being identified by the ALA. Savings of £253,000 in were achieved in 2006/07 and agreed cost reductions of £389,000 for 2007/08. The retraction plan agreed for learning disability services is delivering a further £1.25 million saving during 2007/08.

- 136** The contract performance protocol is providing a more systematic analysis of value for money and savings of £45,000 have recently been agreed through this process. However, there is still some way to go in addressing issues the contract performance protocol has highlighted in eligibility and value for money in services. The Council has not therefore fully addressed value for money in existing services and has not therefore maximised the release of resources to meet other identified needs.
- 137** The Council has not effectively utilised resources made available through savings. The reported accumulated underspend was still £3.7 million at the end of 2006/07, although this is likely to be higher when a large overpayment to a district council provided is reconciled. A number of short-term projects were funded in 2006/07 (to a value of £250,000), which contributed to a reduction of £500,000 on the accumulating underspend. A £250,000 contingency has been agreed for 2007/08 and some commissioning against the new strategy will take place before the end of this financial year, but there a significant underspend at the year-end is still expected. This means that resources are not currently being fully utilised to meet needs.
- 138** Partnership working on achieving value for money through redesign of services is underdeveloped. There has been insufficient progress in assessing and changing services to optimise value for money. This includes understanding the impact Supporting People services could have on other partner budgets and how redesign of existing Supporting People services could provide improved value for money. In particular there has not yet been a significant movement away from more expensive accommodation-based support to floating support schemes. There has also been a lack of any joint commissioning which could improve value for money. We also found one service where the client group had changed from refugees to young people with complex needs but this had not been formally recognised and therefore the value for money provided by the scheme had not been reassessed. This limits how far value for money has been achieved in the programme.

Cross-authority approach

- 139** Cross-authority working has not yet been effectively used to achieve value for money. While there are some examples of utilising procedures and policies from other authorities the potential for joint contract monitoring and joint commissioning to achieve greater value for money has not been adequately explored.

Administration grant

- 140 The Council has not carried out a value for money analysis of its administration costs. Significant additional resources have been allocated over the last year to improve the management of the programme. The admin grant is £464,185, with a further £230,000 committed by the Council in 2007/08. Despite this a projected overspend of £132,000 is forecast for this year. Other corporate resources have also been assisting the programme but have not been specifically accounted for. There also has been significant expenditure on consultants without a clear assessment of value for money. £253,000 was spent in 2006/07 and £81,000 is planned for 2007/08. The Council has never approached partners about funding any element of the shortfall. There has been some informal benchmarking with higher performing authorities, which indicates that an additional contribution to the administration grant is common, but there has been no robust cost benchmarking done and no assessment of cost against quality, in terms of outputs. This means the Council can not demonstrate it is providing value for money in its administration of the programme.

Service user involvement

- 141 In our previous inspection we found that service user involvement was an acknowledged area of weakness. There was a commitment from Supporting People team to engage and involve service users but little progress has been made.
- 142 In this inspection we found that whilst some improvements have been implemented weaknesses continue to outweigh strengths in service user involvement. Tangible outcomes from user involvement are still limited, people with learning disabilities have not been effectively engaged, there is no service user reference group in place and involvement in contract monitoring is not systematic, the views of users from more socially excluded groups have had little impact in the programme. However, there are increased opportunities for involvement and there are effective structures in place to support user involvement, including procedures for involvement in procurement and a number of engagement events and activities have been organised.

Opportunities

- 143 Structures are now in place to support user engagement. A user engagement strategy has been in place since January 2007 and is providing a positive basis for systematically engaging service users. The strategy also integrates with the county's corporate consultation strategy. A specialist worker has been employed to develop user involvement and a user and engagement task group including providers is overseeing implementation of the strategy. Targets within the engagement strategy are not sufficiently SMART but overall the mechanisms in place to support engagement are starting to have impact.

- 144** A significant number of service users were consulted during the sector review process. Ten per cent of service users were consulted as part of this activity with issues arising being fed into the review process. Feedback was also provided to users on the main issue emerging from the sector reviews. This has enabled users to have some input into discussions about the strategic direction of the programme.
- 145** People with learning disabilities and their families have not yet been engaged in the strategic development of services. This client group was not consulted as part of the sector reviews because responses during the service review process were very low. Adult social care has also not yet consulted service users and their families about how the future of care and support for learning disability services may develop. This means that service users and their relatives have not had an opportunity to influence the strategic development of the service.
- 146** It is positive that a series of five engagement events was held from March to April 2007 to discuss emerging issues in the delivery of the programme. These explored what users felt was good about current services and needed to be preserved and possible future changes to services. These events, facilitated by an external consultant, were designed specifically to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere for a range of service users. A key outcome was a need to create a service user charter and this is currently in development.
- 147** The Council has positively mapped other engagement networks. These are coordinated in a reference document that clearly identifies the best way to consult and inform different groups of users. There is evidence that some of these groups are now being utilised including an older person consultative framework of seven groups across the county and Probation's user groups although this is not yet comprehensive.
- 148** Involvement of hard-to-reach groups is still limited. Use has been made of some other networks to contact and involve some hard-to-reach groups. This has included young people through the DAAT team and also a group of teenage parents helping to inform new services. However, overall feedback from hard-to-reach groups has had limited influence on Supporting People services.
- 149** There was no service user reference group in operation at the time of inspection. This limits the Council's ability to involve service users in developing new Supporting People policies, procedures and publications.
- 150** Carers, relatives and advocacy groups are not effectively involved in the Supporting People programme. Existing links are weak and groups are not routinely involved in improving Supporting People arrangements and services. However, work is developing with CVS and a representative is now a member of the Core Strategy Group. Involving carer and advocacy groups helps to ensure that user needs are taken into account.

46 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 151 Positive information about the Supporting People programme is being distributed. A DVD, made with user involvement, which outlines the Supporting People programme and how to get involved is currently being circulated to providers and users. Sessions have also been held with providers to explain key elements of the engagement strategy so that they can explain to users how they can get involved.
- 152 Service user consultation was part of the service review process. All reviews involved some form of user involvement including meetings with service users which took place as part of validation visits. All service users, including where desktop reviews were completed, were sent questionnaire about their service. This provided an opportunity for their views to be considered in the review process.
- 153 Most service users at schemes visited during inspection were involved in or informed about opportunities for involvement by their own providers. This is important for local involvement and provides a framework to link with engagement at other levels.
- 154 There were specific instances where users did not feel information was sufficient to assist involvement. Several users felt that they were not fully informed by their providers about the extent of housing support that is provided. This was particularly prevalent with users of some sheltered housing services who did not understand why resident warden services were being reduced. Users do not always fully understand, or are involved in agreeing, the level of housing support services they receive. Understanding how services work is important in enabling effective engagement.

Outcomes from user involvement

- 155 There is only limited evidence of how involving users through service reviews, the contract management and engagement events have led to changes. Improvements include providing additional security at several schemes to address safety fears, amending a Supporting People leaflet and setting up the 'Voice' forum to involve users more routinely in programme management. Involving users has not yet routinely helped to improve housing support services across the county.

Involvement in contracting and monitoring

- 156 User engagement in the procurement of services has been limited to date. There is evidence of user representatives being involved in developing a new floating support service for gypsies and travellers. However, there has not been significant user involvement in procurement process for other services currently being developed. This reduces the opportunity for users to influence the services to ensure the service best meets their needs.
- 157 It is positive that the new operational procurement protocol identifies the need for user engagement in the procurement process. This identifies the need for service user representatives, advocates and carers involvement at specification stage, short-listing and interview. This will help ensure users influence the procurement of new services.

- 158** User involvement in contract monitoring is underdeveloped. The role of users is not identified in the new contract performance protocol. There is some evidence of users being consulted as part of monitoring visits where this is identified as a need at a contract performance protocol co-ordinating meeting. However, the approach is not systematic and there is also no service user peer monitoring arrangement in place although this is investigated. This means that the Council is maximising the opportunities for service users to shape services to best meet their needs.

Access to services and information

- 159** During our last inspection we found that information to existing and potential service users was satisfactory and there was an improvement in the level of awareness about the support Supporting People could offer. Briefings had been delivered to some front line staff to enable them to be more aware of the housing-related support services available, but in some agencies the level of understanding by front line staff was weak. Service user enquiries were adequately signposted. There was information on the Council's website and access routes to services out-of-hours. There were leaflets on Supporting People covering a range of issues of importance to service users, with the exception of Fairer Charging. General information on the range of services available was good and focused around the individual.
- 160** In this inspection we found a balance of strengths and weaknesses in access to services and information. General information on services is good and provided in a range of formats. There is a high quality website with an effective directory of services. However, coordination and monitoring of access is still underdeveloped, signposting of frontline staff is not yet consistent and the approach to promoting fairer charging has not been sufficiently proactive.

Access and referral to services

- 161** There is a lack of coordination and monitoring of access to services. Systems have not been developed to ensure consistency and equity of access. For example, standard application forms across services and single access routes for similar services have not been adequately explored. There is also no ongoing monitoring of how users are accessing services. This means that the Council can not be sure that there is effective and equitable access to services across the county.
- 162** Access to some services, particularly for older people, is subject to barriers based on property tenure. Some services are only available to tenants of social landlords. This reduces choice and equity of access to services.
- 163** Referral routes are clearly identified in the new service directory which lists all housing-related services in Lincolnshire. Contact details are provided to enable service enquiries to be made effectively.

Information

164 There are a number of positive aspects to the way information on Supporting People is provided including:

- a new quarterly tenant newsletter 'Living' is sent to all existing users;
- leaflets on Supporting People, which are easy to read, advising how to access services. This includes a new pictorial leaflet for people with learning difficulties, developed with providers and users;
- staff and service providers have access to translators and systems are in place to translate written material into a range of formats. This includes Braille, large print, audio and locally agreed languages. This service is publicised on straplines on Supporting People public documents;
- feedback from validation visits is given to tenants through posters displayed in schemes;
- there are links with the Council's media strategy ensuring publicity through newspapers and the radio;
- a Supporting People welcome pack is provided to new service users;
- a wide range of information is provided by both Supporting People team and the providers we visited;
- a communication strategy for Supporting People is in place; and
- a DVD has also been produced providing a record of, and feedback from, recent engagement events.

This helps ensure existing and potential users have clear information about the Supporting People programme.

165 Effectiveness of advice from frontline staff is mixed. Briefing sessions have been carried out with frontline staff within the Council and in partner organisations. However, our mystery shopping regarding Supporting People-related services through the contact telephone numbers in the guidance leaflet highlighted some weaknesses. Response varied from efficient answering and helpful advice to long waits, being put on hold, and weak knowledge and understanding and advice about key issues such as domestic violence. In a few cases incorrect telephone numbers and sign posting information was given. Staff in partner agencies have varying levels of knowledge about Supporting People services, access and referral arrangements. This means that recent briefings have not been fully effective and potential users may not be able to easily access service they need.

166 There are number of other weaknesses in information including:

- the 'Living' newsletter is not suitable for all client groups as the format is not adapted for people with learning disabilities;
- the Better Care Higher Standards document is out of date and has limited references to Supporting People; and
- the service user complaints leaflet lacks timescales for response.

This reduces the accessibility of information on services.

Directory

167 A high quality web-based service directory is in place. This was developed in partnership with providers although not with service users. The web-based tool provides the facility to search by service provider, location and need. There was a formal launch of the directory which attracted local press coverage. This is an important method of increasing access to services.

168 However, the service directory has not yet been produced in hard copy and has only been in place since April 2007. The Council decided not to produce a hard copy of the directory until recently commissioned new services are in place. While the new directory is positive it has been produced comparatively late in the development of the programme and therefore it has only had a recent impact on access.

Website

169 The Council's website is easy to navigate and contains a lot of useful information on the Supporting People programme. There is information for providers, partners and service users. It highlights current news and there is a 'BLOG' area for any comments about the programme. Major Supporting People policies and procedures are shown. User involvement is well promoted. Existing and potential service users can find information on what services are available and how to access them. Useful links are also provided to other organisations that can provide advice and support to vulnerable people. This includes links to provider websites. This helps make services more accessible and helps ensure partners, providers and users have access to information on the programme. A browse aloud facility is available and the website can convert text to other languages. This makes the website accessible to a wider range of people.

Access to fairer charging

170 There is clear information on the availability of fairer charging assessments and the process involved. There is a comprehensive policy in place and effective leaflets. There is also effective information on the Council website. Leaflets have been distributed to providers. This helps ease access to this service.

50 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 171 However, overall the Council has not been pro-active in promoting fairer charging. Information on user payments for services have not been used to proactively target promotion of fairer charging. There has also not been regular campaign to promote the service. This means access to this service is not being maximised.
- 172 Take up of fairer charging assessments has been low and processing has been slow. Only 29 service users are receiving financial assistance through fairer charging. Responsibility for processing of claims is currently being transferred from the Supporting People team to the Financial Assessment team in Adult Social Care. The Supporting People team has been slow to process claims and while the Financial Assessment team has a target to carry out visits in five days it is currently averaging approximately eight days and it is not clear how long it takes to complete the assessment.

Diversity

- 173 In our previous inspection we found that some services were specifically provided for minority groups, although more are needed. Information on needs was improving but there were gaps on gypsy and traveller and BME needs. The need for providers to ensure their services are available to diverse communities was to be addressed as part of the service review process. More information was being provided to service users on the cultural sensitivity of services and more people from BME communities are accessing services. However, information did not cover all housing-related support services.
- 174 In this inspection we found a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the approach to diversity. There is now a robust strategic approach to diversity which has benefited from improved needs analysis and been a focus in recent prioritising of new services. However, the analysis of existing clients is still not comprehensive and cultural sensitivity in schemes has not yet been adequately addressed.
- 175 The Council has identified all functions requiring equality impact assessments (EIAs) and is ahead of its programme to complete EIAs. Completed EIAs have been assessed corporately as providing best practice to be followed by others. This helps ensure equality issues are being addressed.
- 176 The Supporting People team has clearly identified the approach required to meet statutory equality duties in relation to the programme. A draft report to the Diversity Sub Group highlights the responsibilities of the Council, partners and providers. This will be developed to ensure the Supporting People programme integrates with internal and external mandatory duties.
- 177 It is positive that the Supporting People team have all had equality and diversity training. This was specifically identified as part of plans to improve the approach to diversity. This helps raise awareness of equality and diversity issues within the team.

- 178 However, there has not been a comprehensive approach to diversity and equality training in governance structures and for providers. While many members have received some form of related training through their own organisations this has not been comprehensively assessed and specific training tailored to the Supporting People programme has not been provided. Training for the Commissioning Body, Core Strategy Group and providers does form part of future plans but the current position reduces consistency in the level of awareness of diversity issues.

Identifying diverse needs and excluded groups

- 179 It is positive that a Diversity Sub Group (DSG) for Supporting People was established in February 2007. This includes representatives from local diverse groups including the Race Equality Council and migrant workers groups as well as corporate specialists. The DSG is overseeing a detailed action plan of research into needs to form the basis of future action plans to address gaps.
- 180 Progress has been made in understanding how services are being accessed by diverse groups. Client data records for 2005/06 from all services, apart from long-term older people services, have been analysed by ethnicity in terms of access to services, by service type and accommodation type. This exercise found that service users broadly match the local population, in terms of ethnicity, with the exception of the Chinese community. There has been discussion with Chinese Community Groups about this under-representation and an introduction leaflet for Supporting People services has now been produced in Chinese.
- 181 However, information on current service users is still not comprehensive. It is not a CLG requirement for providers to submit client data on long-term older person services, and this has not yet separately collected and analysed. A survey to collect this information is ongoing and due for completion by the end of July 2007. The client data which has to be submitted is also limited in the level of information on the diverse nature of client groups. The Council is planning a wider survey of all users to collect more in depth information but currently there is not comprehensive baseline information to inform service development.
- 182 Networks of partners and stakeholders are starting to be used to engage the community in developing services to meet diverse needs. Meetings have been held with District Councils, community cohesion partnership and community support groups. A pathways analysis of ethnic groups is also developing links with community networks. This is starting to inform programme development.
- 183 Minimum standards in the approach to diversity are being delivered by nearly all providers following service review and validation visits. The number of providers at level D in the QAF standards relating to fair access and respecting the diverse needs of users had been reduced to one at as May 2007.

- 184** Needs information across client groups is now more robust and has been used to identify some limited new service development. This is covered in more detail in the Strategy section above. Sector reviews and early findings from the needs analysis has led to the ongoing commissioning of services to fill gaps including new services for victims of domestic violence, teenage parents, handyman service and expansion of telecare for older persons, a gypsy and traveller floating support service, and a move-on support service for young people.
- 185** There is little evidence of developing services to meet the needs of migrant workers. The growing needs and impact of migrant workers is acknowledged but this is a new 'need', not quantified through census and previous surveys. The Council is carrying out research to gather more robust data to inform strategic planning. It has carried out some work with the Polish community and DSG members have relevant experience to help develop relevant plans. However, it has not maximised learning from other authorities experiencing similar issues.
- 186** Direct engagement of users from excluded groups has been limited. Some recent work has been done with teenage parents and with client with substance abuse problem through the DAAT. However, there are still a wide range of excluded groups who have not been effectively engaged to enable them to shape services.

Cultural sensitivity

- 187** Service review processes and subsequent contract management have not been used effectively to monitor and manage providers' approaches to diversity. Analysis of returns on the diversity of users for specific services has not yet been used. Diversity performance targets and monitoring are not in place for provider services. There are plans for service specific monitoring in the future but this information is not currently being used to inform diversity work in contract management. A survey of providers is also ongoing, which seeks information on their approach to diversity and how far their services reflect the cultural sensitivity of local communities. However, overall there is little evidence of how existing services have been reconfigured to reflect local needs following service reviews, or contract management.

Outcomes for service users

- 188** In our previous inspection we found that outcomes for service users were limited. The provision of services across the county did not match local need and there had been little success in establishing county-wide services. There were no systems in place to capture the outcomes or benefits for service users in Lincolnshire. A small number of new services had been introduced since April 2003, mainly through delivery of schemes where development was already in the pipeline. For individual service users, support plans had been introduced by service providers and were being used effectively.

- 189 In this inspection we found that weaknesses outweigh strengths in terms of outcomes for service users. Reshaping of the programme through both review of existing services and provision of new services has been limited. Gaps and lack of choice in a number of service areas still remain. Some improvement through QAF scores can be demonstrated, plans for some limited expansion of services are well advanced and support plans are still being used effectively.

Supporting People service improvements

- 190 There has still been limited progress in reshaping the Supporting People programme to best meet needs. A home improvement agency has been established across the county and this is a positive development. However, commissioning and decommissioning powers have not been effectively used to reshape the programme. This is despite a large carry over of funding occurring for a number of years which is currently reported at £3.7 million, although this is likely to be higher when overpayment issues are resolved. Overall, service users have not yet significantly benefited from services being refocused on priority needs.
- 191 The service review process did not result in significant remodelling of services to meet strategic objectives. There was a small amount of decommissioning and remodelling during the service review process but this has not had a significant impact on the programme overall.
- 192 The approach to improving services through the QAF has been limited. There has been a focus on improving low QAF scores which has delivered some improvements for service users. From September 2006 to May 2007 there was a reduction from 150 D level QAF results to 6. This will have improved providers approach to services resulting in some benefits for service users. However, improvement planning following service reviews was limited to poorer performing services. The level of B QAF scores has increased from 17 per cent to 25 per cent over the same period but there has not been pro-active work by the Supporting Team to accelerate this improvement in order to drive up services across the county. This means the level of service improvement has not been maximised.
- 193 User outcomes from the contract performance protocol are still limited. The risk-based elements of the process have used to prioritise eligibility and value for money issues, although its dual approach is now beginning to pick up other issues. This has brought some limited benefits for service users but most will come in the longer-term when the efficiency savings that are currently being made will be used to provide other services.
- 194 Joint working with partners at an operational level is not yet delivering improved outcomes for service users. While there are a number of plans to improve joint working to ensure effective use of the Supporting People programme to achieve shared objectives and targets this has not yet resulted in significantly improved outcomes for service users.

54 Supporting People Re-inspection | How good is the Supporting People programme?

- 195** There is little evidence to suggest that the Supporting People programme has had a significant impact on some partner priorities. For example, avoidable admissions to hospital and timely discharge, delayed transfers have increased and more people have remained in hospital or been discharged without the best possible support arrangements. There have also been limited outcomes from the involvement of both YOT and DAAT in ensuring the programme best meet current needs. For example, some young offenders are being remanded in custody due to insufficient supported accommodation being available or being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation without appropriate support. This had not been effectively addressed through partnership working between the YOT, Probation and Supporting People.

Choice for service users

- 196** Choice for service users has not changed significantly since the commencement of the Supporting People programme. Planned new service provision will provide some expansion of choice and in particular will ensure telecare services are provided across all tenures, extend generic floating support to all areas and ensure wider coverage of domestic violence services. However, choice has not yet been significantly developed through remodelling or new service provision. There are still gaps in provision, parts of the programme are still tenure specific or overly focused on accommodation-based services, and some services are not well spread across the county. This reduces choice for service users.
- 197** Move-on accommodation has not been effectively co-ordinated. There is now an increased focus on this issue with a draft strategy being consulted on and a new service to support young people in moving on. However, outcomes in terms of significantly improved access to move-on cannot be demonstrated.

Support plans

- 198** There is a robust approach to support plans. These were checked as part of the service review process and improvements delivered where weaknesses were found. There was also a survey of providers in March 2007 to confirm their approach to support plans and how they were being used. Support plans we viewed during the inspection were of a good quality and user awareness of support plans was high.

Outcome measurement

- 199** Outcome measures are not yet enabling tracking of service user outcomes. A pilot local outcome measurement scheme has commenced for six services and initial data has recently been received. However, the Council is not yet in position to analyse trends. The national scheme for outcome measurement has been launched in the county but data from this is not yet available. This means that outcome measurement has not yet had a significant impact on the programme.

- 200** Assessment of user satisfaction is underdeveloped. While some work has been carried out by providers there has not been a comprehensive approach across services. A survey of all service users is being planned by the Supporting People team which will enable comparison between service providers and across sectors. However, at the present time comprehensive user satisfaction information is not available to measure and inform service improvement.
- 201** There is a now a focus on monitoring national KPIs and SPIs although these show mixed results. Performance on KPI1 (percentage of users establishing and maintaining independent living) deteriorated from 97 per cent in 2005/06 to 95.5 per cent in 2006/07. This is about average when compared with other councils. Performance on KPI2 (percentage of service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary accommodation) has improved from 48 per cent in 2005/06 to 58 per cent in 2006/07 although this is still below average in comparison with other councils.

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

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

- 202 In our previous inspection we found that the Council had a poor track record of improvement in the administration of the Supporting People programme. The track record was of maintaining existing patterns of provision, undertaking reviews to ascertain what to do next and devoting a disproportionate amount of time to disagreement.
- 203 In this inspection we found that there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the track record in delivering improvement. Progress has been made in a number of areas of the programme and there has been an increased pace of change over the last six months. The Council has responded positively to the feedback provided during the inspection confirming progress on a number of important issues. However, the impact of some recent changes is still developing and progress in the key areas of strategy development and reshaping of the programme to best meet needs has been slow which has adversely affected the overall delivery of the programme.
- 204 There has been progress against Audit Commission recommendations but not all have been comprehensively delivered. The table below demonstrates progress against a number of key recommendations although some of these have not been achieved within timescales. There still some areas where recommendations that have only partially been completed and a small number which have not yet been addressed.

Table 1 Progress against February 2006 recommendations

Recommendations	
R1 By June 2006, strengthen service user involvement across the Supporting People programme by:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing involvement and engagement channels for all client groups, particularly those who are hard-to-reach; 	Partially achieved - Positive engagement events and sector review engagement have increased channels but learning disability clients and some hard-to-reach groups are still not effectively involved and service user reference group is not yet operational.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that information feeds into assessments of need; 	Complete.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing feedback loops to ensure service users are told what changes result from their involvement; 	Complete.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a structured approach to involving service users in the strategic development of the programme; and 	Partially achieved - influence through sector views, engagement events and user but involvement on Core Strategy Group is recent, and service user reference not yet established.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of arrangements at least annually to the Commissioning Body. 	Complete.
R2 By March 2006, improve the governance arrangements for the Supporting People programme by:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chief Executives and Chief Officers of the Council, the district councils, health and probation addressing the fundamental arrangements of Supporting People and how to take these forward; 	Partially complete - commitment and engagement at Commissioning Body has been achieved. However, alignment of strategies and integrated joint working at other levels is still developing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing capacity within the Supporting People team and the Core Strategy Group; 	Partially complete - some partners are still not fully engaged in the Core Strategy Group.

58 Supporting People Re-inspection | What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?

Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing clear arrangements in each element of the governance framework to ensure clarity of purpose, appropriate decision-making authority, no duplication and appropriate membership; 	<p>Complete.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing and monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detailed service plans incorporating all aspects of the programme including the recommendations of the previous inspection and the delivery of the five-year strategy; - indicators that will measure the outcomes and benefits for service users; and - indicators that will measure progress against the objectives of the Supporting People five-year strategy; and 	<p>Complete.</p> <p>Not completed - work still ongoing on outcome measures.</p> <p>Not completed - new Strategy still in development.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tracking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - indicators that the programme shares with partners in Health and Probation; - to include involvement of DAT and YOT in the Core Strategy Group with probation also acting as an advocate for the needs of all offenders, on the Commissioning Body; and - progress on government commitments and local government targets such as reducing emergency bed days and preventing homelessness; and 	<p>Complete (although not in timescale)</p> <p>Partial - DAAT and YOT now sit on the Core Strategy Group but the ability of Probation to act as an advocate for the needs of all offenders is still underdeveloped.</p> <p>Partial - delayed discharges from hospitals included but not homelessness indicators.</p>

Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing targets and measures for efficiency and value for money improvements; and 	Complete (although not within timescale).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting progress against targets, at least six monthly to the Commissioning Body and least quarterly to the Core Strategy Group. 	Complete (although not within timescale).
<p>R3 Improve commissioning and procurement arrangements for the Supporting People programme by:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly establishing the establishing the priorities for new services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how funding can be obtained from the programme; and - a transparent process for providers to follow; and 	<p>Partial - priority client groups agreed (although not within timescale) but not the detail of new services required.</p> <p>Not complete - will not become clear until detailed commissioning plans are in place.</p> <p>Complete (although not within timescale).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting applications from providers, at least six monthly to Commissioning Body and at least quarterly to the Core Strategy Group. 	Complete.

205 Progress against the Supporting People integrated improvement plan has been strong in a number of areas but there has been slippage on issues which were dependent on development of a new strategy and commissioning plans. The new integrated improvement plan was produced in February 2006 following feedback in January 2006 from voluntary improvement work carried out by the Audit Commission. While this plan has accelerated improvement in a number of areas the slippage in developing the strategic approach has had an impact on the level of improvement achieved in key areas of commissioning and contracting.

- 206** Areas where there has been improvement since the last inspection include:
- engagement at Commissioning Body and involvement of providers;
 - resourcing of the Supporting People team;
 - improved needs information, prioritisation and identification of 'quick win' new services;
 - development and delivery of retraction plans;
 - a clear and robust value for money and eligibility methodology;
 - improved contract monitoring arrangements;
 - regular performance monitoring;
 - development of a comprehensive appeals procedure;
 - service user engagement mechanisms; and
 - a web-based directory of services;
- 207** However, a number of these improvements have only taken place in the last six months. This is particularly the case for service user involvement, needs information, prioritisation and identification of quick wins, contract monitoring arrangements and the directory of services. This means the impact of these improvements are still developing and are not yet fully embedded, and longer-term sustainability has not yet been demonstrated.
- 208** The Council has been slow to produce a 'fit for purpose' Supporting People strategy for the programme. The previous strategy was found to be weak in a number of areas and has not been used to direct the programme. The Council has done positive work on sector reviews, needs analysis and prioritisation but it is still a weakness that at this stage in the programme there is not a robust Supporting People strategy in place. This has significantly impacted on progress in developing the programme.
- 209** There has been insufficient progress in reshaping the programme to best meet needs. There have only been limited changes to the legacy services that became the Supporting People programme. This is a result of the underdeveloped strategic approach which has limited the ability to reshape services during the service review process and following completion of the process.
- 210** There have been some improvements in QAF performance. In respect of D scores these have been a focus of attention of the Supporting People team and had been reduced from 150 in September 2006 to 6 in May 2007. Other levels have also improved with the Supporting People team carrying out a validating role. While this validation process was inconsistent during 2006/07 a more robust validation procedure is now being delivered. There has been an increase in B scores from 17 per cent to 25 per cent of services over the same period although A scores only increased from nil to 0.8 per cent. This has brought improvements in services some of which will have been directly experienced by service users.

- 211 There has been some improvement in the majority of nationally required indicators for the programme. These are shown in the table below. However, performance on the key indicator on maintaining independence declined from 2005/06 to 2006/07.

Table 2 Performance Indicators

Indicator	2005/06	2006/07
Percentage of users establishing and maintaining independent living (KPI1)	97%	95.5%
Percentage of service users who have moved on in a planned way from temporary accommodation (KPI2)	48%	58%
Available units as a percentage of contracted units (SPI1)	96%	97%
Occupied units as a percentage of available units (SPI2a)	92%	96.5%
Units provided as a percentage of support available (SPI2b)	79%	113%
Actual hours of support provided as a percentage of support hours contracted (SPI3)	94%	94%

- 212 Year-on-year comparisons since 2004/05 of a basket of adult care performance indicators, influenced by services provided through the Supporting People programme, do not show consistent performance improvement. Performance on adults with learning disabilities and physical disabilities helped to live at home have remained at 'significantly above average' and 'above average'. Performance on 'delayed transfers of care' improved from 'average' to 'above average' but has deteriorated during 2006/07. Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home deteriorated from 'significantly above average' to 'below average' and older people helped to live at home has stayed at 'below average'. There is not yet evidence that Supporting People activities are having an impact on these partner targets.
- 213 The Council does have a record of track record of corporate recovery. The Council has had significant governance problems in the past which it has addressed. The Audit Commission assessed the Council as a whole as 'improving well' in terms of direction of travel in its annual audit letter published in May 2007. However, adult social care was highlighted as an area where improvement had been limited. Overall, this does demonstrate some ability to corporately deliver improvement.

- 214** Improvement in value for money has been mixed. Some cost reductions have been achieved through addressing ineligibility and value for money. However, a significant proportion of these savings only commenced from 2007/08. The retraction plan also runs over three years from 2007/08 and a number of services still require further value for money and eligibility assessment through the contract performance protocol. The limited level of reshaping of services also restricts the level of value for money improvements. There is now an increased focus on value for money but this has not been demonstrated over a three-year period.
- 215** The Council has responded positively to feedback provided during the inspection confirming progress against number of issues since the on-site work was completed and also confirming further progress against action plans. This includes:
- progress in producing a draft revised five-year Supporting People strategy;
 - confirming a service user reference group has been established;
 - confirming agreement by the Council of the future staffing structure and associated funding for administering the Supporting People programme;
 - confirming the appointment of new adult social care representatives to the Core Strategy Group;
 - confirming voting rights have been given to provider and service user representatives on the Core Strategy Group;
 - confirming that the Supporting People service plan has been approved by the Commissioning Body;
 - progress in letting the planned new service contracts;
 - progress in assessing the cultural sensitivity of services; and
 - ongoing amendments to provider contracts to clarify their responsibilities in respect of vulnerable persons' protection.

This provides further evidence of the commitment to improving delivery of the programme.

How does the Council manage performance?

- 216** In our previous inspection we found that performance management arrangements were weak. There was no system in place to capture progress on objectives, measure outcomes for service users or agree jointly owned performance targets with partners.

- 217** In this inspection we found that strengths outweigh weaknesses in how the Council manages performance. There is a strong focus on the improvement plan for Supporting People and regular performance reporting is taking place. Improvement plans, have been informed by good practice and do focus on key issues for the service. In a number of areas delivery of plans is already well advanced. However, the lack of a comprehensive Supporting People strategy and detailed project plans to deliver the strategy means that planning is still underdeveloped.
- 218** An improvement plan for the programme is in place and monitoring structures have been established. An improvement plan was put in place in 2006 focused primarily on previous Audit Commission recommendations. Following voluntary improvement work by the Audit Commission in late 2006 a need to widen the scope of the improvement plan was identified. A new integrated improvement plan was produced which drew in issues from the voluntary improvement work and an assessment of the service against the KLOE for Supporting People. Actions in the plan do have timescales, responsibilities and resources identified although not all have clearly measurable outcomes. An improvement board, including the Council's Chief Executive was set up in February 2006 to monitor delivery of the plan and there is also reporting through the Supporting People governance arrangements. This is helping drive improvement in the programme.
- 219** The programme demonstrates improved linkages with the corporate strategy. While there are only limited direct linkages in the Council's 2006/07 business plan, there are clear references to links with Supporting People activities in the 2007/08 plan. Monitoring of Supporting People KPI1 and KPI2 is now part of the business plan and therefore these performance indicators will be monitored corporately. This demonstrates the increased level of understanding of how the programme can contribute to wider council objectives.
- 220** A robust service plan is in place for the Supporting People team for 2007/08. This links to the priorities for delivery of the programme and has a good range of local indicators against which to measure performance. This was developed in line with corporate procedures and the Supporting People team was involved in this process. This will help drive improvement.
- 221** However, it is a weakness that the plan was not presented to the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group and that planned reporting on progress will only be to the Supporting People management team. This reduces transparency and the effectiveness of performance management in the governance structure.
- 222** There has not been a strong approach to integrating actions arising from sector reviews into improvement plans. Strategic issues around needs were fed into the need analysis process but the reviews also identified other issues which needed to be addressed. At the time of inspection a piece of work was being carried out to pull together these issues but this demonstrates the slow response to some issues as the reviews were completed in January 2007.

64 Supporting People Re-inspection | What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?

- 223** Strategic plans for the programme are still underdeveloped. While it is positive that sector reviews, a needs analysis and prioritisation of sector for changes have been progressed there is not yet a comprehensive Supporting People strategy with action plan. This limits ability to reshape the programme and reduces clarity about the direction of the programme.
- 224** It is also a weakness that there is not a clear project plan in place for producing a new Supporting People strategy and more detailed commissioning plans. These are identified as tasks in high level improvement plans but there is not a clear agreed project plan in place for delivering these major pieces of work. The need for this approach was verbally agreed at the Commissioning Body during the inspection. However, the current lack of this document makes the process less transparent and further slippage more likely.
- 225** There is an increased focus on ensuring alignment of partner strategies with the Supporting People programme. All partners have recently been written to confirming the Supporting People priorities agreed by the Commissioning Body and requesting these are also reflected in new or reviewed strategies. A number have already confirmed that they will be doing this. External consultants also carried out a short piece of work on the development of strategic linkages which was reported to the Core Strategy Group. This is raising the profile of Supporting People issues in partner strategy development.
- 226** There has been use of external sources to identify good practice to inform improvement plans. A range of other local authorities have been contacted since our last inspection to help inform improvement planning in a number of areas. There has also been use of consultants in a number of areas which has brought external experience to the programme. Overall, this has had a positive influence on development and delivery of improvements.
- 227** It is also positive that there are specific improvement plans in place for user engagement and diversity. These were established in February 2006 and delivery is ongoing. While some targets in the plan could be smarter, these plans are driving improvement in these programme areas.
- 228** The setting up of a service user reference group is, a key element of the service user involvement improvement plan, is well advanced. Work has been undertaken to identify a pool of interested users who, together with additional users nominated by providers, and these are being invited to a first meeting of a 'Voice' forum at the end of July 2007. This forum will enable users to be effectively involved developing new Supporting People policies, procedures and published materials to improve services in line with user expectations.
- 229** Improvement plans are in place for adult social care. These have been developed to address underperformance in a number of areas and are also monitored by an improvement board of senior officers and councillors. We found that engagement of adult social care in the Supporting People programme was weak in some areas and that alignment of client group strategies was underdeveloped. It is therefore important that there are plans in place to improve in these areas as this will impact on the effectiveness of the Supporting People programme.

- 230** There are well advanced plans to deliver a number of new services. Eight new services were agreed in February 2007 and a further four services linked to Housing Corporation funded capital developments were agreed prior to this. These do link to gaps in needs and the eight recently agreed services are focused on increasing the level of floating support services. One of these services is due to commence in July 2007 and three more in September 2007 with all to be operational by the end of 2007. Delivery of these plans will have direct benefits for service users.
- 231** It is also positive that one of these services will assist young people finding and settling into move-on accommodation. This is a response to weak performance on successful planned moves from short-term accommodation, needs survey data and issues highlighted in the sector review.
- 232** A robust move-on strategy is also close to completion. This was in draft at the time of the inspection with consultation with stakeholders ongoing. This has been developed through joint working with partners. A move-on accommodation working group was established in February 2007 made up of representatives from the Core Strategy Group, Housing Forum, and service providers. There are number of positive elements to the draft strategy. This includes a focus on increasing access to the private sector through rent deposit schemes, standardisation of assessment procedure across social landlords, assessment of move-on needs over a five-year period and increasing floating support services for ensuring successful move-on. However, the action plan does not identify timescales and responsibilities. Overall, the strategy has the potential to provide improved direction for the work on move-on accommodation.
- 233** In other areas plans also do focus on key issues for the service and some of these are also already well advanced. In particular there is a focus on:
- developing a revised five-year strategy and associated commissioning plans;
 - engagement of carers, advocacy groups and the voluntary sector - this has commenced with the engagement of the CVS at the Core Strategy Group and more detailed work is planned to work with the CVS to map wider engagement of this sector;
 - developing outcome measures to assess service performance - considerable work has been done with providers and partners in identifying appropriate outcome measures and a local scheme is being piloted - there are plans to integrate this with the national scheme which the County has rolled out to all providers;
 - development of diversity information and approach on cultural sensitivity of service - survey work to improve information on services users and on cultural sensitivity issues at schemes was ongoing at the time of inspection; and
 - restructuring provision of fairer charging assessment with increased promotion and a link to wider benefit assessment - and the transfer of responsibility for this work was ongoing at the time of inspection and is due to be completed by the end of September.

- 234** Value for money in programme delivery is included in improvement plans but some aspects are not yet clear. The contract performance protocol process is seen as key in delivering improved value for money utilising the value for money methodology. There is also a five-year financial strategy in place which identifies targets for future savings. Value for money is also seen as a key element in reshaping services through wider strategy development and future commissioning. This has been evident in the recent commissioning of new services which have been focused on expanding floating support services. However, the details of how future targets will be achieved and how reshaping services this will impact on value for money has not yet been developed. There are also not clear plans on how the Council will update benchmarking to assess value for money in the programme or plans to assess value for money in use of administration funds. Improvement planning is therefore focused on improving value for money but this is not yet comprehensive.
- 235** Measures are will shortly be introduced to ensure quality assurance in assessment of support levels in learning disability services. From August 2007 a random ten per cent of annual Learning Disability support assessments will be done jointly between the Supporting Team and Learning Disability service. This will increase quality assurance in the assessment process helping to ensure that funding is only provided for eligible services.
- 236** It is positive that there has been a recent review of the structure of the Supporting People team. This has made a number of proposals for restructuring the team to create a more cohesive approach to administering the programme and strengthening links between operational and strategic approaches. Consultation on the proposed changes was ongoing at the time of inspection.
- 237** The approach to performance information and related targets for the programme has some strengths. A quarterly report on performance is produced which covers KPIs, and SPIs which are divided by different sectors. Benchmarking information on national performance on KPIs and has been included in some of the quarterly reports. Some key partner performance indicators are also reported. Targets were being set for 2007/08 at the time of inspection and these had been discussed with partners and benchmarked externally. Separate quarterly reports are also produced on QAF performance and on complaints. This has increased focus on the performance of the programme.
- 238** However, there are also some weaknesses in performance information. Comprehensive outcome measures are still at a developmental stage and there is insufficient analysis on some underperformance in performance reports. While partner targets are included there are not shared targets developed in partnership. Targets for KPI and SPIs in 2006/07 were adopted from another Council and therefore were not consistently challenging. Benchmarking information has not been consistently presented alongside performance information and has not been provided on a sector basis. It has also not covered SPI or QAF performance. This reduces the ability to effectively assess performance and drive improvement in the programme.

- 239** It is also a weakness that service review reports were not reported to the Commissioning Body or Core Strategy Group. While headlines reports were presented to the Commissioning Body in December 2006 this was too late to influence the outcomes and scrutinise the process.
- 240** The contract performance protocol is starting to provide a more comprehensive approach to managing the performance of providers. This brings together a range of indicators relating to how a service is performing and prioritising intervention where necessary. It also incorporates sample validations of annual QAF self-assessments. There are targets for increasing A and B QAF levels in the 2007/08 service plan but this work has not yet been prioritised through the contract management process. Although still developing the contract performance protocol is having an increasing impact on the performance management of providers.
- 241** Forward planning for the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group is underdeveloped. A forward plan linked to agenda items has been developed but this has not been regularly updated and at the time of inspection only detailed items for two months ahead. It is also not clear from the plan what outcomes are expected from the items to be considered. This reduces transparency and coordination of the work of the governance structure.
- 242** Supervision and performance appraisal processes are in place and have been applied effectively for most, but not all staff. Annual appraisals take place with staff and there are regular supervisions sessions between appraisals. However, records show that three members of staff have not had appraisals in the last year and there are a small number of gaps in ongoing supervision for some staff. While these processes are generally assisting in managing performance they are not yet comprehensive.
- 243** There are weaknesses in financial management controls. There are appropriate corporate arrangements in place for financial monitoring and regular financial performance reports are made to Supporting People governance structures but monitoring and scrutiny at an operational level has not been adequate. This has resulted in a significant overpayment of grant to a district council provider. This reduces confidence in the ability of the Council to manage financial resources to support improvement.
- 244** The Council has responded positively to weaknesses in financial management highlighted above. After being made aware of a large overpayment to a district council provider the Council quickly developed plans to rectify the situation, to investigate if any similar instances had occurred and to look at how procedures can be improved. This demonstrates a commitment to delivering improvement in this area.
- 245** Risk management is effective. A register of risks for the programme is in place, is regularly reviewed, and mitigating actions are identified. This reduces the likelihood of unexpected problems significantly impacting on the programme.

Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

- 246** In our previous inspection we found that capacity within the team was insufficient to cope with the demands of the agenda and the Council was still considering the senior management arrangements of the programme. There was a commitment to the programme from councillors and senior managers and some difficult management actions had recently been undertaken to improve capacity within the programme although the impact of this commitment and increased management capacity could not yet be evidenced in improvements in performance.
- 247** In this inspection we found that strengths outweigh weaknesses in the capacity to improve. There is a political and corporate commitment to the programme and improvement plans. The Commissioning Body is also demonstrating clearer and stronger commitment to developing the programme to meet the needs of the Council as a whole. The Supporting People team is well resourced, and assisted by external support and effective IT. There has been a focus on establishing policies, procedures and structures which have increased capacity to deliver tangible service improvements. However, partnership working and procurement are not yet maximising capacity and the level of future strategic capacity and performance management capacity is uncertain. The Supporting People grant is not currently being fully utilised to meet priority needs.
- 248** Leadership of the programme has strengthened since our previous inspection. The Commissioning Body is acting more effectively with a stronger focus on commissioning issues and a clearer countywide approach. This is demonstrated in decisions in February 2007 to commission eight new services during 2007/08. This was on the basis of the most obvious gaps in services coming out of the initial draft of the needs survey and sector views. There is a strong political and corporate commitment to the programme and improvement plans. The new Director of Healthier Communities who is in the process of taking over responsibility for the programme and the role of Accountable Officer showed a strong understanding of key issues for the service. It is also positive that this is a joint Council/PCT funded role. This helps provide the leadership capacity to deliver the programme.
- 249** The Supporting People team is well resourced and appropriately located within the Communities Directorate. The administration grant is being fully spent and the Council contributed £353,000 during 2006/07. In addition to this, the Council has utilised considerable corporate resources to help improve delivery of the programme. Supporting People staff have been brought together in one team situated in the Communities Directorate following a corporate restructuring in 2006. It now sits in the same directorate as adult social care to enable closer joint working. The Supporting People team was also brought together in one location from February 2007 to enable better joint working within the team. Further restructuring of the team is also planned to reduce fragmentation in the approach to service monitoring. This will help provide capacity to deliver improvement.

- 250** There has been a willingness to use external expertise to assist delivery of improvement. For example, this has been used in needs analysis, facilitating of user engagement events. This is positive where there is insufficient external capacity to deliver specific projects.
- 251** However, the heavy reliance on corporate and external support to deliver improvement means it is difficult to be sure there is the capacity to maintain this when this support reduces. Significant corporate resources have been used to assist improvement in the programme, particularly over the last six months. There has also been considerable use of external consultants for both specific projects and for the strategic management of the programme. This will not be sustained at the same level in the future. In addition, support and advice has been provided by the Audit Commission and the CLG. There is therefore some doubt about the future capacity for strategic development of programme and effective performance management.
- 252** Improved policies, procedures and structures provide have increased capacity to deliver tangible outcomes in the future. Since our last inspection a number of improvements have taken place in developing policies, procedures and structures to support the delivery of the programme. These are particularly evident in governance, provider involvement, contract management, grant eligibility, value for money, procurement, service user involvement and diversity and covered in more detail in the first section of this report. The outcomes from these recent developments are currently still limited but they do provide help provide the capacity to support tangible improvements in the future.
- 253** Capacity to deliver some improvements is made more certain by a number of plans already being well advanced. These plans are covered in more detail in the above section on 'How the Council Manages Performance'. As the plans to deliver these improvements are nearing completion then little further capacity is needed to ensure delivery and the certainty of delivery is increased.
- 254** The approach to training is mixed. Training requests from staff are responded to effectively and diversity training has been provided to all members of the Supporting People team. An internal programme of training to share skills across teams has recently been developed. There was also good morale among the Supporting People team. However, the strategic approach to training is still underdeveloped with a lack of strategic analysis of training needs. For example, the need for specific training on adult and child protection was not identified until this was raised during the inspection. This means that the effectiveness of the team is not yet being maximised.
- 255** IT capacity is being used effectively in the delivering programme. No significant concerns were expressed by staff about the IT being used in the delivery of the programme. It is being used to effectively monitor the programme and to expand access through an effective website. Effective IT is important to ensure the capacity of staff is being maximised.

70 Supporting People Re-inspection | What are the prospects for improvement to the Supporting People programme?

- 256** Procurement is not yet maximising the efficiency of the programme. While there is a more robust procurement strategy and protocol in place this has not yet had a significant impact on the programme. This is a reflection of the limited progress in developing and implementing commissioning plans. Of the limited new services that are in development, some have been procured using a competitive process although others were negotiated with specialist providers. Overall, resources for the programme are not yet being maximised through procurement.
- 257** Partnership working is not yet significantly increasing the capacity of the programme. There are some examples of effective joint working in developing Supporting People policy within the Core Strategy Group. However, joint commissioning is not being used effectively to deliver services, partner involvement in review and contract monitoring has been limited and partner strategies are not well aligned to maximise the potential of Supporting People services. There is also little partnership working with other Council's on commissioning and monitoring of services. This further reduces the capacity of the programme.
- 258** The limited progress in reshaping services to best meet needs also restricts the overall capacity of the programme. The Council and partners have been slow to address the need for reshaping legacy services which could both increase capacity of these services and unlock funding for further new services.
- 259** It is also a weakness that financial capacity has not been fully utilised to meet priority needs. An accumulated underspend of Supporting People grant has existed for a number of years and currently stands at £3.7 million. This is despite there being unmet Supporting People needs. This means that financial capacity has not been used to maximise support to priority groups.

Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

- 1 The data set out in the following table shows the average unit cost of services for the year ending 31 March 2005. This is based on nationally produced figures which were not produced consistently in all categories resulting in some gaps.

Table 1

Benchmarking	Lcc	Regional	National
Single homeless			
Floating support	76.59		76.32
Homeless hostels etc.	148.98		203.42
Supported housing	157.36	165.81	141.84
Drug-related problems			
Supported housing	273.24		189.24
Offenders, or at risk of			
Floating support	64.82		120.91
Supported housing	130.56	153.43	195.31
Mental health problems			
Floating support	95.52	119.05	98.52
Supported housing	129.68	194.5	201.7
Socially excluded			
Refugees			
Supported housing	140.67		104.02
Disabilities			
Physical/sensory			
Residential care home	2.43		64.03
Learning disability			
Adult placement	57.69	157.41	272.1
Outreach service	326.52	423.33	300.28
Supported housing	276.62		351.85
Supported lodgings	170.95		228.04

Benchmarking	Lcc	Regional	National
Older people with support needs			
Alarms	2.43		
Almshouses	2.94		
Sheltered housing	11.55	10.49	16.17
Supported housing	7.64	16.23	20.8
Very sheltered	29.76	27.36	45.31
Hia	6.84		
Frail elderly			
Sheltered housing	12.44		27.99
Young people			
Floating support	164.00		87.77
Foyer	144.12	216.18	179.4
Supported housing	138.06	216.18	179.4
Homeless families			
Floating support	45.13		79.93
Supported housing	147.75	129.94	100.55
Women and domestic violence			
Floating support	250.41		88.66
Refuge	137.02	307.88	261.03

Source: Lincolnshire County Council

Demographic information

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

Table 2

Measure	Lincolnshire	England
Population (mid-2005) ⁴	678,700	50,431,700
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2005)	19.6	16.0
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2004)	1.3	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ⁵	2.0	2.3
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ⁶	262	-

⁴ Source: mid-year population estimates (2005).

⁵ Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (July 2007).

⁶ Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

Figure 1 Percentage of the population⁷ in each age group compared with England

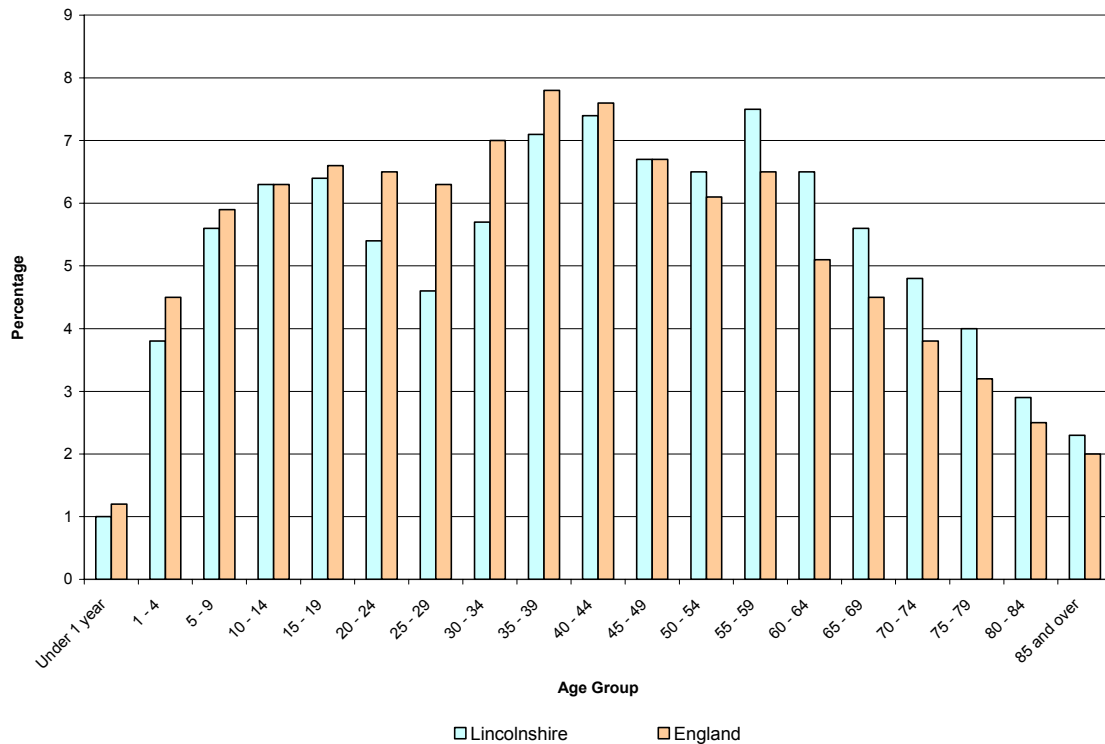
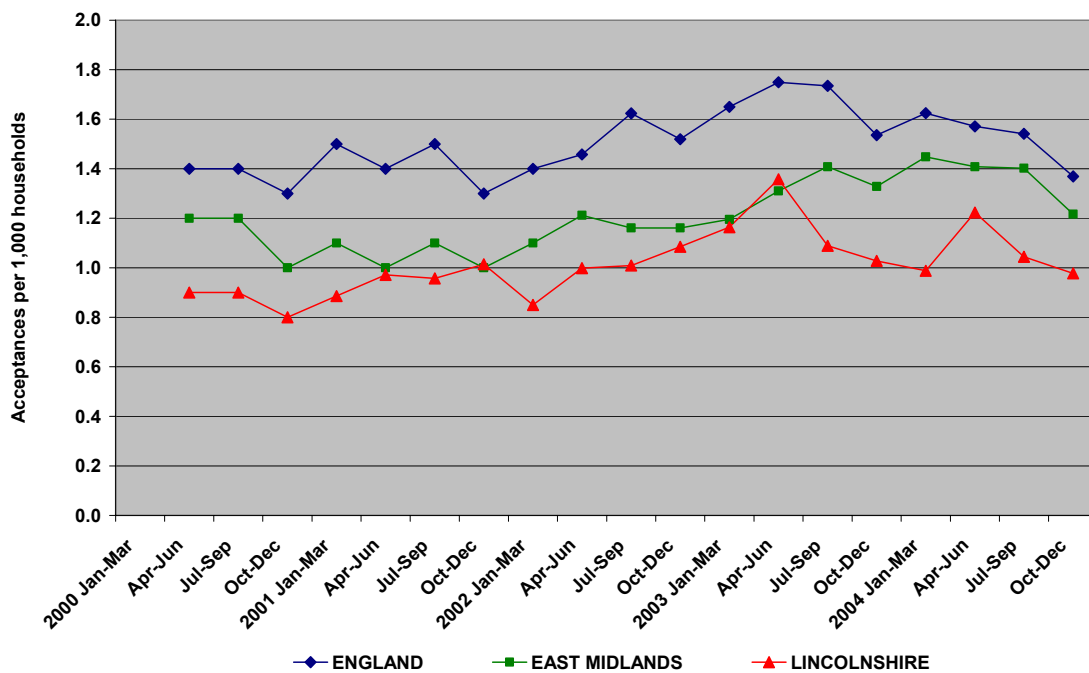


Figure 2 Households accepted as homeless between 2000 and 2004 compared with the region and England (acceptances per 1,000 households)



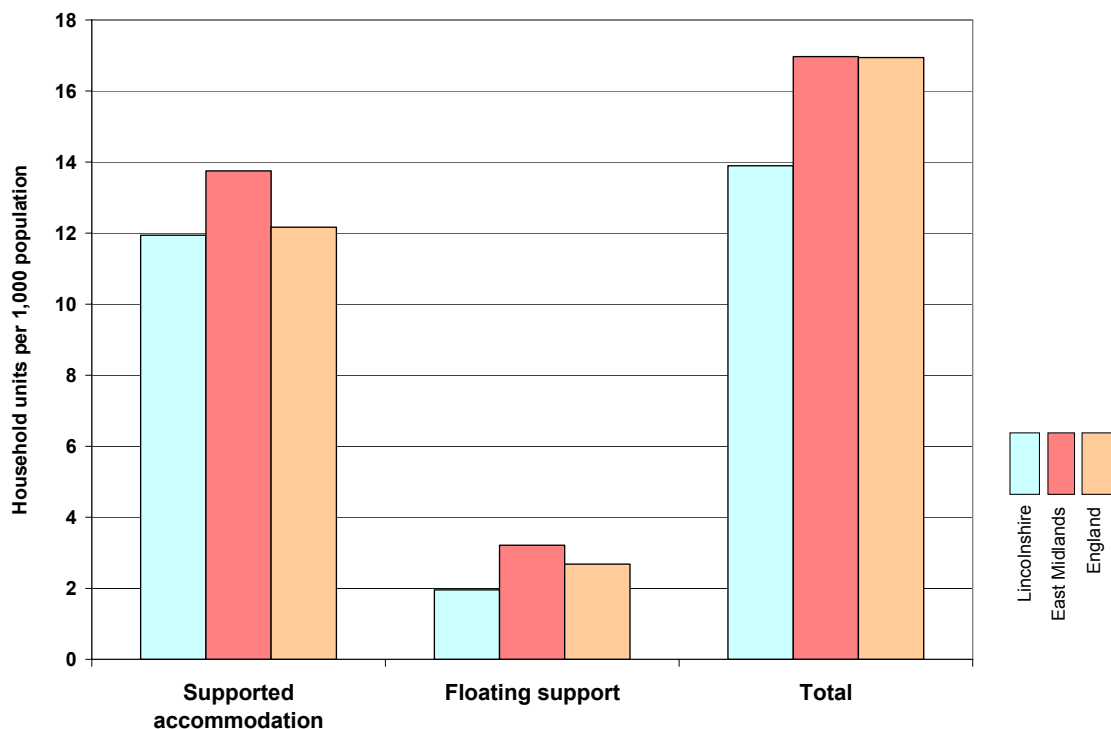
⁷ Source: mid-year population estimates (2005).

Performance information

- 3 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

Figure 3 Total service provision funded through Supporting People⁸



⁸ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Figure 4 Services for older people with support needs compared with the region and England⁹

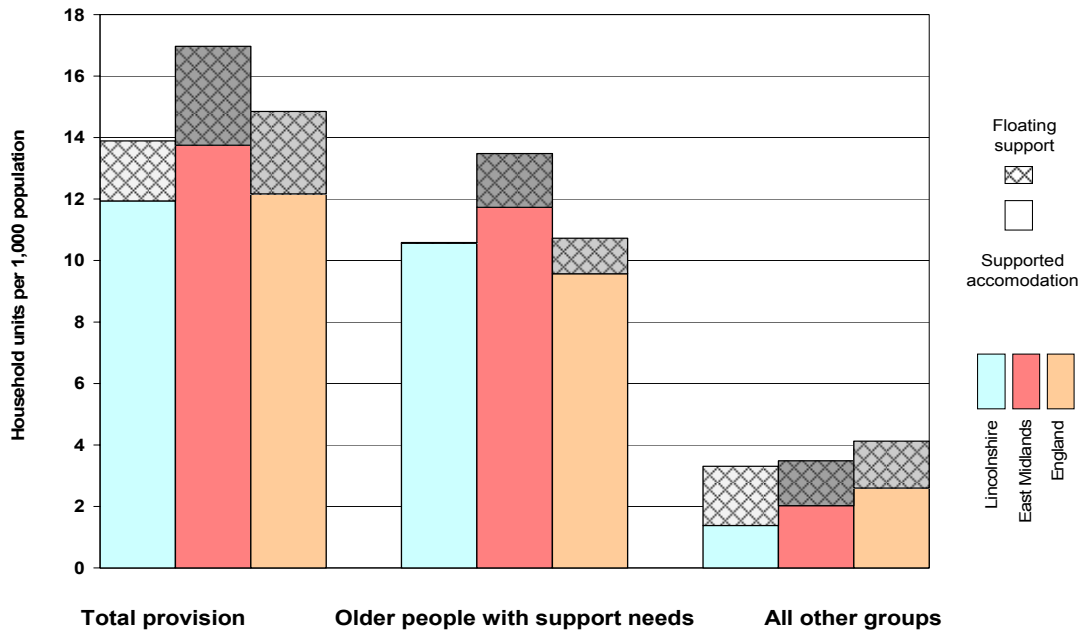
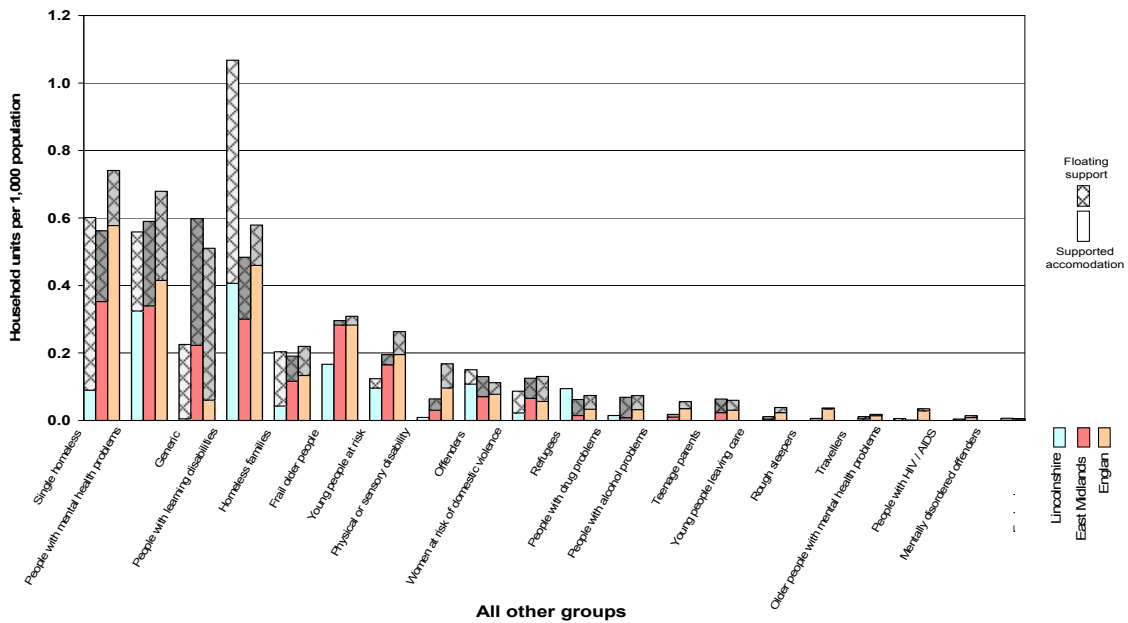


Figure 5 Services for other groups compared with the region and England¹⁰



⁹ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

¹⁰ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Table 3 Funding for Supporting People¹¹

Lincolnshire	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£ 23,184,655	£ 22,822,904	£ 21,749,385
Pipeline allocation	£ 125,679	£ 206,026	£ -
Administration grant	£ 480,252	£ 486,370	£464,185

Table 4 Unit costs of Supporting People services in 2003/04 (£ per week)¹²

	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms and sheltered housing
Lincolnshire	£ 0.68	£ 23.78	£ 38.77	£ 131.68
East Midlands	£ 0.69	£ 24.96	£ 31.50	£ 88.82
England	£ 0.70	£ 28.30	£ 34.71	£ 76.37

'The data quoted is taken from ODPM sourced material 2003/04. This is the only data currently available. ODPM will be able to provide updated data when it becomes available and this will then be used.'

¹¹ Source: Grant allocations, ODPM.

¹² Source: Platinum cut data, ODPM. November 2003.

Figure 6 Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹³

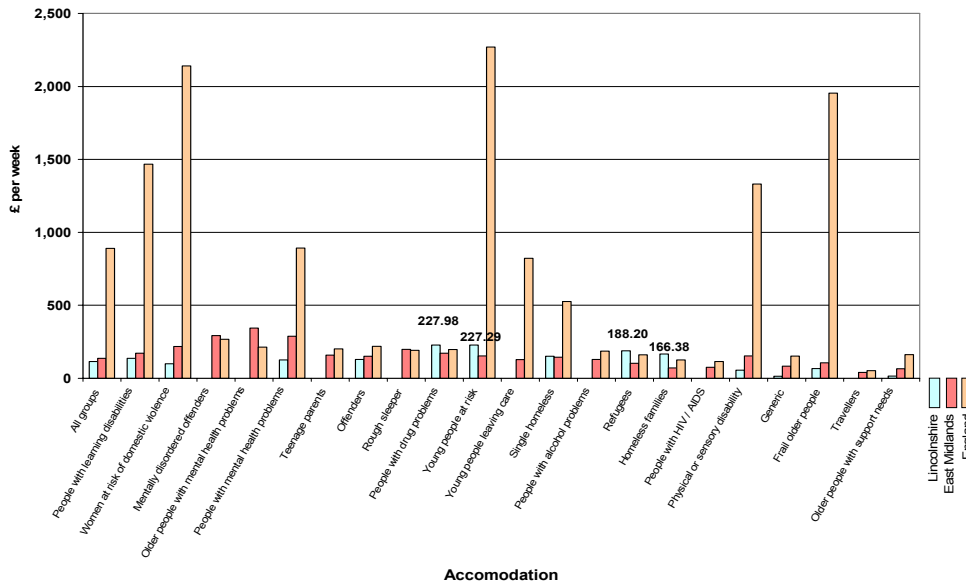
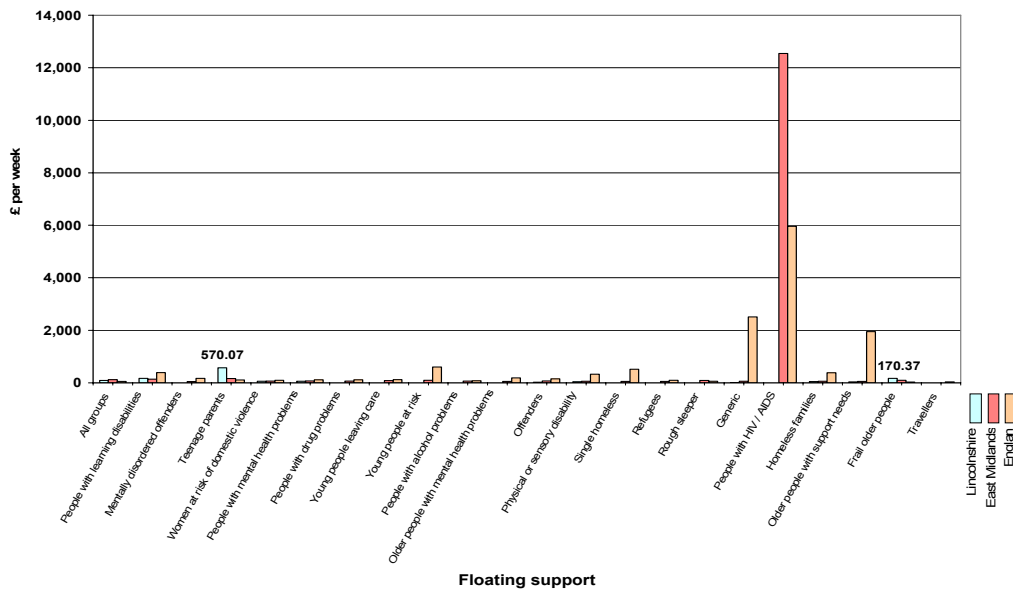


Figure 7 Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)¹⁴



¹³ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

¹⁴ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Figure 8 Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours,¹⁵ all county councils and all English councils (2004/05)

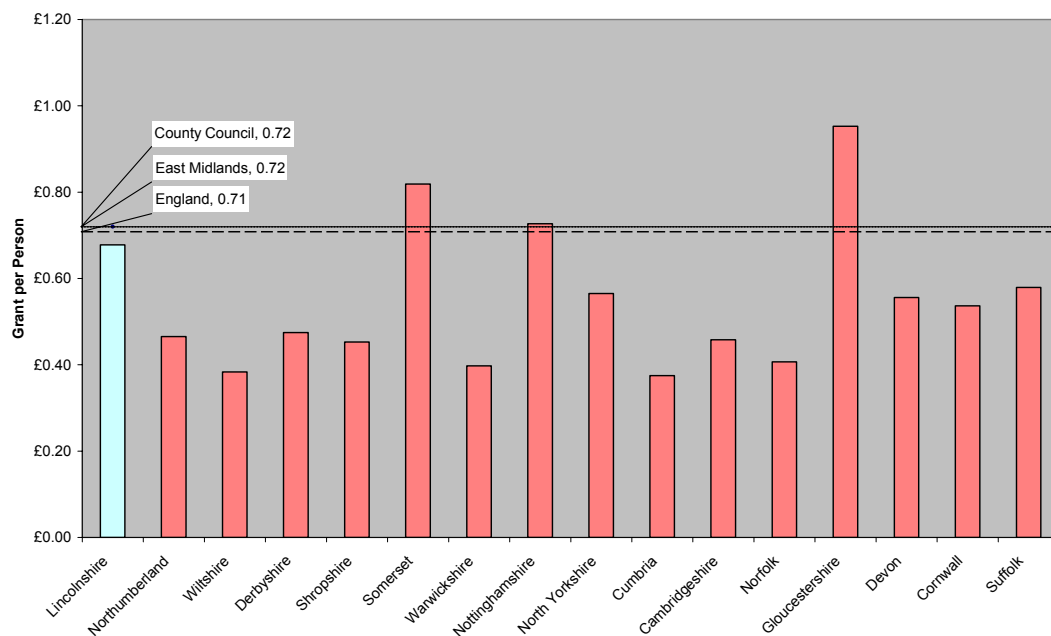
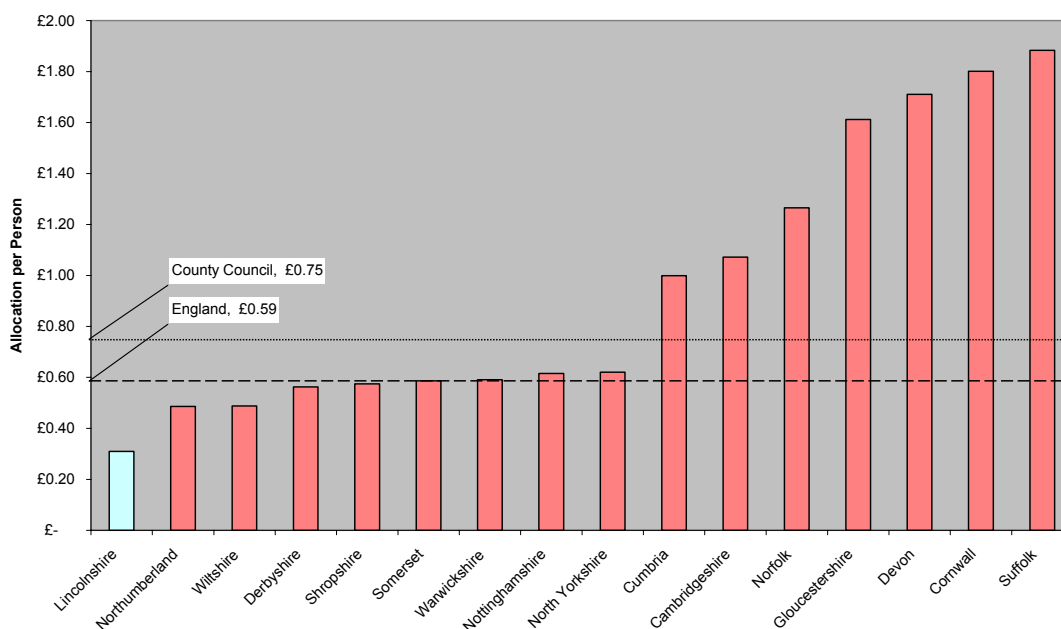


Figure 9 Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours,¹⁶ all county councils and all English councils



¹⁵ A comparator group of similar councils.

¹⁶ A comparator group of similar councils.

Figure 10 Share of spending between user groups (£000s)¹⁷

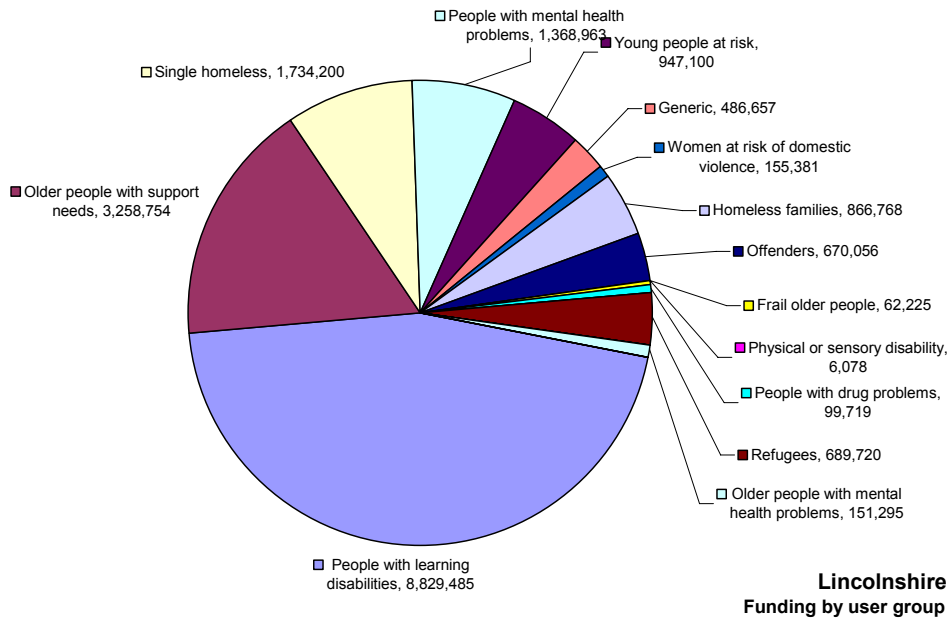
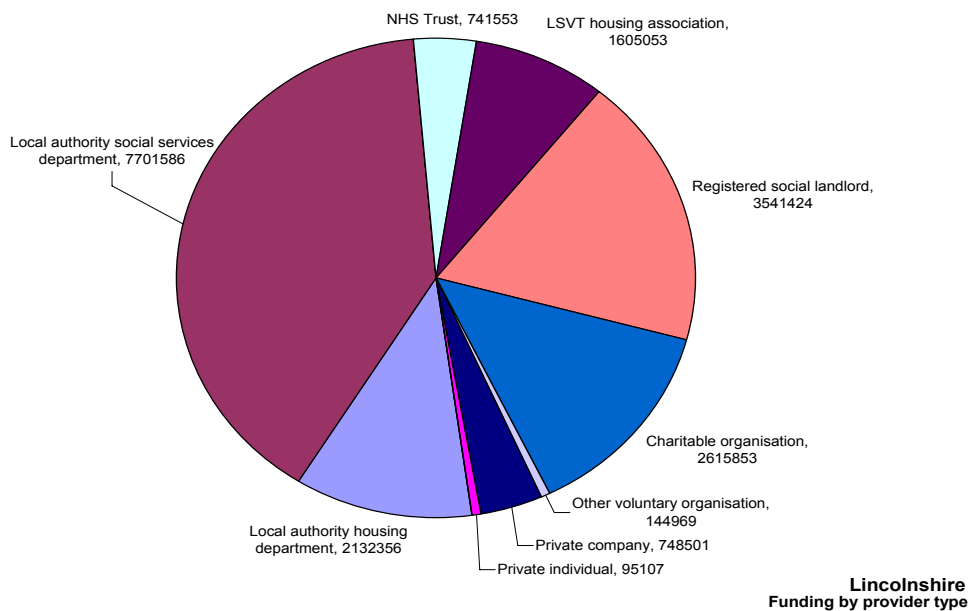


Figure 11 Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)¹⁸



¹⁷ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

¹⁸ Source: CLG, 2005/06. Excludes community alarms, home improvement agencies, leasehold schemes and pipeline services.

Table 5 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	Some	Uncertain	★ (1)
Children's Services	Adequate	Good	

Social services performance indicators

Table 6 Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2005/06

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

Lincolnshire	
Significantly above average (•••••)	Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30) Employment, education and training for care leavers (A4)
Above average (••••)	Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29) Delayed transfers of care (D41) Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54)
Average (•••)	Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40) Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31 March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51)
Below average (••)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31) Older people helped to live at home (C32)
Significantly below average (•)	Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39)

Best value performance indicators

Table 7 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

Lincolnshire	
Within the best 25 per cent	
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)
Within the worst 25 per cent	

Table 8 District council performance on relevant indicators in 2005/06

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

Boston	
Within the best 25 per cent	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2) Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a) Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)
Within the worst 25 per cent	

East Lindsey	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b) Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2) Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a) Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)
Within the worst 25 per cent	
Lincoln	
Within the best 25 per cent	Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63) Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2) Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a) 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)
Within the worst 25 per cent	

North Kesteven	
Within the best 25 per cent	<p>Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a)</p> <p>Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b)</p> <p>Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a)</p> <p>Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)</p> <p>Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)</p>
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)
Within the worst 25 per cent	Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63)
South Holland	
Within the best 25 per cent	Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b)
Average	<p>The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)</p> <p>Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63)</p> <p>Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a)</p> <p>Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a)</p> <p>Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)</p>
Within the worst 25 per cent	

South Kesteven	
Within the best 25 per cent	<p>The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)</p> <p>Energy efficiency of local authority owned dwellings (BV63)</p> <p>Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a)</p> <p>Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b)</p> <p>Council homes which did not meet the decent homes standard (BV184a)</p> <p>Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)</p>
Average	Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)
Within the worst 25 per cent	
West Lindsey	
Within the best 25 per cent	<p>Length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation (BV183a)</p> <p>Length of stay in hostel accommodation (BV183b)</p>
Average	<p>The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2)</p> <p>Average time for processing new housing benefit claims (BV78a)</p>
Within the worst 25 per cent	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176)

Appendix 2 – Reality checks undertaken

- 1 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 front line staff;
 - file checks of service reviews;
 - mystery shopping exercises to test how easy it is to access services;
 - review of leaflets and the Council's and care trust websites;
 - interviews with members of the Supporting People Team;
 - interviews with members of the Commissioning Body and the Accountable Officer;
 - observation of Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group meetings; and
 - interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Chief Executive of the Council, the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder and other councillors. Managers from Adult Social Services, the Care Trust and the Probation Service.