

Supporting People

Lincolnshire County Council

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Supporting People Inspections

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively and delivers high quality local and national 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 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) 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

Summary

- 1 Lincolnshire County Council in the East of England. The population is 646,645 of which three per cent are from black and minority ethnic communities. The county is the fourth largest in England and has a very low population density of only 109 people per square kilometre, compared to the national average of 378.
- 2 The Council is Conservative led with 45 of the 77 seats. The Council employs 15,000 staff across all services and has a budget of £645.567 million for the period 2005/06.
- 3 Lincolnshire County Council acts as the administering local authority (ALA) for the Supporting People programme in its area. The Council works in partnership with East Lincolnshire, West Lincolnshire and South-West Lincolnshire PCTs; Lincolnshire Probation Service; Boston Borough Council, the City of Lincoln Council and East Lindsey, West Lindsey, North Kesteven, South Kesteven and South Holland District Councils in commissioning Supporting People services.
- 4 The total amount of Supporting People grant funding available in 2004/05 was £22.822 million which reduced to £21.749 million in 2005/06. The Council also receives an administration grant of £480,252, to fulfil its role as the administering authority and additional funding of £39,366 to provide additional capacity to review services.
- 5 The highest cost Supporting People service in Lincolnshire is £600.96 per week for a learning disability service. The lowest cost service is £0.78 a week for a community alarm service for older people with support needs.

Scoring the service

- 6 We have assessed Lincolnshire County Council as providing a ‘poor’, no star service that has uncertain prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Table 1 Scoring chart¹

		Prospects for improvement?					
Excellent						‘a poor service that has uncertain prospects for improvement’	
Promising							
Uncertain	☀						A good service?
Poor							
		Poor	Fair ★	Good ★★	Excellent ★★★		

Source: Audit Commission

- 7 During the inspection we found a number of weaknesses, including the following, of which are significant.
- There are gaps in services for some vulnerable people and uneven distribution of services across the county. This restricts availability and choice.
 - There are few measured or demonstrable improvements for service users. The programme does not have plans or mechanisms in place to implement and monitor the improved outcomes that the Supporting People programme aims to deliver.
 - There is limited understanding of the housing support needs of some client groups including black and minority ethnic communities and travellers.

¹ The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the service or function is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent service (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the service, also on a four-point scale.

- Ineligible care services or those that have an element of care are being funded from the Supporting People grant which is intended for housing related support. The Council has been slow to identify the amount involved and arrange for a planned return of funding to its appropriate source.
 - Although financial administration is sound, there are as yet no performance management systems in place to measure the achievement of objectives or monitor performance against indicators or outcomes for service users.
 - Service users have had little opportunity to influence the strategic developments of the Supporting People programme.
 - Although governance of the programme has improved, arrangements to ensure effective management, challenge and scrutiny are not well established. Several issues, including the involvement of councillors and the full involvement of health and all the districts still need to be addressed.
 - There is an inappropriate level of dependency on the Administering Authority and a lack of ownership of the programme by all partners.
 - The Core Strategy Group has only recently been re-established and there are a number of aspects that need to be addressed so that it can fulfil its function, including provider and user representation, the inclusion of additional partners such as the Drug and Alcohol ACTION Team (DAAT) and the Youth Offending Service (YOS), work plans, performance monitoring and its relationship with the Commissioning Body and the Business Process Meeting.
 - No fixed term contracts have been issued to replace the original interim contracts which makes planning difficult for providers.
 - The council has failed to spend its allocated administration grant, despite recognition of the lack of capacity to deliver the programme.
- 8 There are some strengths in the programme, these include the following.
- All the district councils have signed up to the Supporting People Memorandum of Understanding, although this was conditional on a further review of the Memorandum.
 - The Council responded to an opportunity, offered by the ODPM, to apply for additional funding to assist in the completion of service reviews. As a result an additional £39,366 was awarded to the Council and this has been used to employ an additional reviewing officer.
 - Service reviews are being undertaken, there is a plan to complete them all by the April 2006 deadline and greater flexibility and choice have been secured through changes to some services, following reviews. In addition, some strategic reviews are nearing completion.
 - A floating support service for people with HIV and Aids have been established.
 - The Council has established a provider forum that has met regularly. Providers find the information provided through the forum helpful and informative and confirmed that they received accurate timely payments.

- 9 We have judged that the Supporting People programme has uncertain prospects for delivering improvement.
- Although effort has been accelerated recently there is insufficient evidence of firm progress since the last inspection.
 - The recommendations from the previous inspection have not been fully implemented.
 - Capacity within the team is insufficient to cope with the demands of the agenda and the Council is still considering the senior management arrangements of the programme.
 - Performance management of the Supporting People programme is weak. There are no shared targets and insufficient monitoring of performance. The governance arrangements are not managing or driving the programme.
 - There are no SMART service plans to deliver the five year strategy or the recommendations from the previous inspection.
 - There has been a lack of transparency about how priorities for new services were agreed and how providers can apply for funding to develop services in the future.
- 10 However some improvements have been introduced.
- The pace of development within the programme is improving. Several strategic reviews are underway and will contribute significantly to the Council's understanding of need.
 - There is clear commitment to the programme from councillors and senior managers and some difficult management actions have been recently undertaken, to improve capacity within the programme although the impact of this commitment and increased management capacity cannot yet be evidenced in improvements in performance.

Recommendations

- 11 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 costs¹ 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 customers, service providers and councillors, and addresses all weaknesses identified in the report. The inspection team makes the following recommendations.

¹ 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 costs is over 5 per cent.

Recommendation

R1 Strengthen service user involvement across the Supporting People programme by:

- establishing involvement and engagement channels for all client groups, particularly those who are hard-to-reach;*
- ensuring that information feeds into assessments of need;*
- developing feedback loops to ensure service users are told what changes result from their involvement;*
- developing a structured approach to involving service users in the strategic development of the programme; and*
- evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of arrangements at least annually to the Commissioning Body.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- the programme will be shaped by the service users. Services will be developed that service users need and want;
- needs information will be kept up to date;
- service users will feel engaged; and
- improvement mechanisms are built into the process.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by June 2006.

Recommendation

R2 Improve the governance arrangements for the Supporting People programme by:

- *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;*
- *addressing capacity within the Supporting People team and the Core Strategy Group;*
- *establishing clear arrangements in each element of the governance framework to ensure clarity of purpose, appropriate decision making authority, no duplication and appropriate membership;*
- *establishing and monitoring:*
 - *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;*
- *tracking:*
 - *indicators that the programme shares with its partners in Health and Probation;*
 - *to include involvement of the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and the Youth Offending service (YOS) 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;*
- *establishing targets and measures for efficiency and value for money improvements; and*
- *reporting progress against targets, at least six monthly to the Commissioning Body, and at least quarterly to the Core Strategic Group.*

12 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- the Council and its partners will know how it is progressing;
- the Council and its partners will know the contribution it is making to wider objectives;
- poor performance will be easier and quicker to identify; and
- investment decisions will be better informed.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with medium costs. This should be implemented by March 2006.

Recommendation

R3 Improve commissioning and procurement arrangements for the Supporting People programme by:

- *clearly establishing the priorities for new or developed services:*
 - *how funding can be obtained from the programme; and*
 - *a transparent process for providers to follow;*
- *reporting applications from providers, at least six monthly to the Commissioning Body and at least quarterly to the Core Strategic Group.*

13 The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- the Council and its partners will develop services in line with the shared five-year strategy;
- the Council and its partners will know the contribution it is making to wider objectives;
- providers and key stakeholders will have confidence in the procurement process;
- investment decisions will be transparent and better informed;
- eligibility of grant funded services will be secured; and
- value for money will be achieved.

The implementation of this recommendation will have high impact with low costs. This should be implemented by March 2006.

14 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: 31 October 2005 - 4 November 2005

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Report

Context

The locality

- 15 Lincolnshire County Council is a predominantly rural county in the East of England. It is the fourth largest county in England but only has a population of 646,645. The county has a very low population density of 109 people per square kilometre compared to the national average of 378. Three per cent of the population are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities compared to the national average of 13 per cent. There is a relatively large proportion of older people, with 21 per cent being over pensionable age compared to the national average of 18 per cent.
- 16 The largest employer in the area is the public sector. Over 15,000 people are employed by the county Council with manufacturing, agriculture and tourism being the other key employers. Although unemployment is lower than the regional or national averages, the average hourly earnings are the lowest in the East Midlands. On the 2004 indices of deprivation, the county ranks 94 out of 150, with one being the highest level of deprivation.
- 17 The population is growing faster than the regional and national rate due to inward migration. This growth is projected to continue, with a high increase in older age groups. This is particularly so in the coastal areas of the county where the population age 60 - 74 stands at 19 per cent compared to the national figure of 13 per cent.

The Council

- 18 The Council comprises 77 councillors. The Conservative group has control with 45 seats, Labour have 21, the Liberal Democrats eight and there are three Independents. Currently, an executive and scrutiny model governs the business of the Council. The Council's overall budget for the year 2005/06 is £645.567 million.
- 19 The Council has reviewed its priorities previously identified in the 2003-2006 best value performance and budget plan and now has six ambitions supported by ten objectives. The ambitions for the county are to:
 - create economic prosperity;
 - enrich the quality of life;
 - improve community engagement;
 - provide opportunity for people to realise their full potential;
 - improve transport infrastructure; and
 - provide community focused, cost effective services.

- 20 A comprehensive performance assessment was carried out in 2003 and the Council received an overall score of 'fair'. This assessment noted that there were weaknesses in social care provision and the way in which the Council was managing the environment. In 2004, the Council continued to be 'fair' although improvements had been made in a number of areas and the Council had begun to move resources to priority areas
- 21 In 2004 the Commission for Social Care assessed the provision of adult services in Lincolnshire as one-star (serving some people well with uncertain prospects of improvement).
- 22 The Council were subject to a critical Corporate Governance Inspection which reported in March 2005. It criticised the Council in several areas for having poor governance arrangements, poor managerial and political leadership and poor interaction with partners and the community.
- 23 In August 2004 an Audit Commission inspection of the Supporting People programme judged the service to be 'poor' with uncertain prospects for improvement. Because of this poor rating a re-inspection was required and this re-inspection report covers both the progress made since the last inspection, an evaluation of the current service and the prospects for improvement against the Audit Commissions' expectations as described in the key lines of enquiry.

The service

- 24 Lincolnshire County Council acts as the ALA for the Supporting People programme in the area. The Council received a Supporting People grant of £21,749,385 for 2005/06 which is a reduction of £1.07 million on the previous year's allocation. The Council also receives a grant of £464,185 to administer the programme, and an additional £39,366 has been awarded by ODPM to help the Council complete its service review programme.
- 25 The Supporting People team is located in the social inclusion unit of the county social services department. The Accountable Officer is the Interim Assistant Director - Social Inclusion.
- 26 The commissioning body comprises Lincolnshire County Council; all seven district councils; East Lincolnshire, West Lincolnshire and South-West Lincolnshire PCTs; Lincolnshire Probation Area; and two non-voting members of the Lincolnshire Housing Forum.
- 27 The commissioning body is a senior officer group and meets every two months. Councillors and health and probation board members are involved through a Scrutiny Panel that is chaired by probation. There are joint meetings of the commissioning body and the Scrutiny Panel at least twice a year and members are entitled to sit as observers at the commissioning body.
- 28 The delivery of the Supporting People programme has had recent changes to increase capacity and currently comprises:
 - a strategic co-ordinator - acting up arrangement due to the post holder's absence through ill health;

- an assistant strategic co-ordinator - vacant post;
- a strategic finance and business manager;
- a finance assistant;
- monitoring and review team of five people;
- a commissioning and contracting manager;
- an information and programme administrator; and
- a payments and service data team of two people.

29 Unit costs for the services that are commissioned are significantly higher than the regional or national average when community alarms and sheltered housing are excluded. The average 2003/04 unit costs of services in Lincolnshire were £131.68, compared to the regional and national averages of £88.82 and £76.37 respectively.

30 The highest cost service in Lincolnshire is £600.96 per week. The lowest cost service is £0.78 a week for a community alarm service for older people with support needs.

31 The Supporting People programme funds 391 services to 10,695 service users through 101 providers. The actual supply of accommodation and support services detailed in the shadow strategy shows that there were 10,479 units of provision. These were:

- 9,401 units of supported accommodation;
- 1,078 individuals receiving floating support; and
- 7,349 community alarm units.

32 One of the most significant issues for Lincolnshire is the very low provision for all service user groups with the exception of older people. Of the total provision, 91.8 per cent is for older people although this accounts for only 18 per cent of the budget. This is mainly sheltered accommodation which is often of the wrong type and in the wrong place although this does vary across all districts. Examples of this are 'bed-sit' accommodation with shared facilities that are hard to let and no accommodation being available in smaller, rural areas where older people wish to remain.

33 After provision for older people, the group with the next highest level of service is people with a learning disability at 2.7 per cent of the provision but 51 per cent of the budget.

34 The overarching aim of the Supporting People programme is:

'Working in partnership to provide high quality supported accommodation services for vulnerable people that promote social inclusion, help prevent deterioration, and, so, help them remain independent'

The key priority areas for the five year strategy are to focus on services for people with complex needs, develop move-on services and focus on substance misuse.

The strategy also prioritises five user groups, in no particular order:

- young people;
- homeless people;
- people fleeing domestic violence;
- people with mental health problems; and
- people with physical disabilities/sensory impairment.

How good is the service?

35 Our assessment is based on the following key issues:

- governance;
- delivery arrangements;
- service reviews;
- user involvement;
- access to services and information;
- diversity;
- outcomes for service users; and
- value for money.

Governance

36 Governance arrangements for the Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire are not well established and engagement from health is weak. There is a lack of understanding by some stakeholders about the programme and what it can deliver. The Commissioning Body has 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 are able to voice their opinions through a scrutiny group and some want to become more involved in the decision making process. The Core Strategy Group has recently been re-established but there are a number of aspects that need to be addressed before it is fully functioning. Service users have limited involvement in the strategic development of the programme and some stakeholders feel that the programme is overly dominated by the interests of social services, rather than being a partnership. As a result, the programme is not being managed and driven forward on key areas.

37 The ODPM 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 Development 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.
- 38** There is now a corporate commitment from the Council to the programme and councillors are developing their understanding of the Council's role in administering it. The previous inspection raised awareness of the Supporting People programme and the areas of weakness. Councillors have increased their level of scrutiny and are also able to attend the Commissioning Body as observers. The portfolio holder for Adult Services takes responsibility for the programme as a whole.
- 39** There are links between the Supporting People objectives and the Council's corporate objectives but links with local strategic partnerships including health, criminal justice, community safety and housing are weak.
- 40** The Probation Area has taken significant steps to more fully engage with Supporting People and to ensure that its engagement can be effective through both the Commissioning Body and the Core Strategy Group.

Commissioning Body

- 41** The Commissioning Body is not effectively overseeing the Supporting People programme, despite recent improvements. Scrutiny and challenge are weak and a number of issues remain unresolved. Although relationships between the districts and the county Council on the Commissioning Body have improved, this improvement has yet to result in collaborative working that produces improved outcomes.
- 42** The Commissioning Body is established with appropriate levels of senior representation from the Council, the district councils, health and probation. Probation is represented by the Assistant Chief Probation Officer (who can advocate for offenders and ensure links to the YOS are made) and the three PCTs have one representative. In principle there is sufficient delegated responsibility for decisions to be made about the strategic development of the programme.
- 43** At the time of the previous inspection the district councils had not all signed up to the Memorandum of Understanding and until recently, a significant amount of time was wasted in meetings by councillors discussing and disputing the content. As a result, very little core business was completed and health and probation felt the meetings were irrelevant and stopped attending.

This situation has recently improved with all the district councils agreeing to the constitution but this was conditional on a further review which will take place shortly. Stakeholders acknowledge that there has been an improvement in relationships but are concerned that a further review may once again disrupt relationships.

- 44 Attendance by health and probation has improved recently, helped by the introduction of themed agendas but a lack of capacity within the PCTs has meant that attendance for much of this year has been poor.
- 45 Partners have observed a significant improvement in the atmosphere within Supporting People, in particular the Commissioning Body, during the current year. They believe that there is now a genuine desire to move forward and to concentrate on the delivery of improved services. However, while there has been some improvement in the understanding of the Commissioning Body in respect of the role Supporting People can play in delivering the objectives of all partners, there is still some way to go in embedding this understanding at all levels of practice.
- 46 The administration of meetings has improved with the support of the Council's corporate secretariat, agendas are produced on time and minutes properly record the discussions and decisions, however, it was evident from a Commissioning Body meeting that we observed that there is no challenge to performance reports and little willingness to engage in some of the tasks of the body, for example participating in the selection of a provider for a sensory impairment service.
- 47 There are several issues that still need to be resolved before the Commissioning Body can operate effectively. These issues include the involvement of councillors, providers and user groups and the development of work plans, customer focussed performance reports and performance indicators.
- 48 Commitment from councillors has increased. Councillors from both the districts and the county council attend Scrutiny Panel and some would like further involvement in the decision making processes of the Commissioning Body, by attending as full participants. There are, however, differences of opinion as to how and whether this should be done, with some councillors preferring to remain in an advisory capacity through the Scrutiny Panel. The issue of how this is arranged and who then scrutinises decisions will have to be resolved to ensure the most effective use of resources and that there are no conflict of interests. Until this issue is resolved, the lack of clarity around governance will remain.

Core Strategy Group

- 49 The absence of a Core Strategy Group has meant that the delivery of Supporting People in Lincolnshire has not been effectively overseen and developed on a partnership basis. The group has recently been re-established and this has been welcomed by stakeholders. It is chaired by one of the districts councils and has a wide range of members although it does not yet involve providers and service users appropriately or representation from the DAAT and YOS.

Following a workshop facilitated by Supporting People staff from Oxfordshire who are recognised as a beacon council in partnership working within Supporting People, it is beginning to develop an understanding of its role.

- 50 There are a number of issues that need to be addressed in order for the Core Strategy group to function effectively. These include its relationship with the Commissioning Body and Business Process Group to ensure that there is clarity between each of the strategic groups, each playing an effective part without duplication; the level of seniority of its membership, to ensure decisions can be taken by attendees at the meeting and the appropriate involvement of providers and other partners.
- 51 The Core Strategy Group does not yet focus on developing policies and the wider implications of the programme. Work is not commissioned effectively by the Commissioning Body and it recognises that it needs a work plan to ensure developments are delivered. For example, the gaps in the provision of Supporting People services for offenders have been identified but there is no delivery plan or other indication of how these will be addressed. In addition reports that enable performance to be measured are not driving the delivery of the programme.

Accountable Officer

- 52 The programme in Lincolnshire has developed slowly and there was little progress for a year after the previous inspection. This became evident following the change of political administration and a number of managerial changes were made.
- 53 The role of Accountable Officer was transferred to the Interim Assistant Director for Strategic-Social Inclusion shortly before the inspection.
- 54 The Accountable Officer understands the role and he is beginning to raise the profile of Supporting People within and outside the Council. However, this work has only recently begun and there remains a widespread lack of understanding about Supporting People.

Cross Authority Partnership working

- 55 Following the previous inspection the Council's attendance at the East Midlands regional implementation group (EMRIG) has improved and benefits are beginning to follow. Lincolnshire have shared their work on steady state contracts and benefited from peer support and networking.
- 56 Supporting People is linked with the local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements for high risk offenders but lack of capacity has meant that attendance has not always been consistent.

Delivery arrangements

- 57 The delivery of the Supporting People programme is of mixed quality. Some significant arrangements are not in place to effectively deliver the Supporting People programme. For example, although the five-year strategy is in place it is seen by partners as an aspirational document that needs to be reviewed and informed by additional information from strategic reviews and other sources.

However, some aspects of the strategy are being developed without being informed by information from partners; for example, a recent needs mapping exercise for the housing related needs of mental health users has been conducted by Lincolnshire Partnership Trust (LPT) without the involvement of social services.

- 58 Payment systems are robust and payments are made every four weeks, and this performance is monitored by both the Commissioning Body and the Administering Authority. Discussions on funding are regularly held with providers and no instances have been reported of services threatened with closure because of funding shortfalls. A number of providers have raised queries with regard to the original costing for their service but these are being discussed and resolved. Some services have been re-engineered to provide improved service and better efficiency.
- 59 However, there are weaknesses in performance management including an understanding of risk, the implementation of an agreed procurement policy and a lack of urgency in unlocking funding from legacy services.
- 60 The Supporting People team are committed and enthusiastic and have worked hard to cope with a challenging workload, but they have not been well managed. Changes in the structure and a lack of capacity has meant that implementation of the recommendations of the previous inspection have not been fully addressed and completed in sufficient depth.
- 61 Additional capacity has been created by mainstreaming some functions within Social services. Monitoring and review staff have been moved into the strategic commissioning and contracting section, payments have been moved into the finance function of the business support section and administrative staff are now part of the wider business support team. To manage long term sickness and the loss of some managers a group consisting of the Finance Manager, the Deputy Co-ordinator and Co-ordinator has enabled the programme to be maintained at a basic level.
- 62 Following the previous inspection, a Finance Manager was appointed and this has improved financial administration but not performance. Actual grant expenditure is reported to the Commissioning Body and ALA on a regular basis. Reports compare actual expenditure against budget and are prepared by cluster and service user groups. Information is also available by individual contract. In addition, all new promises of grant for development projects are monitored against the amounts built into the five year strategy.
- 63 It is a significant weakness that the administration budget has been under spent over the last two years, despite concerns about the capacity of the Supporting People team, to effectively progress the programme.
- 64 There have been significant pressures on learning disability service budgets that have triggered a review of the Section 31 agreement, large contracts and of workforce issues. A recovery plan is in place with the anticipated overspend of £8 million being managed down to £3 million in the current financial year through negotiations with providers.

- 65 In Supporting People, savings of £300,000 have been achieved, through the revision of high cost learning disability services, with another £300,000 anticipated before the end of the financial year. One component of this strategy is the decision not to allow an inflation uplift, which puts pressure on providers to deliver efficiency savings.
- 66 Fairer Charging for Supporting People services has been introduced and is based on the Council's charging policy. Fairer charging assessments are undertaken as and when requested but the level of request is low and at the time of the inspection the process was being reviewed. This created problems for some providers who received nothing in writing about the suspension of the policy.
- 67 Better use is being made of data from the Supporting People information system and some performance information is being reported including performance indicators for the administration of the grant by the Council.
- 68 Links with housing are through the Core Strategy Group and the Business Support Group but there is little evidence of Supporting People in district council housing and homelessness strategies.
- 69 The Council has established a provider forum that has met regularly on a six monthly basis. Providers find the information provided through the forum helpful and informative but the forum has not been used to its full potential, in that it has not been used to ensure ongoing feedback from providers or to encourage joint working.
- 70 A major weakness and an issue of concern is the lack of transparency regarding the bidding process for new Supporting People schemes. Providers are unclear about the process for bidding for new services and new schemes appear to have been commissioned without going to tender or being in accordance with the five year strategy. This situation has been identified by the Council and is being addressed.
- 71 The Council has not yet issued any steady state or fixed term contracts. This creates additional uncertainty for providers. The process of negotiating steady state contracts is being concentrated into the second half of 2005-06, which will create additional workload demands on an already stretched team.
- 72 Eligibility criteria have been developed although it is unclear to what extent partners and providers were involved in agreeing them. Clarity around the definitions of housing related support requires further development to ensure services are appropriately funded. The Council has identified that the provision of waking night staff through Supporting People funding may be ineligible and have set up a review to explore the situation. In addition, cleaning and undertaking repairs have also been funded through Supporting People, these are clearly ineligible and should be removed from the contracts following individual needs assessments using the new eligibility criteria.

- 73 The Council met the deadline of 31 March 2005 set by the ODPM for ALAs to submit a five-year Supporting People strategy. A draft strategy was agreed by the Council's Executive, the Probation Board, one PCT and the district councils and submitted to the ODPM by the target date. However, the strategy was not agreed by the management boards of the remaining two PCTs. Strategic objectives and main priorities are set out in the five year strategy but we were told that new priorities are being followed since the strategy was agreed.
- 74 Cross authority working is developing but has been slow. For example, the Business Processes Group meets twice a year to consider issues around the administration of Housing Benefit in the county but attendance by Supporting People at inter-agency groups, such as the DAAT, is poor.

Service reviews

- 75 The service review programme in Lincolnshire has made slow progress. Although some services have been remodelled and now offer greater choice there are as yet few large scale tangible outcomes and some very high cost services have not been reviewed, including those delivered by the county Council.
- 76 Schemes were prioritised for review using the ODPM high risk definitions and criteria and new providers that developed services under Transitional Housing Benefit. Similar service types were selected to be reviewed consecutively to enable comparisons to be made. With Commissioning Body approval modifications and revisions have been made to the programme in the light of unit cost benchmarking data and in response to concerns identified regarding service delivery.
- 77 Consultants have been appointed to undertake strategic reviews of learning disability services, services for older people and travellers during 2005/06.
- 78 There is now sufficient capacity to undertake reviews. There are three monitoring and review officers in post and there is the potential to use staff from within the Social services contracting and commissioning function to meet any shortfall. However, the Council still faces a challenge to complete the reviews on time and to a high standard. Staff we interviewed acknowledged that they did not yet have all the skills they need and although there is some additional capacity as described, these staff have no experience of Supporting People services. In addition, expertise from professionals in other agencies or areas is not regularly used to assist review officers who have little specialist knowledge of a service area: for example, probation staff are not routinely involved in undertaking reviews of offender services alongside Supporting People review officers. This lack of a joint approach means that opportunities to enhance the skills and capacity of the team as well as capturing the views of users with specialist needs are missed.
- 79 There is a plan to complete all reviews by the ODPM deadline of April 2006 but to achieve this some service reviews are only being undertaken by a desk top review and reviews are only assessing for minimum standards.

80 At the time of the on-site period of the inspection progress was as follows.

Table 2

Lincolnshire - Supporting People Service Reviews	
Total services to review 2005	427
Reviews completed (end September 2005)	272
Reviews to commence or in progress	149
Reviews to CB	0
Full Service Agreements (Contracts) signed	0
Full Service Agreements (Contracts) pending	12
Note - leaseholders have been excluded from the above figures. There are four leaseholder companies and currently 38 service users.	

- 81 There has been one unsuccessful appeal against a decision to de-commission a service and two services have been de-commissioned – one was a sole trader operating a very expensive service for learning disability and the other was a scheme for substance misusers; the latter case attracted a lot of publicity but was handled sensitively and residents were found suitable alternative accommodation. Where service failure has been identified, support has been offered. For example, when difficulties were identified in the City of Lincoln sheltered housing service, the City Council supported improved performance in the service.
- 82 Although some providers told us that reviews are carried out well others were confused about the process and told us they had not received reports following reviews two years ago, when these were in fact validation visits. Feedback to providers following reviews does take place but progress in providing the final report and in accreditation is slow. Action plans did not appear to be monitored systematically with only occasional telephone calls being made to check on progress.
- 83 The Council works hard to sensitively include service users in reviews on either an individual or group basis and all service users we met had support plans. However, advocacy services are scarce in Lincolnshire and the workload of the team prevents regular feedback to service users who have contributed to reviews.

- 84 There are problems with the Council's in-house learning disability service; there are 11 contracts in total but sometimes the services are delivered by providers other than Social services; some of these schemes do not meet minimum standards and data about performance and other matters is difficult to find in the system. These issues will be addressed as part of the review of services.
- 85 A key issue for these services relates to the banding for payments – these have been set at £100 and £400 per week. Where services were below £400 per week they have been re-set at £400 (as this is the nearest banding level); as a result costs have artificially increased however, the council is aware of the implications of this measure and are beginning to address it but it is not yet resolved.
- 86 The Council has considered the monitoring they will undertake following the completion of reviews in March 2006. They have built additional performance indicators into steady state contracts and will monitor these measures through a performance management approach. They also plan to re-visit those schemes that have been undertaken on a desktop basis and to consult service users about the schemes that they use.

Value for money

- 87 The Council is not in a position to demonstrate that the Supporting People grant funds eligible services only and consistently delivers value for money. An approach to value for money that includes both cost and quality is being developed but has yet to be applied to all services. Although the Supporting People programme is funding ineligible services the Council has 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.
- 88 The unit costs of services are above both the regional and national average and the cost of some service provision, particularly in learning disability services, is exceptionally high. Delays in addressing value for money impact on the whole programme, as funds are tied up inappropriately and prevent the development of new or additional services.

How do costs compare?

- 89 Housing related support costs in Lincolnshire are higher than the regional and national average. Although unit costs per head of population are comparable, removing the high volume community alarm services from the comparison shows that Lincolnshire's cost of £38.77 is higher than the East Midlands average of £31.50 per unit. When both community alarms and sheltered housing are excluded, the unit cost of £131.68 are significantly higher than the East Midlands average of £88.82 and the national average of £76.37.
- 90 Unit costs for some service user groups are higher than others due to the level of support provided. However, even on like for like service user group comparisons, the unit cost of services for people with learning disabilities, young people leaving care and homeless families are significantly higher than regional or national averages.

- 91 With the exception of floating support services for people with learning disabilities, where costs are high, floating support unit costs are lower than average for women fleeing domestic violence, offenders, people with drug misuse problems, young people at risk and single homeless people. These services are low volume and their quality is not yet fully understood as they have not all been reviewed or their value for money evaluated. Some of these areas are priority areas for development and this indicates that quality may be an issue.
- 92 The data appendix at the end of this report provides further information and illustrates the cost and level of provision against regional and national averages.

How is value for money managed?

- 93 Value for money is beginning to be addressed and, through negotiation with providers, savings of approximately £300,000 have been made through remodelling or decommissioning services. Spending is now monitored and policies and procedures to manage budgets are in place. Although work is in progress the Supporting People team have a challenging agenda and do not have the capacity to address value for money comprehensively with all individual providers.
- 94 To address value for money, evaluate quality and drive down costs the Council's approach is as follows.
- Working through EMRIG the Council is looking at comparative performance measures to derive an overall score. However, benchmarking is at an early stage.
 - Discussing value for money during service reviews and highlighting to providers that value for money is a key element of the review.
 - Providing some value for money information on its website so that providers can look at average unit costs for their own service area. However, the approach being developed by Supporting People to look at quality is different to the quality measurement system featured in the Supporting People Newsletter.
 - Negotiating some reduction in value with all providers of contracts in excess of £100,000 per annum.
 - Not allowing an increase for inflation.
 - Introducing banding of learning disability contracts to provide greater flexibility for providers.
- 95 Although these measures are beginning to address value for money and produce a picture of cost and quality for the Council, there are areas of weakness.
- There is a risk that the measures will not deliver value for money where contracts of less than £400.00 per week are rounded up. In addition there is a risk that some service users may be provided with higher levels of service than their needs require, at a cost to other service areas.

- Negotiating reductions in cost takes time and not all this work has been completed due to lack of capacity. It is also having an impact on the issuing of steady state contracts, as these are being held up until negotiations have taken place.
 - Problems with the in-house learning disability services have not been addressed by the Supporting People Team. The Council estimates that approximately £3 million needs to be recovered from Social services when ineligible services are transferred back to the appropriate budget.
- 96** The service review programme has a sound rationale, having been devised to target high cost services and those where there were concerns about quality. However, some high cost packages have not been reviewed for example, a learning disability service for one user costs £600.96 per week, compared to a national average of £343.07. In addition, there has been no accreditation of this service and the review is not scheduled until 2006.
- 97** To address quality, as well as comparable unit costs, services need to be thoroughly reviewed and improved. In order to complete the review programme by the ODPM deadline, services are only being evaluated against minimum standards. There is insufficient capacity to re-evaluate those which improve their performance or monitor the implementation of improvement measures following reviews, so the delivery of improved quality cannot be demonstrated.
- 98** Cross-authority work on benchmarking has been useful in providing more recent and reliable cost data to inform comparisons. The Council is active in this work and willing to share and learn.
- 99** Over £11 million of the grant is spent on services for people with a learning disability. From their knowledge of services provided and information from validation visits, the Supporting People team is aware that significant amounts of ineligible services are being funded by the grant. No demonstrable progress has been made to unlock this funding although some individual reductions in contract values have been negotiated. The impact is that the programme remains committed with limited capacity for service development, while needing to attract funding and make savings from elsewhere.
- 100** Lincolnshire has not been able to provide us with an estimate of the value of ineligible services currently being funded. Until eligibility assessments are complete the exact amount involved will not be known. However, we would expect the Supporting People programme, at this stage, to have a realistic estimate of the amount involved.
- 101** Plans to move the funding of ineligible care services to the correct budgets are not as far advanced as we would expect to see in the third year of the Supporting People programme. Some discussions have been undertaken with Social services on how to remedy the funding position in the medium term, while protecting the provision of services to individual service users, but health have not been involved and no firm agreement is in place on how this will be achieved.

- 102 Some savings have been negotiated with relevant service providers in acknowledgement of ineligible or high cost services or being funded. However, these are temporary arrangements until the service review is concluded.
- 103 Not enough is done to ensure that the administration budget is delivering value for money. The Council receive a significant ODPM administration grant to deliver the programme, and this budget is closely monitored and actual spend against expected spend is regularly reported. However, no benchmarking or comparisons of costs are carried out to ensure that the administration of the programme is good value for money and by under spending, the capacity of the team has been affected.

Service user involvement

- 104 Service user involvement is acknowledged as an area of weakness. There is a commitment from the Supporting People team to engage and involve service users but little progress has been made. The Council has begun to consult service users on how they want to be communicated with. Although service users are included in service reviews there was limited involvement of service users in the development of the five-year strategy or within planning and delivery structures. There has been no specific effort to involve hard to reach groups such as offenders who would be less likely to access and identify their specific needs through other forums. Partners such as the probation service, who have direct access to such groups, could beneficially contribute to accessing these groups. Importantly, feedback arrangements are weak and there is insufficient capacity within the Supporting People team to inform service users how their views have contributed to improved services.
- 105 Despite the recommendation of the previous inspection, there is no overarching strategy for involving service users and no inclusive forum, although this is an intention of the Supporting People team. Although the selection of providers who have bid for contracts is beginning to consider including service users this development is at a very early stage. Service user engagement and involvement is variable across service groups and there is limited evidence of how engagement informs planning or has led to improvements in service.
- 106 Contact was made with some specialist services regarding the five-year strategy including the County Tenant's Forum, a Better Government for Older People forum and with two local inclusive fora which included both providers and service users, but there is little evidence to indicate how their comments were included.
- 107 The development of user involvement is contained in a section of the five-year strategy entitled 'Where we want services to be in 2010' and is described as an area that will be embedded in service planning and delivery early in the life of the strategy, but there is no indication how this will happen and it does not appear in the annual plan for the first year of implementation.
- 108 At service level, some providers effectively include service users through house meetings and other mechanisms, ensuring an inclusive approach in which opinions can be aired, with the support of other service users.

Access to services and information

- 109** The information available to existing and potential service users is satisfactory and there is an improvement in the level of awareness about the support Supporting People can offer. Briefings have 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, for example probation, the level of understanding by front line staff is weak. Service user enquiries are adequately signposted. There is information on the Council's website and access routes to services out-of-hours. There are 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 is good and focused around the individual.
- 110** Some effective work has been carried out to ensure front line staff is aware of the Supporting People programme and its services. The Supporting People team has held a number of awareness briefings for the customer service staff who deal with all incoming calls to the Council and to frontline staff to assist them in understanding what services are available, financial systems and how the programme aims to increase the quality of services. Our mystery shopper enquiries were dealt with promptly and courteously but our out-of-hours call regarding a domestic violence issue was not dealt with appropriately and the staff member we spoke to lacked appropriate knowledge to deal with the situation.
- 111** Probation managers have identified that they need to raise the level of knowledge of housing support issues and what Supporting People can offer amongst their front-line staff. A lack of consistent knowledge has also been identified in the health sector.
- 112** Information for potential and existing service users is good. A general purpose information leaflet on Supporting People in Lincolnshire is displayed in Council offices and in those of districts and some partner agencies. There is no information available to people on Fairer Charging (the financial help towards housing related support services) and how to make an application, and when the policy review has been completed this information needs to be shared with users and providers. Service providers are expected to inform service users, carers and advocates on access to fairer charging systems. In our view this is not satisfactory as it relies entirely on the service provider being well informed and knowing how the system works. Consequently some service users may not be applying for financial support, which they may be entitled to, or may choose not to take up a particular support service, because they feel they cannot afford it.
- 113** A range of information on Supporting People is available on the Council's website with links to the ODPM national website. An overview of Supporting People is available and the directory of housing related support services is comprehensive. However, the website is not particularly easy to navigate and the Supporting people section does not include the full version of the five-year strategy although it can be found in the Council's policy section on the web-site.

- 114 There is no over-arching strategy for the development of service user information and no common standard of information provision by service providers. Some information on Supporting People is provided by service providers although the standard is variable. Many of the schemes have developed leaflets and information sheets for their own services users. These are generally informative and some are well written and presented. However, others are not user friendly with overuse of jargon, abbreviations and poor quality print. There is little consistency about the use of strap-lines offering information in other languages or formats. Where a strap-line is included, it is usually in English. This may defeat the purpose of enabling the information to be available to someone who does not read English well.
- 115 Supporting People has been integrated with wider Council information on the provision of services to vulnerable groups. The annual report on the Better Care: Higher Standards charter includes references to Supporting People funded housing related support services.
- 116 Access to support and information, out of office hours, is provided through:
- a directory of services with contact details is on the website;
 - the website also contains a link to social services out-of-hours' team who can be contacted in emergencies. This number is also widely available to the police and health services; and
 - some direct access services are also available. These include homeless hostels and domestic violence refuges.

Diversity

- 117 Strengths and weaknesses are balanced in the Council's approach to diversity. Some services are specifically provided for minority groups, although more are needed. Information on housing related support need is improving but there remain gaps, for example on the needs of travellers and the needs of people from black and minority ethnic communities. The need for service providers to ensure their services are available to diverse communities is addressed as part of the service review. More information is being provided to service users on the cultural sensitivity of services and more people from BME communities are accessing services. However, this information does not cover all housing related support services, nor does it include details that are essential to vulnerable people. Without information on need, the Council cannot know whether or what type of service is required. Without information, people are denied choice.
- 118 Information on the housing related support needs in Lincolnshire does not adequately cover all client groups. It is improving but more work remains to be done. The five-year strategy has drawn together what is currently known about the diverse housing related support needs of individuals and communities. It accepts that there are gaps in intelligence and proposes actions to plug these gaps.

- 119 Assessment of need is being addressed through strategic reviews being carried out by consultant on behalf of the Council. These include the support and housing needs of travellers that will be completed by April 2006.
- 120 Delays in service reviews impact on the speed of improving service providers' approach to diversity. One element of the service review process considers fair access, diversity and inclusion and makes recommendations for improvement. Because not all reviews have been completed, it is too early to see any measurable change. However, to improve performance in this area, it has been agreed that tenders for services will have to evidence how the provider will ensure culturally sensitive services that meet the needs of service users from diverse backgrounds.
- 121 There is limited information on the housing related support needs of travellers, and existing information held by the DAAT on the housing support needs of people with drug misuse problems has not been used. Some providers are not completing the diversity section in the returns which means the full information is not being gathered.
- 122 The five-year strategy proposes to gain a greater understanding of the current and future needs of BME communities and states that by 2010 these will be a well established part of the programme. The annual plan for the implementation of the first year of the strategy states it will develop services for people with HIV or AIDS and this has been done. It also states it will develop intensive short-term support for people with newly acquired visual impairment, and tenders for the delivery of this service were being invited at the time of the inspection.
- 123 Systems are in place to encourage the development of diverse communication skills. Staff and service providers have access to translators and systems are in place to translate written material into other languages and formats.
- 124 Corporately the Council faces a challenging agenda regarding diversity. There is no comprehensive Equalities Plan in place and a Council priority for 2005/06 is to achieve level 1, the lowest level, of the Local Government Association Equality Standard. In addition, compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act is presenting Lincolnshire with a challenge in terms of access to public buildings by people with disabilities.

Outcomes for service users

- 125 Outcomes to date for service users are limited. The provision of services across the county does not match local need and there has been little success in establishing county-wide services. There are no systems in place to capture the outcomes or benefits that the Supporting People programme delivers for service users in Lincolnshire. A small number of new services have been introduced since April 2003, mainly through delivery of schemes where development was already in the pipeline. For individual service users, support plans have been introduced by service providers and are being used effectively.

- 126** The financial situation with the programme has enabled £1 million to be spent recently on new services. Overall however, service users see little change to legacy service provision. Since the introduction of the Supporting People programme, the concentration on accommodation based services and a lack of move-on accommodation continues to restrict choice.
- 127** Some new services have been introduced to address needs in Lincolnshire, mainly pipeline schemes for which specific funding was provided by ODPM. These include HIV/AIDS service, a floating support mental health service, additional domestic violence services, an extra care service for older people and a homeless floating support service.
- 128** There is little choice for service users across tenure. Service provision is mainly accommodation based - over 97 per cent of provision. This restricts choice for vulnerable people and the availability of support particularly for those in the private rented and owner occupier housing sectors, such as service users ready to move on from accommodation based support to live in general purpose accommodation, but with a reduced level of support to help them successfully make the transition to full independence.
- 129** Despite a recommendation of the previous inspection, a county-wide Home Improvement Agency has not been established. Shortly before the re-inspection a manager was appointed and began work on an agency representing the two districts that were previously engaged; although others have expressed an interest no further progress has been made. HIAs provide support to people in the private sector housing, enabling them to maintain their lives in their own homes, the lack of this service has a considerable detrimental impact on their ability to do so.
- 130** Little progress has been made in filling gaps in service provision. Although gaps in services are identified in the five-year strategy, only a small number, 8 per cent, of people with mental health problems receive Supporting People funded services, and although older people make up 90 per cent of all service users in the county they only receive services provided by 31 per cent of the grant. This means that individuals from the service users groups concerned do not have access to the housing related support services to improve their life chances and their ability to live independently. It is also indicative of poor partnership working.
- 131** Currently there is no system in place to capture and quantify the benefits that the programme is bringing to service users. Without such a system the programme is unable to monitor trends, measure achievement or progress towards objectives or take informed decisions on priorities or remedial action.
- 132** Move-on accommodation for users of existing services is becoming increasingly difficult to find in Lincolnshire. Providers surveyed identified the lack of move on accommodation to be a problem. This issue is a particular problem for young people and offenders as restrictions provide barriers to them accessing mainstream services. Support services become blocked as service users cannot find accommodation to move on to, and service users become frustrated at being unable to live more independently when they are ready to do so.

The five-year strategy has highlighted this as a priority for further investigation to ascertain the full extent of need but until provision is increased the problems remain for service users.

- 133** There is evidence to indicate that offenders, and in particular those who present a high risk of harm to the public, may effectively be excluded from projects due to the scoring systems and eligibility criteria employed by housing departments and providers. There is a need for the links between community safety and appropriate accommodation to be better understood by providers, and for assessment procedures to reflect this.
- 134** Support plans are being effectively used by service providers contacted during this inspection. Service providers have developed support plans for their individual service users and the plans are being used to shape services around individual need. This ensures that support is focused on service users' individual needs to help maintain or develop their ability to live independently. Support plans are reviewed and updated regularly after each periodic interview. They are used to plan ahead as a diary and as reminder of the progressive steps needed to move an individual forward.
- 135** Service providers are using the Quality Assessment Framework to improve the way they are delivering their services. They are actively looking to improve the quality of their services and involving service users to guide the process. However it is too early to quantify any improvements in the quality of services - 79 per cent of providers reviewed have attained the minimum performance standard of at least grade but it is not yet possible to evidence improved performance across the board.
- 136** Service users told us how the support they are receiving is helping to improve their quality of life and their life chances. These included:
- a service user who had lived all her life in institutional care. Initially her ability to live alone was extremely poor and she would not even get out of bed until she was told to. With consistent support and encouragement she was able to get up, have her breakfast and let her support staff in; and
 - after two years of support, a young man who had lived all his life in care and was unable to sustain a tenancy has moved into his own flat and functioning well.

Summary

- 137** Overall, we consider that the development of the Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire remains poor. Although there are some areas of satisfactory performance, the administration of the programme remains weak and there have been few improvements in outcomes. There are key areas which have not been addressed and recommendations that have not been implemented.

Despite a grant of almost £70 million over a three year period, the pattern of provision remains inconsistent and some vulnerable people are not receiving any service at all; governance has been improved but the arrangements are not yet delivering robust decisions or driving the programme, strategies have been written but not delivered; joint objectives have not been agreed and strategies are not cross-cutting.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- 138** The Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire has a poor track record of delivering improvement. Its track record is of maintaining existing patterns of provision, undertaking reviews to ascertain what to do next and devoting a disproportionate amount of time to disagreement.
- 139** The previous inspection provided the Council with 23 recommendations to improve performance within clear timescales. There has been some work on each recommendation but few of them have been fully implemented so as to deliver improved outcomes for service users. Despite a considerable amount of activity during the 12 months after the on-site period of the last inspection, a lack of prioritisation and scrutiny meant that the Council did not identify the lack of real progress until recently. As a result outcomes have not significantly improved in terms of new services, value for money or reconfiguration of provision.

Table 3 Previous inspection recommendations

By 31 August 2004	Summary of progress
Share and discuss this report with key partners, including the PCTs and the probation service and agree how the recommendations that impact on partnership working and joint commissioning will be actioned and progress monitored.	Report shared but little progress on joint commissioning.
Draw up a timetable for the development of the five year strategy that clarifies the resources needed to complete this work and identifies the role that all partners will have in this work.	Completed and the five-year strategy was delivered to ODPM on time.
By 31 October 2004	
Work with the PCTs, the probation service and the district councils to understand what the barriers are to participation in the programme and work to resolve these.	Some evidence of improvement though commitment to the memorandum of understanding was qualified by being dependent on a further review after one year. Health still not actively engaged.
In conjunction with partners, decide on the level of representation that is needed for the effective operation of the programme and gain agreement to this commitment.	Level of representation on the Core Strategy Group is still to be addressed.
Develop a plan for future Commissioning Body meetings that identifies regular agenda items and ensures the involvement of all partners in these meetings.	Some recent progress but full attendance is not consistent and some performance reports do not ensure effective scrutiny.
Arrange a series of briefings for all stakeholders that clarify the programme, the structures that support it and the roles and relationships of and between the various groups.	Recent workshop indicated an on-going lack of understanding about the programme, and the structures that support it. Further work is necessary on clarifying the relationship between the various groups.

By 31 October 2004	Summary of progress
Finalise the service reviews for the high cost services and present the outcomes and cost reduction that can be achieved to the Commissioning Body.	Some progress but not all high cost packages or in-house services reviewed.
Develop a user involvement strategy which allows service users to inform and influence the programme and the development of the five year strategy.	Not completed or implemented.
Ensure that resources are identified to complete the outstanding work on the interim contracts and that they are all signed.	Completed.
Clarify and undertake the work needed to adequately map needs across the county and ensure process are in place to keep this work up to date.	Work on need commissioned from consultants and will be reported in 2005/06 and during 2006/07.
With other partners, identify all the outstanding issues relating to the expansion of the home improvement agency and take to resolve these.	Little progress until September 2005 when HIA manager appointed-no resolution regarding the service being county-wide.
By 31 March 2005	
Ensure the council's website contains relevant, up to date information on the programme and the technical links to the ODPM site are resolved.	Content improved – further development required to make access easier and information kept up to date.
Identify the issues around diversity for the programme and develop an action plan to address these.	Not completed.
Develop and implement protocols that clarify the operation of the various groups including the role of providers on the groups and conflict of interests.	Not completed.
Identify the resources required and complete the outstanding service reviews and ensure timescales for future review activities are specified and report the performance and outcomes to the commissioning body.	Reviews on track for completion by 2006 but assessments are against minimum standards.

By 31 March 2005	Summary of progress
Examine how partners and/or external agencies can be involved in future service reviews to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the needs of users in the process.	Not completed.
Develop a suite of performance monitoring reports to be presented to the commissioning body.	Some performance information presented but this does not focus on measurable outcomes for service users.
Implement the charging policy for Supporting People.	Completed but Fairer Charging policy is subject to further review.
Develop and implement processes for bidding for additional funding and ensure these are transparent and accessible to all partners and providers.	Not completed. Processes are not transparent.
Draw up an action plan to resolve all the other issues identified in this report.	Not completed.

- 140** The Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire has been beset by dysfunctional relationships between the districts and the county Council and a lack of senior strategic management capacity and implementation skills. There is little evidence of the Council seeking best practice elsewhere other than through Oxfordshire and there is still a widespread lack of understanding among stakeholders about what Supporting People can deliver.
- 141** Payment procedures have been put in place but policies, such as those for value for money and eligibility, were late in being developed. Without them the Supporting People programme has been unable to complete all the stages necessary to effectively evaluate and review legacy services. Service reviews are underway, although progress is slow, and none have reached the concluding stage confirmed by steady state or fixed term contracts that encapsulate the decisions in respect of re-commissioning, remodelling or decommissioning.
- 142** Consequently, while existing services have been maintained, there has been little change to legacy provision. A small number of new services have been developed but gaps in provision have still to be filled. There is little change from accommodation based provision and little evidence of budget spending being significantly changed to follow established priorities of the programme. In addition, the Council and its partners are slow to put arrangements in place to move inappropriate funding to its proper source despite the fact that the Supporting People grant is paying for ineligible care services.

- 143 Shortly before the re-inspection the pace of development within the programme markedly improved. A number of strategic service reviews are underway into areas of priority and expect to be concluded shortly, and evidence of improved services is beginning to emerge.
- 144 A performance management system to monitor progress and track indicators is still to be developed. There are few shared indicators and no co-ordinated tracking of common indicators which might be improved or influenced by the Supporting People programme. Were one in place, it would capture positive and negative trends. However, at present, it is not possible to determine the contribution that Supporting People may be making to the delivery of strategic objectives in the county.
- 145 Progress against the recommendations has been reported in summary form but this has not revealed the true picture, and without rigorous scrutiny under performance went unnoticed until recently. Further, work has yet to be prioritised, unfinished tasks completed and policies fully implemented and the Commissioning Body is still not fully aware of the situation.
- 146 However, the extra resources secured after the previous inspection, to deal with finance, contracting and service and strategic reviews in an attempt to meet the April 2006 deadline, have delivered positive results.
- 147 Lincolnshire's track record of driving improvements through partnership working was heavily criticised in a Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI) report in March 2005. Since then the Council has been seeking to address this as part of an Improvement Plan drawn up in response to the CGI, the progress against which is being monitored by an Improvement Board chaired by the ODPM. The Audit Commission's recent Direction of Travel assessment noted recent initial evidence of improvement in working with partners as a result. Overall improvements in services remain inconsistent but overall positive.

How does the service manage performance?

- 148 Performance management arrangements for the Supporting People programme are weak. There is no system in place to capture progress on objectives, measure outcomes for service users or agree jointly owned performance targets with partner agencies although there are plans to address LPSA2 (stretched targets for reducing falls and keeping people at home) in partnership with the LPT and Supporting People Team.
- 149 Progress on service reviews, the key to delivering improvements in Lincolnshire, is not being monitored as closely as it should be to drive improvement in services. The Supporting People programme is however clear that it faces a significant agenda of work and needs clear priorities and detailed plans. Until this work is completed progress will continue to be slow.

- 150** Information is critical to the Commissioning Body's ability to be able to manage delivery of the programme effectively. While an Annual Plan has been put in place for the current year's activity it is not underpinned by relevant indicators and targets. There is no system in place to capture and quantify the benefits that the programme is bringing to service users. Without such a system the programme is unable to monitor trends or measure achievement or progress towards objectives, or take informed decisions on priorities or remedial action.
- 151** Progress with the service review programme is vital to success and it is being monitored. There is a summarised plan to illustrate how long the programme is expected to take and the time and resources needed for each stage against which progress can be regularly monitored and reported. Progress has been reported to the Commissioning Body but not in the detail that the issue deserves. The Commissioning Body has not taken action to ensure that the policies and procedures were put in place to ensure that service reviews could be progressed quickly, and nor have plans yet been agreed on how replacement funding will be found for ineligible services identified as part of service reviews.
- 152** Plans to improve value for money are in place but lack any detailed targets. Within the five-year strategy, achieving value for money is identified as a priority in two areas.
- In learning disability services the reduction in funding will total £4.5 million between 2006 and 2010.
 - Across all remaining service groups there will be a reduction of five per cent in spending levels. In addition, Fundamental Service reviews will be carried out to identify need and provision in services for older people, travellers, homelessness and mental health.
- 153** Savings have not been built into 2005/06 because the majority of service reviews will not be completed until well into the year.
- 154** Section 6 of the five-year strategy sets out a series of objectives and how they will be achieved through implementing the agreed value for money policy during service reviews. However, the proposal has insufficient focus. Without any targets to aim for, proposals are too loose and will be unable to be adequately monitored.
- 155** The five-year strategy sets the direction for the programme. It analyses existing provision, compares this against known levels of need, and sets out priority areas for the future. However, it is seen as an aspirational document and we received comments that it is not being followed as there are new priorities. An additional weakness is that it does not identify which are priorities for service development across the client groups. While understanding that everyone is equally important, this demonstrates the programme's difficulty in agreeing priorities which in the past has had a detrimental effect on delivering improvement. There is no mechanism for determining the ranking of priorities and no system is in place to measure progress or achievement of objectives.

- 156** The strategy drew on the most recent available needs information and was consulted upon with service providers and key stakeholders. Some stakeholder groups were visited to help develop the strategy. While some consultation took place there is recognition of gaps and areas where consultation needs to be strengthened. Examples include travellers and improvements needed to better understand the housing support needs of black and minority ethnic groups. Service users have been consulted on how they would like to be engaged in future. Work plans will need to be developed to support the implementation of a strategy identifying how the Supporting People programme will involve and engage with each client group.
- 157** Plans to take the programme forward are not in place with actions drawn together to ensure they are easy to monitor and manage. These need to be integrated to ensure effective co-ordination and monitoring so that required actions are not overlooked.
- 158** To sit alongside the five year strategy, an Annual Action Plan has been developed for the Supporting People programme. This plan identifies four key principles and ten priority service user groups, and some additional services, but there are no detailed tasks and few clear outcomes. Generally the section describes intentions and the need to develop understanding, to review and to undertake further work. For example:
- Supporting People intend becoming involved in the work of the Young People's Forum and County Homelessness Group;
 - research into issues affecting black and minority ethnic communities will be tendered;
 - work to establish a county-wide independent Home Improvement Agency; and
 - work will continue to prepare for strategic reviews of community alarms, older people, mental health and learning disabilities.
- 159** The Supporting People team do not have a detailed service delivery plan that incorporates all key actions or the Audit Commission key lines of enquiry. Without this it is not clear how progress will be monitored.
- 160** Some work has been carried out to identify risks. More needs to be done to ensure all aspects are included, identified actions are undertaken and contingency plans are in place for major risks. A log of identified risks has been set up for the programme with actions to be taken to mitigate risks, but there are some omissions and it is not clear how managers ensure these actions are taken. Contingency plans for major incidents have been put in place and used to ensure that action can be taken quickly in the event of an emergency, such as the sudden closure of a scheme, to protect the lives of vulnerable individuals.

- 161** There are few links with other strategic partnerships and groups to ensure that Supporting People is integrated into their proposals and plans, for example Supporting People has yet to contribute to the Community Plan and Corporate Plan Objectives and the community plans of district councils. Work through the district Local Strategic Partnerships and the Local Area Agreement is recognised as being critical to integrating and delivering Supporting People but this work has yet to be undertaken.
- 162** Leadership of the programme is becoming significantly more visible and some difficult decisions have been taken since the spring of 2005. However, it is not driving the programme with the urgency needed in critical areas. Faced with the budget cuts, the Commissioning Body adopted a financial strategy, including a 5 per cent cut in contract values, which will maintain the delivery of services and protect vulnerable individuals but hamper the development of small services to specific service user groups. This decision was taken in consultation with representatives of service providers and the Commissioning Body was well aware of its likely impact and unpopularity with service providers. The decision was clearly communicated to all providers and Commissioning Body representatives to explain the reasons for their decision and providers' responses were noted.
- 163** Financial administration of the programme is a strength. There is regular monitoring of both the grant and administration budgets. Projections ahead to the year end are routinely made and reported to the Commissioning Body. This means the programme now has a better understanding of its projected outcome.
- 164** The Supporting People team are developing some positive contract management guidance and at the time of the inspection were piloting this with twelve providers with a programme to increase this figure rapidly. The guidance and procedure have been adapted from that currently used by social services for care contracts. A flow-chart has been developed beginning with the point when the service is commissioned and describing the process through to implementation. There is ongoing contract management on a six-monthly basis with an annual review culminating in a report to the management team. The procedure also allows for a best value options appraisal to take place prior to the expiry of the contract to determine the future of the service. The outcome of this best value assessment and the review could lead to competitive tendering of the service, continuing to provide the service or ceasing provision.
- 165** Providers have welcomed the contract meetings that have been planned for 2006 to ensure that high risk or high cost services are kept under scrutiny. Performance will be monitored by building on the QAF system. One provider said that she worked with a number of Supporting People programmes but this development was a first in her experience.
- 166** To gain a full understanding of the quality of services those reviews that were desk-topped will be fully reviewed on a rolling basis.

- 167 Corporately, the Council does not have a performance management framework with a series of departmental plans, objectives, targets and reporting arrangements. Supporting People is not integrated into other corporate plans or those of partners. However, quarterly performance management meetings have recently been established for Supporting People; these are held by the Assistant Director for Adult Services and have looked at progress against the annual plan.
- 168 The Council, in its delivery of the Supporting People programme, recognised that it did not learn from others and has established a mentoring arrangement with Oxfordshire, a Beacon authority in terms of Supporting People partnership working. However, it is less effective at capturing and sharing what it learns internally.
- 169 Cross-authority links and working are developing. Despite being restricted by lack of capacity, Lincolnshire is keen to be involved and very receptive to sharing information and practices. There are clear benefits to be seen in the development of the steady state contracts and emerging benchmarking to inform value for money. More will be in the pipeline as the cross authority work programme rolls forward. Internally however we are not aware of any mechanisms in place to capture and spread good practice, for example on what has worked well on a particular service review and how this could be applied to others.

Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- 170 The Council acknowledges that it started from a low base in terms of Supporting People and that following the previous inspection there was an absence of strong strategic management, leadership, clear priorities and effective performance management. We have serious concerns about the overall pace of change since the previous inspection.
- 171 Recently members and senior managers have recognised that progress against the recommendations from the last inspection was unsatisfactory and steps have been taken to address this. The last six months has seen a focus on the forthcoming inspection and the performance of the Supporting People programme, some difficult management decisions have been taken and interim arrangements have been put in place.
- 172 There is now explicit commitment and determination to implement improvement in the programme and a desire to more closely involve members in the decision making processes and to provide robust scrutiny. In addition, difficult relationships between some of the district councils and the county council have improved.
- 173 Effort and commitment from staff within the Supporting People team has been consistently high and staff feel supported in their work. There would be benefit in holding Supporting People team meetings to focus on improvement.
- 174 However, improvement depends on the programme's ability to free up capacity from legacy services, which will be achieved, but not in the short term. The Commissioning Body has some information with which to make informed decisions about the direction of the programme which includes information on housing related support needs in the district and current patterns of supply.

- 175** The Council is aware of its shortcomings in the delivery of the programme and is open about progress. The development of effective partnerships is a key priority. Service providers are well engaged in the programme and although unhappy about the cuts imposed on contract values do consider that communication is effective. It has been recognised that the business of the Core Strategic Group needs to be addressed and its role and relationship with the Commissioning Body is under review. Service users, carers or advocates are not well engaged with the strategic development of the programme. The Council is aware of this and proposals on the best way to secure meaningful engagement are under discussion.
- 176** The effectiveness of the use of resources to secure improvement is mixed. Corporate support has improved some key functions in the administrative centre for the programme and has improved finance, contract monitoring and performance information. With the current focus on service reviews, the number of Monitoring and Review Officers has increased and the team have access to added capacity within adult social care. A light touch approach has been approved to enable these to be processed quickly with these services being reviewed after April 2006 and a series of contract monitoring meetings for high cost and high risk services.
- 177** However, the programme will only deliver real change if it unlocks resources from its legacy services and it has made a slow start in achieving this. Not only will the programme need to deliver efficiencies to meet future reductions in the ODPM grant but it also starts from the difficult position of having an imbalance in service provision across the county. No real estimate has been made of the amount involved in funding ineligible services or savings that can be achieved through ensuring existing services are value for money.
- 178** The agenda facing the Council is considerable and means that there is little surplus capacity to direct to Supporting People. A number of senior management changes have been made and the Council has ensured that, on the whole, these vacancies have been managed. This has ensured support for people in the Supporting People team but at each level above the team, post holders are interim, acting up or carrying additionally demanding roles. The Council is considering who the Supporting People programme should report to at Director level, but this has yet to be agreed or the post-holder appointed.
- 179** The team has some of the necessary skills and experience to carry out the job. Our assessment of the people we met was that they were competent and had the experience and training needed to carry out the work effectively but had lacked strategic direction and strong leadership. There is a logical structure to the team with each area of responsibility.
- 180** Personal supervision and appraisal systems are in place and operating effectively. However, it is a weakness that clear links are not made to operational objectives. Appraisals assess individual performance and identify any training needs required. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that the individual then receives the necessary training and the benefits are assessed.

Measurable targets, however, are not set for individuals linked to the objectives of team as a whole. Without these, it is less clear what is expected of an individual, how they contribute to the team, and how they determine their work priorities. Targets would also enable performance to be assessed.

- 181 IT systems are robust and provide adequate support for delivery of the programme. Supporting People records are fit for purpose and there have been no issues around payments to service suppliers.
- 182 Council commitment to the Supporting People programme is clear. The areas of weakness we shared with the Council during the inspection were considered and accepted. A review of capacity and the management arrangements is to be undertaken and some of the work being undertaken to improve the performance of the Council as a whole will benefit Supporting People for example, performance management, partnership working, consultation and communication.
- 183 Senior councillors are now closely involved with the development of the programme and are taking a more active role with the Supporting People programme. However, their involvement in the Commissioning Body has yet to be agreed and the Memorandum of Understanding is to be reviewed again.
- 184 The Commissioning Body does not effectively scrutinise performance by asking challenging questions. In addition, despite improved relationships and stating they wish to work together in partnership there is little evidence that this is happening in practice.
- 185 The Supporting People programme is not outward looking although it has established what it feels is a helpful relationship with another county. It would like to learn and benefit from good practice elsewhere but has felt it lacked capacity to do this. In general, it knows where performance is poor and what remains to be done but currently lacks the capacity and skills to implement improvement. In Lincolnshire effort has been focussed on internal processes and managing difficult relationships, rather than driving ahead in partnership.
- 186 The Supporting People team is integrated well into the Council structure and is not seen as a separate entity, although some people we interviewed told us that Supporting People is seen as overly dominated by the county council's adult social care agenda.
- 187 Some work on performance management has been developed but this does not provide a comprehensive framework that delivers outcomes. This area of work was highlighted by a number of people we spoke to as being critical to success. At the current time there are no clear plans to undertake the work within an agreed timescale and until it is the system cannot effectively monitor what benefits the programme is delivering for the county. Financial monitoring and administration is strong within the Supporting People programme.

- 188** The programme does not have a commissioning framework and the procurement policy it developed has not been implemented. This is essential if it is to show how it will ensure that new services are procured in a fair and transparent way and be good value for money. While the programme can be guided by the corporate procurement strategy, there is little within existing strategies or plans to show how new services will be procured in future.
- 189** There is little evidence of joint working and this is also recognised as an area for development. Work remains to be done to ensure the programme delivers complementary services and reviews informed by specialist knowledge from partners. Some work has also begun with social services to consider the package of services needed by vulnerable individuals with learning disabilities. Little progress has, however, been made on joint commissioning for housing related support, for example across council boundaries, and there is no evidence of joining up monitoring and review arrangements in appropriate cases with health and social care arrangements.

Summary

- 190** On balance we judge that Lincolnshire has uncertain prospects for improvement. Barriers to improvement outweigh drivers for improvement. The track record of the Supporting People programme in Lincolnshire is poor. The service review programme has made slow progress and little has been achieved in delivering new improved outcomes despite the budget surplus. There is little change to legacy provision or the pattern of supply.
- 191** Managing the performance of the Supporting People programme is also weak. There is no framework in place to measure progress against objectives, monitor outcomes for service users or track trends in performance on any agreed performance targets with statutory partners. There is an absence of clear plans to deliver the many improvements required and the actions have not been prioritised.
- 192** In terms of capacity to deliver improvements the barriers outweigh the drivers for improvement. The capacity of the team, the lack of permanency in the senior management levels above it and the lack of established governance still need to be addressed. The commitment and enthusiasm of the Supporting People team has been sustained through a difficult period and they have been well supported by the new administration and senior management of the Council.
- 193** It is recognised that much work remains to be done work but work on strategic and service reviews, with additional resources, is being undertaken and less intensive procedures agreed for low risk services. Significant strides forward are expected in the next few months and the ODPM deadline of all services reviewed by March 2006 should be achieved.
- 194** A number of key policies are not yet in place. In addition to a robust performance management system, the programme lacks a mechanism to determine priorities for new service development, and it has not implemented a commissioning or procurement strategy to show how new services will be procured in a fair and transparent way and secure improved value for money.

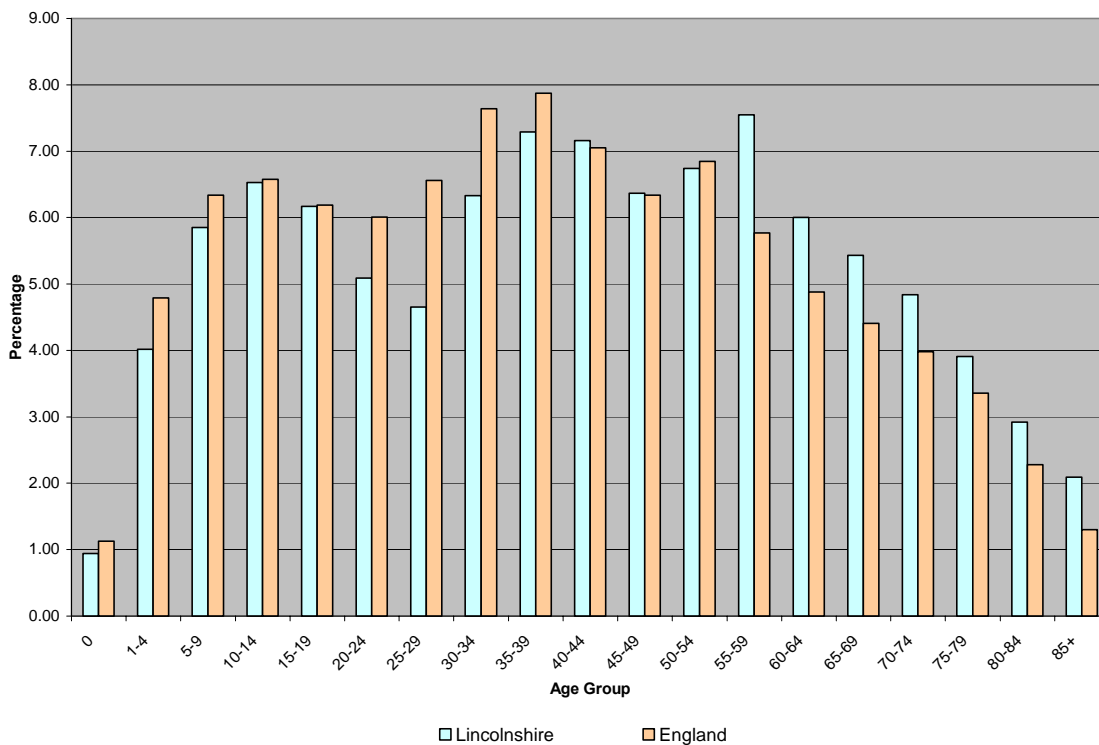
Appendix 1 – Performance indicators

Demographic information

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

Measure	Lincolnshire	England
Population (mid-2003) ^I	665,300	57,851,100
Percentage of the population aged 65+ (mid-2003)	22.2	18.5
Percentage from minority ethnic groups (all groups other than White – British 2003)	1.3	10.44
Percentage unemployment (claimant count rate) ^{II}	1.7	2.4
Deprivation Index (1 highest, 354 lowest) ^{III}	262	-

Percentage of the population^{IV} in each age group compared with England



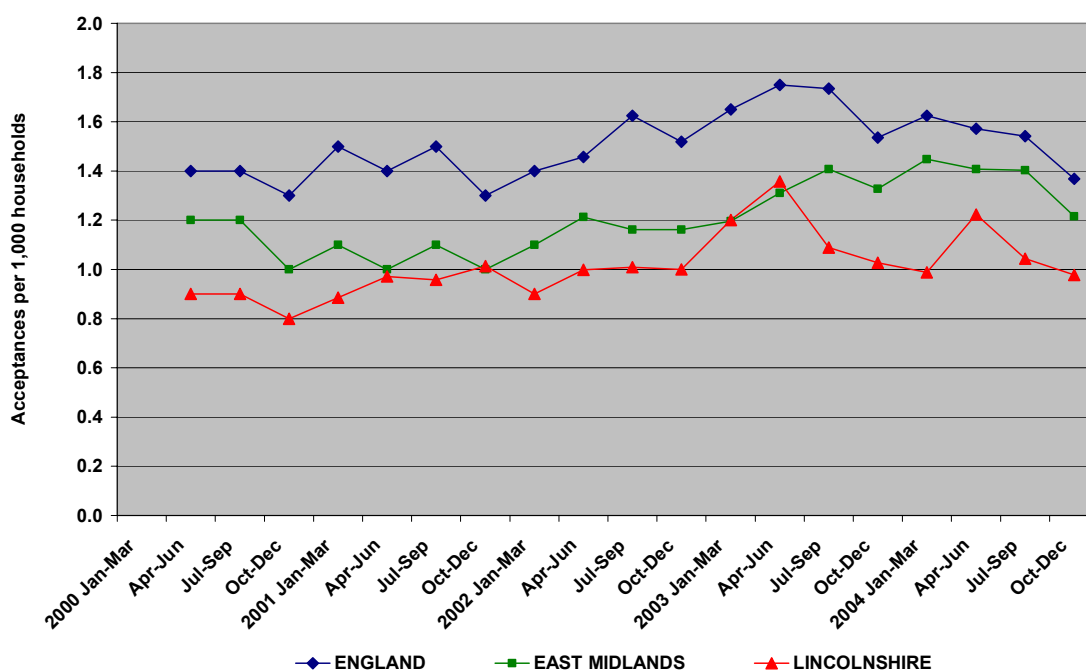
^I Source: midyear population estimates (2003)

^{II} Source: claimant count with rates and proportions (June 2005)

^{III} Source: deprivation Index 2004, average ward score for the authority.

^{IV} Source: midyear population estimates (2003)

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



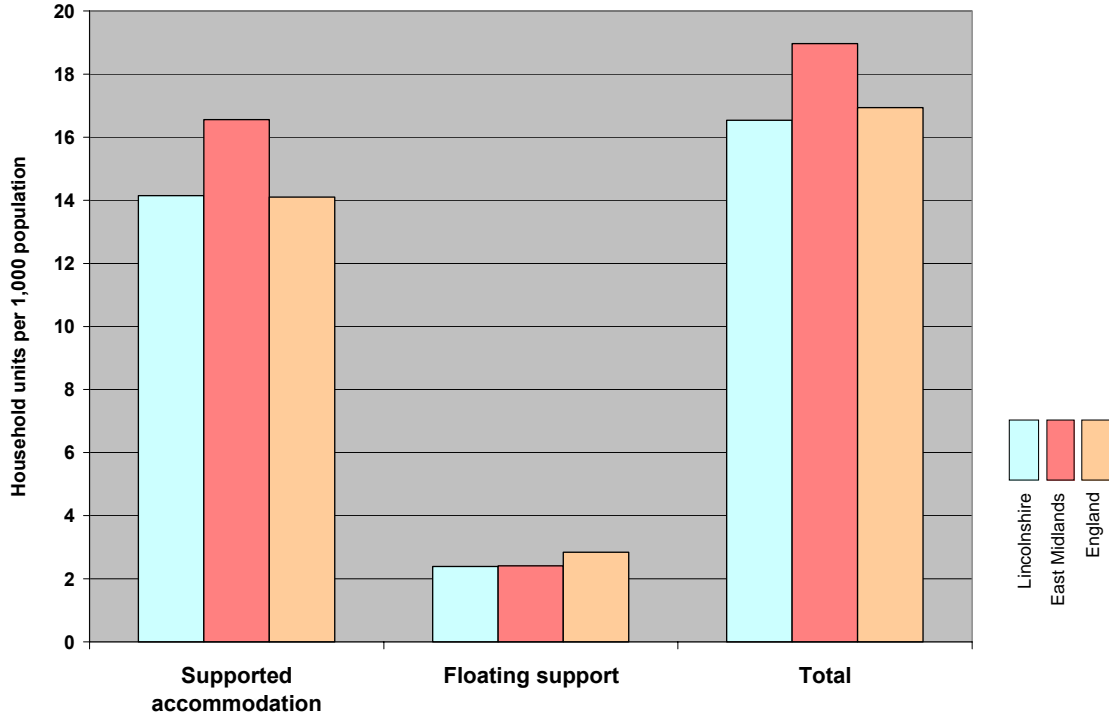
Performance information

196 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:

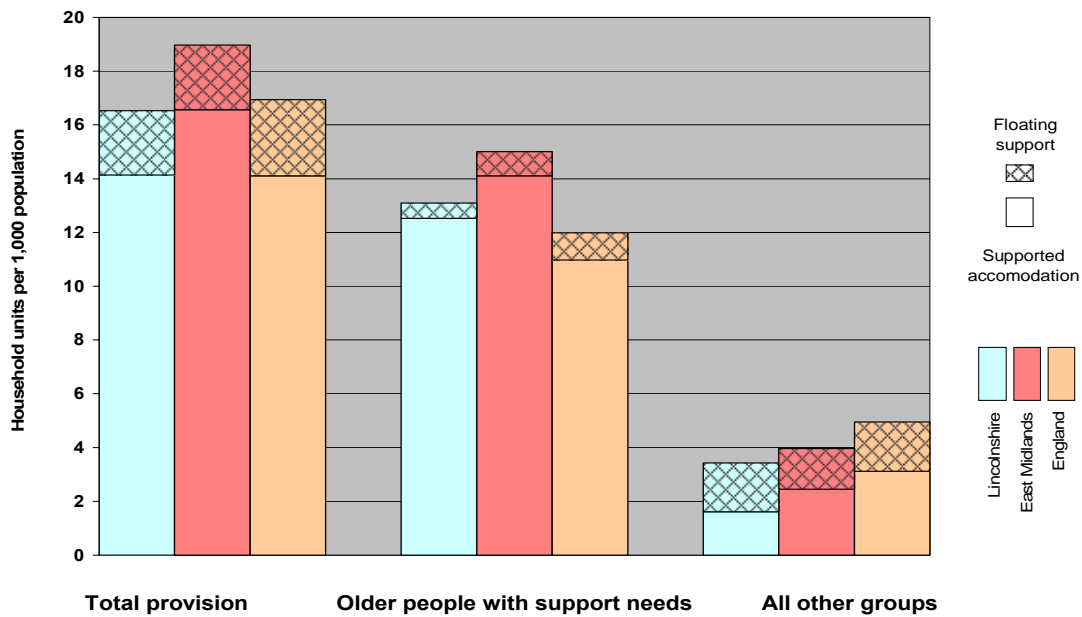
- data for services funded through the Supporting People programme;
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment scores;
- star ratings for social services;
- Performance Assessment Framework indicators for social services; and
- relevant best value performance indicators.

Supporting People data

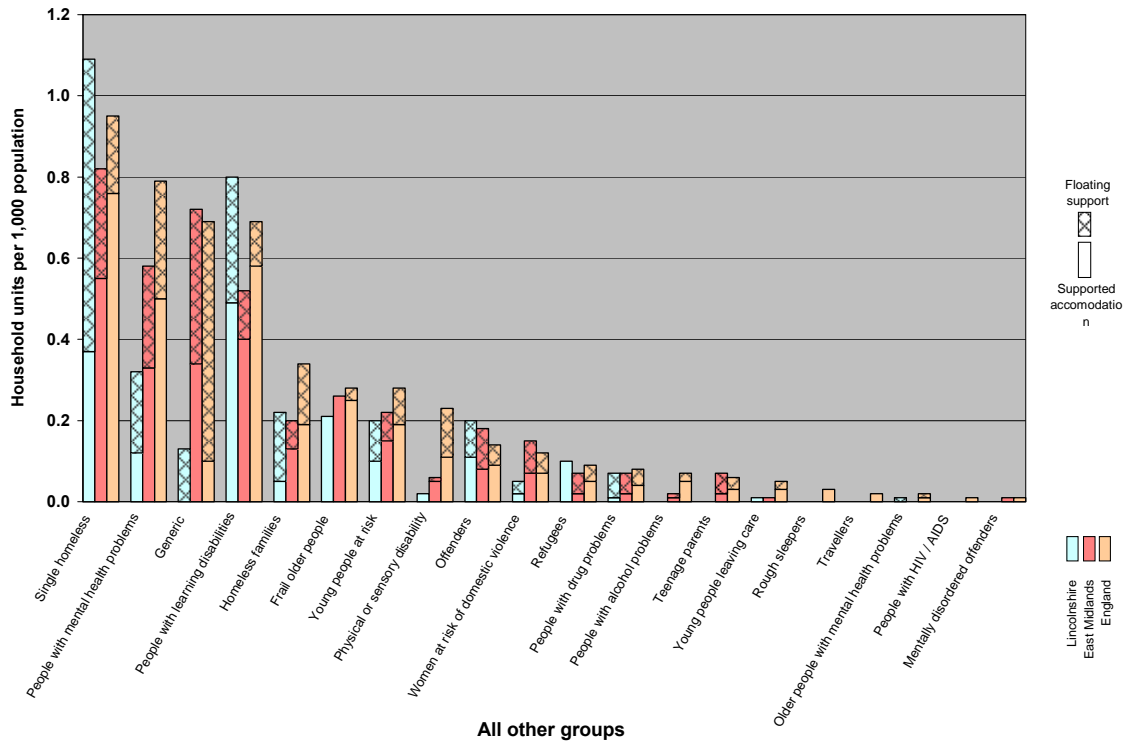
Total service provision funded through Supporting People



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



Services for other groups compared with the region and England



Funding for Supporting People

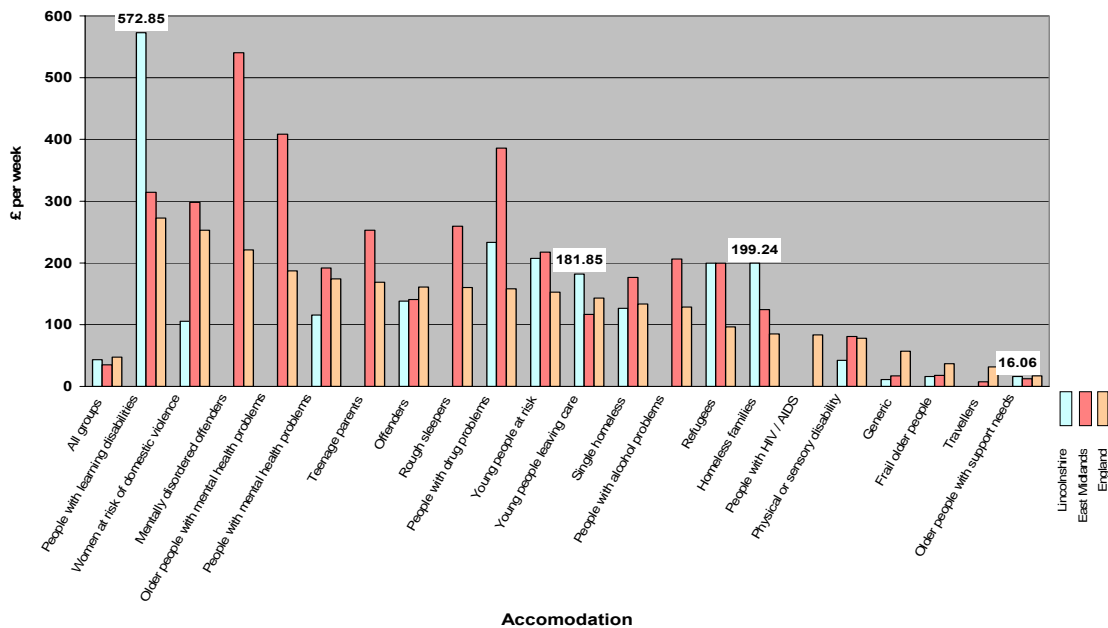
Lincolnshire	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Final Supporting People grant	£ 23,184,655	£ 22,822,904	£ 21,749,385
Pipeline allocation	£ 125,679	£ 206,026	£ -
Administration grant	£ 480,252	£ 486,370	£ 464,185

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

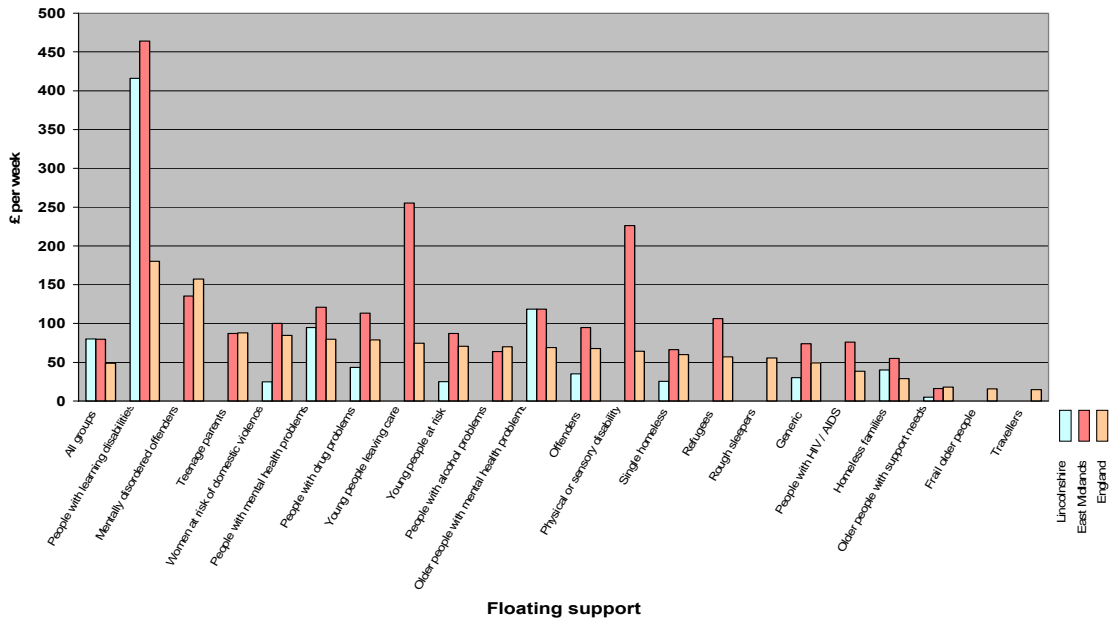
	Per head of population	Per unit	Per unit excluding community alarms	Per unit excluding community alarms & sheltered housing
Lincolnshire	£ 0.68	£ 23.78	£ 38.77	£ 131.68
East Midlands	£ 0.69	£ 24.96	£ 31.50	£ 88.82
England	£ 0.70	£ 28.30	£ 34.71	£ 76.37

'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 from September 2005 and this will then be used.'

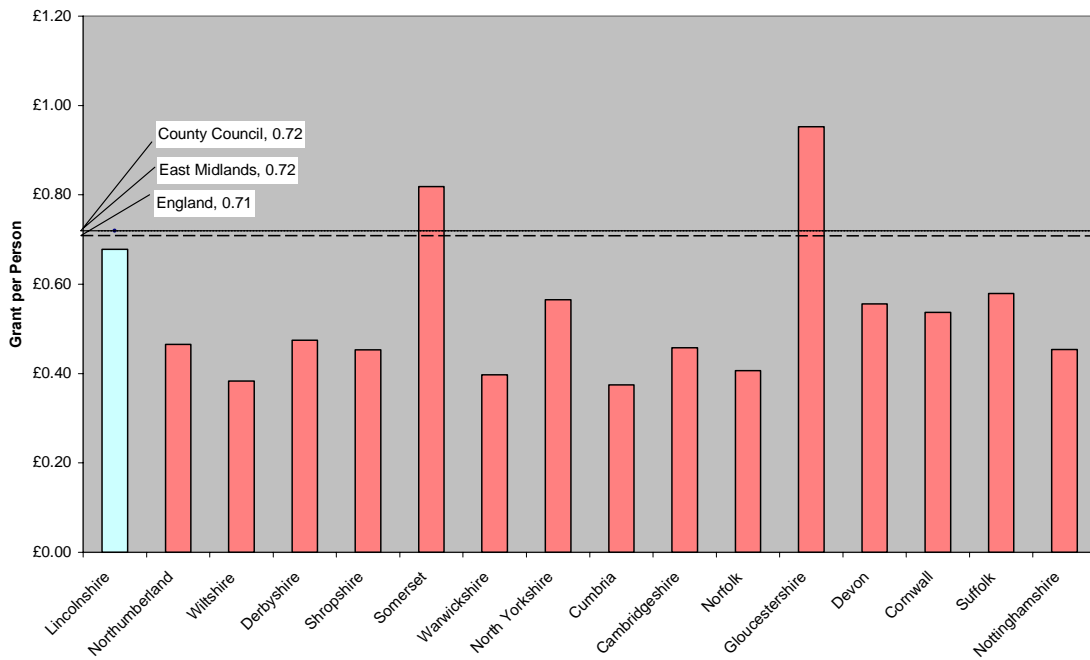
Unit costs of supported accommodation compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)



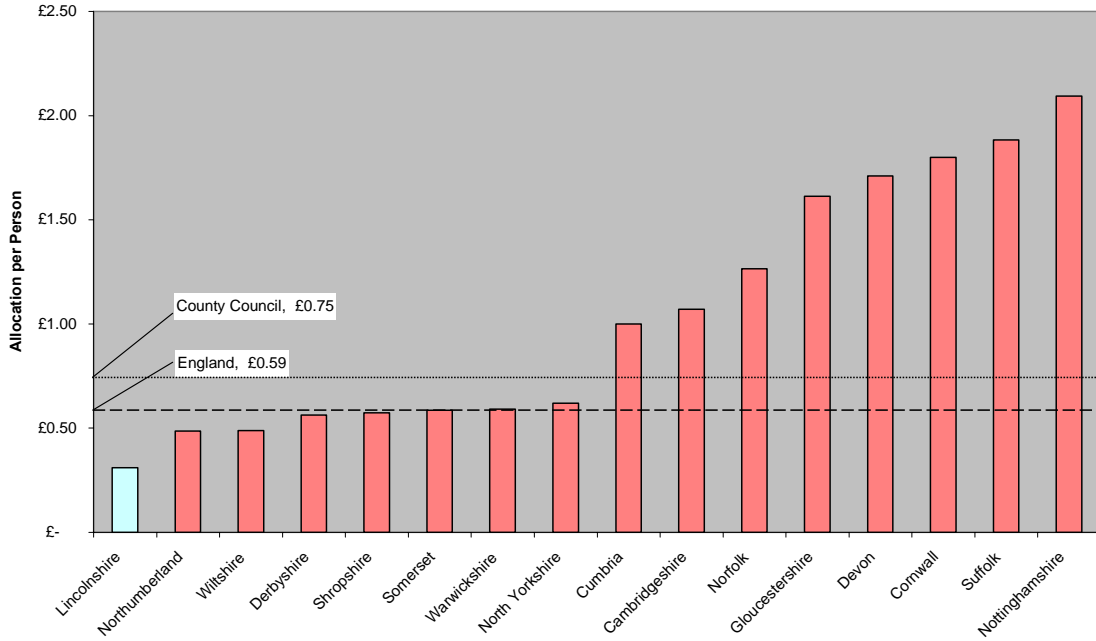
Unit costs of floating support services compared with the region and England (labels show costs in the highest 25 per cent)



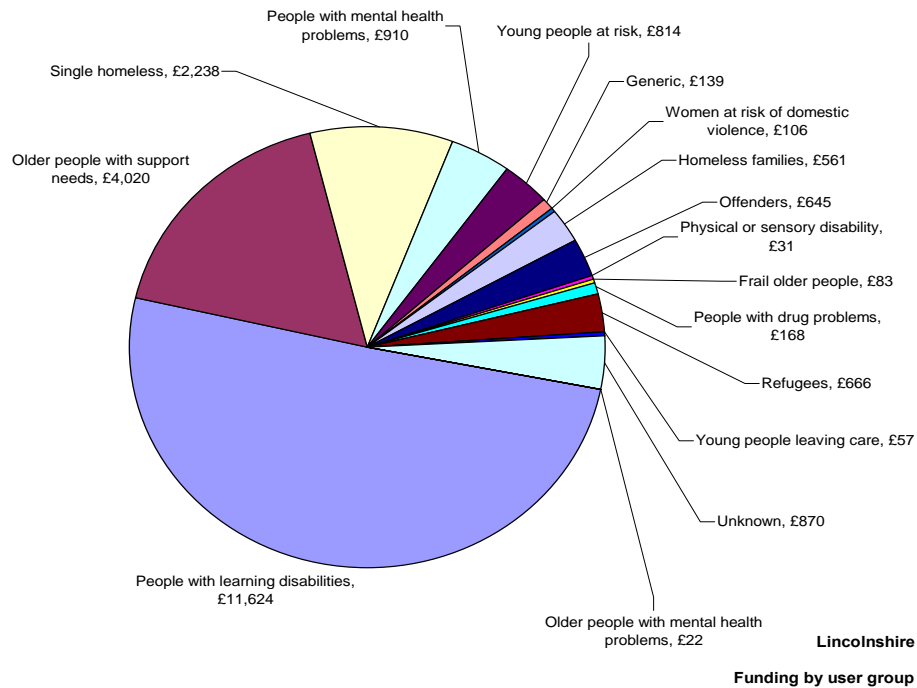
Supporting People grant per head of population per week compared with nearest neighbours, all county councils and all English councils (2004/05)



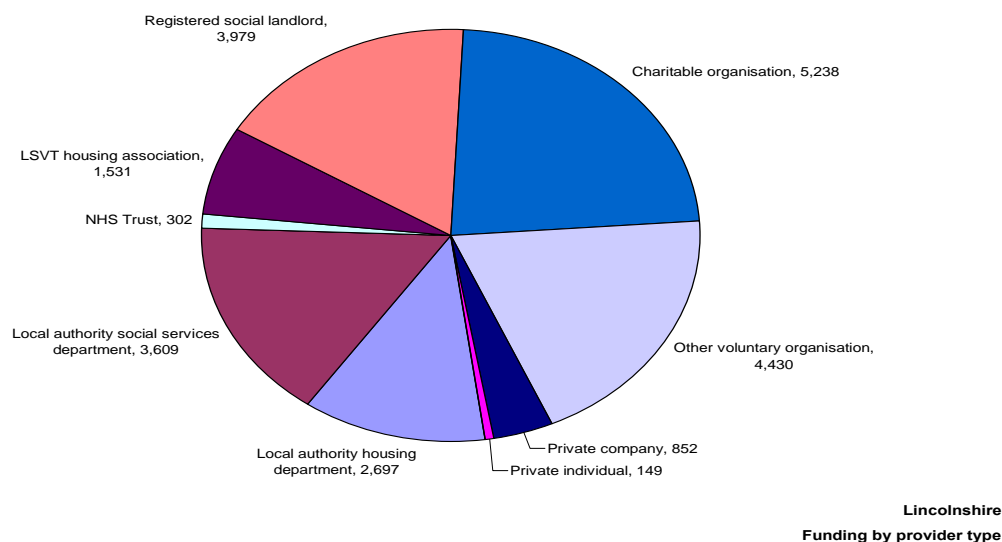
Pipeline allocation per head of population compared with nearest neighbours, all county councils and all English councils



Share of spending between user groups (£000s)



Share of spending between types of provider (£000s)



Social Services star ratings November 2004

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	Some	Uncertain	

Social services performance indicators

Performance Assessment Framework indicators 2003/04

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

Lincolnshire	
Significantly above average (●●●●)	Adults with mental health problems helped to live at home (C31). Admissions of supported residents aged 18-64 to residential/nursing care (C27). Adults with learning disabilities helped to live at home (C30).

Lincolnshire	
Above average (****)	<p>Admissions of older people to residential/ nursing care (C26).</p> <p>Adults with physical disabilities helped to live at home (C29).</p> <p>Percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within seven working days (D54).</p>
Average (***)	<p>Adults and older clients receiving a review as a percentage of those receiving a service (D40).</p> <p>Emergency psychiatric re-admissions (A6).</p> <p>Delayed transfers of care (D41).</p> <p>Employment, education & training for care leavers (A4).</p> <p>Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that their opinions and preferences were always taken into account (D57).</p> <p>Physically disabled and sensory impaired users who said that they can contact social services easily (D58).</p>
Below average (**)	<p>Percentage change on previous year in total emergency admissions to hospital (A5).</p> <p>Older people helped to live at home (C32).</p>
Significantly below average (•)	<p>Adults and older people receiving a statement of their needs and how they will be met (D39).</p> <p>Adults and older people receiving direct payments at 31 March per 100,000 population aged 18 or over (C51).</p>

Best value performance indicators

Performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04 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	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176).
Average	The level of the equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms (BV2).

District council performance on relevant indicators in 2003/04

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	
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	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176).
East Lindsey	
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	Domestic violence refuge places (BV176).

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

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

Appendix 2 – Documents reviewed

- 1 Before going on site and during our visit, we reviewed various documents that were provided for us. These included:
 - Audit Commission Management letters;
 - Best Value performance indicators;
 - Community Plan;
 - Supporting People five year strategy;
 - Fairer Charging guidance;
 - eligibility criteria;
 - Commissioning body minutes and papers;
 - Better Care: Higher Standards annual review report;
 - corporate objectives; and
 - finance reports.

Appendix 3 – 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:
 - visits to a number of supported housing schemes;
 - focus groups with service users;
 - interviews with staff;
 - interviews with Councillors;
 - provider focus group;
 - desk top review of service reviews; and
 - meetings with partner agencies.